

Philip Kopitske TCK Thoughts 2022

Favorite PNG memories:

Milo, Sunshine Powdered Milk, mom's home made root beer and ice cream, Maria Biscuits, Minties, the sound and smell of the diesel engine starting up as my dad cranked it over, landslides, over 1000 shades of green, the Greens (house parents at Highland Lutheran School), HLS plays and Hagen Sports Days, sweet potatoes, sugar cane, raw coffee beans, rain storms you could not see through, clouds lifting from the mountain valleys, the huge white pre-beetle juice smiles of our Enga neighbors, building tree houses, the pride in knowing our parents were fulfilling the great commission, and the almost impossible task of falling asleep the night before a trip to Madang apartments A and B, crawling around between their cement footings, and especially apartment C, Lion's Cove, Have-a-Heart ice cream in a sweaty station wagon, feeling content, happy, grateful and very much alive moment by moment.

Emotions entering the USA:

We older kids (in the Kopitske family) had it much easier having acclimated to modernity in boarding school in Australia. The newness, largeness, shininess, openness, and endless promise of the American land and culture was inches from my face and within my grasp. Our younger siblings were often a bit overwhelmed. One of my sisters was cornered and punched in the girl's bathroom by some Lutheran girls, but she punched them back harder, and they turned much nicer after that ;).

Life experience since PNG:

Martin Luther High School '74-'78, Navy Nuclear Power and USS Carl Vinson aircraft carrier commissioning and first two years of cruises to Ft Lauderdale, St. Thomas V.I), Barbados, Monaco, Casablanca, Abidjan, Perth, Philippines, Japan, Hawaii, San Francisco from '78 - '84, college for an Engineering Physics Degree in Norman Oklahoma at OU '84 - '87, Boeing Air Combat Analysis in Wichita, KS, Boeing Space Station Subcontract Management in Madison, AL, Rockwell Space Station Operations in Houston, TX, Software and Expert Systems Development for Keane Incorporated, Gensym, Agra Simons, Answerthink '87 - '91, then Manufacturing Execution Systems installation for Mountain Systems and General Electric '91 to 1 Feb 2022 at which point I retired at age 62.

Life Influences:

The world continuously creates, modifies, and destroys vast numbers of peoples, systems of government, cultures, and co-evolving worldviews, even as our own personalities, likes, dislikes, politics, and relationships grow and change. PNG from age 7 months to 14 years gave me total immersion in a culture just emerging from the stone age, five day to six month periods of loneliness in boarding schools, but also the gift of truly independent thought and action at a very young age. I have grown to adulthood away from PNG for 44 years now, which is about the same number of years that PNG has been an independent nation. My belief in my creator and savior is an unshakable part of who I am, but I also see the creator's love and teachings in the cultures, religions, and worldviews that have shared this pale blue dot of a planet with me over the millennia, so I leave it to God to sort us all out in the end, even as we all fail to meet his law and fall back on his gospel.