

Martin and Marie Dicke—Missionaries Serving the Lord in Papua New Guinea

A Year of Ministry in Review as Lutheran Church Musicians



By Martin Dicke

“Hepi Ista!” (“Happy Easter!”) as they say in Papua New Guinea. It has been exactly a year to this day when we landed at Jacksons International Airport in Port Moresby to begin serving as missionaries here (see pic at right for our first view of PNG). To celebrate the anniversary of our ministry here, this expanded newsletter includes pictures that we haven’t placed in our newsletters or on our Facebook page (link below).

While preparing to come, we discovered that many wondered how musicians could be missionaries. In one sense, the answer is quite simple: Musician missionaries join God’s people in celebrating and proclaiming what God has done, especially

the mercy He showed through the death and resurrection of His Son Jesus Christ. What we do is nothing new at all. We are simply following the example of the musicians in the Bible, and there were a LOT of them. Music is used throughout the Bible to celebrate God’s deeds and proclaim His mercy. In fact, the Book of Job reveals that right after the world was created, the angels were so delighted with what God had done that they formed the first choir and sang for joy (Job 38:7). The Book of Revelation reveals that the Saints and angels sing eternally (Revelation 5 and 15 et al.). There is an ongoing Eternal Song to God and to the “Pikinini Sipsip Bilong God” (“the Lamb of God”) and we Christians have the joy and privilege of singing this song. Martin Luther’s many comments about music reveal that he understood this. Of course, he knew his Bible so well. For more of my own ideas about music and worship, visit my blog at www.JubalsLyre.com.

Some were apparently also concerned that a Lutheran church musician serving as a missionary would simply impose

“his” music upon others. First, trying to impose anything never works. In addition, the first task of a Lutheran church musician is to proclaim Jesus Christ and help God’s people do the same. Yes, people must have their own song, so a Lutheran church musician must encourage them and help them do that, just as Martin Luther did. But we must understand that our song is enriched immeasurably when we are aware of and sing the songs of the Bible as well as the songs of Christians throughout the ages and throughout the world. Our experience has been that the Christians here want to know these songs and are eager to learn about, hear, and sing them.

The needs here are so great that besides serving as musicians, we help in many other ways. Every day is busy and we have already put 15,000 kilometers on our vehicle visiting churches and schools up and down the valley. We were privileged to help the Gutnius Lutheran Church celebrate the 500th Anniversary of the Reformation (see p. 3). We could learn a lot from the people here on celebrating the Good News of Jesus Christ.



It has been a privilege and joy to sing the Eternal Song with the people here who sing it with such passion! We look forward to another year of doing the same. Join us in this prayer:

O Almighty and eternal God, who through the death of Your Son destroyed sin and death, and by His rising to life again restored innocence and everlasting life, that being delivered from the power of the devil, we might live under You in Your kingdom, grant that we may be forever comforted by true faith in the resurrection of Your dear Son. Guide us with Your holy counsel and when we die, give us the Crown of Life, that with all the holy angels and the Saints we may praise and glorify You eternally. Amen.

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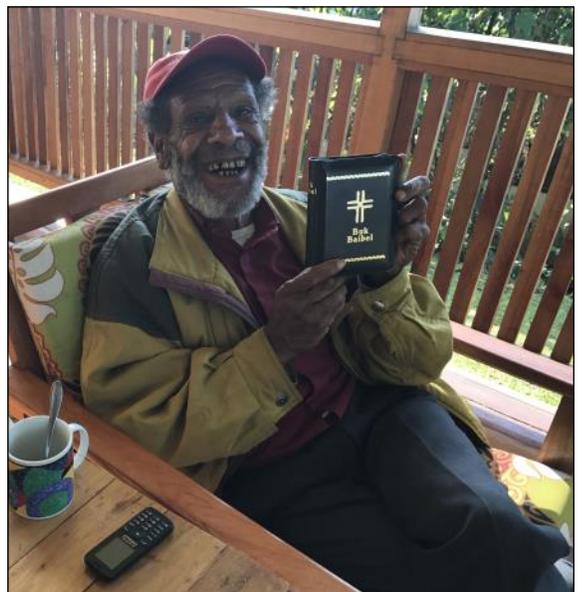
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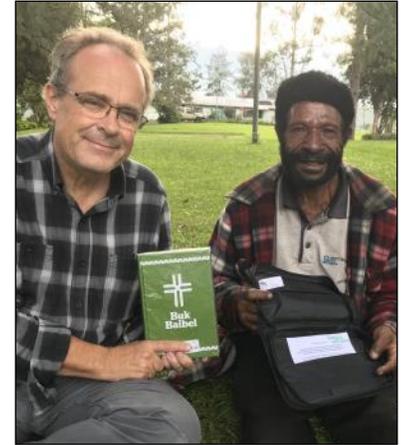




Captions for page 3: 1) The entrance to the Yaramanda in October 2017. At the invitation of Yaramanda leaders, the first mission station in the Enga Province was established here in 1948. 2) Procession for the worship service at Yaramanda on Sunday, October 28. 3) Signs made for Reformation marches and displayed at Yaramanda. 4) Women at Yaramanda wearing Reformation shirts designed and printed by Pastor Kambu Yupele. 5) Pastor Joel proudly displaying his Enga New Testament while on the march from Wabag to Birip on Monday, October 30. 6) Reformation march from Wabag to Irelya on Tuesday, October 31, 2017. 7) Reading the sermon written by Dr. Willard Burce for the 500th Annivesary of the Reformation: "What Would Martin Luther Say to Us Today?" This sermon is being made available in print in both English and Tok Pisin. For links to more pictures, visit www.JubalsLyre.com/PNG.



L to R: 1) Pastors of the Gutnius Lutheran Church ordained on October 31, 2017. 2) Pastor Lipa Pawapen of Timothy Lutheran Seminary proofreading a Tok Pisin version of Dr. Burce's 500th Anniversary Reformation Sermon. 3) A new Bible for Ranyeta who lost his in the fire next to our house (see Feb newsletter). 4) Visiting the teachers at Xipuli Memorial Primary School at Irelya.



Devotional Thought: Missions and the Gospel

Some in the Enga Province scoff at the faithful saying, "Bilong wanem yu ritim Bai-bel? Em i olupela buk. Em i expire pinis! Nau yu mas harim Spirit tasol." ("Why do you read the Bible? It is an old book. It has expired! Now you must listen to the Spirit only.")

Dealing with movements and schisms can be difficult. We found the following devotional thought to be very helpful for our work here. It explains what has happened here and why a missionary presence is still needed. It explains why we have a responsibility as a church body to remain here and do what we can to assist the church we helped establish.

The Pure Gospel

"The light is among you for a little while longer. Walk while you have the light, lest darkness overtake you."

John 12:35

The preaching of the Gospel is not an eternal, lasting, and continuing teaching, but rather is like a traveling rain shower, which moves on. What it hits, it hits, and what it misses, it misses. It does not return, it does not stand still, but the sun and the heat follow and lick it up. Experience shows that in no place in the world has the Gospel remained clear and pure beyond one man's memory. Rather, as long as those who

introduced it remained, it continued and increased. When they were gone, the light was also gone, and soon schismatic spirits and false teachers followed . . . So also now, we have the pure Gospel and it is the time of grace and salvation and favorable days (2 Corinthians 6:2), but this will soon be over, if the world stands longer . . . Be careful to receive the Gospel with thanks and fear.

Martin Luther

From the *Church Postil*, Sermon for Lent 1 on 2 Corinthians 6:1-10 (Luther's Works 76:356-57). Taken from *Martin Luther Day by Day* (CPH).

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