

Up From the Ashes...After 16 Years

By Martin Dicke

Tears of joy streamed down her face. The joyous procession was complete. While the majority of the crowd waited outside the temporary church, only a few were inside witnessing its rededication 16 years after it had been destroyed and its members scattered in a fierce tribal war.

The war started down valley in 2002. The reason for the tribal fight varies depending on who you talk to, but at this point I guess that doesn't matter anymore. The fight spread like wildfire from tribe to tribe quickly enveloping much of the lower Lai River valley from Wapenamanda to Lenki near Wabag. It was during this time the original classroom at Highland Lutheran School was burnt down and Akom Lutheran Church was destroyed. But, we are promised that "the Word of the Lord endures forever." (1 Peter 1:25)

By 2017 the members of Akom Lutheran Congregation had raised only K600 (\$180 USD) for a new church. Things looked hopeless. Community leader Kamap Minato recalled that for many years he was confused and discouraged. It then occurred to



him he needed to return to his roots. His father Minato had worked as an Evangelist with missionary Rev. Ian Kleinig of Australia. Kamap had played with Kleinig's children. Kamap resolved to return to God. He began attending Sukutea (Resurrection) Lutheran Church in Yaramanda. Renewed, he was brought back into the faith. But then, he thought of the young people in his clan. What about them? So in March 2018 he began taking young people from Akom twice a week to Sukutea for Christian instruction and fellowship. Only 2 or 3 went along with him the first time, but eventually more and more joined. Helping Kamap reestab-

lish Akom became a major mission effort of the Yaramanda church. And on the last Friday and Saturday of January, Akom Lutheran Church became a congregation again having the first worship services, baptisms, and communion celebration in 16 years.

Kamap thanked the missionaries for bringing the truth from Heaven to Enga. Without them "mipela olgeta inap paul paul i stap" ("we would all be lost").



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Thank You, Thank You, Thank You!

We can't thank you enough for the support you've provided for our mission work in the last few months. You were especially generous during the month of December. There were three pages of donors which kept Marie very busy. At right she is sitting at our dining room table sending thank notes to all of our December donors.

Some of you have been our friends and acquaintances for many years. Others of you we know only by name. We are praying that when we return to the United States in April for our regularly scheduled three-month Home Service we will

be able to meet you and thank you in person. Please contact us if you would like to schedule a visit. Whether it be over a cup of coffee, a dinner, or a visit to your home, school, or church, we are looking forward to meeting you.

You might also receive a call from our friends at the Office of Mission Advancement who help and work closely with us in developing a network of support. They are helping us schedule our three month visit since it is difficult for us to do it half-way across the world.

Hope to see you soon!



Marie writing thank you notes to our December donors at our dining room table.



There are many opportunities to serve as short-term or GEO missionaries. Check out the current list and download an application at lcms.org/service. Click on "Service Opportunities."

Please support the missionary service of Martin and Marie Dicke with a monthly, quarterly, or yearly giving plan or with a one-time gift. Visit lcms.org/dicke or call LCMS Mission Advancement at (888) 843-5267.

Alternatively, you can send checks payable to the LCMS with "PNG/Dickes" on the Memo Line to:

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