

Sherry Teske followed her brother, Gary Teske, to Papua New Guinea in June of 1976 as a volunteer nurse. She was a graduate of Lutheran Medical Center School of Nursing and credits Dr. Bulle (and many others) for helping with the physical and mental arrangements for a life-changing experience. She almost traveled only as far as Chicago. All preparations for the move to PNG went smoothly except for the visa. Despite assurances that time would not be a problem in applying and receiving the visa, on the day she was to leave the USA her passport was still at the Australian/PNG consulate in Chicago. With just enough layover time at Ohare Airport to get a taxi to downtown Chicago, she left luggage and all belongings on the forwarding flight. Hoping that her passport was ready to go she asked the taxi driver to wait for her to take her back to Ohare. Reluctantly, the taxi driver agreed if it would not take too long. Hurrying? up the elevator she found her passport ready to go and hurried? back down to find the taxi driver waiting. She jumped in and told him she had to be back in 30 minutes. Turning he looked at her and said, "Lady, it's rush hour now." She explained how she needed to get back for her overseas flight. He took off listening to her story and told her he knew some short-cuts around the traffic jams. The ride was the beginning of the process of trusting the native people to help you get where you want to go. She made it with minutes to spare and arrived in PNG on schedule.

Sherry was placed in the Kandep and lived with Gary and Linda and girls with the original plan of working for a year, but a year is barely enough to get to know what the job is, so she renewed her contract for a second year. She worked with Elisabeth Schenkl, an Austrian volunteer, as a Maternal/Child Health nurse. They started out by seeing about 200 children five years old and younger per month and were seeing close to 2000 per month at the end of two years. Besides conducting well-baby/children clinics (and the children were not always well), the MCH team gave pre-natal care, school health education and nutritional teaching. State-side nurse's training in no way prepared someone for giving health care without a doctor, without many supplies and without knowing the language and culture, but again, by trusting in the national people, other health care workers and God, she got where she was supposed to go.

After 2 years she left on furlough and returned as a nursing instructor at Immanuel Hospital in Mambisanda. Shortly after she returned in 1979, she married:

Fred Rengstorf came to Papua New Guinea in 1977 as an assistant to Roy Schache. After a couple weeks in Kopiago learning to get by in Pidgin, Roy and Trevor Starick sent him out to Marimuni to fix a diesel. That Fred came out as a carpenter and didn't know anything about engines or mechanics, didn't mean a thing to Roy or Trevor. With all instructions, diagrams and specifications scribbled on a napkin from Roy's kitchen he flew out with the necessary mechanical tools. After spending a day loosening and tightening bolts and bleeding fuel lines and doing everything at least three times, the engine coughed and sputtered to life to the delight of the crowd of locals who had come to watch the "koni" cuss at a machine. Thinking he had performed some sort of magic in getting the power to start, they rewarded him with a gourmet meal of fish and rice.

Roy sent Fred to different parts of the Enga building a variety of buildings before Roy went home "pinis." Things were changing in the construction, electrical, and mechanical work at Yaibos, and Tora Enterprises was set up as a company to do the

various aspects of those different trades. Fred worked with Gary Altmann and Trevor on various projects.

During his first term in the Enga:

Fred and Sherry were married. After his first term, Fred decided to return to ordained ministry and informed Bishop Waisa of his intentions to become ordained. (He had graduated from Concordia Seminary-in-Exile before coming to PNG.) Bishop Waisa expressed interest in calling him back to the GLC as a missionary and after working out the finance package with the Bavarian Lutheran Church in coordination with a congregation in the USA, Fred and Sherry returned for a second term.

Fred worked in the Kandep Region as an assistant to Bishop Pilipo of Region 5. He and Pastor Kambu Yupele worked to set up a Bible school for continuing education for the local pastors. Tribal fights erupted shortly after the school was set up and disrupted the work of the school for most of three years. Plan B was to minister to the local congregations in whatever way necessary.

Two of their three children, Ben and Brenda, were both born in PNG at Immanuel Hospital. While life in the Enga, and especially in Kandep, certainly did not include all the amenities of western civilization, the years in PNG were some of the best years of Fred and Sherry's life. They returned to Minnesota in August of 1983.

Fred is now a pastor of a congregation in Cosmos, MN, and Sherry is a school nurse in the local school district. Their third child, Nathan, was born while they were serving a 2-point parish in northern Minnesota. The time in PNG taught them the lessons of learning the language of the place and respecting local customs, and this has been invaluable in their work in the USA.

Fred & Sherry Rengstorf
P. O. Box 116
Cosmos, MN 56228