

## Term 3 Opens at Timothy Lutheran Seminary

By Martin Dicke

The good news is that Term 3 is underway at Timothy Lutheran Seminary, Birip in the Enga Province of Papua New Guinea. Scheduled to start on July 17, the professors delayed it by two weeks until July 31 before the students left for the term break anticipating possible violence during the PNG elections as votes were counted and winners declared. However, due to unprecedented violence of this year's election, during the week of July 31 only four students were on campus. The following Sunday there were only six.

The following week the professors decided to start the term anyway. They contacted all the students and told them to come. That Tuesday morning 14 of the 22 students were in attendance at the morning worship service. For my class that afternoon two more had arrived. Some walked over several mountain ranges to get to Birip in order to avoid the trouble near the capital of the province.

So, what do you teach the first day back after such calamitous and devastating events? I was led to introduce the students to

the Community Laments that are found in the Book of Psalms. Psalms such as 44, 60, 74, 80 and all the other "Sam Bilong Krai" (literally "Songs of Crying" or "Songs of Lament") take on a whole new meaning in times like these.

Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel,  
you who lead Joseph like a  
flock.

You who are enthroned upon  
the cherubim, shine forth.

Before Ephraim and Benjamin  
and Manasseh, stir up your  
might and come to save us!

Restore us, O God; let your  
face shine, that we may be  
saved!

Restore us, O God; let your  
face shine, that we may be  
saved!

*Psalm 80:1-3, 19*



*Pastor John Timothy, Bishop of the Kandep Region and President of the Timothy Lutheran Seminary Board preaching at the service opening Term 3.*



*A group picture of the seminarians, professors, and their families following the Divine Service celebrating the beginning of Term 3.*

## Contact Information in PNG

Our address in PNG is:

Martin and Marie Dicke  
PO Box 803  
Mt. Hagen 281  
Western Highlands Province  
Papua New Guinea

Our e-mail addresses are:

[martinpdicke@gmail.com](mailto:martinpdicke@gmail.com)  
[marieadicke@gmail.com](mailto:marieadicke@gmail.com)

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## Devotional Thought: “May They Be Numbered With Your Saints...”



*The welding tank hanging outside Timothy Lutheran Church at Birip. Panu would ring this “bell” every Sunday morning, may he rest in peace.*

It was all just a little too much. Returning home from church I parked and turned the engine off. First one tear formed, then another, and then I had to get my handkerchief out, wipe my face, blow my nose and all that. You probably know what I mean.

It was around noon on August 27. That Sunday morning Timothy Lutheran Church was full for the first time in many weeks. During the weeks of uncertainty due to violence surrounding the elections, schools had been closed and people stayed at home. It was a such a joy to again be with so many people hearing the Word of God and receiving assurance of the forgiveness of sins and the true body and blood of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ by partaking in the Lord’s Supper. Three full tables came up that day.

During the announcements

following the service, however, it was announced that Panu, a long-time member and one of the founders of this congregation, had been shot and killed during the election violence near Wabag. Originally from the coast, he came up to the Enga Province in the 1950s and 60s working with the government. He stayed and married a woman from Teremanda. He was visiting her family when one morning he heard some shots. Stepping outside to see what was going on he was shot and killed. The news was difficult to hear. Every Sunday Panu would take the initiative to ring the “bell” at Birip calling people to worship. The “bell” is the welding tank pictured at the left. I have placed it there in his memory.

After church I met a women named Madeline. She lives near Amapyaka so I gave her a ride home. On the way home she told me that she hadn’t been to church for a long time due to the many disturbances in the province. She comes to Birip for church because in 1999 the church near her home was burned down in a tribal fight. They would like to build a new one, but so far have only raised \$600 PGK (about \$200 USD). She said that on Sunday mornings many of the people living near her “stap nating long haus” (“stay at home and do nothing”). After attending such a wonderful worship service and receiving the Means of Grace I was deeply saddened to learn that so many people living near me were not hearing the Good

News of the God’s love for them and our salvation through Jesus Christ. It was all just a little too much.

On the way home I had been listening to the National Lutheran Choir sing Benjamin Britten’s setting of the Te Deum, that great and ancient proclamation of faith. Just as I turned the engine off the choir sang, “We therefore pray You to help Your servants whom You have redeemed with Your precious blood, make them to be numbered with Your Saints in glory everlasting.” It was a comfort to be reminded that Panu is now singing with the Saints and Angels in heaven. Now we need to pray for more workers in the field so that people like Madeline and her neighbors hear the Gospel on a regular basis.

And then the choir sang:

“O Lord, save Your people and bless Your heritage. Govern them and lift them up forever.” and...

“O Lord, in You have I trusted; let me never be confounded.”

### *Te Deum*

We praise You, O God; we acknowledge You to be the Lord. All the earth now worships You, the Father everlasting, To You all angels cry aloud the heavens and all the powers therein. To You cherubim and seraphim continually do cry;

“Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Sabaoth; heaven and earth are full of the majesty of Your glo-

ry.” The glorious company of the apostles praise You. The goodly fellowship of the prophets praise you.

The noble army of martyrs praise You. The holy Church throughout the world does acknowledge You. The Father of an infinite majesty; Your adorable true and only Son; also the Holy Ghost the Comforter. You are the King of glory, O Christ; You are the everlasting Son of the Father.

When You took upon Yourself to deliver man, You humbled Yourself to be born of a virgin. When You had overcome the sharpness of death, You opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers.

You sit at the right hand of God in the glory of the Father. We believe that You will come to be our judge.

We therefore pray You to help Your servants, whom You have redeemed with Your precious blood. Make them to be numbered with Your saints in glory everlasting.

O Lord, save Your people and bless Your heritage. Govern them and lift them up forever. Day by day we magnify You. And we worship Your name for ever and ever.

Grant, O Lord, to keep us this day without sin. O Lord, have mercy upon us, have mercy upon us. O Lord, let Your mercy be upon us, as our trust is in You. O Lord, in You have I trusted; let me never be confounded.



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