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Dear: Co-worker:

We usually comment about the PIM beginnings in our May newsletter, so let's start by saying the PIM saga began 58 years ago, in May of 1959, the Memorial Day weekend. I was superintendent of a California school district and I was bored, unhappy, and viewed my educational future drearily. That particular weekend we went fishing at our favorite haunt, a lake near Mt. Lassen National Park, and this time Martha and I walked to the lake with my younger brother and his wife. But it rained, and rained some more. So Martha and I packed up and went home to Mount Shasta.



Ambunti Religious Instruction Class (RI) led by Ray Wangimbi.

The next day, Sunday afternoon, I was reading in the living room an article in the *Presbyterian Journal* by Dr. L. Nelson Bell who had been a missionary doctor in China for 40 years. I set the monthly aside and something said clearly and distinctly, "Neal, you don't belong here. Leave, I have a special work for you." That word provided the conviction of an utter dependency upon the Lord. I called Martha and the four children together and said we were going leave and become missionaries.

I had a year to go on my contract, so I talked to a couple board members and told them of our plans to leave. (Martha was also teaching at the school.) I drove to the Bay Area to see my parents and seek direction from various pastors about what might be the best way to serve. The last one I saw gave me a list of four possible options. One was Wycliffe Bible Translators. I preferred that because it provided opportunity to examine God's Word. Since the pastor's church was near Berkeley and a member of WBT was attending UC, he suggested I contact him. Our two-hour visit led the family to join the group.

We rented the Mount Shasta home to a man and wife who worked for the state. (They lived there for 25 years then purchased the home in their retirement.) In two weeks we were on our way to Seattle to take linguistic courses at the UW. Due to various earlier contacts with friends and my parents' background we attended Seattle's First Christian Reformed Church. That fall we taught in their Christian school, and by their good graces we were able to attend WBT's

jungle camp in Mexico. The summer of 1960 we took more courses at the University of Oklahoma. After spending the fall in the Bay Area of California, we boarded the *Oriana* on its maiden voyage to Australia in February 1961 using our teacher's retirement funds to pay for the trip.

To make a long story short, after several weeks at WBT's base in the highlands of PNG the director asked me to make a trip to the Sepik region to consider translation work. They had been praying for two years for a couple to lead the way. That resulted in visiting the village of Madiwai of the Waskuk tribe on 30 May 1961. That happened exactly two years after the family had decided to leave Mount Shasta on that Sunday afternoon.

To conclude, we left WBT in 1977 and today (May 1) I received an email from PNG which says, *Reuben Wak's sister Susan said, 'I always think about Neal and Martha praying for us teachers every day. They came first and planted the seeds. Now they are growing everywhere. We continue what Neal and Martha started, teaching the children in all the schools.' She is the teacher in charge at Sio village, last year and this year. 'I gather the children from the churches on Sundays and we have such good fellowship together. I teach them how to pray the ladder: Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, and Petition.'*"

Good words for me as I thank my God for His unusual favor.
In His grace,

Orneal Kooyers

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Photos by Doug
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Pipe to be used in repairing the Ambunti town water system.