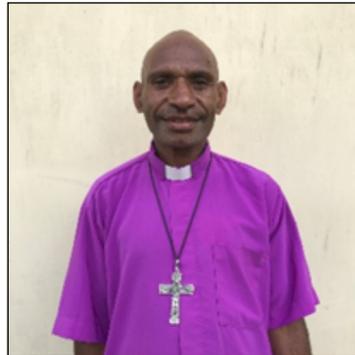


Five New Pastors for the Gutnius (Good News) Lutheran Church

By Martin Dicke

On December 14 five men graduated from Timothy Lutheran Seminary at Birip. This seminary serves the Gutnius Lutheran Church of Papua New Guinea (see our December newsletter). This year these servants of the Lord are beginning their first full year as pastors. In this newsletter you will find their pictures and some information about each of them. Please keep them in your prayers praying that God will strengthen them and protect them in His service to life eternal. Pray that their congregations will be blessed by their service and will support them and their families in every way.



Pastor Greg Anton is from the Werck Kongregesin in the Kandep region, about 2½ hours southwest of Birip by truck or several days on foot over a couple of mountain ranges. He is married and has four children, two boys and two girls. Prior to our arrival on the mission field in April he did not know how to play the guitar. When I started teaching at the seminary in May, he was a very eager learner and in the first week, on behalf of the Year 4 class, asked for extra lessons. They were graduating in six months and wanted to learn as much about music as they could. Now he can play in three different keys and was helping to lead the worship services at the seminary. Greg received a call to the Wapenamanda district which is only about 30 minutes southeast of Birip.



Pastor Kala Bipi is from Togoba near Mt. Hagen, which is a 1½ hour drive southeast from Birip over the Hagen range. He is a member of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Papua New Guinea (ELC-PNG). He is married and has eight children, four boys and four girls. In 2016 he served his vicarage at Wanakipa, a remote area that is accessible only by light aircraft. The Wanakipa airstrip was an LCMS mission project in the 1980s. It was built by hand with the help of some light machinery. The first landing at the airstrip was on July 6, 1990. A video of the building of the airstrip entitled “One Stone At a Time” can be seen on YouTube. Kala was called back to Wanakipa to serve as a pastor there.



Pastor Usa Leo is from the Muritaka Circuit near Laiagam, a 1½ hour drive northwest of Birip. He is not married. In 2011 a friend of his died leaving a daughter alone with no family and no means of support. Usa took her into his home, but that did not turn out well. It turned out that she was not a Christian and in fact openly mocked the faith making fun of Usa for being a Christian. When Usa was accepted into the seminary, he simply abandoned his home and his garden to this woman and dedicated his life to serving his Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Usa struggled a little with the class-work at the seminary and had to spend one extra year there, but now has graduated and has also been called to serve in a remote area.



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New Beginnings in 2018

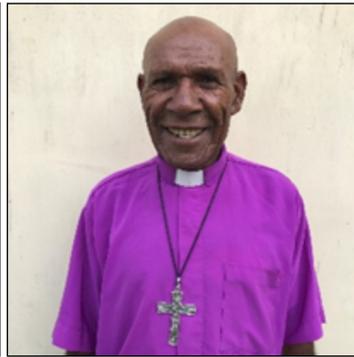
In Papua New Guinea the school year begins in January or February and runs through November. Some graduations are held in early December. As such, we are beginning a new school year.

It looks like it will be a very busy one for us. Not only will Martin be teaching at Timothy Lutheran Seminary, but since we

are living on the campus of Highland Lutheran International School, we will lead music at their chapel services (see below), teach some music, lead a staff Bible Study and the Saturday Night Fellowship. We are also making plans to visit the 30 Lutheran schools of the Gutnius Lutheran Church. Please keep all these schools in your prayers.



Pastor Paul Maputs comes from the Kendelam Kongregesin in Laiagam. His father was an Evangelist who worked with Rev. Ob Spruth in the late 1960s when he was stationed at Papuyuka near Laiagam. Paul was born in 1982 and has two brothers and two sisters. He was married in 2012 and has one girl who is three years old. Paul is very intelligent and articulate and was elected the Student Body President of the Seminary in 2017. He has been called back to his home district.



Pastor Peter Pison is also from the Kendelam Kongregesin in the Papuyuka Circuit. Several years ago he was on a truck with a lot of passengers that tipped over. Fortunately he survived, although he had to have a pin placed in his leg. This somewhat delayed his schooling. Having now graduated, he has been called back to his home circuit also. In our guitar classes he learned very quickly and after only hearing it once was able to explain the parts of a guitar to Usa who was late that day.

Devotional Thought: The Armor of God

The Apostle Paul concludes his letter to the Ephesians in this way:

Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.

Ephesians 6:10-12

He then uses the analogy of a Roman soldier to clarify what this armor is. He identifies six

elements:

1. God's Truth as Your Belt (Ephesians 6:14)
2. God's Righteousness as Your Breastplate (Ephesians 6:14)
3. The Good News of Peace with God as Your Shoes (Ephesians 6:15)
4. The Faith God Gives as Your Shield (Ephesians 6:16)
5. God's Salvation as Your Helmet (Ephesians 6:17)
6. The Word of God as Your Sword (Ephesians 6:17)

Remember that we do not need to stand in our own

strength, but rather in "His strength." As Martin Luther reminds us in "A Mighty Fortress," the battle has already been won. Furthermore, we do not need to provide our own armor. God gives it to us.

We put this protective armor on by immersing ourselves in His Word, remembering our Baptism, partaking of the Lord's Supper, and praying. As Paul continues in Ephesians 6:18, "praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication."

Soldiers sometimes help each other put their armor on. With prayer we do that also. Thanks for your prayers for us and the church here! You are in ours.

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