

## *The Church at Ukarumpa Village*

“Brian... what ever happened to the church in the village?”, you might ask.

Well on Sundays, if you were to cross the old dilapidated bridge across the Ba’e river that borders the center where we live and then hike up the hill through the center of the village, you would find our old “home” church. It is now part of the EBC or “Evangelical Brotherhood Church”– one of many denominations in this country.

The village church has certainly seen some ups and downs over the years. They witnessed our David growing up in their midst. When he was a small child, David was one blond “tow head” in a sea of bright shiny faces. The other day, elder Riki, who works at our Aviation Department told a funny story about finding adult David thrown into a drainage ditch (having fallen off his motorcycle). “Er.... Gee David, you never told us that story” <grin>. The village church has been part of our life here at Ukarumpa and they are wonderful Saints of God.

We have stood by them during the down times, like a nasty church split here in the valley. And during a recent sad, but rejoicing funeral where our dear friend, Mantu, recently died and raced off to be with the Lord. She was a beloved and faithful Sunday school teacher and she will be missed by us and her family and friends. But she assuredly goes to a far better place.

Recently a revival has come to the village and after a series of open air tent meetings, many new converts to the faith have stepped forward by God’s Spirit. There is a thriving youth program now and a commensurate reduction in “rascal” activity in the otherwise idle youth. Pastor Bafi (who you may recall from letters of a decade ago or more) is a bit more aged, but still energetically pursuing a teaching function and actively discipling many new believers. Pastor Bafi is no longer the principal pastor in the village and the EBC have sent another; his aging eyes are beginning to fail him and he must be led by the hand by one of his adult sons to get around. But he still preaches strongly and his latest teachings are about “accountability pairs” for the young Christians to get together and encourage one another.

And the church wants to expand it’s “tent-pegs” and build a new building. At present there is another church building site nearby ready to receive a new building, and there is an over-flow crowd who sit outside in the lawn area during the Sunday church services. This works adequately so long as it does not rain in the morning, and unfortunately, this is the rainy season. The building project is projected to cost K30,000 in total (\$10,000), but they are waiting for around half that figure to be in hand before attempting to start the building project. They are faithfully waiting for God to provide the means, and expectant that He will provide in time... but they are a patient people. So far they have reached around K10,000 toward their goal.

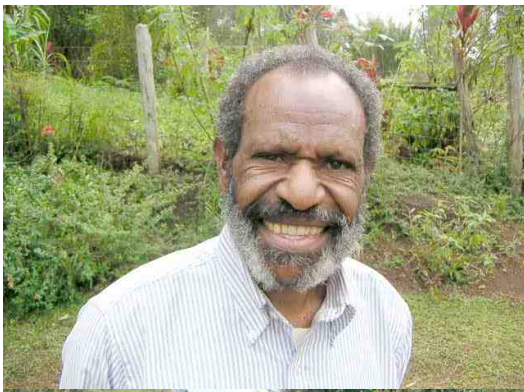
Since we have recently returned, we are not sure what our roles will be with the church at this time. There is always the tension to be an active participant and yet, not stand in the way of a national Christian growing into a given church position. It is far better for the church to appoint valley elders, than say myself, since I will never really be a “citizen” of this country, and at any moment could be called away for any number of good reasons– as the Lord wills. On the other hand, there is much that can be accomplished by Helen and I in personal ministry to others, and ways to encourage the Saints to “love and good deeds”. I hope we can do that and strengthen the local body of believers.

*“and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near.” – Hebrews 10:24*

So that’s our report. The church has grown over the years, and I guess we have grown with it. Praise be to our Lord and Savior who makes all things possible and new.

Joyfully in Service to Him,





Pastor Bafi still offers a lot to the church with a bright heart. **β**

Brian with friend listen to the sermon during the outdoor funeral service for Mantu. **à**



Church elders off with the local “hearse” to the receiving tent in another village **β**



**à**  
Merolyn and David (guess who he is named after?) at the receiving tent to participate in a two day mourning.



January, 2005

Email Address: [b.chapaitis@sil.org.pg](mailto:b.chapaitis@sil.org.pg); [h.chapaitis@sil.org.pg](mailto:h.chapaitis@sil.org.pg)

SIL Box 188, Ukarumpa, E.H.P. 444, PAPUA NEW GUINEA  
Wycliffe Bible Translators, P.O. Box 628200 Orlando, Florida 32862-8200, USA

Tel: 011 675-737-4352  
Tel: 1 407-852-3600