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Hi Brothers & Sisters

Happy New Year!! And also a belated Merry Christmas. I hope that the festive season has been one of joy and thanksgiving for you. The freaky weather I mentioned in November's report has continued, with all of December being unseasonably wet and into the high 80's°F. As a result, many of us are now down with colds and Malaria. Miring and I spent Christmas day sneezing, aching, sleeping, and staring at the walls. Thankful that we had no plans to cook a large meal that day, or guests to care for! Planning to roast a chicken and make pumpkin pie once I can taste things properly again and my ears are no longer blocked.

December was an intense month and I've got a bit of that "chewed up and spat out" feeling. We spent much of the start of December visiting multiple patients at Angau Hospital, including John Waine. Thank you for your prayers for him and family. He has recovered well, with only left eye blindness being the lasting issue. The large gouge out of the top of his head is healing well, and he will eventually go back for a skin graft. He was released on December 11th. Other patients included seven year old Samson (who attends worship at M.B.C. with his mother and siblings), and two of Miring's female relatives. Samson had surgery to remove a large bladder stone and has recovered well. One of the ladies has since died of cerebral Malaria, and the other is still in the hospital with what is likely cancer.

On December 8th, we returned from hospital visitation to find half of a large tree down across the driveway, and the neighbour's car port badly damaged. We were incredibly thankful for several things:

Abraham Mesa had just pulled into the driveway and witnessed the tree falling but was far enough away that he was able to stop safely and avoid disaster;

The neighbours' children, the oldest of whom is around seven, were in the house, not playing where they usually do;

The neighbour's bus and truck, which they run commercially, were both away from the property at the time. Both are frequently parked right where the tree fell;

And the power supply to my house, which was rerouted through the car port a few years ago, was not effected despite the damage.

We have since helped to remove the down part of the tree, and the car port has been repaired.



The Tree...



And what the tree did!

On the 12th, we had the first of three floods. The second happened on the 23rd, and was worse than the first one, but I didn't take pictures of it. The third happened a day or two later and was minor. The culvert under the road was blocked up, and has since been cleared. We are currently living in a sea of mud. If you have ever visited the property here in Lae, you may be wondering what has happened to little creek "Warabuai". A couple of years ago there was a landslip up closer to the head of our creek. It has run muddy ever since, and when flooded, carries a lot of

ground with it. In fact, the whole level of the land has changed greatly in the past few weeks. We are now having to relocate items stored under the back corner of the house and veranda, as the water comes further under with each flood.



Flood #1



And Mud! (This was what it looked like after the first flood. The second came up over the PVC pipe downspout and the patch of grass on the far side of it is no longer visible for mud).

On the 14th, my namesake, who also happens to be John Wayne's niece, was diagnosed with suspected breast cancer, and possibly a rare form of it known as Paget's Disease. Ruth will be twenty-one in March, and has just completed her first year of university. The health system here is lacking at best, and the diagnosis was reached via x-ray, etc. The first surgeon recommended a mastectomy, but the second surgeon they saw a week later has questioned the diagnosis. As a result, the hospital has done a biopsy and the family have paid a large fee to have the sample sent

to Australia for testing. Biopsies here are normally sent to Port Moresby and the results take many months to come back. Those sent, through a private lab at The University of Technology, to Australia, usually take two or three weeks. Please pray for Ruth and her family, who have been going through a really difficult time over the past six weeks, first with John's accident, and now with her current health situation.

On the 15th, a close friend of mine became one of the latest to be evicted from her residence. Between the 15th and the 21st, she and her children slept outside of their locked gate, with all of their possessions. She was finally able, with the help of our Lae M.P., to get a stay order, and was allowed back in. Illegal evictions have become a major problem in Lae, and other parts of the country, where families – some of whom have lived in Housing Commission housing for up to 40 years – suddenly find that their houses have been sold out from under them by corrupt officials. Some of the families even have the land titles in hand and nothing owing. Quite often no notification is given, and those evicting also destroy gardens and possessions as they enter the property. Last week another family was evicted, and their house was torn down at the same time. They also received a stay order, but no longer have a place to stay.

The National Youth Camp for 2017 took place between the 17th and 21st at Gabensis, a village located on the Bulolo-Wau road, about a 40 minute drive from Lae. Miring and Rose both attended and reported a spiritually uplifting camp and thirty-three baptisms, including Rose's younger brother, Palei.

In the November report, I mentioned that the chief pilot for our local rural airline, North Coast Aviation, had died suddenly of Malaria and a heart attack. He was also a relative of Miring, from Sikam village, near Indagen. The funeral for Thomas Keindip took place on the 16th, and then tragedy struck again. On the 23rd, David Tong, an Australian pilot working for N.C.A., was returning alone from his third trip into Yalumet in Kabwum District, when the Norman Islander he was flying crashed near Sapmunga. He was able to use his cell phone to reach a fellow pilot, and search and rescue was deployed within minutes. However, it took three days before they were able to initially spot some of the wreckage. They then lost it again, and it took another two to three days to locate the crash site, by which time he had died, trapped in the wreckage. Poor weather, really rugged terrain, and dense rainforest all contributed to the outcome. We know from experience that flying into the villages in the area can only be done during a brief window of time each morning before the clouds roll in for the rest of the day.

Jab and Becky Mesa, along with grand-daughter Jasmine, travelled to Bali, West New Britain Province on December 6th, returning on the 20th. While they were there, they were able to host a Gospel Meeting. Sadly, we learned late last week that Teresa Pondo has died after a short illness. Teresa, and husband Mark, were first year students at M.B.C. last year, and we anticipated their return this month, along with another family who will be doing their 3rd year. Mark is a recent Christian, and Teresa was a visitor to the church. Please pray for our other students, many of whom will learn of Teresa's passing when they arrive this month for the school year, and for Mark and the congregation on Bali.

Our twice monthly Bible class for the ladies from Indagen continues to go well. We met on the 9th and 23rd of December, and the next class is set for January 13th. We now have twenty-eight

ladies, and several children, who have attended one or more of the classes. The class and time of fellowship continues to be an encouragement for all of us with an average of eighteen people attending each class.



Some of the neighbours come for a visit.

The last known “Fuzzy Wuzzy Angel”, Havala Laula, died on December 24th, aged 91. During World War II, Papua New Guineans - mostly from Oro (Northern) Province, but also from other parts - served as carriers and guides to the Australian troops, along the Kokoda Track. They saved the lives of many many soldiers who couldn't handle the rough terrain and illness.

The 2018 school year starts on February 29th. It was announced recently that the tuition for government tertiary institutions has been raised, with the University of P.N.G. in Port Moresby reporting a 300% increase in tuition for 2018. P.N.G. is currently in a financial crisis and we are finding the price increases in everything difficult.

As of the end of December, we have surpassed the K100,000.00 mark in our fund-raising efforts for the new Melanesian Bible College classroom and office building. On December 31st we stood at K101,565.19 (approx. CN\$42,610.00) with another K391.00 stock on hand. This means that we have another K18,500.00 to go before we can purchase the building frame. We sincerely appreciate your assistance in praying for this project, as well as any financial assistance offered. I look forward to being able to report more on this in the coming months. Please feel free to contact us with any questions or for further information.

In Canada:

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In the U.S.A.:

Highland church of Christ
400 N. Houston Levee Rd.
Cordova, TN 38018
Att: Jackie Meadows

Please make sure that the donation is earmarked "MBC Building Project" to avoid confusion, and if possible include an email or mailing address so that we can communicate with you regarding your donation and progress made. Thank you. If you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to contact me (ruthzimm@gmail.com) or M.B.C. Principal, Jab Mesa, at melanesianbiblecollege@gmail.com. If you are in Australia, and are wanting to contribute, please contact us for further information.



Some of the knit caps made recently towards our M.B.C. building fund-raising. I plan to display them in the library during the school year, price K10 each (about CN\$4.20). Last year a sister planted a taro garden, and donated the money from taro sales. Another sister has also made a couple of string bilums (woven bags) for sale towards to project.

Prayer Points:

1. Thank you for praying for Jab & Becky Mesa and their safe and successful trip to Bali, West New Britain Province. Please pray for the congregation there struggling with the loss of Teresa Pondo, as well as opposition from one of the local denominations.
2. Thank you for your prayers for Jon Waine (pronounced "wine-eh"), who continues to heal well after a horrible car accident.
3. Please pray for Miring, Rose & I as we recover from illness, and as both Rose and Miring are currently visiting friends outside of Lae.
4. Ruth Waine, my young namesake, awaiting biopsy results for breast cancer.
5. My friend Bafi, evicted illegally and still facing uncertainty.
6. Miring's nephew, Warinu, currently in hospital with cerebral Malaria.
7. The start of the 2018 school year. Our Bible college students will be travelling soon. Please pray for safe travels for all and a good start to the school year.

8. A sister in Christ struggling with domestic abuse, and another young sister in Christ, whose family are trying to force her into an arranged marriage.

9. One of my uncles, battling the last stages of cancer. He has been hospitalized for several weeks, and my family are feeling the strain.

10. Our local rural airline, North Coast Aviation – upon which we rely heavily especially when teams visit – and the outcome of investigation following the December 23rd crash and death of the pilot.

11. The ongoing ladies' class for our sisters from Indagen, that they may be encouraged and grow spiritually.

12. The classroom project for M.B.C. and subsequent fund-raising.

May this new year, 2018, be filled with blessings and joy.

With love in Him,

Ruth

Sponsors:

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