



A Ministry of Hope and Healing: Enga Province, Papua New Guinea

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“What is that Crazy Girl Doing these Days?”

Another month (or several) pass and here I sit, writing to you, my friends and family, my brothers and sisters in Christ. Thank you to everyone who continues to support me with prayers, kind words, emails, care packages and through financial means. It is all needed as I continue on the path that God has laid before me.

Since last I wrote, UTB went to Madang, Christmas was celebrated, we rang in the New Year and said good-bye to good friends. I also lost a dog and gained a new one who is currently rolled up into a little ball in my lap as I write this.

“United to Be” raised enough money through car washes, bake sales, Activity Grants and support from the Engan Governor to travel to Madang for a week. The group spoke with several different organizations based out of Madang, provided HIV education to a group of missionaries and provided awareness to markets, bus stops and schools. Christmas and New Year’s Eve were celebrated Papua

New Guinean style...what exactly that means you will have to read in the next article :)

On February 14th, Linda Davis returned back to the States to pursue her Master’s Degree in Social Work at Washington University. I offer her my congratulations and hopes for a good education. Shortly after the New Year, Hercules died. For those of you who do not know, he was my two-legged wonder dog named more for his spirit than physical strength. However, Grace joined my menagerie of animals...she’s less than a year old and as mentioned before, currently sleeping on my lap. Adorable.

And, also, for those who do not know, Dr. Steve Lutz has fallen ill with a brain tumor. Please keep him in your prayers as he undergoes radiation and chemotherapy treatment. We hope that the Lord will bless him with several more years in Papua New Guinea.



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- *Christmas in Mambis*
- *‘United to Be’ goes to Madang*
- *School on Sundays! Crazy-ness!*
- *“The Shed”—Mambisanda Community Resource Center Update*

Christmas in Mambis

Christmas in Mambis was a strange mixture of old and new traditions. “United to Be” led the way in many of these traditions. I held Advent services at my house for “United to Be” On Wednesdays we joined together to reflect on the true meaning of Christmas and prepare for what the birth of Christ means for us today.

On December 23rd, “United to Be” joined forces with the Sunday School and the nursing staff to perform Christmas Caroling in the Wards. We sang Christmas carols, read the

story of Christmas, UTB provided a drama for each ward, and I was honored to lead Ward 5 (the HIV ward) in services. Afterwards, around 40 people packed themselves into Dr. Steve’s house for coffee and Christmas cookies.

UTB held a Christmas party filled with good eats. And, finally, on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day marathon-long services were held at the church. I even brought out my flute and joined Linda in several Christmas duets.

The joy of Christmas was felt in all activities.

“United to Be” Goes to Madang!

“United to Be” ...loved, healed, aware, educated, empowered, one, HIV free....

Many people questioned the motives of “United to Be” members wishing to go to Madang to do HIV/AIDS awareness; however, after spending one week with them, I can assure anyone that this group of community activists are dedicated to HIV/AIDS work in Papua New Guinea. While many hours were spent having fun and relaxing, many more were spent in fellowship through devotions and preparing and performing HIV/AIDS awareness.

Initially, the idea of a Madang trip, from my perspective, was to gain insight on effective awareness methods from people who have been more organized and fighting HIV/AIDS longer. However, much to my surprise, it was UTB members that impressed people from the Madang Provincial AIDS Committee. While in Madang, not only did “United to Be” perform dramas, but they networked with organizations such as: Madang PAC, VOS, Save the Children, local high schools and a representative from a local Drama Network Theatre group. It was during these meetings where my praise of this unique group was reinforced. Many organizations, especially volunteer grassroots organizations, in Papua New Guinea wait...they wait for leadership, wait for money, wait for ideas, wait for someone above them to start...they are always waiting for something. However, members of “United to Be” recognizes the need to share the love of Christ with people infected, affected and living in a world with HIV/AIDS. They are often a true representation of God’s body on this earth.

As mentioned above, UTB also provided dramas and speeches at various events. They also promoted the Madang World AIDS Day celebrations as no one else seemed to be doing it. UTB’s first stop was a local park where they performed the “Tug o’ HIV” drama, which shows which attitudes and behaviours pull communities, countries into the HIV epidemic and how only by joining together in fighting HIV/AIDS are we able to defeat it. The next

presentation was at a busy bus stop where the same drama and speeches were performed. The next day, UTB spent with high school students talking about the basics of HIV/AIDS and answering questions. They also performed the “Bridge of Life” drama which shows that as we travel through life, there are many things in this world trying to make us fall off the bridge to happiness. However, God sends us things to help us- mentors, positive peer pressure, pastors, teachers, education and wise decisions. So that even if we do fall, He’s there with an outstretched hand to help us up again. UTB’s final educational event was at the Pacific Orientation Course for missionaries entering Papua New Guinea. UTB performed the Amazing Grace drama which shows God’s amazing love for us, even if we are infected or affected by HIV/AIDS. It is through God’s amazing grace that we are able to accept ourselves and others living with HIV/AIDS. We then talked about the importance of missionaries understanding the many systems, both modern and traditional, that contribute to the HIV/AIDS epidemic because the body of Christ in Papua New Guinea is suffering from it. We encouraged the new missionaries to help their communities to fight and stand-up against HIV/AIDS, to have respect for marriage and to live God-filled lives.

We were a bit reluctant to leave Madang and head back to the Highlands, but did so joyfully as there are still many people and places that need to hear about God’s amazing grace in Enga. “United to Be” is needed in Enga to translate the love of Christ to people living with, dying from and crying out against HIV/AIDS.

Please continue to keep the work of UTB in your prayers.



Erick, Jackie, Joe, Pes, Freddi and John prepare for an HIV/AIDS awareness



UTB meets with Madang PAC and various other organizations...

School on Sundays? Are you Kiddding Me!..

Liz' adventure into the world of teaching Sunday School

For those of you who attend St. John's Lutheran Church, you may remember the crazy girl dressed up as a Pirate running around saying "arrgh" and making the students say "aiy aiy Cap'n" from nearly 3 years ago. Well, for better or for worse, that same Pirate will be teaching the Word of the Lord to the youth of Mambisanda. As mentioned before, Linda Davis left on the 14th of February which left the Sunday School without a teacher. So, to continue the Spiritual education to these young people, I stepped in.

My first Sunday was the 15th of February...it went pretty well. Instead of running around like a Pirate, I looked very respectable. However, I had the kids doing trust falls and performing dramas of their own. Unfortunately, the entire Sunday School class consists of about 45 kids, ages 4 through 16. This does make it difficult to teach a thorough lesson to all ages involved. So, adopting Linda's way of doing things, the class splits into two groups...4-9 years olds and 10-16 year olds...one group on one side of the church and the other on the other side of the church and we go from there.

Nilim, a UTB member and congregation member, is helping me out by looking after the little ones while I teach the youth. This usually means that the little ones hear a Bible Story and draw a picture either about what it means to them or just illustrating what is happening in the story. While the youth and I talk more about how the Bible Story applies to life as teenagers in Papua New

Guinea who are children of God. We also talk about what it means to be a Child of God.

My first lesson was the story of Jesus and Peter walking on water. What does that mean to a Papua New Guinean youth? It means trusting Jesus when all your friends are saying something else. It means focusing on the cross when temptations arise or when troubles surface...it's trusting in that outstretched hand of Jesus when it feels like we're drowning.

Next week's lesson: Transfiguration Sunday. Wish me luck!

Please keep the youth of Mambis in your prayers.



Sunday School performs a creative dance to "Testify to Love" for Christmas Service.

Community Resource Center

I want to express my deep gratitude to those who donated, collected and sent the books to PNG. These books are already in use— not as widely as I hope for the future, but within a subsection of the community.

Anton Lutz and I have begun talking about what it will take to build/renovate a building that is secure and accessible for a community resource center. My hope is to get it up and running as soon as possible and then look toward expansion. Solo, one of the UTB members, has expressed interest in giving us some of his land on which to build a resource center. He is very excited about it and sees these books and future expansion as a great opportunity for the young children of the Mambisanda community. Having the support of local community members will be key in providing this service. The majority of students around here have to study in kunai houses (a bush house) with no electricity. The ones that I know well, come to my door and receive some tutoring, but others are unable to receive this assistance.

With a community resource center, we would open up tutoring, resource books, reading books, computers, printers and, eventually, the internet to those who are thirsty for knowledge. A community resource center could open up the younger generation to a world view that does not include tribal violence, domestic abuse, Spirits and poisons, but does include tolerance, reconciliation and where helping your neighbor is highly valued. I am really looking forward to this endeavor and hope that in the generations to come, community members are able to access new ideas and incorporate good changes while maintaining the good in their own traditional lifestyles.

Please continue to support and pray for this ministry as it is difficult to get the proper community support, financial assistance and books.



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 ✝ Faith Focus ✝

Matthew 14:22-33...Jesus Walks on Water...

Yes, it is a miracle that Jesus walked on the water, but that is not the bit I want to focus on for this issue's Faith Focus. The section of the text that I want to discuss is Peter walking on the water, why he began to sink and Jesus' reaction to this. For through these things, I think we can get a small glimpse into the nature of God.

Peter walking on water is, indeed, a miracle in and of itself. In it we see Peter's courage, his desire to show his trust in the Lord. He does not demand that Jesus allow him to walk on the waters, but he says 'command me to come to you'. He is not desiring a miracle or to show off, but wishes to remain close to Jesus, no matter how it is done. Think about it, Jesus just as easily could've said, 'alright Peter, come to me--swim to me. Instead, he shows his power over nature and allows Peter to walk to him upon the water. In walking upon the water, Peter shows his courage, his obedience to the Lord. Peter could've responded, "nah, that's alright Jesus, you come here and I'll talk to you in the safety and security of our boat here." But he doesn't, he shows complete faithfulness as he boldly followed the Lord's command. No matter the cost or danger to himself.

Then, comes Peter's weakness...he was afraid. Suddenly, he took note of the waves lapping over his toes, the wind blowing fiercely against his face and he was afraid. He was suddenly acutely aware of the stupidity of walking on water...what was he, a mere man, doing out on these dangerous waters...He took his eyes off of his ultimate goal: to join in unity with his Lord. And he begins to sink. However, in his defense he quickly calls out to the Lord, "HELP ME!". He recognizes his limitations, his weaknesses and his need for help. Immediately, Jesus stretched out his powerful and comforting hand to support Peter, to save him.

Thus, I encourage you to live as Peter lived: with the courage to do as the Lord commands, cry out for help when needed and to cling to the still outstretched hand of our Father.

Financial Support

NOTE: To support this mission financially, you may send tax-deductible gifts to:
 LCMS World Mission
 Debbie Feenstra
 1333 S.Kirkwood Rd.
 St. Louis, MO 63122

Make checks payable to LCMS World Mission. Include "Support for Liz Neuf" in the memo line. Thank you!

Prayer Requests:

- For the Lutz family during this challenging time
- That God continue to bless the work that is happening in Papua New Guinea
- Thanksgiving for all that the Lord has already accomplished through me
- That the Lord place a protecting arm around the women whose lives are in danger because of an unjust system
- For those in the community who are dying from HIV without feeling the comfort of Christ
- For provisions for the Community Resource Center ("The Shed")
- Continued blessings, strength and perseverance for UTB
- That God present to me new mission opportunities, like the Sunday School
- For perseverance and courage for myself as I continue to face corrupt systems and try to work through them and within them.

UTB in Madang:

