

I LOVED teaching five sessions in the Bible School, one on Missions and four on Christian Character and the Family!!

This school is another ministry of Kotidanga Baptist Church. How exciting it was to be a part of the growth of these young men preparing for full time Christian service! I am sure I challenged Matt and Andrew as they translated for me, and I know I gave everyone a few good laughs the way I tried expressing ideas in simplified English. God allowed us to be a special encouragement to these young men and their families through the provision of foam mattresses, blankets, and pillows. They have left their homes and gardens, their means of provision, to study the Word. We were blessed to “boost” their faith a bit, providing something that we take for granted in our country!

We are so thankful for the gracious hospitality of the Allens and each of the TTMK team members! Thanks John and Selina for your bed! (Oh! And it was so cold, Selina, Trina had to borrow some socks!) They were so patient in taking time to answer all our questions, and went out of their way to give us as many opportunities to serve and learn as we desired. Becky gave Trina a room by room tour of the house, detailing things that had been purchased in and out of the country, cost, and options to consider for our future home. Matt did the same with me from a design and building aspect. They shared practical information about getting supplies, ***but most importantly shared a passion for the needs of the Gulf and Western province that God used to direct me and expand my vision of the work God has for us in Papua New Guinea!!***

The Gulf and Western provinces of Papua New Guinea have been neglected by their government. The people there are without roads and adequate transportation. In many cases they are without schools or access to health care at even the most basic level. But worse than this, they have been neglected by those that could bring a true, clear gospel.

The Catholics did not neglect these people, nor the United Methodists. The people of this area have conveniently mixed their traditional pagan belief systems with the new pagan belief systems presented to them – particularly as those ministries offered to provide social services to their villages. There is only one Baptist missionary in the Western Province: Jason Russel, now preparing for his third term and the planter of 3 churches. In the entire Gulf province there are currently two works headed by Baptist missionaries: John Gray in Kerema and the Allens in Kotidanga. Soon, the Helzermans, now in the country, will be up in Kaintiba. That will make a third – and God has called us to be another, centering our ministry at Ihu!

Ihu and the surrounding area is a place for which Matt Allen has been burdened. He has taken several of the men who have visited him, praying about ministry in PNG, to spend time with this Orokelo people group along the coast and up several of the rivers that empty there into the sea. Together we planned a 5 day trip into this part of the country. We were blessed to be able to fly into Apea, a city up the Vailala River with an airstrip maintained by the logging company, and then hire a dinghy and driver

for travel up and down the rivers and across the saltwater bay. Traveling with Matt, Trina and I were Jerry and Jack. Jack is a graduate of John Gray’s 3 year Bible School in Kerema, planting a church in Malalaula. Jerry Miri is a graduate of the same school. Jerry has been praying about a church plant in Ihu, even obtaining a 99 year lease from the government there for land already!! He would have liked to have had the land cleared before our arrival, but his wife’s serious case of malaria and recent breast cancer diagnosis prevented them from spending much time preparing in Ihu. He shared an interesting thought with me one evening. He said, “We are blinded by things in our culture that keep us from seeing all of God’s ways for us. We need someone outside of this to show us those truths of God we miss.”