



The Harvest Times

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The Bride Price

The girl's white teeth flash in a smile; her brown eyes dance. She and her family—adopted from the village for the occasion—had spent all morning decorating themselves for the event. The sun shines bright overhead, filtering through the palm leaves and sparkling against the ocean in the distance.

Accompanied by about 20 village women, the girl marches toward the clan of her husband-to-be. The women sing about the bride and marriage. The bride price ceremony is underway.

The groom's family joins him, about 150 in all, and begins marching toward the group of ladies. They are singing a completely different song about finding a wife. As the two groups meet, their songs blend beautifully.

Representatives from the groom's family try to "find" the bride, but are beset by the women, who have locked arms and surrounded the girl. Loud cheers break out when the men "find" the bride and take her to the groom. Together they march toward the feast of beef, pork, rice, and sweet potatoes.

So how much is this bride worth? She is from Morobe, a city in mainland Papua New Guinea, which means her bride price is more expensive than the average \$1800-\$7250 in Buka. The total bride price collected from various sources would be over \$20,000 USD.

Such an event, described in a recent email from missionary Larry Doyle, echoes another, very different bride price story. In this account, the bride-to-be is a condemned slave. Regardless, the groom loves her and is determined to pay whatever is necessary so she can be freed to live with him. But the price is higher than \$7250 or even \$20,000. The groom must give up everything, become a slave like his bride-to-be, and suffer torture. The price for this bride is the very lifeblood of the groom.



This December, as you consider the manger scene again, imagine what that first bride price discussion in heaven must have been like. Perhaps God the Father told the Son what it would cost to redeem His bride, lost humanity. The Son replied that He was willing. He would leave his home of heaven and come to earth to "find" the bride and lay down His life for her. That Baby in the manger was destined for a cross, where He would pay a bride price more costly than any we can imagine. You and I, the bride, are worth that much to God.

This Christmas, may you celebrate the reason Jesus came! Thank you for continuing to support the work of World Missions, as we seek to tell more people about the bride price paid by Jesus.





Bobby and Rowena Clouse stand in front of the mission home in Cayman Brac.



Spot Bay church, one of two Churches of God (Holiness) in Cayman Brac



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AROUND THE WORLD

Q & A WITH THE CLOUSES

Bobby and Rowena Clouse recently answered a few questions by email from Cayman Brac, where are serving as interim pastors for about six weeks. Davelee and Ruby Tibbetts resigned as of August 31, and we are so grateful for the Clouses' hearts of service and appreciate their stepping forward to meet this need. Their current plans are to return to the States by Christmas. As God leads, we are looking forward to announcing a new pastor early next year; please help us pray toward that end.

How long have you pastored and what churches have you pastored? It has been our privilege to pastor for 33 years. We have served as evangelists while pastoring and especially for 7 years when we were not pastoring. This year, 2013, is our 40th year of ministry.

What are your current positions of ministry? Our home is currently in Hobe Sound, FL, and we are working for Gospel Publishing Mission which sends out International English Publications to many locations in the U.S. and around the world. This organization is part of FEA Ministries.

Have you visited the Cayman Islands before? We have ministered in Grand Cayman at least 3 times and have previously held revivals in Cayman Brac 7 times.

How did God lead you to the Brac? The people in the two churches in Cayman Brac, Watering Place and Spot Bay, have become very special to us, so when the invitation came to help, God made it clear that we should go. We are grateful to be in the center of God's will.

How can we pray for you and the churches there? Please help us pray for God's continued direction and help in the building of both churches spiritually and numerically.