

Rall Report 2018

As many of you know, Ron now has a part time call with the LCMS to teach at Timothy Seminary for 2 months twice each year; however, since the term lasts 10 weeks, we will be spending about 5 months per year in PNG. This trip we arrived on Sept. 15, 2018 and spent several days organizing the house and planning classes with the teachers at Timothy Seminary. On Sept. 20-21 we travelled to Yakoptamanda (up the mountain from Papayuku—about a one hour walk) to do workshops/classes on Stewardship and Pillars of the Reformation. There was a big crowd, including quite a number of pastors from the Laiagam Circuit. On Sunday, the 23rd, Ron was privileged to preach at Sirunki. Since school had not yet started, he was also able to attend a vicar service at Aios in the Laiagam Circuit, do some teaching, preaching, baptisms and confirmations.

On October 2nd, Ron was invited to preach at the funeral service for the late Lucy Ipatas (the Governor's wife who had died at a hospital in the Philippines). This was a great outreach opportunity as the church was packed and hundreds of people attended the service with many hundreds more coming for the 5-hour presentation of funeral gifts—100 + pigs, easily 1,000 cases of Coke and every kind of vegetable you can imagine. We sat next to the Governor who gave us a pig, bananas and some other food to take with us to Birip. We were able to share the pig with TLS students and neighbors at our farewell dinner later that month.

The Pastors' Conference in early October was attended by 90 pastors, 10+ evangelists and other leaders. We had a workshop on Worship using a new book, *Hanbuk Bilong Lotu*, which generated great interest and lots of questions. In the afternoon, Anton Lutz did his presentation on *Sanguma*.

Teaching during the week, usually Monday through Thursday, left the weekends for visits to local (and some not-so-local!) congregations. Tapokmanda (high on a mountain above Lenki, near Wabag) where Pastor Jeremaiah is serving was one of our first visits. It was a great service and great congregation! They were thrilled to have a missionary visit. (From Mary Anne: I was not so thrilled with the climb, but it was worth every minute!)

Exodus class began on October 9th, followed by classes on Worship—using the new booklet, *Hanbuk Bilong Lotu* — and Jonah. There were often services for church blessings and the like that were held on Fridays and Saturdays so we were able to participate in many of those. It was exciting to be able to work in cooperation with local pastors, particularly Pastor Jeri from Birip who taught the history of how the Gospel came to Enga, and with Dr. Marty Dicke, who has done tremendous work, teaching various classes at the Seminary, including guitar lessons for all the seminarians.

In mid-October, Ron drove to Banda in the Jiwaka Province (formerly a part of the Western Highlands District.). ELC congregations there in some places have been abandoned so there are Lutherans there who want the GLC to come and work. We visited one mission congregation (Jordan) and stayed at another with our base at Wagi Rabish (right near the big Wagi River). On Friday we visited with the Council, a very influential leader who wants the GLC to come and work in his area. There is no conflict with the ELC in what we want to do. On Friday and Saturday we did 6 Bible Studies/Workshops: Baptism, Holy Spirit, *4 Pos Bilong Reformation* (Pillars of the Reformation), *Sanguma*, *Wok Bilong Pasto/Evangelist*, and Stewardship. There are 4-5 places where the people want to build churches there, and 4 men want to come to Birip next year to study. The Jordan congregation is not far (just over the mountain) from the Jimi,

which also appears to be a significant mission field. We had worship with communion on Sunday morning with lots of conversations after the service.

During the last week of classes at the end of October, the Jonah class practiced for a “play.” They presented the re-enactment of the book of Jonah—complete with costumes and props—on the last Sunday in October. The students did a good job and the congregation seemed to appreciate their efforts.

Because of visa problems, we arrived in between terms, so Ron wasn’t able to teach a full term of 10 weeks; however, when we return to PNG in February 2019, we will be there for the entire term. In the seven weeks we did serve, Ron was privileged to preach on 12 different occasions along with teaching and doing workshops; so although the time was shorter than we would have liked, we were still able to accomplish something. As always, it was a joy to return to Papua New Guinea, and we look forward to going back in February to work among people we so dearly love!