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Hi Brothers & Sisters

Greetings again from Lae, Papua New Guinea. As always, I pray that you are well and thriving in God's love and care.

The past 3 months have gone by at record speed. That is true every year when we are into classes at the Melanesian Bible College, however every year feels a bit faster than the last! Block 1 started on March 28th and we have just completed Block 2 and are into a week-long break before starting the 3rd and final block for this year.

We have 34 students currently in Bible and literacy classes, as well as 13 children in the Headstart Program (kindergarten equivalent), and 6 others who have either been placed in the local primary school, or are too young for school. Of the 34 students, 9 are doing their 3rd and final year: Philip & Ruth and John T. & Nancy from Chimbu Province; Kenneth & Rose from Madang Province; and Sou & Rita and Lisa from Morobe Province. In the 1st & 2nd year classes, we have another 20: Daniel & Donna, Labisa, Nelson & Dararish, Muritu, and Sulan from Morobe Province; Gon, and Dapi & Hani from the National Capital District; John N. and Mephil from Chimbu Province; Sent & Jamien from the Western Highlands; Sere & Lahui from Central Province; Uyuk & Leonie from Madang Province; John M. from the Autonomous Region of Bougainville (A.R.B.); and Roy from West New Britain Province. Altogether, 19 congregations are represented and three of these students are second generation M.B.C. students.

Literacy started this year on April 4th. I am teaching 4 students, and Becky Mesa has another (Marian from the A.R.B.) who needed extra help with learning *Tok Pisin* while also learning to read. In the past 9 years of teaching literacy at M.B.C., I've really learned how unique each class can be. This year is no exception. The classes are usually predominantly female and mature, but this year I have 3 teenage boys (Branzo, Jaikabi, and Roni) and the wife of one of our 1st year students, Raqawec (pronounced "Raw-koo-wha"). Branzo and Jaikabi were in school in the Waria Valley, but frequently absent teachers led to them not being able to read well. Roni is the son of 3rd year students, Sou & Rita, also from the Waria, and has had several periods of prolonged illness – starting at age 4 - which have led to some learning difficulties. And Raqawec, from Sialum and Indagen, in Morobe Province, was never placed in school. Last week, with the completion of the first course book, I have split the class in two and am now more able to meet the

needs of everyone in the class. Three days in to the new setup and everyone was doing well. They are truly keeping me on my toes this year!



Having fun on the final day of the Block 2 Old Testament Survey class. (l-r: Hane, Donna, Damarish, Raqawec, Leonie, Lahui, and Jamien, with Sulan kneeling in front).

We were excited to welcome Abraham & Rachael Mesa to the M.B.C. teaching staff this year. (They returned from two years at the South Pacific Bible College in New Zealand in December.) Things didn't quite go as planned however, at least not our plans. A week into teaching, Abraham became very ill and appeared to have had a stroke. On April 8th, he was admitted to I.C.U. at our local hospital and was eventually diagnosed with Guillain Barre Syndrome. After nearly 7 weeks in hospital, he was released and is continuing the long recovery process at home. Please hold him in prayer, along with Rachael, their daughters, and his parents, Jab & Becky.

A couple of days before Abraham's admission, sister in Christ (and roommate Miring's niece), Akio, was admitted to the acute ward at the same hospital. She spent a week there, fighting cerebral Malaria. It was intensely troubling for everyone involved, but recent reports from her family say that she is 'back to normal' and that she plans to soon return to her elementary teaching position. Please also hold her in prayer.

On April 13-16, the Tent City congregation, here in Lae, hosted the National Women's Workshop. This was the first since 2019, due to Covid-19. Despite limited capacity for sleeping, it was well attended. There were 56 baptisms (including one of our M.B.C. students and the

daughter of another), and 94 repentances. Reportedly, there were 2,000 in attendance for the combined worship service held on April 17th.



M.B.C. ladies off to evening classes at the women's workshop, with teacher Joe Dobadoba driving.

The 'highlight' of May was turning 50 on the 6th. For the most part, it was a non-event. The fun started the next day when former roommate, Rose, arrived with my birthday present. His name is "Oreo" (although "Cookie Monster" is more appropriate at times) and he is 5 months old today. Our nearly 4 months without a cat saw the invasion of mice, so Oreo's arrival was timely. He hasn't caught anything yet (except geckos 😞 and my nose a couple of times), mainly because the mice have moved into the wall cavity and are no longer chewing on things in the office!



Oreo, the chicken terrorist.

Thank you for your ongoing prayers for brother and sister in Christ, Taylor & Robyn David. After 8 months of waiting for Taylor's follow-up surgery at Port Moresby General (to replace the portion of his skull removed during his brain tumour surgery last year) he was finally seen by the surgeon in mid-April. The portion of his skull, that they had surgically implanted into his body for 'safe-keeping', was removed and found to be unusable. They also said that his brain is still too swollen (thankfully, the M.R.I. done showed no sign of regrowth). The next option is a Titanium plate, but they are unavailable here and only bulk ordered, which will likely mean a few years of waiting. Taylor was told that, since the skin has healed well over the hole, just to live with it. Please continue to hold both Taylor and Robyn in prayer. They returned to Lae on May 7th with many unanswered questions (ie. what is causing the brain swelling and what to do about it) and lots of concern. The surgery last year has left Taylor with right-side weakness. He is walking with the aid of a stick but has to be very careful. For several months following the surgery, he didn't experience any seizures, however they have started again in the past few months. He has started Physiotherapy, so hopefully that will help him gain back some strength and movement. We were also able to find a reinforced baseball cap for him, which will give him some protection.

We are in the middle of national election campaigning right now and things are rather crazy and noisy. On the eve of the calling of writs, the member for Bulolo District and Deputy Prime Minister, Sam Basil, was killed in a car accident. He was well respected and the timing led to much suspicion and anger. Things have settled since his funeral, a week later, and now the candidates are in full swing. We have been avoiding our closest shopping area on Fridays due to large rallies taking place, and even reports of planned violence. I've included the picture of a recent rally, only for perspective. It was taken by drone and posted on the sitting member's facebook page. The election will be held in mid-July, so only a few more weeks to go.



Before ending this report, I thought you would like the following: In 1997, we started a nursery school that ran, for several years, in conjunction with the Boundary Road church of Christ Preschool (and later Boundary Road Elementary School). My first class was made up of the children of the M.B.C. students of that time. Twenty-five years later, one of these children came back to Lae for urgent medical care, and she has spent the past few months with us. She and her

mother will be traveling back to their village this week. In the 1997 photo, Selina is standing 4th from the right, with her sister, Margaret, beside her (3rd from the right). The 2022 is of Selina and her mum, standing outside of the M.B.C. Library. Her older brother, Nicholas, graduated from M.B.C. a few years ago, and sadly, her father, Name, who graduated in 1997, passed away last year.



Scanned photo of the 1997 nursery class



Selina and her mum.

Prayer Points:

1. Ongoing struggles with Covid-19 around the world and the war in the Ukraine.
2. Our M.B.C. students, currently on break and soon to start their final block of classes for this year.
3. Abraham Mesa and family, for his continued recovery.
4. Akio Bugere, for continued recovery from cerebral Malaria.
5. Taylor & Robyn, for Taylor's continued healing and also for his safety from further head injury.
6. The current campaign period here in P.N.G., and upcoming elections – for peace and rational thought.
7. For my plans to travel to Canada later this year, Lord willing. Plans are going ahead to travel home in August with a few days in Brisbane en route.

We have been experiencing lots of widespread internet problems recently. I was unable to access anything on my laptop for more than two weeks and the cell phone has been hit-and-miss. I have finally managed to get the laptop connected again by using my cell as a WiFi device. If you have

written recently, and haven't had a reply, please don't hesitate to contact me again. Chances are that it just didn't get here!

May God's love and peace be ever present for you in the current chaotic times.

With love in HIM,

Ruth

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