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Hello from Lae once again. I pray that you are well. The past 6 weeks (since the last report) have been busy with preparations for and the start of the school year. The heavy rains of December continued into January, with further flooding, but things have since come full circle. We had a two week period at the end of January and start of February where it stopped raining completely and was very windy. It only takes a few days of dry weather in Lae before the leaves start drying up and falling and the grass along the driveway turns yellow. The 'mud flats' surrounding the houses dried out and started looking a little bit like sandy beaches, especially after the dry leaves had been raked off of them. It is now raining every couple of days, and things are a little more "normal".



*Velma's orchid in bloom along the front fence.*

We are now three weeks into the Melanesian Bible College school year. It really felt like it started at a slow trot this year, instead of the normal full gallop. Several returning students experienced issues which delayed their arrival. Third year students, Nick & Regina, tried three weeks in a row to get on the ship from West New Britain but there was no space. They finally made it on the third try, and arrived here this past Friday.

Second year student Sikale (*See-ka-lay*) arrived minus her husband. They had been staying with his family in his village in Raikos District, Madang Province, and when his parents found out that they were returning to BIBLE college (not BUSINESS college), they detained them! Sikale was able to travel by dinghy to Madang and come by bus from there, in time for the start of school, but Max wasn't able to 'escape' until last week. He is now happily back in classes with his wife.

We are still awaiting the arrival of the wife of second year student, Joel, from Chimbu Province. Vero was in the literacy class last year. Two other second year families and a single haven't returned, and the wife of another is now working, so the number is a little depleted.

In the first year class, we have one couple – Bomi & Miriam – who come from a brand new congregation at Gain village (pronounced *Gine*) near Erap in the Markham Valley, a couple of hours from Lae. We also have four single men: Kris from the Koki congregation in Port Moresby, Kale (*Ka-lay*) from the Gabensis congregation outside of Lae, James from the Bali Island congregation, West New Britain, and Lithus (*Lee-toos*) from the Noa congregation, Markham Valley.

Literacy started last week, and I have five students: Melissa, Ziring, Natak, Delma, and Tapsi (who is repeating). Tapsi was in school until grade two. Melissa comes from the settlement behind us, and never went to school, having been orphaned as a child. Delma's parents prevented her from going to school after her older brother was struck by a car and killed. And Natak and Ziring were both kicked out of grade one for bad behaviour! After they became Christians, their intense hunger to learn to read, as well as a lot of praying and hard work, led both of them to figure out, on their own, how to read short words. They didn't learn to print however, so they have set out this year to finish what they started in the 1980's in Indagen.



*2018 Literacy class hard at work.*

We also have a number of students auditing one or more classes: Bessie, Rose, Elizabeth, Marie, Kerianne, Becky, and Miring. This brings the number of adult students

currently to twenty-eight. There are also six children, who started preschool classes this week. New teachers include Arthur Tatara, who returned from two years of study in Singapore last May, and Miring (my roommate) who graduated from M.B.C. last year.



*2018 MBC staff & students.*

In the December report, I requested prayers for my young namesake who had been diagnosed with breast cancer. The biopsy results came back after three weeks, and confirmed breast cancer, but not the rare type that they had feared. On the 23<sup>rd</sup> of January, Ruth had surgery. She is still in hospital, but recovering well, and will soon have a skin graft. Registration for the current university school year was last week, so she won't be able to return to school until next year. Please continue to pray for her as she continues to go through a difficult situation as a really young woman and Christian. On a bright note, Ruth's uncle – Jon Waine – has continued to recover well. The large cut on his head (from his car accident in November) has filled in and recently I heard that he has started to regain vision in his left eye.

The past six weeks have been difficult in some ways:

- I spent most of January recovering from malaria while doing last minute jobs that I knew I wouldn't have time to do once school resumed.
- We witnessed a close friend continually going through the cycle of domestic abuse, and cried and prayed with her frequently. She is now back with her husband and we pray that the issues are being resolved. Their situation is further complicated by a severely disabled 14 year old son.
- On January 11<sup>th</sup>, Miring and I visited her sister-in-law, Zavi (*Ja-vee*), at 2 Mile. Zavi was suffering from mouth cancer, a really common form of cancer here

caused by beetlenut chewing. She died on the 23<sup>rd</sup> and her burial took place yesterday.

- Long time brother in Christ, Ganimo Baupu, passed away on the 20<sup>th</sup> and his funeral took place on the 26<sup>th</sup>.
- One of Miring's relatives, mentioned in the December report as being hospitalized with suspected cancer, has been told that there is nothing more to be done. She and her family returned home to Indagen yesterday.
- Two days ago, Miring's brother – Wesley – was admitted to hospital with really high blood pressure. He was experiencing intense left arm pain, but they were able to rule out heart problems. The pain was a combination of hypertension and malaria. He is being moved from Emergency to a ward today, and will likely remain there for several days.
- And on a really personal note, my uncle, Craig Warner, passed away after a sixteen year battle with cancer this past weekend. The past few months have been really hard on everyone. He was my Mum's oldest brother, and we are feeling the loss greatly. Thank you for your prayers for him and my family over the past several months.

There have also been a few high points over the past few weeks. Visiting Miring's nephew, Willie, who is currently working on the Y.W.A.M. Medical Ship, and being shown around. Y.W.A.M. (Youth With A Mission) does frequent medical missions to remote coastal areas around P.N.G., and have both expat and national crew members. They have just completed a few weeks in Morobe Province, and will be leaving tomorrow for time in Alotau, before travelling on to Central Province and Port Moresby.

While cleaning out my office, I started dragging my really cheap, frail, eighteen year old, chipboard desk out into the living room, and it went off like a bomb, ending up in about twenty pieces. It has been glued and nailed several times, and was truly beyond repair. Given the high humidity here, it has acted over the years like a giant wooden sponge. Enter a new 'flat pack'. Aaarrrrgggghhhhhh! After several failed attempts at interpreting the instructions, we called in backup. With Miamel's help, it took four of us two laughter-filled hours to finish it, and the end result has been worth it. The only problem has been the resulting competition between myself and the cats for who gets to use it!



*Miamel & Miring, desk construction!*

And what is the longest time you ever stood in line at the bank? Our young roommate, Rose, who just started grade 12, went to pay her tuition (no cash or cheque payments at the schools) and ended up standing in line for eight hours! When she got there at 8:00a.m., the line was out of the bank, and about three quarters of the way around the block!

Thanks to some truly generous Christians, both here and overseas, as well as a lot of hard work (approaching 500 cartons of drinks purchased!), we are making strides with raising the funds needed to purchase the frame and base for the new M.B.C. classroom building. As of January 31<sup>st</sup>, the balance raised was K112,616.79 (~CN\$47,250.00) plus K426.00 in stock . That means we have approximately CN\$15,685.00 still to raise towards stage one of this project. Your prayers and support are very welcome, as are your questions. Please don't hesitate to contact us for further information. If you wish to contribute:

In Papua New Guinea:

"M.B.C. Building Project"  
ANZ Lae Top Town  
Account #: 15709384

In Canada:

Fenwick church of Christ  
765 Welland Ave.,  
P.O. Box 416,  
Fenwick, ON L0S 1C0

In the U.S.A.:

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

**If you are in Australia, and are wanting to contribute, please contact us for further information.**

Please make sure that your 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.

**Prayer Points:**

1. Thank you for your prayers for the safe arrival of our 2018 students. Please continue to remember us in your prayers over the next three months of classes.
2. Thank you for your prayers for my namesake, Ruth Waine, recovering from breast cancer surgery.
3. Please keep the families of Zavi and Ganimo in your prayers, as well as my own family, in this time of loss.
4. Miring's relative, who returned to Indagen yesterday with incurable cancer, and for her family.
5. Wesley, Miring's brother, currently in hospital with high blood pressure and other medical issues.
6. Willie, Miring's nephew, preparing to travel out with YWAM tomorrow; especially for peace of mind as his Dad is in hospital.
7. A sister in Christ struggling with domestic abuse and the care of her disabled son.
8. The ongoing ladies' class for our sisters from Indagen, that they may be encouraged and grow spiritually.
9. The classroom project for M.B.C. and subsequent fund-raising.

*Bikpela i ken stap wantaim yupela olgeta, na blesim yupela moamoa yet.*  
(God be with each of you, and bless you abundantly).

With love in Him,

*Ruth*

**Sponsors:**

Fenwick church of Christ, P.O. Box 416, Fenwick, ON L0S 1C0 Canada  
(cofcfenwick@gmail.com)

Malaga church of Christ, P.O. Box 105. Ballajura, WA 6019 Australia  
(malaga@perthchurch.net)