

# **SOVEREIGN GRACE BAPTIST MISSION**

## **International – Papua New Guinea / Malawi Africa**

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Dear Pastor, Church and All Supporters;

*Mt 10:28 And fear not them which **kill the body**, but are not able to **kill the soul**: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and **body** in hell.*

*Lu 12:4 And I say unto you [my friends,] Be not afraid of them that **kill the body**, and after that have no more that they can do. (Emphasis mine).*

Since my last report, much has taken place, the amount of information would be too much to digest in one setting, and by the time I square it away for another report, there is enough to report on that would keep you (the reader) busy for lengthy periods in digesting these mission reports, therefore, I try to highlight, or at least share with you what I believe pinpoints the mission work, both (positive and negative) both the good and bad, as I have indicated many times in my reports that mission work is not all about the ‘conversions – in salvation; baptisms, new church births, and so on’; However, it is also about the struggles, difficulties, problems, challenges, hindrances, being stranded, attacked (spiritually, & physically) the roadblocks, dangers, life-threatening and so on, and so on. Paul wrote much about all this, and much of the above experiences in Paul’s life was woven into the Scriptures for us to read today, and will in fact be recorded for eternity.

I am not comparing myself to the Apostle Paul, however I am saying the life and ministry here in PNG, in this generation that I live, work and serve in, carries with it much in terms of the human struggle as well as the spiritual warfare.

Without repeating past mission reports, and being redundant I will simply pick up and recap from my last report and bring you forward.

I would like to thank those of you who sacrificially gave to the cause for some financial assistance to the brethren here in PNG in response to the earthquake that we experienced on the 25<sup>th</sup> Feb 2018. I can fill the report with just news about this, but will simply say, due to the fact that there has been so much corruption here in this country with the oil

companies, a (get rich quick) government that (Unicet; and the Red Cross) pulled their staff out of the country due to armed robberies, roadblocks, physical attacks etc. and the government refused to assist their own people. I had to travel to the Capitol city (Port Moresby) to obtain a legal document from the government in order to purchase large quantities of medicine, some food, and hardware in view of assisting some of those affected within our area. Medicine is of short supply, when placing an order for such, demands the necessity to produce proper documentation.

I had supplies ready and was in a position to travel, when civil unrest broke out in the Southern Highlands and halted my travels. I was road blocked in Mt. Hagen and after two attempts in reaching the mission station, I was turned back only to return to Mt. Hagen.

Some of the events that transpired I posted pictures and some comments on Facebook, but I will now again share the highlights. Elections were rigged in 2017, money buys those who are willing to sell out (which, is many) politicians have access to money (big money) and simply follow the path of least resistance. The Southern Highlands Province, debated the (declared winner); it went to court, the outcome was rigged (court, judge, witnesses) all paid off. Following the courts decision, thousands of angry tribal men, took control and the Mendi Township was (under seize). An aeroplane (Air Niugini) Dash 8 was burned to ashes, the Mendi courthouse was burned to the ground and a business belonging to the Prime Minister was also torched. Roads blocked and thousands of armed militants and insurgents took immediate control of this town, all roads leading in and out were road blocked.

It was under these conditions that I had made an attempt to reach the mission station, which is located in the Hela Province, with one road that leads from Mt. Hagen to the Tanggi mission station, and it must pass through Mendi (Southern Highlands). I was road blocked and told to return to Hagen on two different occasions.

With no network around the mission station it was difficult for me to communicate with those in the mission work. I was resolved that the LORD had a work for me in Mt. Hagen, therefore I settled in to conduct some bible studies and lessons. My accommodations were with a local family (Elder Hepe Ekere) the one who was recently ordained to the ministry in Dec and who is pastor of the church in Mt. Hagen.

With a small house and family of five, besides Bro. Hepe's mum who also stays with in the same house, living conditions were crowded, I had my own room, about (7'x7') a small office (7'x 4') and the main sitting, dining, room which, is about (12'x10'); the bath house and toilet is one small (out-house); It is difficult trying to convert another culture and or people to certain living conditions and or ways that you have been taught and or practice.

The more easy way is for you (whomever you may be) to just accept, do the best you can in your situation and thank the LORD for the accommodations, and food you have been given.

Serving the LORD is not about (you), what you have, or don't have, what you like or don't like, its not about everyone else making sure you are comfortable and have your cup of tea 'just like you want it'! Rather, the servant of the LORD is just that 'a servant'. Jesus instructed HIS disciples that they had to learn how to be a servant and serve.

*Mt 20:25 But Jesus called them unto him, and said, Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them.*

*Mt 20:26 But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister:*

*Mt 20:27 And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant:*

This is a lesson that is slowly learned by many of GOD'S children, and often times takes a lifetime before one fully understands its application.

The twelve weeks I spent in Mt. Hagen with the Kim Bap church and the family of the late Ekere Ibago, (two sons, two daughter, all married and the widow with sixteen grandchildren all under the age of thirteen so it was an experience.

Many evenings after the dinner meal I would teach on the family structure as outlined in Scripture. For someone who has never lived amongst Tribal people may think and say with some prejudice... 'You cannot act the way you do just because you are of such and such a Tribe or ethnic group of people'; I have heard much of this said for many years from the same people who have never lived amongst, around, under and within the culture arena of such people.

Therefore, for the reader I pose some queries regarding some thoughts, why are the Jews the way they are as a people? And why did Paul say the Greeks seek after wisdom? And the Jews seek after a sign? What makes the Germans to be the people they are, and how is it that most Tribal (black) people like loud colours, I can go on but I think you get the point. Ethnic, Tribal, clannish people have always had 'distinguishing' marks that set them apart from others. Yes, people are just that, and there is a common thread of 'oneness' that qualifies all tribes, tongues, nations, and people. At the same time there are enough qualifying marks and distinguished features that set all ethnic peoples apart.

Just a few things, food, habits, customs, the do's & don'ts, clothing, behaviour of men and women, interaction into family, marriage, death, gestures and so on (all) make up who people are.

All that was said in order to demonstrate, one does not just walk into the lives of Ethnic and Tribal people and demand that they change for 'your way' most likely, you will have to change to 'fit' into their society.

One thing I do demand and that is, if the custom, tradition goes against GOD'S Word (meaning the plain and clear teaching), then I stress in my preaching and teaching that one must change (to please HIM) and not your traditions (*Mt.15: 8,9*)

The LORD gave me both liberty and opportunity to preach the Word and teach in ways that I would not have done with the family and the church in Mt. Hagen. There is no place like home and its always good to come home, but having the (Truth) and staying at home, never helps those who do not live with you.

I was informed that the roads were clear and passage was open, therefore I started my preparations to return home. This past week I spent the better part of the week in preparation.

On Sat the 21<sup>st</sup> of July I was packed, fuelled and ready to depart Mt. Hagen with a payload of (1600) kilos or (3500) lbs. the vehicle was heavy laden and the going would be slow. The journey is two hundred and nine miles from where I stay in Mt. Hagen to the Tanggi mission station. It has averaged over the months to be a twelve-hour trip with a load and road conditions. First, Second, & Third gears are what I use mostly.

At 16:00 hrs. I departed, as the hours turned and the kilometres clicked by the daylight was quickly fading, the road conditions here demand good lighting, an experienced eye and ready hand to negotiate the potholes, sudden landslides, bridges being washed away, sections of the road broken away etc.

Through the mountains, the road noise, roar of the engine and constant meshing of the gears silences the communications and mostly we (those who are with me) ride in silence enduring the constant jolting and being tossed to and fro by the swerving and dodging of the vehicle, in an effort to miss the (bigger) potholes that would cause vehicle damage.

Through the midnight hours of the night I pushed on, pressing toward the mark, (home), we topped our last big mountain (10,000) ft. elevation and started our decent into the Tari basin (land of the Huli Tribesmen); we had heard that there had been a lot of fighting and vehicles had been seized, people robbed and some killed in the past twelve weeks I had been in Mt. Hagen.

Being vigilant is a key and having a plan B is a 'must', not being armed (physically) with the exceptions of an axe and two machetes that I carry to clear the road from fallen trees, etc. it all comes back to 'how real is your faith'. Great to preach a fiery sermon on 'living faith' its wonderful to hear a challenging message on Sunday morning about the great hero's of faith, and its encouraging to see your own faith carried out, however when you have to actively (live by faith) that is yet another story!

At 01:00 hrs. we approached a one lane bridge, it was road blocked by a large log, and would require several men to remove it before passage, I felt things were just not right and proceeded to put the vehicle in reverse, when several men came running out of the bush, shouting and shooting their weapons, it was too late to turn around and the only method of escape was to reverse.

As a shot was fired, there was the sound of metal hitting metal, and I knew the vehicle had been fired upon and hit, other shots followed, and one man was chasing after the vehicle, I knew humanly speaking the only chance we had of escape depended on my ability to keep reversing, in hopes that they had not felled a tree or set up a road block behind us.

For about half a mile I reversed, GOD being with us, managed to out distance the attackers. I turned the vehicle around and we headed back in the same direction we had

come from, back up the mountain. For the next half hour we drove in silence, finding a spot at the top of the mountain to sit and wait it out till daylight.

I had time to examine the vehicle; the passenger side door had sustained a direct hit from a 12-gauge shotgun shell. Not one of us sustained any injuries, except the emotional stress level.

All the 'could have, but, if, maybe, almost, should have, and all other speculative language goes right out the window – when we say we believe in a Sovereign GOD. Either HE is in control or HE isn't, either HE is, or isn't; controlling, directing, and allowing (all things) to work together for the good to them that love GOD..."

At 04:00 hrs. A convoy of four trucks carrying twenty-foot containers for ExxonMobil were making their way toward us, we stopped the first truck and informed the driver of the security issue, he replied, "that is ok, we are being escorted by an armed escort." We waited until the last vehicle arrived; it was a vehicle carrying eight armed PNG Defence Force (Army) soldiers.

They took the lead and we followed, when we approached the same area where we were assaulted, the roadblock was gone, no armed men to engage and the way was clear. We passed and on we went until we arrived at Tari station, the soldiers went into Tari and we came onward to the mission station, another two hours drive.

Our trip had begun at 16:00 hrs. On Sat afternoon, it was now 08:00 hrs. Sunday morning, long hard trip, but we were safe and unharmed; the LORD is good in all HIS works.

I took my bucket bath, cooked some breakfast, dressed up and prepared for church service here at the Tanggi Bap church. We had a crowd, well over a hundred people; I preached on the subject "You have to know the Signs"!

My life and ministry is being tried and tested here in PNG, no trial is easy, and no test do you just put it on cruise and sit back. Faith is not faith unless it's tested.

**(Proverbs 24:10) "If thou faint in the day of adversity, thy strength is small."**

I want to thank each of you who give sacrificially both of your means and prayers. We could not do what we do without your help. May our LORD keep each of you in the centre of HIS will and smile upon the work of your hands.

Until we meet, may GOD be with you!

In His Name,  
Missionary Peter A. Halliman