

## Hi Friends

These last few month have been like a blur for me! I'm not sure what month it is or what day! Since the Mengen Church has started to give their first independent baby steps. I have been freed up to travel allot and its been a major eye opener to hang around with these national believers and learn from them and also to get an overall feel of how things are going with the churches in New Britain. It's great to see what God has doing up to know, but to be honest, **the task is not completed yet!**

### **IT STARTED IN SOI....**

Over the years we had many discussions with different phased out churches and younger churches about how healthy the church really is and concerns they have for the way they interrelate. Sometimes these discussions would just be in the house boy or house wind as they pass, and other times it would be more official. Not so long ago, I had a meeting scheduled for the Mengen teachers and leaders during which I wanted to share some Biblical principles again about what church really is, namely Gods image in the process of being restored and then also share some principles about evaluating each other with the goal of looking at ways that we can help each other.



### **AND SPREAD TO ALL THE CHURCHES IN NEW BRITAIN....**

This eventually developed into a two month traveling and teaching stint to visit all the New Britain churches, and share some of these truths.

And

### **TEACHING IN MANG VILLAGE**

We first spend some time on the South Coast meeting with 6 of the churches planted by NTM.

*Arriving in Kandrian on the Kodiak*



*Three hour truck ride*



*Teaching about Finishing well*



*Hanging with my friends*



**TEACHING IN LAMOGAI**

Then the team moved to the North Coast meeting with 5 of the churches planted by NTM.

*Breakfast*



*Supper*



*Even the kids listened very well.*



*Chilling*



**TEACHING AT SEGE**

Then we moved towards the East to meet with the 6 of the churches including the Mengen leaders.

*Teaching about being a good builder*



*Meeting the Kol believers for the first time*



## **MAJOR CHALLENGE**

The Lord really challenged us to examine our work carefully and make sure we complete what we started and that we do it well. Here are a few challenges that we came home with:

- The church does not realise the importance of seeing God's image restored, not just as individuals but also communally as a body. This process of restoration is not completed yet, we are in the process of seeing the bride prepared but the groom has not come yet. So we should focus on seeing the church brought to completion, in that she is ready to meet Christ. Unfortunately, due to a strong evangelistic focus (which is not wrong), many churches do not develop beyond salvation and growth and life of the church is stunted.
- There is not a close enough bond between us as believers and churches where we see ourselves functioning in such a close relationship, which means that the body of Christ is not brought together and functioning as a unit. This is detrimental to our testimony and also to our mutual support which means that we have small units trying to be church on their own and struggling.
- We are seeing some churches not recognising God as their head, but looking to others such as missionaries, NTM etc. to give steer.
- We recognise that God has provided all the gifts we need between us as believers and local churches in that we could do all that's needed as we grow and develop in Christ. But because this unity does not exist we are having fellow members of the body struggling and not being cared for and disciplined by others.
- As leaders we do not realise how valuable God's church is for Him. He bought it dearly with His blood and we have the responsibility to bring these blood-bought children to maturity!
- We as leaders are responsible for these children of God and we should be careful about how we look after them and should be willing to give our lives for this purpose. It's not something we do on the sideline.
- We as leaders need to remember that our work will be evaluated by God!

At the end of these trips, and teaching time we all had a renewed sense of God's grace in redeeming us and restoring His image in us. We had a renewed vision for His church, and that she is to be united in one functioning body, and that she should be prepared and made ready for when Christ returns. But we also had a renewed holy fear for our task as elders. Realising that God has honoured us with giving us His children, bought with His blood, to look after and that this is no small responsibility that we will be held accountable for.

Thanks so much for your prayers for me as I travel around, and thanks for praying for Marie and the kids as they carry the burden of this back on the centre. Marie will be sending some personal news soon.

Many blessings  
Lourens