

Church Matters

Keeping a link with the Sydney congregation



Living and Sharing the Gospel

December 2016 – January 2017

Vanuatu Festival 2016

Mark Latham with **Rex Morgan** joined the Vanuatu church at this year's Festival. Mark gave a sermon about the church in Mt Wilhelm, using large laminated photos which the members studied excitedly, rejoicing in the opportunity to see their fellow Melanesian brothers and sisters. He capped off the sermon by presenting a "billum" (a traditional woven string bag made by hand in PNG) from the PNG church to the Vanuatu congregation.

Mark had also brought a letter from the Mt Wilhelm children and one from the Mt Wilhelm church. In the following days, many of the Naveli children handed him letters of reply to take back to PNG on his next visit there. We hope the bonds between the two congregations will continue to grow and strengthen as we are all family together, or "wantok" (one-talk) as they say in PNG.

A meeting of the leadership team enabled Mark to work with the Vanuatu members on determining the best way to proceed with the buildings damaged by the April earthquake. It was agreed that there was no choice other than to demolish and replace the current church building. It is badly cracked and liable to collapse in another earthquake, as well as showing serious termite damage. But the first priority is the water supply. It was also agreed that they need to buy another water tank to supplement the current one, and to improve the guttering on the Guest House in order to capture the maximum amount of rainwater.



Consideration was also given to buying a large solar panel kit to provide power so they don't need to rely on the noisy, fuel-hungry generator. A trip was made to the nearest town to compare options. Some wood was bought and **Ombre Taren** made a ladder ready for use on the guttering work.

Mark also explained compost-making and encouraged the members to do this.

(More on Web...)



Mark Showing Pictures of Mt Wilhelm



Mark & Ombre Making the New Ladder



Cracked Wall

We will be holding our annual PNG meeting on Sunday, January 29th 2017. At this meeting, we will review the developments of the past 12 months and the priorities for the future.

PNG Annual Meeting

We have been very encouraged at the response to recent visits. As the report on their recent Festival demonstrates, the Mt Wilhelm congregation is taking the initiative as they respond to the lead of the Holy Spirit.

Services

There will be no services in Sydney and Wollongong on December 24th, 31st and January 7th.

On January 28th, **John Mclean** will be speaking in Sydney and **Rod Matthews** in Wollongong.

The Wollongong congregation will have a new location for January 14th and 21st — at the **Gudze's** home. They will be back to the normal location on January 28th.

Correction

Correction to the November issue: **John Swamis** should have been **John Biswas**.



Rod Matthews:

Kathmandu

Earlier this year, **Deben Sam** conducted his second annual Himalayan Bible School (HiBiS) in Kathmandu for 12 students selected carefully from the 12 or so sessions of the Mobile Bible School that he conducted in rural villages during the summer months of last year. **Wong Mein Kong** and I had the opportunity to spend a day with this group in Kathmandu in March and each teach a session.

The students spend three months in Kathmandu and then the following nine months back in their home areas strengthening the local congregation and utilising what they have learned. Deben considers this activity one of the most important he conducts in the course of the year. He is most appreciative of the fact that the funding for HiBiS came from the Australian churches through the Mission Fund last year.



This year, his team has already conducted Mobile Bible Schools in seven locations and, circumstances permitting, hopes to add another four or five before the end of the year. This year, Deben has been quite ill for a time, and so his brother-in-law, **Raju**, and Pastor **Joseph** who leads the Kathmandu congregation, took the classes. From these locations, he will choose another 12 people to come to Kathmandu for HiBiS next year, which starts in February. The starting date necessitates having the funds available far enough in advance to get the travel costs to these rural people before they have to come to Kathmandu in February.

As mentioned last Newsletter, Wollongong had budgeted \$9,000 to cover the entire cost of HiBiS for 2017. The \$9,000 from Wollongong was sent in time with the assistance of our head office.

PNG Festival 2016

Theme: *Living and Sharing the Life of Jesus Christ.*

Ben Gelwa sent this report:

Love and greetings from Mt Wilhelm GCI congregation to all our dear brothers and sisters in Australia, who share the gospel of Jesus Christ and their life with us. We would like to extend our greetings and special thanks to **Mark Latham** and **Rod Dean** for their pastoral visits; they were a real blessing to us in both our physical and spiritual life.

We had a wonderful festival this year which was unlike the previous ones that we had before. On the first day we had our welcome day to start it off. The following night we had a fellowship and talent show. The middle of the week was marked as family day that we celebrated together with different activities. We had youth day on Saturday. We had fellowships, Bible discussions and also different types of games on several days involving children, youths, mothers and fathers including the elderly.

We had a pastoral team meeting about a vision plan and accountability in the church. Deacon **Francis Angai** gave a brief report about the establishment of Ramu church. He reported that they had ten children, two women and a man. They requested for an elder or leader from our Mt Wilhelm church to go and serve them.

Our church members of different age groups and gender humbly took part in all the different activities during the festival. The main message of the festival was "*We are God's Holy Temple.*" Therefore we must live and share the life of God. As we celebrated the last day we joyfully enjoyed the communion service followed by a mumu and presentation of gifts.

We all enjoyed the festival with much fun, faith and friendship including the surrounding communities who attended. We also had **Martin Kuno**, a long-time baptised member who was baptised by **Tim Grauel**, attend as well. On the last day, he encouraged the church and commented that he was inspired and how he had learnt a lot of new things during the festival. Everyone was really impressed and blessed during this time together.

(More on Web...)

Victorian News

Early December, **Randal** and **Mary Bouchier** with **Phil Van Dijk** will be travelling to our church in Ranongga in the Solomon Islands. They would appreciate our prayerful concerns.

A big invitation is extended to attend the **Victorian Regional Family Camp**, 26th December to 2nd January. Bookings can be made online at the National Church website or you can call **Randall** on 0425 716 655. The campsite is situated on the **Selzer** farm at beautiful Myrtleford on the Ovens River.

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Thanks to Park Hunter (See Exodus 4:2-3) 10-24-2006
ZIPPORAH, HONEY, HAVE YOU SEEN MY STAFF?