

Vol 62 | Issue 4 | 2014

# MESSAGE

spread the word

abwe<sup>®</sup>  
INTERNATIONAL

## from who to **Who**

Transforming a culture of blame to a  
culture of forgiveness through Jesus



## Reaching All People

As a missions agency, we are ever mindful of God's great command to bring the gospel to all people. And never has the phrase "all people" been more apt than in Papua New Guinea. The Pacific island nation's landscape is so severe and rugged that more than 800 unique cultures and languages have developed in a country not much bigger than the state of California. In such a diverse place, the question becomes: how do we reach all these people?

The answer is found in training and discipling locals who can carry the gospel.

Throughout my life, I have had both the blessing of being discipled and of discipling others. I spent five years as a Bible college professor dedicated to training young people for ministry and missions. I know the value of good training and have seen how pouring into others impacts the world in a way that continues to multiply.

That is exactly what is happening at ABWE's Goroka Baptist Bible College in Papua New Guinea. Students come from all over the country to receive training and then return to their native region to minister to their people in their local language. They are able to share the gospel in a culture they know well and in a way that few outsiders could replicate. This issue of *Message* explores the college's unique ministry and impact in a part of the world that, for many centuries, remained unexplored and ignored.

As you read about these amazing students and the transformation they are creating within their culture, please pray they reflect God's love to those around them. And then take a moment to think about the relationships in your life that remain unexplored or ignored, and how God might be calling you to bring the light of His love into them.

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### WHO IS THE ASSOCIATION OF BAPTISTS FOR WORLD EVANGELISM (ABWE)?

ABWE was founded in 1927 as an independent Baptist mission. The objectives of ABWE are to establish indigenous Baptist churches and to train national pastors and leaders. About 1,000 missionaries serve with ABWE to advance God's work in more than 60 countries around the world by sharing the story of hope, building communities of faith, and serving the world with love.

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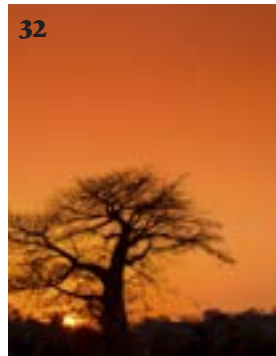
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A Papua New Guinean woman picks a cherry off a coffee tree  
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TOGO

## FREEDOM THROUGH THE FIRE

In the small West African country of Togo, ABWE's missionaries battle to share the light of the gospel in a culture rooted in mysticism and animism, a belief that natural objects and the universe itself possess souls.



Paul was born into these beliefs and immediately deemed special because he had a caul, a rare and harmless medical condition where part of the amniotic sac is still attached at birth. According to his culture's beliefs, this was a special omen, and the caul was formed into an amulet that Paul was told to wear around his waist to give him supernatural powers.

Having a caul is considered a blessing, but to Paul, it became a curse.

"Even though I was supposed to be protected, I was afraid to walk outside at night. I lived in fear," Paul said. "Spirits surrounded me at all times. They talked with me and I with them."

Paul was terrified to disobey the spirits' commands, but was desperate to be free of their control. He began searching for a way out.

"During all this time, I knew nothing of Jesus. I wanted to know Him, but the spirits would not let me," Paul said.

Paul sought to find the truth. He visited church after church, but only encountered more mysticism. Then one day in the village of Agoudze, he walked into a Baptist church started by ABWE missionaries and now led by missionary-trained Togolese leaders. It was here that Paul heard the gospel for the first time.

"I went to this church, and at the end of one of the services, I talked with the church leaders and pastor. They told me about Jesus," Paul said. "They explained that I could have peace, eternal life in heaven, and freedom from fear if I put my trust in Jesus. I did, and the church leaders and pastor came to my house and prayed seriously for me. And the voices of the spirits ended."

To celebrate his new freedom in Christ, Paul recently shared his story during a Sunday service at the Agoudze church. Afterwards, the Togolese pastor and more than 40 church members went to Paul's house and watched as he and the pastor doused his amulet and other fetish items in gasoline before lighting them on fire.

"There was quite an explosion, after which we all sang praises to God and watched as the things this young man used to worship evil burnt in front of us," said ABWE missionary Sharon Rahilly. "What an incredible testimony to the power of our God over sin, over societal pressure, and over evil spirits themselves!" ■



AUSTRALIA

**WORKPLACE EVANGELISM**

Rebecca first noticed the gnawing emptiness in her heart shortly after her desk was moved next to Kevin, a Christian colleague at her Sydney-based technology firm.

Born and raised in China, Rebecca learned to value professional success above all else and to view religion, especially Christianity, as a crutch for the weak. But the more she talked with Kevin, the more intrigued she became. Not only was Kevin a hard worker and an insightful friend, he possessed a peacefulness she had never encountered before. So when he invited her to attend a seminar discussing the Bible in their company’s lunchroom, she took the opportunity to learn more about Christianity.

The seminar was unlike anything Rebecca had experienced before. The atmosphere was friendly and relaxed as several dozen employees gathered to hear ABWE missionary Russ Matthews describe God’s love for humanity and His plan for redemption. Russ works in partnership with City Bible Forum to do evangelical outreach to professionals in Australia’s major cities. During the seminar, Russ encouraged the attendees to participate with questions or



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comments, and he answered each one using examples from the Bible.

Suddenly, Rebecca realized two things: first, the peace Kevin possessed was because of God, and second, she wanted it. Rebecca gave her life to Christ shortly after and experienced a sense of peace and wholeness for the first time in her life.

“Our job is to engage non-believers and to equip Christians working in the city,” said Russ. “In this era, the workplace is where we have most of our relationships. And if that is where the relationships are, then that’s where we need to be equipping people with the gospel and giving them opportunities and tools to share their faith.” ■

**A STORY ABOUT THE BIG STORY**



Recently, six-year-old Audrianna and her grandmother sat down to read *Reflections From God’s Story of Hope*, a new book created by ABWE’s Good Soil ministry. The coffee-table book was made to reach all ages and succinctly explain the storyline of the Bible in 50 Old Testament and 50 New Testament events — from Genesis through Revelation.

As the two leafed through the book, Audrianna loved looking at the beautiful illustrations, but her grandmother kept asking questions to make sure she understood the meaning of all the stories about

salvation. The little girl was quick to explain and had a strong understanding of what the stories meant and how they applied to her life.

Sensing that Audrianna was ready, her grandmother asked her if she wanted to accept Christ as her Savior. She shyly declined, but as they continued through the book, she realized she needed to be saved. Audrianna put her faith in Christ that day and quickly wanted to share her decision with others.

“Our goal was to make a book so attractive and appealing that even an unbeliever would be happy to have it on their coffee table,” said Gil Thomas, author of *Reflections From God’s Story of Hope*. “The book takes people through God’s big story of redemption and asks for a response.” ■

**LEARN MORE** about *Reflections From God’s Story of Hope* and get your copy at [www.goodsoil.com/reflections](http://www.goodsoil.com/reflections)

CHILE

## A FRESH START

**M**arta\* came to Santiago, Chile, in the hope of leaving her destructive decisions behind. She was escaping an abusive home in Colombia and trying to free herself from a long battle with drugs, alcoholism, and promiscuity. But despite her sincere attempts to start a new life, she failed.

Marta quickly fell back into her old bad habits, until a friend recommended she listen to radio broadcasts from a gifted Chilean pastor. She found herself wondering if his message was true: Could God really love her so much that He would sacrifice His only son?

Desperate to know more, she drove to the radio station's headquarters to find this preacher. Workers at the station directed her to New Life Baptist Church, a body of believers led by Chilean nationals along with ABWE missionaries Dave and Ruth Ann Rogers and Duane and Linda Cross.

Marta attended a Sunday service, and immediately afterward, she went to a small Bible study where she opened up about her past and the unfulfilling ways she sought happiness.

That Sunday was the start of Marta's new life as she turned to Jesus and found His love and forgiveness. Marta now speaks boldly about her relationship with Christ and has invited several friends to church so that they, too, can discover a new life in Jesus.

"Marta is changing things in her life, and as she learns more, she just can't get over God's tremendous and boundless love," said Dave Rogers. ■

*\*Name changed to protect identity*



TOGO

**NEVER TOO LATE**

**M**ichaelle Blakley is proof that no one is too old or too lost to be found and used by God.

Michaelle was saved as a young girl growing up in Beaver Falls, Pa., but teenage rebellion hit her hard. She found herself pregnant and married at 17, and she felt trapped by the poor decisions of her youth. After 16 years, the mother of four finally left her toxic and abusive marriage, but she quickly got wrapped up in drugs and alcohol, turning her back on God and her kids.

Despite her actions, she knew what she was doing was wrong. She felt God convicting her, and when she could no longer bear the burden of her lifestyle, she turned to prayer.

“I felt like I was sinking. I was in an abyss,” said Michaelle. “I began earnestly praying and crying out to God to take me out of the situation I was in. After a few years, He finally started answering my prayers.”

His answer began with Michaelle losing her job of 14 years. Her hospital transcriptionist work was being outsourced, which meant she no longer had an income, but a federal program called Trade Relocation Adjustment offered to pay for her to go back to school. Then, her daughter offered to have Michaelle move in with her so she could help care for her three grandchildren. Michaelle knew God was leading her.

At the age of 53, Michaelle was excited for this fresh start and enrolled at a community college to become an X-ray technician. She finished her core classes and beat out 60 applicants to grab one of the 20 spots in the radiological technology program. But it wasn't

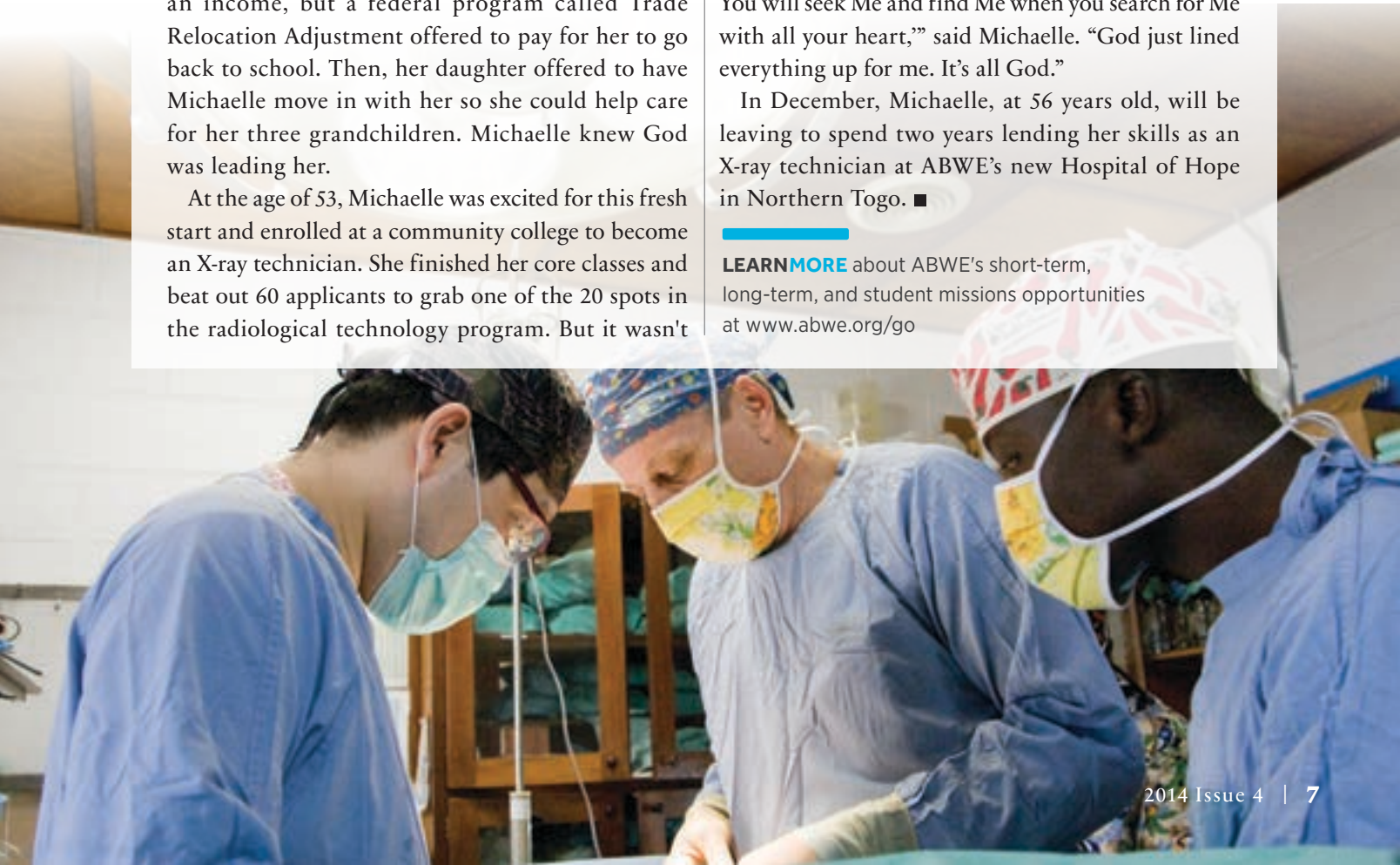
easy. She was the oldest student in her program, and she found herself needing to re-learn subjects she had studied over three decades ago. Despite many obstacles, Michaelle was one of the 12 remaining students who stood victorious on graduation day.

While she was finishing her degree, Michaelle also began to search for a church where she could establish roots and bring her grandchildren. On her first visit to Harmony Baptist Church in New Castle, Pa., a group from the church spoke about a recent construction mission trip where they helped build a hospital in a country Michaelle had never heard of, called Togo. As they spoke, the seed of doing medical work on the mission field was planted, but it didn't take root until a second construction team returned. The team gave a presentation and the pastor asked if any member of the congregation would be interested in going on the next trip. Michaelle immediately raised her hand.

“It's like it says in Jeremiah, ‘Then you will call upon Me and come and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. You will seek Me and find Me when you search for Me with all your heart,’” said Michaelle. “God just lined everything up for me. It's all God.”

In December, Michaelle, at 56 years old, will be leaving to spend two years lending her skills as an X-ray technician at ABWE's new Hospital of Hope in Northern Togo. ■

**LEARN MORE** about ABWE's short-term, long-term, and student missions opportunities at [www.abwe.org/go](http://www.abwe.org/go)



# LEGACIES

Honoring 35 Years of Ministry



## PHIL & BARB KLUMPP

CANDIDATE CLASSES: 1977 & 1975

COUNTRY SERVED IN: Philippines



“  
Always remember that we are totally dependent on the Lord ... stay flexible, keep your sense of humor, and remember that a smile speaks in any language.”

### MINISTRY HIGHLIGHTS



1977  
Married on October 22



1983  
Started the Grace Baptist Church of Baybay, Leyte (indigenized in 1990)



1978  
Arrived in Philippines and began medical work & evangelism at Leyte Baptist Clinic & Hospital



1991  
Planted Grace Baptist Church of Cebu City (indigenized in 1995)



## AN INTERVIEW WITH THE KLUMPPS

**Q: How did God call you to missions?**

**Barb:** I was challenged for missions at a Bible club camp by a missionary from Japan. Though it was a struggle to think of leaving my family, from the moment I surrendered to the Lord, I never doubted that foreign missions was what He had for me.

**Phil:** I had two older brothers who talked of their travels and ministries in Mexico and Colombia, so their influence helped me to know the dedication needed to be a missionary. I was 16 when I dedicated my life to be a missionary at a missions conference.

**Q: How did God call you to the Philippines?**

**Barb:** I was appointed with ABWE in 1975 to the field of Hong Kong and almost had my full support when I was delayed due to pneumonia and changes on the field. I didn't know it at the time, but the Lord had something special prepared for me. I met Phil while speaking at a Bible camp, and the Lord led us to the Philippines.

**Q: What is one of your favorite ministry memories?**

**Phil:** Turning over the church-

planting ministry of our two Grace Baptist Churches. After pouring our career and ourselves into them, it was such a blessing to see these churches be carried forward by an indigenous local body of believers with a national Filipino pastor.

**Q: What moment had the biggest impact on your ministry?**

**Barb:** After spending several years in the United States to get help for our son, we were very eager to return to the Philippines. We had our support and thought we were ready to go, but the Lord closed the door at the last minute. We were devastated and could not understand why the Lord was doing this. When our administrator challenged us to start a ministry with Filipinos here in the states, it was the beginning of a delightful and exciting ministry and lifelong Filipino friends. We learned that we could trust the Lord in what He was doing. Two years later, we were able to return to the Philippines with great joy and with the realization that the Lord really does know what is best for us.

**Q: What advice would you give to new missionaries or those considering missions?**

**Phil:** The greatest piece of advice I would give to any new missionaries would be to stay close to the Lord who, with the Holy Spirit and the scriptures, guides and directs our paths. Spend every day of your devotion to Him in service and testimony for the glory of the Lord.

**Barb:** Always remember that we are totally dependent on the Lord. Without Him we are nothing. No matter how big or how small the task or the group you are speaking to, remember to ask for His help and be aware of His presence. Other than that, stay flexible, keep your sense of humor, and remember that a smile speaks in any language.

**Q: What is the most unusual food you ate on the mission field?**

**Barb:** We were staying with a national pastor's family shortly after we arrived in the Philippines and that afternoon someone from the church brought a rice sack with something big in it. The pastor began praising the Lord for the large octopus the Lord had provided. We chewed and chewed and chewed on it for supper! ■



1998

Moved to Manila to teach at the Baptist Bible Seminary and Institute



2007

Began training young people for ministry at the Bukidnon Fundamental Baptist Seminary of Malaybalay



Worked with Filipinos in Pennsylvania, returning to the Philippines periodically to teach modular intensive courses at various Bible seminaries and schools

2005

An aerial, high-angle view of a multi-lane highway. The image is heavily blurred to convey a sense of rapid motion and traffic density. The cars are streaked across the lanes, and the overall color palette is dominated by warm, golden-brown and blue tones. A central metal divider runs down the middle of the road. The text 'AN ACCIDENT WITH DU' is overlaid in a clean, white, sans-serif font across the lower half of the image.

AN **ACCIDENT**  
WITH **DU**

# T RPOSE

By Ingela Hartman

**W**hen the sounds of screams and screeching tires finally faded, they were replaced by an unsettling, motionless silence. The car looked like a crumpled tin can, crushed in on the driver's side.

After several interminable minutes, sirens interjected. Police and emergency workers rushed to the car and pulled out Lisa, Ricky and Kristin Caynor. Kristin and Ricky were covered in scrapes, but responsive. Lisa hardly had a scratch on her. But she wasn't breathing.

Two months earlier, Lisa and Rick Caynor had celebrated the completion of their two-year language training in Bangkok. They were anxious to get out of the overwhelming city of more than 8 million people so they could start building their ministry in Cha-am, a small coastal town of 40,000. They chose Cha-am because of its manageable size and because it had almost no Christian influence. Their ministry dream resonated with a Thai couple they had been discipling, Pastor Ang and his wife Orn, and together, they moved the 100 miles south.

Finally out of bustling Bangkok, they unpacked, looked for a place to host their ministry, and began acclimating to the slower rhythm of life among waving palm trees. After a month, they were still settling in — making connections, painting walls, and buying chairs for what they hoped would be a thriving church. Everything was going as planned until a phone call changed Rick's whole world.

"Your wife's been in an accident," a foreign voice said.

### Praying For Hope

Lisa had been taking their two children, Ricky and Kristin, to the local immigration office for a routine 90-day check-in. She was driving on the highway when a motorcyclist suddenly pulled into their lane and slammed on his brakes in front of their car. Lisa swerved to miss him and hit a light pole instead.

Kristin fractured her pelvis on both sides and broke her left leg, and Ricky was covered in scrapes with several broken ribs. They were taken to a local clinic in Cha-am to get bandaged up, but Lisa's injuries were different. She had hit her head and was in a coma with severe brain trauma. She was taken to a bigger hospital in Hua Hin before she was flown to one of the top hospitals in Bangkok and put on life-support.

"The doctors said there was no hope," said Rick. "They said she was going to die."

The doctors instructed Rick to begin preparing his children for their mother's death. Rick could barely comprehend how his wife of 19 years, a woman in the prime of her life with hardly a scratch on her, was being given no hope of surviving. Rick needed a miracle.

The church that the Caynors attended during language school in Bangkok quickly organized a prayer chain of people who committed to praying every hour of every day until God intervened for Lisa.

"When the church hears there's no hope, they go to God in prayer," said Rick.

While Lisa laid in the intensive care unit, having each breath forced in and sucked out by a powerful machine, doctors waited for her die, and Rick and his church prayed. After 40 days, Lisa surprised everyone when she began to breath on her own. The hospital moved her out of ICU, but the doctors maintained that she would never recover. They insisted that, while she may not die, she would remain in a vegetative state.



*"The doctors said there was no hope. They said she was going to die."*



“There was nothing we could do. There was no surgery to be done,” said Rick. “All we could do was pray and wait.”

Lisa was covered in prayer every hour of every day as she laid unresponsive in a coma. One month went by and then two more. Rick and his children remained at her bedside, until — against all odds — Lisa began to wake up. It was not instantaneous, but slowly, Lisa came back to her family. The doctors once again warned the family not to get their hopes up. They said she would most likely have significant memory loss.

Rick prepared for that outcome, but received another miracle instead.

“After a weeklong process of her waking up, we realized she had no memory loss,” said Rick. “She could remember every song she ever sang, and every verse she’d ever memorized.”

### **The Long Road to Recovery**

God had answered their prayers. Lisa and her memories had awoken, but the damage to her brain and months of lying in a hospital bed had caused Lisa’s body to atrophy and stiffen in a curled-up position. She only had limited motion in her right hand and left foot. She needed intensive therapy.

The nurses and doctors began working on Lisa’s body, and Lisa began working on their hearts. Despite her physical limitations, Lisa’s passion for evangelism never waned. She took the intimate hours of therapy as an opportunity to share the gospel with three of her Thai nurses — one of whom got saved.

Unfortunately, her recovery wasn’t making as much progress as her hospital-based ministry. After three months, the Caynors reluctantly decided they needed to return to California, where they could lean on their strong support network of friends and family.



“In spite of all the obstacles, Rick and I never lost the certainty of being called to Thailand,” said Lisa. “We knew we’d be coming back.”

In California, Lisa began a grueling therapy regiment. But after several months, she was still unable to stand, dress herself, or use the bathroom on her own. Doctors recommended that they simply find a good motorized wheelchair. They said she was never going to walk again.

“Coming back to the US was hard, but realizing that my mom wasn’t going to improve as quickly as we had hoped was even harder,” said their daughter Kristin. “The feeling that the circumstances were extraordinary and temporary was replaced by a sense that now this hardship was ordinary, and we were in it for the long haul.”

The prognosis that Lisa would never walk again was devastating. But having seen God erase so many “nevers” already, Rick and Lisa decided to try a different specialist that a church friend had recommended.

{CONTINUED}



Immediately, they noticed how much this therapist's technique differed from the others Lisa had tried. He specialized in Neuro-Integrative Functional Rehabilitation And Habilitation or Neuro-IFRAH, an approach specially created for patients who have paralysis caused by a stroke or brain injury. In just one session, Lisa showed signs of progress. By the second session, Lisa could stand for 15-seconds, and by the fourth session, she took a step by herself. She went to therapy six hours a day, five days a week, and as every week passed, Lisa and Rick's dream of returning to Thailand became more and more real. Lisa worked with that specialist for another year before getting approved to return to Thailand for an 18-month trial term. The goal was to see if her recovery could continue to progress while she was abroad.

### Learning to Love Bangkok

The Caynors were unable to return to Cha-am because it was not handicap accessible and didn't have the specialists Lisa needed, so they went to Bangkok instead. Remarkably, God led them to a therapist who had the same rare training as their specialist in California. She had studied the Neuro-IFRAH technique and worked in Chicago for 16 years before returning to Thailand. Although the Caynors knew it was confirmation that God wanted them in Bangkok, it was hard to say goodbye to the dream of Cha-am.

"Adjusting to ministry in Bangkok was difficult because our first love was Cha-am," said Lisa. "Honestly, our first six months back after the accident were so difficult. There were many days that we felt so alone and didn't know how or where we could serve God in such a big city."

Rick and Lisa plugged back into the Bangkok church that had faithfully prayed for Lisa, and they also got connected with a college ministry through a local professor. During their first year, they built many relationships and began developing their



©BRAD MORRIS AND RICK CAYNOR



own ministry to reach university students, but they saw no one come to Christ. They struggled to understand why God had taken them away from Cha-am.

“It seemed like everywhere I looked God wasn’t coming to our aid, and yet, He was waiting for just the right time and the right place,” said Rick.

***“It seemed like everywhere I looked God wasn’t coming to our aid, and yet, He was waiting for just the right time and the right place.”***

Their glimpse into God’s plan came in the form of a rowdy 24-year-old college student named Tony. He was an English-major who started coming to Rick and Lisa’s house for family night to practice his language skills. Family night was a time of fun and food that the Caynors used to engage college students — most of whom were many miles away

from a home-cooked meal. They also used it to start discussions about Jesus. But Tony wasn’t interested.

After two years with little progress, Rick began to lose hope that Tony would ever change. Then, one day, Tony casually mentioned he wanted to try to stop smoking, and Rick saw an opportunity to connect further. Rick said he would lose weight if Tony would quit smoking. They struck a deal, and each week Rick had to get on the scale and Tony had to share how many cigarettes he had smoked. The challenge cemented their friendship, and last October, Tony attended a Christian camp where students get together to discuss their faith. It was there that Rick sensed a shift in Tony’s attitude, and on the last day of the camp, Tony pulled Rick aside.

“I really heard the message today. All the other times, I wasn’t really interested or ready, but this time was different,” said Tony. “I do believe in Jesus.”

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*“I no longer bow to the idols.  
I bow to the one true God.”*

Rick cried when he heard the news, and since then, he has seen a revolution in Tony’s life. Tony has a new way of thinking and a newfound love of God’s word that he’s been sharing with others. Recently, Tony made his conversion official on his national ID card. Where his religion had once been listed as Buddhist, it now says Christian.

“I no longer bow to the idols,” said Tony. “I bow to the true and living God.”

In the last two years, Rick and Lisa have been blessed to bring 17 more young people to Christ.

#### **His Plan**

Living in Bangkok has allowed the Caynors to reach people in ways they had never considered. In addition to their college ministry, God has given Rick and Lisa a heart to reach the city’s more than 2 million foreigners, and recently, the Caynors launched an international church. With the support of two new team members, Jason

and Kris Sperling, who arrived in August, they dream of reaching all of the nations living in their diverse city.

“We never thought we’d love Bangkok, but we love it now. At first, we were just ready to get out of here, but now we want to be here and we see the impact and opportunity we have,” said Rick. “One student said, ‘If you had been in Cha-am, who would I have here?’”

While the Caynors’ ministry and life have moved to Bangkok, Cha-am still holds a piece of their hearts, and God has provided for that, too. This year, five ABWE missionaries, Liz Stevens, Bill and Lisa Sheets, and Daniel and Katie Lamb, arrived in Thailand to serve in Cha-am. They will join Pastor Ang and help fulfill a dream that was once thought to be lost.

“There was a time when we thought our vision to see Cha-am reached with the Good News of Jesus Christ was gone, but God is smiling because He knows what He’s doing. He had a plan to build that team, not with us, but God used us to recruit all those people,” said Rick. “God is working in Cha-am, but we clearly see that we’re meant to be in Bangkok.”





### Finding Forgiveness

As the city of Bangkok pulses outside their tiny apartment, Lisa has a university student read from a Thai Bible. A dozen other students surround Lisa on the floor, listening intently. Lisa has become like a mother to this hodgepodge of believers and seekers. It's hard to believe that just four years ago she was laying in a hospital bed on life support.

Lisa has made significant progress in regaining her mobility and independence. She can now dress herself, do household chores, and walk up to 15 minutes without assistance. But not a day goes by that she is not affected by what happened on that highway four years. The motorcyclist who took off after causing their accident was never caught for his crime, but Rick and Lisa pray that he would come forward — not for punishment, but for forgiveness.

“If I could speak to the motorcyclist who caused my accident, I would tell him I love and forgive him because God loved and

forgave me,” said Lisa. “I would tell him I’ve prayed for him to know Jesus.”

Rick worries that the motorcyclist is living with the guilt of thinking the accident he caused killed the people in the car. Rick has considered putting up a billboard to let the motorcyclist know everyone is okay.

“Lisa may not be able to do everything she used to and she may still have some limitations, but we are making an impact,” said Rick. “We know that our merciful God is in control, and it is hard to be anything but grateful.” ■







# from **who** to **Who**

Transforming a culture of blame  
to a culture of forgiveness  
through Jesus

By Ingela **Hartman**

As the son of a witch doctor, Moses had a bright future ahead of him. He was training to follow in his father's footsteps, making him one of the lucky few in his village who received any form of education. Moses was in line for one of the most prominent roles in his jungle village, and life seemed good. But Moses' bright future was eclipsed by constant fear and his village's dark traditions.

Moses lived each day scared of the vindictive spirits that his people believed controlled their world. But more than anything, he was afraid of the way his people tried to appease these spirits through idol worshipping, animal sacrifices, and even murder.

Moses grew up in Papua New Guinea — a place filled with unbelievable natural beauty and unimaginable brutality. This Pacific island nation sits just 125 miles above Australia's northeast coast, but it bears little resemblance to its progressive neighbor down under. Papua New Guinea's steep mountains and thick jungles prevented exploration by the Western world until the late 1800s. Its severe landscape also kept villages isolated from each other for thousands of years, allowing more than 800

**Photographs By**

Tom Kilpatrick,  
Jay York &  
Jeremy Berrus

distinct cultures and more than 850 unique languages to develop in a country the size of California.


Today, more than 80 percent of the country's 6.5 million people still live in rural and remote areas with little-to-no aspects of modern life. Those living in Papua New Guinea are focused mainly on survival, as few have access to basic healthcare, more than a third are illiterate, and less than half have guaranteed access to safe drinking water. Most people merely exist on what they are able to produce in their gardens.

While there has been some introduction of modernity in the form of spotty cell phone coverage and a few paved roads, many tribes remain untouched by the outside world, and the country continues to be enchained by animism — a belief that

the spirits of their ancestors inhabit the rivers, trees, mountains, and the world around them, controlling good and evil. In Papua New Guinea, sunny days, calm weather, and good fortune are the result of pleased spirits. Thunderstorms, crop failures, and illness are the result of angry spirits. In order to appease the angered spirits, the village must determine who is at fault and the wrongdoer must be punished accordingly — often in unbelievably brutal ways.

“If you can think of everything in Papua New Guinea, in general, as anti-God and anti-Bible, you will begin to understand the culture,” said Bill Tobias, an ABWE missionary to Papua New Guinea. “Constant fear and bondage are daily companions to these people.”

Moses was raised in the heart of this darkness, deep in the dense jungle of the Simbai region. He lived on a mountain near a remote village called Yomneki, where the people felt so skilled at pleasing the spirits with dark rituals and sacrifices that they named the mountain “Satan’s Throne.”



If you can think of everything in Papua New Guinea, in general, as anti-God and anti-Bible, you will begin to understand the culture.”



More than 80 percent of Papua New Guinea's inhabitants live in remote areas with little-to-no access to modern life.

But in the face of this deep-seated evil, God was calling these lost people to Himself.

When Moses was 15, God led a Yomneki man to a church in a faraway coastal town where he heard the gospel. He quickly returned to his village to share what he had learned about a man named Jesus. He told them that because of Jesus they could have forgiveness for their sins and lasting peace.

“We knew what we were doing was wrong. We knew the truth was out there, but we did not know what it was,” a Yomneki tribe leader later said.

As an up-and-coming witch doctor, Moses was sent to investigate the truth of the man's claim. He hiked two hours through the rugged jungle to Yomneki where he listened to the man explain the gospel. Moses placed his faith and trust in Jesus Christ just two days later, and for the first time in his 15 years, the fear that gnawed at him night and day evaporated. Moses immediately began telling people about the peace he had found, and his witness created many new believers. Soon, Moses felt God calling him to become a pastor so he could teach more people about Christ's hope, but he needed more training and education.

ABWE's Goroka Baptist Bible College was the answer.



### Teaching Hope

Established in 1974, Goroka Baptist Bible College (GBBC) is a four-year school that equips Papua New Guinean believers to be pastors, church planters, and church leaders. More than 400 men and women have graduated from the college, including Moses who, after completing his degree, returned home to plant the Simbai Station Baptist Church.

“Moses grew to be a great preacher through his training at GBBC. He was blessed with a winsome personality, and now he knows how to study his Bible and write a compelling sermon,” said Bill Tobias. “He has also become an amazing leader with a lot of influence over the other pastors and leaders in his region.”

Moses partnered with other GBBC graduates and Simbai pastors to plant several more churches and brought many more to faith. As the gospel spread, these new believers felt a deepening burden to reach all of their people, but they quickly realized the enormity of reaching more than 70,000 people scattered throughout a

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That airstrip is what faith looks like.

It is about starting the impossible and trusting in God to make it possible.”

rugged mountainous terrain with no roads. Even with all their passion and determination, they knew they needed help.

They began praying for a missionary pilot and a plane, and in 1983, they put their faith into action. With no plane or pilot, they started building an airstrip in Yomneki. They had to literally carve the airstrip into the side of “Satan’s Throne” to create enough level ground for the plane to land and take off. With no power equipment, they used only hand tools — large burlap bags, shovels, hand carved wooded tampers, and two homemade dirt carts. It took nearly 17 years, but in 1999, the strip was officially opened.

“That airstrip is what faith looks like,” said Bill Tobias. “It is about starting the impossible and trusting in God to make it possible. God provided the plane, and according to many pilots, it is one of the best bush airstrips in the country.”

Pastor Moses, along with ABWE missionaries and other pastors and GBBC

graduates, are using that airstrip on “Satan’s Throne” to open doors for the gospel in the Simbai region, and it is working. Today, more than 30 believers from Simbai have graduated from GBBC and planted more than 20 churches, freeing thousands from the chains of spirit worship.

#### **Forgiveness Is Hard**

While the gospel is taking root in Papua New Guinea, it is slow, hard work in a culture built on blame and punishment. The concept of forgiveness is difficult for many to grasp. Even educated, city-dwelling Papua New Guineans still espouse some belief in sorcery. When something bad happens in Papua New Guinea, people do not ask what — they ask who.

“If a person becomes sick or dies, a witch doctor is often consulted to determine who





is to blame for the tragedy. Even with a medical diagnosis, I heard a man say, 'Yes, he died from dysentery, but we want to know who caused him to get it, and we'll make them pay.' It often leads to threats, pay-back killings, and tribal wars," said Pat Melson, ABWE missionary and Headmaster at GBBC.

David Tila, a GBBC graduate, sought to change this mindset through leading by example and God gave him many opportunities.

Several years ago, David was on his way to visit the sick at the hospital when a group of heavily intoxicated young men, unprovoked, jumped him. David received a violent beating that resulted in a sizable knot on his forehead and deep gash over his eye that required six stitches.

The police managed to capture the men and kept them overnight so David could

press charges in the morning. When David returned the next day, the police were surprised that wasn't why David had come back.

"These guys didn't mean to do it," David said. "They are my friends."

The police incredulously stared at his heavily bandaged face that was littered with deep hues of blue and purple, but with nobody to press charges, they had no choice but to release the men. The police opened the cell and watched as David walked in and spoke compassionately to the men who had beat him just hours earlier. Both the policemen and the now-sobered drunks listened to David explain that he was called to forgive because God had forgiven him.

David's background was not much different than those men. He arrived at GBBC in 1995 with only a sixth-grade education. He was a self-described "bush manki," or country bumpkin. Cultured people often looked down on him, but when he preached, his powerful words challenged even the most

(CONTINUED)



person he has discipled. The ministry cycle of training faithful men, who in turn teach others, continues.

educated of men. David's classmates grew a deep respect for him and his passionate belief that God had called him to preach.

After graduating in 1998, he started a church in his home region. In spite of persecution and even threats on his life, this former bush manki persevered. He remained confident in who God made him to be, and his life and actions proved to be the greatest sermon he never preached.

"David has sent two families to GBBC and there are seven current students at the college who were either discipled or sent by him," said Pat Melson. "Not bad for a man from the 'sticks' with only an elementary school education."

David's legacy is being carried forward by every life he has touched and every

### **From a Thief to a Witness**

Along with former witch doctors and bush mankis, GBBC is reaching those who are most in need of redemption — like Rusta.

Rusta never had a true family. His mother and father gave him away as an infant, and the woman who looked after him died when he was only five years old. He was left to fend for himself until his brother gave 15-year-old Rusta to a white man who came through their area recruiting young men to work on a plantation.

Feeling oppressed by the work and lack of opportunity for a man with no education and no family, Rusta began making trouble and stealing. Before long, he was living the life of a thief. He became a well-known criminal in several major cities and towns





of Papua New Guinea and was to be shot on sight by the police — no questions asked.

“I did a lot of sinful things and was living as a criminal. I was an armed robber, robbing banks and businesses all over the country. The police chased me many times and I finally had no more places to hide,” said Rusta. “I returned to my home area in Simbai and went out and lived in the dense jungle.”

Occasionally, Rusta would make brief appearances in the village, where he met ABWE missionaries Bill and Debbie Tobias and a GBBC graduate, Pastor Walis. They felt compelled to share the gospel with the lost and desperate Rusta. Their words gave him a lot to think about as he hid for months at a time in the jungle with very little human contact. Rusta thought about

the many times the Lord had spared his life, and he began to feel convicted about the blessing and mercies he had received despite his poor choices. Rusta eventually accepted Christ as his Savior, and God began using him as a powerful witness.

“I was living in sin and doing a lot of sinful things. I knew if I died I would not go to a good place. But God sent the missionaries to help me,” said Rusta. “I do not know how to read or write very well, but I heard God’s word, thought about what the Bible says, and prayed a lot. Finally, I believed God, and God saved me.”

In the last 10 years, Rusta has married a kind Christian woman, and together

**(CONTINUED)**

#### VIEWMORE

stunning photos of the natural beauty of Papua New Guinea and its people at [www.abwe.org/gallery](http://www.abwe.org/gallery)



“

Students need to keep going to GBBC, keep learning, and keep coming back and teaching us the truths from God's word.”

they've had four beautiful children. Rusta is a doting father who is giving his children the childhood and family he never had.

“Unlike my parents, I am taking good care of my wife and children. I help my wife with the children, changing their dirty diapers, washing them, feeding them, and providing for them,” said Rusta.

In many parts of the world, these duties are a standard part of being a father and a husband, but not in Papua New Guinea where women are viewed as property. Wives are bought for a bride price, and their responsibility is to take care of their husband, the land, the gardens, the animals, and the kids — in that order. Women lack basic rights and according to a 2013 study, Papua New Guinea is one of the worst places in the world for violence against women. Immorality and adultery are a way of life. Abuse and abandonment are commonplace. But the influence of GBBC and its graduates are slowly changing this pattern by solid teaching and providing Godly examples.

Rusta and his family faithfully attend their local church led by GBBC grad Pastor Walis. Through his tutelage, Rusta is learning and growing spiritually, and over time, he has established himself as a prominent member of the community. He regularly shares the gospel with his friends and neighbors, and one weekend he visited 27 different homes to share what Christ has done in his life. While he has not yet received a pardon from the government for his sins, Rusta has received a full pardon from God.

“Students need to keep going to GBBC, keep learning, and keep coming back and teaching us the truths from God’s word,” said Rusta.

### **Making a Lasting Impact**

Over the last 40 years, Goroka Baptist Bible College graduates have impacted Papua New Guinea in ways that few others can. The country, with its hundreds of diverse tribes and unique languages, is one of the most culturally and



linguistically complex nations in the world, but after training at GBBC, students are able to return to their native region and minister in their local language to a culture they know intimately. This November, 30 more men and women graduated from GBBC, bringing the college’s 40-year total to just over 400. These educated witnesses and leaders have gone out to spread the gospel throughout the country and planted more than 100 thriving churches.

“The annual graduation is one of the greatest moments in my ministry. I love to feel the excitement and hope as graduates prepare to leave the Bible College. It is also fraught with tears, as we talk of God’s faithfulness, and the uncertainty of the future,” said Pat Melson.

“Having come as strangers, they leave as brothers and sisters. They leave as fellow laborers in the harvest fields of men’s souls.”

As graduates share the hope and knowledge of Jesus Christ, they have created a surge of new believers who want to study God’s word. Sadly, the GBBC is already at maximum capacity and many potential students must be turned away.

“Papua New Guinea’s rugged terrain, limited roads, and lack of general infrastructure makes it physically impossible for our students to commute. They must live on-campus, but space is limited,” said Bill Tobias. “We must expand to allow the college to teach more students who can go out and share the gospel.”

The college is currently working to raise support to expand the campus with additional facilities, classrooms, and housing. The goal is to incrementally increase the number of students from 70 to 200 throughout the next five-to-ten years, giving more local believers, like Kia Kawage, the opportunity to be discipled.

Kia was 14 when he came to know Jesus Christ as his personal savior after he heard an ABWE missionary preach the message of salvation. As a young man with little opportunity for discipleship, his faith often wavered. There were times that he felt pressure to give up his Christian life because of bullying from his clan and community.

“Sometimes I questioned if religion is something that belongs to the white people, and they are just using it to rule over my life,” said Kia. “But after studying and consulting my heart, I concluded that Christianity is not about the color of our skin. It is about a loving God who gave His son Jesus to die on the cross for my sins.”

As Kia’s spiritual walk deepened, he felt called to attend GBBC so he could better minister to his people, and the training he received more than 20 years ago has helped his

ministry flourish. He has discipled many and sent six students to GBBC, equipping them to share Christ’s hope and free the people of Papua New Guinea from the chains of spirit worship.

“I am using the education I received at GBBC to bring my people into a saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus,” said Kia. “I dream of the day when every man and woman in Papua New Guinea has heard and responded to the gospel.” ■





**“Jesus completely transformed my life,**

and I want to share His hope and peace with my people. But I don't know how. I need to attend Goroka Baptist Bible College so I can study God's word and learn how to bless others with it — but the college has no more room.”

*- Samson*

## **WILL YOU HELP?**

Help us expand Goroka Baptist Bible College so we can train more eager believers like Samson. Your support will help equip more church planters and church leaders to teach and share the gospel with the people of Papua New Guinea.

**GIVE ONLINE AT [www.abwe.org/teachhope](http://www.abwe.org/teachhope)**

 In Canada, give to Goroka Baptist Bible College at [www.abwe.ca/give/ways-to-give](http://www.abwe.ca/give/ways-to-give)

# PAPUA

## NEW GUINEA

More than **800 indigenous languages**  
in a country the size of California



More than  
**850**  
Ethnic Groups



POPULATION

**6.55**  
Million

More than

**80%** *LIVE IN RURAL*

**AREAS** with few or no aspects of modern life

Many tribes in the isolated mountainous interior have little contact with one another, let alone with the outside world, and do not have any monetary system.

Due to the mountainous terrain, air travel is the most important form of transportation in Papua New Guinea.

The country has **561** airstrips,  
**540** of them unpaved.



**PNG** Compared to its closest Southern Neighbor: **Australia**

125 Miles

Papua New Guinean women are **37x** more likely to die during childbirth than Australian women

Australians can expect to live nearly **20 years longer than** Papua New Guineans



**1,200** children **DIE** every day

**1 DOCTOR** per **17,068** people



**PNG** has the worst health status in the Pacific region.

**IT RANKS 157 of 187** countries on the UN's Human Development Index

**30% LIVE** on **LESS THAN \$1** a day



**1/3 OF CHILDREN** do not attend school and never learn to **READ** or **WRITE**

**50% DO NOT HAVE ACCESS TO CLEAN WATER**



**SOURCES**

- [www.adi.org.au/health-in-png-2/png-health-statistic](http://www.adi.org.au/health-in-png-2/png-health-statistic)
- [aid.dfat.gov.au/countries/pacific/png/Pages/why-aid.aspx](http://aid.dfat.gov.au/countries/pacific/png/Pages/why-aid.aspx)
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# Everything is Different

By Dan **Byrum** | ABWE Missionary to The Gambia



**P**alm and Baobab trees are scattered across the flat Gambian coastline. The paved roads are narrow, so my wife and I walk the dirt side streets that are rough and pocked with potholes. The stores, products, and landmarks are strange and unfamiliar.

The money is colorful and it takes a lot to buy anything. Our mental calculators are constantly in conversion mode. The beggars come — the blind, the crippled, the mother with twins. There are vendors selling apples, oranges, peanuts, cashews, and cellphone credit. I smile and speak a polite, “No, thank you,” before sliding into our scorching vehicle with bags full of groceries. The beggars wait just outside our window as we pull away. I feel the guilt of being in this new position of wealth.

Everything here is different. The tropical sun is warmer, the air has a strange scent and texture, and the cadence of speech has a foreign rhythm. The afternoon sun pulses 100-degree heat, and my family, tired, sweaty, and hot, retreats to the comfortable relief of the air conditioning. We turn on the TV, flipping past Arabic Idol, soap operas, and talk shows delivered in an alien tongue. Finally, we discover English-speaking programming. Eagerly and gratefully, we drink in the escape from the strangeness of this place.

Our new home is in a small rural village. It is a basic brick house with corrugated roofing, windows with screens, and florescent lights that are dimly powered by solar panels and batteries. We use light sparingly, opting to save the energy for our 12-volt fans. We are among the richest people in town. This has never happened

before in our lives, yet another reminder that everything here is different.

The people talk to us, but we don’t understand. They greet us kindly, smiling and laughing. They are gracious and want to be our friends, but we don’t know a single word of their language. We feel lost, confused, foolish, uncomfortable, and overwhelmed. We sit on our porch as the sun sets in the west, at least that’s the same. We eat dinner around our dimly lit table, something comfortably American.

Finally, the day ends. Washed, clean, and exhausted, I crawl into bed. As I lay in the dark, waiting for sleep and listening to crickets deliver the world’s loudest serenade, the speakers in the Mosque begin chanting the call to prayer, and I am reminded where I am and why I am here. Suddenly, our purpose comes into focus; these are a people shrouded in darkness desperately in need of the light. We have a message of hope, a message of eternal love, a message of God’s mercy and grace that through our Savior Jesus Christ all can be saved. Through Him, everything here can be different.



**LEARN MORE** about Dan and Bridgot Byrum’s ministry at [www.thegambia.abwe.org](http://www.thegambia.abwe.org)



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## Bringing God into Focus

By Patrick Melson

**As missionaries in Papua New Guinea, we often feel we can't handle the size of the task before us or that we have bitten off more than we can chew.** There are more than 850 different tribes speaking more than 800 different languages, but throughout this diverse country, a unifying cornerstone of Papua New Guinea's culture is animism, the belief that vindictive spirits interact with the physical world and must be appeased.

Even some Christian believers support these animistic practices — reducing the one true God to just another petty and competing spirit. This blending of contradictory beliefs, known as syncretism, does not represent biblical Christianity.

How can we help change this? What is the solution?

Christ's answer was lifestyle discipleship. This is done through nurturing continual learners who grow in biblical knowledge and obedience, and regularly apply biblical truths to everyday situations.

At Goroka Baptist Bible College, we help students identify and interpret unbiblical thinking and practices, like animism, and replace them with a biblical worldview. Teachers mentor individual students and teach them how to interpret life situations through the lens of scripture. The college's Bible classes provide a firm foundation of knowledge, while theology classes systematize correct doctrine and practice, and ministry classes and internships provide practical hands-on experience. GBBC is a vital part of inciting change here in Papua New Guinea. It provides valuable ministry and discipleship training to faithful men and women so that they can, in turn, teach others (2 Timothy 2:2).

Most graduates return home to faithfully serve the Lord where they are already fluent in the culture and language. Their growing influence and strong witness was recently demonstrated when a local Christian was accused of using sorcery to murder a young man. Two GBBC graduates stepped in and helped resolve the situation. Instead of the normal bloodshed, believers prayed, the witch doctor was silenced and discredited, and God's name was exalted. It reminded me of Paul's work among the Ephesian disciples who decisively turned from false gods to the living God (Acts 19-20).

With the help of GBBC and its graduates, this shift is beginning to take root in many areas throughout Papua New Guinea. People are turning away from animistic practices. The gospel is making strides. It is happening one student, one disciple at a time. And slowly, the overwhelming task at hand becomes just a little smaller.

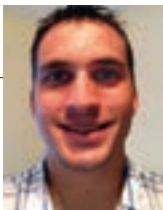


*Patrick and Kellis Melson serve at Goroka Baptist Bible College in Papua New Guinea, where Patrick has been the Headmaster since 2001.*



## Unlocking a **400-Year-Old** Treasure

Secluded in the mountains of Cape Verde's largest island, Santiago is a village closed off to the rest of the country and very skeptical of outsiders. It was in this setting that the village chief cautiously invited us in to talk about how we could help teach and nurture the children in their school. When the conversation inevitably turned to faith, the chief brought out one of their most prized possessions: a 400-year-old Bible. He told us, 'We read a portion together as a village almost every week, but we have no one who can explain to us what it means.' We are excited to help them unlock the riches in this 400-year-old treasure."



*Michael and Reneé Skibinski are ABWE missionaries working in the Cape Verde Islands off the Western Coast of Africa in partnership with a mission movement out of Brazil started through the Brazilian Multicultural Mission Maranatha. Michael and Reneé, along with their three sons, are helping to plant churches and share the gospel through sports ministry, English classes, and personal discipleship.*



## Help Faith Take Root in *Papua New Guinea*

This Pacific island nation is a place unlike any other — filled with unbelievable natural beauty and unimaginable darkness. Many people believe the spirits of their ancestors control the world and must be appeased through dark rituals, animal sacrifices, and even murder.

But in the face of this deep-seated evil, God is calling the people of Papua New Guinea to Himself. And they are hearing Him.

In 40 years, Goroka Baptist Bible College has trained more than 400 national believers to share the hope of Jesus Christ throughout the nation. Their ministry has freed thousands from the chains of spirit worship and created an explosion of people wanting to study God's word — more people than the college has room for.

### *Will you help?*

We are praying to raise an initial \$280,000 to begin expanding the college campus so we can increase the number of students from 70 to 200. Please help us give more eager believers the opportunity to be disciplined.

**Give online at [www.abwe.org/teachhope](http://www.abwe.org/teachhope)**  
Or mail your check made out to ABWE Foundation to  
PO Box 8585, Harrisburg, PA 17105. Please include Goroka  
Baptist Bible College (E14MAD01) in the memo line.

