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Dear Co-worker:

It is mid-May as I compose this letter. And it is the month when Martha and I are reminded of the time we left the fruitless years of teaching and administration in the public schools of beautiful Northern California where I went to hunt, ski and fish. But after eight years Jesus grabbed hold and said to me like He said to Peter, "When you were young you girded yourself and walked wherever you wished, but when you are older you will stretch out your hands and another will gird you and carry you where you do not wish to go." And He added, "It's time you went fishing for men, not fish."

On May 29, 1959, the Memorial Day weekend, we went fishing with my kid brother and his wife at my favorite fishing hole, Willow Lake, inhabited by beavers, just south of Lassen National Park. But it rained all night and all the next day, so Martha and I left for home where I continued to ponder about the vicissitudes of life. I never thought the public schools of California provided the best of occupations, and I was bored along with holding a general dissatisfaction about any accomplishments. The rainy weather at Willow Lake fed my reflections. The next afternoon in Mount Shasta, Memorial Day, the 31st, Sunday while reading an article in the Presbyterian Journal by Dr. L. Nelson Bell, who had been a missionary in China for 40 years, God spoke to me in a flash and said, "You don't belong here. Go serve a needy people." I gathered the family together, prayed, and announced that we would be looking into an entirely new kind of life, that of missionaries.



David Kasen speaking at a teacher training course.

Informing the educational board the next day of my plans, I resigned from my two year contract, drove to the Bay Area to see my parents about advice, learned from a pastor in Berkeley about Wycliffe Bible Translators, rented our home, drove back to Mount Shasta, and in two weeks we were on our way to Seattle, Washington to attend WBT's summer linguistic courses. There we also met the folk of Seattle's First Christian Reformed Church where we formed friends who to this day support the work of PIM along with the church.

Since then the Lord has abundantly blessed us with spiritual fruitfulness, and along that line I wish to share some words from David Kasen in a letter he sent to Martha and me that we received after he learned about Leah's passing away last August. David has been with PIM since its inception and has contributed his administrative talents and spiritual commitment that have inspired and trained other nationals to act as missionaries to serve in the isolated villages of the Sepik swamps and hills. Here are some of his comments.

This week I am in Ambunti making arrangements for holding the memorial service for Leah Ruth Heidema in the local church. I think back to 1977 and now up to 2015 in which it has been 38 years since I have worked with PIM. From 1980 Papa Neal and Mama Martha have held leadership and other

courses to train us nationals. This work has paid off to produce men like Reuben Wak, Edward Wiruk, David Wakuri, David Inia, and myself along with many elementary teachers and other workers.

Earlier many problems existed in supplying goods for the many Sepik villages along the river. But now there are good means to provide goods and services and facilities. Many have attended PIM's training courses and some have become leaders, magistrates, counselors, and moved into other types of work to serve their communities.

Many years ago Neal spoke about his vision of 70,000 souls to become disciples of Jesus, and I believe now that his vision carries this fruit. I make this statement because PIM's work in education has grown to enroll over 2000 students in the mission's elementary schools. Scores have gone on to secondary schools and many have gone on to college. Some of these students have even joined PNG's Parliament. In November of 2015 I will be preparing 200 trainees for introduction into the government's system of education. Many times in the past PIM did not have the finances to keep its entire program operating, but this has not stopped the mission from our desire to continue on. I am grateful to Reuben for his excellent work of looking after the mission's finances.

But there are now problems in the Sepik we did not have earlier. The villages did not know how to make alcohol. Many youth now get into gangs in government schools and have learned how to make drink and bad smoking. They produce bad stuff in their own gardens that make frightful problems. Many now struggle in the Ambunti station. Fortunately, church leadership is aware of the problem and are working to overcome it.

My wife Jenifer and I grieve over Doug losing Leah. We send our prayers to him and also to you Papa and Mama. We continue to work here in light of the nearly 40 years of service and the vision we share. We look forward to return to our villages to do His work. Our children do well. Priscilla is married and has two children. Bart works in Port Moresby. Pisha attends school. Shillana has completed grade 12 and lives with us. Gerald is in grade 8 and Sharolyn is in grade 7. Dorine is in grade 3 and is attending the Sodas school in Ambunti. However, Bart is stubborn and does not go to church.

We send you 1 Corinthians 15:58. [Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.] The work that you two do along with the other missionaries is not in vain. Our Father God has prepared tremendous blessings for both of you. Leah Ruth Heidema now receives hers and rejoices greatly with our Father in heaven.

Many thanks, David Kasen

Rejoice with us in having our loving heavenly Father lead us 55 years ago to the Sepik peoples. David Kasen speaks for many about what the Lord Jesus Christ is doing to call many to Himself in obedience to His call. We also rejoice this month of June; Martha and I celebrate 68 years of marriage. In His grace,

Orneal Kooyers

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Photos by Doug and formatting by Michelle



Display of bride price payment consisting of cash and traditional woven mats.