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*Holiness Writers*

**ORCHIDS ON A  
WASTE HILLSIDE**

By

*Marilyn Lavy Sturdevant*

*“Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without  
which no man shall see the Lord” Heb 12:14*

**Spreading Scriptural Holiness to the World**

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# ORCHIDS ON A WASTE HILLSIDE

By

**Marilyn Lavy Sturtevant**

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[This booklet is not copyrighted. However, since the material contained in it relates to the work of Evangelical Bible Mission (EBM), I contacted Gerald Bustin, General Leader of EBM, for permission to publish the work. He, in turn, referred me to Steve Sturtevant. Just today, 08/24/97, I received the following email from Steve Sturtevant:

To: hdm@dmi.net From: "Steve Sturtevant" <steve@sturtevant.kiev.ua> Date: Sun, 24 Aug 1997 22:02:52 +0300 (EDT) Subject: RE: Orchids on a Waste Hillside

Dear Duane,

We are happy to give you permission to put "Orchids on a Waste Hillside" on digital disk and trust that it will be a blessing to someone. May the Lord richly bless you in your ministry!

Yours for the Kingdom—Steve Sturtevant

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If you enjoy this book, please consider making a contribution to EBM to help support the missionary endeavors of Steve Sturtevant. See last page for details to order books and/or the address to send contributions. — WHP

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# ORCHIDS ON A WASTE HILLSIDE

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## BACK COVER TEXT

Here is Marilyn Sturtevant's own story of courageous Christian Witness in the highlands of Papua New Guinea. In a kaleidoscope of vividly-presented senses, she tells it as it really is — the spiritual darkness and paralyzing superstitions of a primitive, yet sensitive, people; the bloody inter-tribal warfare kept alive by ancient rivalries; the sacrificial ministry of Christian missionaries, aided by a growing and virile indigenous church.

Marilyn, a graduate of Messiah College, Grantham, Pennsylvania, first served a four-year missionary term in Papua New Guinea, beginning in 1967. After returning to the United States, marrying, and beginning her family, she returned to PNG in 1980 with her husband, Steve, and her two children, Jason and Stephanie.

"Orchids on a Waste Hillside" is a gripping missionary story of what the Holy Spirit is doing now in a rapidly-emerging Third-World nation. You will be absorbed in this unforgettable narrative; you will sometimes smile; and perhaps, you will occasionally shed a tear as you read this triumphant account of contemporary "servanthood."

Larry D. Smith, President  
John Fletcher Christian College and Academy

In her engrossing account of life and faith in a primitive country, Marilyn Sturtevant has presented both the natural, awe-inspiring beauties of God's creation and the beauty that can be found in men's souls when they accept the Lord as Savior and Example for their lives.

The turmoil of primitive tribes living in the old ways is mirrored throughout the world wherever men have not found the great, forgiving love available through Jesus Christ and its second blessing, the self-giving love for other human beings regardless of genealogy or place of birth.

The examples set by the missionaries and their families are truly models for all men everywhere.

Cliff Lowell  
Media Director,  
Educational Service Unit #11  
Holdrege, Nebraska

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# ORCHIDS ON A WASTE HILLSIDE

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## **To the Reader:**

Orchids on a Waste Hillside is an account of trials and triumphs of our missionary service in the tropics of Papua New Guinea. The narratives related herein are eyewitness accounts from our own lives or they have been recounted to me by a friend who was involved in some way. In a couple [of] cases names have been changed.

The book is composed in three main divisions. The first section consists of chapters one through five. Various adverse scenes of PNG life, as it affected our lives, are described in it. These are the trials. God gives protection during them.

The last division pictures the triumphs. It consists of chapters 14 through 18. The gracious manifestations of the power of God as we witnessed them, are displayed in it. Thank God for them.

The middle section can best be described as the trudgings. By and far the major part of mission life is just that: trudging. Here our daily life will be discussed. But I found it difficult to adequately describe the weariness and boredom of everyday routines and schedules. This aspect of mission life is the part that takes a resolute walk with the Savior in order to be victorious day by day. Yes, God has grace for this, too.

Marilyn Lavy Sturtevant

January, 1984

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## FOREWORD

During the last 26 years of my personal involvement in foreign missionary work, I have had repeated opportunities to watch new missionaries arrive on the field and begin a period of adjustment. For some, the struggle proved too great. Discouragement and personal defeat caused them to be added to the list of "drop-out" missionaries. Others persevered, made it through the first discouraging years and went on to become valuable missionaries.

Only now and then does a new missionary come along, who, from the first day almost, finds his place of service and becomes immediately effective.

Steve and Marilyn were the exceptional new workers. Their gifts in teaching and personal work were very vividly manifested right from the start. Added to their teaching ministry was a strong evangelistic emphasis which eventually took them into several remote areas as they sought to share the Gospel with hungry hearts. God has greatly blessed their ministry.

I was excited when I heard that Marilyn had written this book. I was honored to be asked to write the foreword. I was thrilled as I read the vivid portrayals of missionary life and work.

Now read on and enjoy the book as I have, then put the Sturtevants on your prayer list along with mission work in Papua New Guinea.

Gerald T. Bustin  
Papua New Guinea  
Field Superintendent

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# **ORCHIDS ON A WASTE HILLSIDE**

By

**Marilyn Lavy Sturtevant**

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# ORCHIDS ON A WASTE HILLSIDE

By

**Marilyn Lavy Sturtevant**

1

## MURDER AT DAWN

Silently the greased, nearly-naked bodies slunk forward in the early dawn. Well-hidden, unsuspected, they crept close to the Kugla tribal houses.

Smoke! That acrid smell of burnt grass stung noses inside the pit-pit huts. That was the first indication that anything was amiss that cool, moist Sunday morning, May 15, 1983. Sinister noises outside caused fear to march up the spines of the Kugla people. Angers flared! The ever-ready arrows and spears were brought to quick action.

As men burst through low doorways, women and children from nearby houses scuttled away to the protection of surrounding brush and forest. No attention was paid them. This was the men's sphere.

The Pabarabuk tribesmen had seized a critical advantage during those prime minutes. Kugla men quickly sized up the situation. Several houses were already succumbing to the flames set by the enemy. They had no place for retreat or regimentation. It was every man for himself in this surprise attack. They were surrounded.

In the close man-to-man combat, an arrow sunk deep into Tepu's flesh. He fell to the ground near a large clump of bushes. Could he possibly move into its protection away from the deluge of arrows? But his clumsy, pain-ridden attempts attracted attention. With devilish glee, all enemy artillery was trained on him, while his comrades fled to safety. Now Tepu was left to himself. There was no way for any Kugla man to rescue him now.

The horrible realization of imminent death swept over him. Pitifully pleading for his life, he begged for an explanation of their menacing actions. He had not been aware of yesterday's argument between the Pabarabuk and Kugla clansmen. What did that matter to the enemy today? They had their victim. No amount of imploring would melt their hard hearts this morning.

In measured strokes, to prolong the pain of death, the brutal axes made sickening thuds on the limbs of the unfortunate man, till at last, through loss of blood, life drained away.

What disagreement could change the usually friendly Pabarabuk clansmen into such fiends?

Nambuga Mara is the elected premier of the Western Highlands Province, Papua New Guinea. His tribal home is a mile and a half from Pabarabuk mission station. In his younger, less-prosperous years he attended four years of primary school in the mission school. Now that he has risen to affluence and power, he has forgotten God. In line with his high position, he has taken six wives. Six



children have been born to his wives, one of whom is Marie, who attends high school at Papua New Guinea Bible Institute.

On Saturday, May 14, 1983, he was busy campaigning for the 1984 elections. He visited the neighboring Kugla village about five miles from Pabarabuk. To promote good will he supplied several cases of beer. When all had well drunk, he stood up to make his campaign speech. Boasting about his accomplishments, he angered the Kugla village councillor. When the councillor dared contradict him, tempers flared. Spears and arrows appeared as if by magic. A fight developed. Nambuga's men tried to protect him and his son Thomas, who was traveling with him. But before they got out of there, they both had arrow wounds. Unforgiveable!

Vengeance must be taken. Nambuga began rounding up the Pabarabuk warriors who would fight for him. Far and wide he went to raise an army. Those who didn't want to fight were labeled "sissies." The urge to loyalty was strong. Soon scores were ready to fight.

That night a counsel of war was held in the men's house near Nambuga's place. Many village elders were there. The voices of all present were almost unanimous with Nambuga's wishes. But one pastor, Kandulope Yakubu, from the Papakolia church, opposed him. "Let God take care of your enemies," he urged. "Be forgiving. Don't fight. God will not be pleased with such a war."

But no one listened. The fighting spirit was aroused. They wanted war. The strategy was drawn up for a surprise attack the very next morning. In that attack, Tepu was murdered. While one group was there, other groups were hitting the stores, gardens and pigs elsewhere. A path of destruction followed them till the Kuglas drove them back to their own land.

By afternoon both sides were ready to meet on the battlefield. The armies approached on an open hillside. Low, guttural noises, more beast-like than human, came from their throats. Shouted insults, hurled back and forth between the enemies, aroused their passions of hatred.

At a commanding "hoot", the men surged forward, led by front line warriors, bearing large tree-bark shields. Crouching close to the ground behind their screens, they closed the gap between the enemies till they were within arrow range of one another. The men behind the front lines were laden with quivers full of bone-tipped arrows. Their strong, black palm bows were tightly strung with sinewy vines, to give forceful drive to their missiles. As the antagonists reached shooting range, a volley of arrows began flying back and forth. Shouts and hideous screams created a mighty din on the battlefield.

When one was hit by an arrow, the others on his side rushed over to protect him behind the big shields while his brothers carried him back away from the battleground to safety. There the wounded waited and nursed his wounds till he was taken to a clinic.

Stephanie, Jason and I were walking to the local church for my women's Sunday school class that same day. Along the way we met Timothy Cranston running to the clinic with his brother's camera equipment. Melody and Benny Smith were coming out of the clinic. "They are taking a spear tip out of a man's leg," exclaimed Benny, "and we watched them!"

"They used scissors to do it," added Melody.

The missionary children were getting close-range observation privileges. They even heard the wounded men say they were going back to the war grounds immediately to help avenge their own injuries.

I walked on to church. Many local people were coming and going. The church began filling up. A solemn feeling prevailed. The usual geniality was missing. Thoughts of war were in their minds. Men were in the valley of decision. Should they obey the premier and go to war? Should they refuse and suffer abuses from their own relatives for their faith in the Lord Jesus? "Amazing grace, how sweet the sound, That saved a wretch like me," they sang in Pidgin English. Yes, God has plenty of grace available for every one in need. This was surely an hour of need for the Pabarabuk people. Missionaries' hearts bled as strong young men of the community laid aside their clothes to put on tanket leaves and go to war. How acutely aware we were of the spiritual battle going on at this time!

The next day we could see the smoke from many fires rising on the hills in the distance. The men were burning large areas of grassland along their borders so that there could be no surprise attack again. The burnt off area also serves as a battleground

By Tuesday several neighboring tribes had allied themselves with one or the other fighting tribes. The newspapers reported five thousand clansmen were involved. With the larger number fighting, larger numbers were wounded, too. But most of the wounds were superficial. They could be tended at the clinic on our station. After school I went over to see for myself.

I found a couple men waiting on the bench on the porch. Entering the first room, I saw a man sitting on a bench against the wall. An arrow tip was broken off in the calf of his leg. A medical attendant was swabbing it with alcohol. Another patient had his leg cocked up on a stool with gauze covering his wound.

Beverly Wickham, our missionary nurse, invited me to the next room where two other men were being treated. One was sitting on the examination table. A bulge on his forehead told of the place the arrow had hit him. At Beverly's direction, I placed my finger on the bulge. A hard kernel moved under the skin. The arrow had grazed his forehead, breaking off the bone tip between the skin and skull.

The other man was sitting on a chair, holding out his foot. The medical attendant was cutting away at the spot where the arrow had entered. A big three-cornered cut was still not large enough to locate the piece of bone.

Among the patients not one word of pain or discomfort was uttered. Those warriors neither wanted nor expected any sympathy for their wounds. They were proud of their wounds. Rather than being frightened away from war, they were anxious to get back to the fight as soon as possible.

But the sights I saw made my stomach churn. So I left quickly and never returned to see any more of the fifty-five wounded men treated there for arrow wounds during the next few weeks.

Some of our school children in the Accelerated Christian Education school have to travel about seven miles from their homes every day to attend school at Pabarabuk. One day during the early part of the war they had an exciting story to tell. Along the road, they had been stopped by a band of painted warriors.

"They had great big wooden shields," one volunteered.

"Bright-colored designs were painted all over the shields," another added.

"Yes, and the men were carrying long spears. Everyone of them had an ax in his hand or tucked into his bark belt." Others chipped in with their descriptions.

"What did they want? Why did they stop your truck?" We all wanted to know.

"They wanted to know what tribe our driver is from," explained Hudson.

"What tribe is he from?" I wanted to know.

"Oh, he's from Ialibu," they told me. That tribe is far enough away so as not to be allied with either of the enemies. The implication was evident. If the man had been from the Kugla tribe or one of its allies, he would have been in danger.

"Were you scared?" I wanted to know.

The reactions were varied. "Yes." "No." "Kind of." "Not really." But for the most part the excitement of it all was more overwhelming than fear. They had seen painted warriors close up.

Soon after that, the driver left his job. He never returned to drive the children to school anymore.

During the war Esther Hershey needed to take a car into Hagen right through the fighting zone. A police escort helped her through in the morning, because of threats to any of our vehicles going by the enemy territory. When business was taken care of, no police was available to accompany her. She had a young man from Pabarabuk in the back who needed to get home. He was covered with some goods so no one could see him along the way.

Passing through the Kugla land, they came upon a group of men standing across the road, forming a human road block. With a prayer in her heart, Esther laid on her horn and stepped on the gas. The men scattered. They made it back home safely. Had she stopped, the man in the back would have been in danger of his life.

The war continued to get worse. More tribes began to ally themselves with one of the tribes. Two or three large battles left dozens wounded. After two or three weeks of war, the police got serious about stopping it. They came out several times with tear gas. The fighting stopped only as long as they stayed in the area.

Nambuga Mara was charged with inciting others to war. He would not travel through the enemy territory to go to his government office duty. One day they sent a helicopter to pick him up. It stopped on the playground by our Accelerated Christian Education school. But Nambuga wasn't available. They flew down to his house, but he wasn't there. So they returned and waited on campus till they could get him. At last with much ado, he came in his truck and left in the helicopter.

A couple days later he was back in his home village. A police escort had guaranteed him safe passage. When he was wanted in Hagen again, a riot squad of about fifty police came out to get him. But he didn't want to go. He came to use the phone at our administration building, trying to get excused. The police, with their tear gas guns, waited in readiness on our campus. When he couldn't get excused, he finally went along with them.

Then one day the police ordered all warriors to negotiate peace.

Along the road to Hagen stands a curious monument. It consists of a rough-hewn post driven into the ground with several other posts encircling it at a two-foot radius. The ground all around it was cleared of vegetation at its erection. A couple months later those posts boasted green leaves sprouting from them. Vegetation had begun growing around it. Now it is a living monument of peace between the Kugla and Pabarabuk tribes.

Following police order no more arrows were to be exchanged. Both sides were to report any irregularities coming from the enemy clan.

It was the police who erected that monument squarely on the boundary between the two tribes. Neither side could cross that mark, bearing weapons. Punishment for doing so would be administered by the police themselves. The gardens, pigs, and houses of the truce breaker would be destroyed. Under this threat the two enemies laid down their arms and went back to ordinary tribal life.

So the living monument by the road to Hagen stands for peace in our valley.

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# ORCHIDS ON A WASTE HILLSIDE

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2

## HIRED KILLER

The Hagen and Tan people, two large tribes in the highlands, have been enemies for years. Since open tribal warfare for the most part has been checked by the government, the conflict must be carried out undercover. But there is always opportunity for angers to flare, ending in murder. One such episode occurred in May 1981.

Hunger and greed caused the two Tan men, working at jobs in Hagen, to sneak into a nearby garden by night. There they found plenty of taro. While one stood guard, the other dug as much as he could. This happened several times till the garden owner became wary. One night he was watching from the shadows when the thieves came. He was ready with his ax. Though one man escaped, the other was beaten to death.

Word spread at lightning speed. "A Hagen man killed a Tan man!" That the man was killed while stealing didn't make any difference. His murder must be avenged. Quickly the Tans responded. They sped back to Tan to round up their bows and arrows, shields and spears, and plenty of volunteers. Soon the Hagen people knew the Tans were ready for war.

Before a full scale war was waged, the police riot squad was on the scene. Tan plans were thwarted. Since there was no hope for open warfare, they went undercover. It wasn't hard for them to find a prominent Hagen man alone and unprotected. The terrible deed was finished without delay. Tans had their revenge.

But the Hagen tribe wouldn't take that violence without retaliation. They began looking for Tans. But they had cleared out of the area overnight. Looking far and wide in the Hagen area, they found none of the enemy tribe.

But PNGBI is only twenty-six miles from Hagen.

Clutches of fear gripped the hearts of our couple dozen Tari students. Killers were hired for \$6,000. They were waiting just across the Nebilyer River, about two miles away. Local Christians guarded roads to our station, forbidding their entrance.

But the boys still harbored dreadful fear in their hearts. At nights they grouped together in one or two rooms in their dorms. Their sharpened axes were always ready for use. Their sleep was troubled.

A boy from another place thought this was a good time to play a practical joke on them. One evening while they were huddled together in their room, he came up on the outside and broke some panes of glass in their window. Very shaken, they soon figured out what happened. Though they didn't think it was funny, they took it without repaying.

Another incident nearly ended in tragedy during this period of intense fear. Thomas, a student from the Enga province, went into the pit-pit hut used by the Tan students for cooking, one evening when it was empty. No one knew he was there. He lay down to rest by the smoldering fire.

Several Tan boys decided to go to the cook house during the evening. Waitili was carrying his sharpened ax. Through the partly opened door, they could see this man lying on the floor. Pangs of fear pierced their hearts. What if this were the paid killer? But they were prepared. Waitili pressed forward ahead of the rest, ax poised and muscles tense. The others fell silent.

Creak! Creak! The hinge squeaked as the door swung open. Thomas opened his eyes and lifted his head, peering in the dimness toward the open door. There silhouetted against the night sky was Waitili, with ax raised, and several others grouped behind him.

"I'm not from Hagen," he yelled. "I'm from the Enga." Fear etched his voice.

Sensing their mistake, Waitili lowered his ax. Their tenseness began to melt away as they entered and seated themselves by the fire. They gave Thomas a scolding for using their cookhouse without their knowledge.

With all this tension and fear on campus, the staff soon realized something had to be done. They decided to call a police escort and take the Tan students home. Winston Wehrman loaded the big Fuso truck with boys. Police cars, with lights flashing, led the way and brought up the rear. He took them to Mendi. From there they made their way into their own territory where they would be protected by their own warriors.

For three weeks or so they stayed home. But one stayed back at school. His name is Gera.

"Why did you stay here when the others went home?" Steve asked him.

"Because you had preached that if we are Christians, God will take care of us. Nothing will happen to us that isn't in His will. I testified that I was a Christian. I think if I had gone home, maybe my friends wouldn't believe that I am a Christian. I stayed back and trusted the Lord to take care of my life, and He did." This was Gera's reply.

God honored Gera's faith. In 1983 he graduated from PNGBI. He has been a stalwart Christian during these years. Several times he has accompanied Steve as a member of a Gospel Team and preached at various outstations. He plans to enter the English pastor's school and continue his preparation for God's service.

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# ORCHIDS ON A WASTE HILLSIDE

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3

## SINGING PRAISE IN THE WAR ZONE

Late one Saturday night a beer party was in progress at the new club house on the Ulke coffee plantation not far from Pabarabuk station. A young man from the neighboring Palike tribe, who had married into the Ulke tribe, was in the party with his in-laws. While the men were all drunk, contention rose among them. The Ulkes ganged up on the Palike man and murdered him. His body they threw into a nearby garden.

The next morning the woman who keeps the garden found the corpse. But where were the drunken murderers now? They were nowhere to be found. Well, the way to settle those scores is to bring out the bows and arrows. In the ensuing tribal war another man from the Palike tribe was killed. It was indeed a tense situation.

Unaware of the strained relations, Stephanie, Jason, and I walked into the coffee plantation for a Sunday morning service. Steve had left us off at the road on his way to preach at the Hagen services. The air was still, the new morning crisp. The birds were singing gaily in the trees, the sun's rays filtering through the leaves. It was such a lovely, peaceful walk — the kind of day that makes one wonder how anything could be wrong with the world.

Then we began noticing how nervous the natives were along the path. When they heard us coming, they peered around the bends in the road, then quickly drew back into the shadows. Along the way we passed the new club house, oblivious to the violent deeds committed there.

Just a few hundred yards beyond the beer house, a new grass church has been built by the Christians at the plantation. Approaching the clearing where the church is, we saw a man with a cocked arrow in his bow and a sheaf of arrows in his hand. But he smiled as we neared and readily shook hands with us.

"What are you doing with your bow and arrows?" I asked.

"I've been scouting around the plantation to make sure no armed warriors are coming," he replied. "Nothing will happen today while you have church," he assured me.

Near the church the village men were sitting on the ground discussing war tactics. They had every reason to fear revenge from the Palikes since they had killed two of their men. The score was not even.

As the time for service drew near, I was attracted to the church by the singing of a few women inside. Their song was the Pidgin version of "Blessed be the Name." The words of the Pidgin song mean, "Lift up the name of the Lord. Hallelujah! Jesus has already conquered Satan!" My heart was

touched by these humble women singing praise to the Lord for His victory over Satan. It might seem like the devil was victorious in the midst of this tribal war. They had their children grouped around them while the men outside were discussing their hair-raising schemes within earshot of the singing women. As I talked with the women, I could sense their deep-seated fears. But in the face of that fear they were praising God.

Soon my interpreter entered and the service began. After telling the story of Naaman to the children, I called the adults to listen as I related a story of war-time in Jerusalem. I told them how God protected the Israelites when Sennacherib's army surrounded their city. Soon I noticed that the young men began slinking into the back seats of the church. Discussions died down outside. One old, gray-headed man came to the open window to listen. The Holy Spirit was present with us. At the end of the service we had a good season of prayer.

As we walked back to the road to wait for Steve to pick us up, some of the women accompanied us. We listened to all the gory details of the murder at the beer house. It was evident that all the events of the past weeks were indelibly etched on their minds. By the time Steve picked us up, I was anxious to get away from there.

Within the next few days, fighting broke out again. Houses and coffee trees were burned on the plantation. Several received arrow wounds. Police came to the scene to squelch the war. In the resistance met by the police, one tribesman was killed.

Not long after, a pig feast was held in a neighboring tribe. The Ulke people were invited to share in the festivities. When the unfriendly Palikes heard of the journey the Ulkes were taking, they set up an ambush to kill Pinje, the headman, along the road crossing near Pabarabuk. Our herdsman saw these warriors and chased them off, forbidding them to shed blood in Pabarabuk territory. He then retreated to the protection of our station for his own safety.

But Pinje heard of the plan, so he found refuge among friends on our station over the weekend. When his fellow tribesmen arrived back home at the plantation, Pinje was not among them. No one knew where he was. They concluded that he had been killed. They all went into mourning for him.

As he rode home safely on the truck of a Pabarabuk man, he heard wailing. Soon the crying turned to rejoicing when they discovered their headman was alive and safe.

But for sheltering Pinje, the Pabarabuk tribe found themselves in the disfavor of the Palikes. Word was passed around that four Pabarabuk men were marked as a target for their revenge.

Ten, a local evangelist, was one of the marked men. I talked with him to get his reactions.

"At first I didn't believe it," he told me. "Then when I went to Hagen, I changed my mind." While there he was suddenly confronted by a group of his enemies. He saw them reach for their knives in their pockets before he turned and sprinted to safety in the police station. When they disappeared, he returned to his errands, only to find them on his trail again. After eluding them a couple times by



running to government buildings, he asked for a police escort. Then he hunted up the first vehicle leaving for Pabarabuk. He didn't try returning to Hagen for a while.

"How long will you have to worry about them following you?" I wanted to know. He told me they would never forget. Even if they didn't kill him, they would tell their sons. Some day they would get their revenge for harboring their enemy.

How do these people cope with such fear? Ten's philosophy is that God will keep His hand on him till it is his time to die. Then something may happen to him at his enemy's hand or he may fall sick. He isn't too deeply concerned about it. The answer is found in the faith of those women back in the plantation singing, "Hallelujah! Jesus has already conquered Satan!"

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4

## VENGEANCE

"Oo-ah, oo-ah, oo-ah," they loudly chanted in unison. Brandishing long spears and bows and arrows, the mud-spattered, nearly naked men, women, and children completely blocked the road. We saw the demonstration from the top of the hill. Dean Rose was driving us in his truck. Keeping at a distance from the crowd, we hesitated while waiting to see if vehicles would be allowed to pass. When a couple of trucks came through from the opposite direction, Brother Rose drove forward ever so slowly, so as not to anger them.

As our truck neared the group, they all seemed to go into a frenzy, wailing their sing-song, "Oo-ah, oo-ah, oo-ah." They danced and jumped up and down as they chanted. Their long spears, pointed to the sky, bobbed randomly like popcorn in a popper. For several minutes we were forced to watch their mourning dance. Shivers crept up my spine. At last we were allowed to pass as the mob separated, leaving a narrow path for us.

Looking into their eyes as we passed, I searched for signs of deep grief. Instead I saw only curiosity peering back at me. The women out in front seemed to have cried out all their true tears. Now their mud-caked faces had "crying marks" made by drizzling water in little rivulets down their cheeks to resemble tears.

Here was a little culvert over a stream. The day before a mother and her young toddler were here at the stream for family washing purposes. Unknown to the mother, her child wandered out onto the road while she was busy. A car from Hagen zoomed by. In its wake the little one was left crushed to death. The mother was overcome with grief. Her wailing was soon spread to all the members of the tribe.

Immediate action was decided upon. No vehicle would be allowed to pass through that spot of death for a couple days without being apprehended by a group of mourners. Should that Hagen truck return or another from Hagen come along, its driver and passengers would be in danger of death. Tradition asserts that death must be compensated. So whether by exchange of money and possessions or by life for life, the custom of compensation still rules in Papua New Guinea.

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Life is cheap in PNG. Quite commonly men take the law into their own hands, wreaking vengeance on their enemies. Namba's story illustrates this.

Namba grew up at Marapul, a village in a low valley at the base of mighty Mt. Giluwe. When he was old enough, he went to Tambul mission station to the Evangelical Bible Mission primary school. Esther Hershey and Helen Glick were two of his teachers. Dan Glick taught him to drive a tractor

and work in the school gardens. Being one of the older students in his class, he was entrusted with more responsibilities. One day a mishap occurred while he was driving the tractor. Somehow he flipped the tractor over, cutting a gash in his forehead. He carried the scar from that accident for the rest of his life.

After finishing sixth grade at Tambul, he was recommended to continue his studies at the newly-opened Papua New Guinea Bible Institute. His prospects were bright in those days. Every opportunity to follow God's perfect plan was laid before him. But like Esau of old, he despised his birthright and squandered away his opportunities. Before he had completed his course at PNGBI, he went back to the world and joined in a sing sing. When he knew he was to be dismissed from school for his actions, he took the school tractor and ditched it along the steep road to the fields, then ran away.

Thus he began a slippery descent that ended in disaster. He entered nursing school at Hagen. While doing practical work at Banz hospital for his nursing course, he met a Minj girl. The two were married and he never finished his training. Three children were born to that union. When work opened up at the new hydroelectric project a few miles from Pabarabuk, he moved his family out here. He was employed as a mechanic and truck driver.

When he began giving attention to his employer's wife, jealousy developed. His employer, Olga, hired some killers to take his revenge. The murderers found out when Namba received his fortnightly pay. They could get Olga's fee and Namba's pay in one action. That was a good arrangement for them.

The date was June 8, 1982. Namba had just received his pay. The gang of men crept up to his house where he was lying asleep.

"Rascals, rascals!" they yelled.

Awaking with a start, Namba ran outside to investigate. Then the moment of truth dawned on him. He was the victim of all those rascals with none to help him. The struggle was short. As the heavy iron rod crashed down on his head, he screamed for mercy. But none was forthcoming. He lost consciousness, slipping into eternity with no time to prepare his soul.

Now the men had a dirty deed to cover up. They took two large bags, stuffed the body in them, and sewed the bags together. Using Olga's truck they drove to the big river beyond Hagen and dropped the body into the rushing torrent. They thought their ugly deed was hidden. They began circulating a story that Namba was seen wandering around insane, by the wild Kaugel River. Searches were organized. Of course, the body couldn't be found and soon the search was called off.

During the third week of July some Chimbu boys were swimming in their river, many miles from Hagen. One of them spied a bulky object lodged in some rocks by the bank. To satisfy their curiosity they all went to investigate. Were they shocked when they looked inside that old water-logged bag!

What events were behind this corpse? No one knew. Quickly the boys announced their news. Police came to investigate. Then they hauled off the contents of the bag. A court followed. Soon the body was identified by a watch on the arm and a distinctive scar on the forehead. The family was notified. The story was then pieced together.

Angers flared. This terrible deed must be avenged. Namba's tribe prepared their weapons for war. Excitement was running high for a few days in our area. Then the police stepped in to prevent outbursts of violence. Blocked from shedding blood, the tribe then demanded payment for compensation. Angry talks took place, but at last a price was agreed upon. Twelve pigs were quickly delivered to the offended clan, with promise of \$43,000 to be paid when the next coffee harvest could be sold. They were satisfied.

So ends the story of a wasted life! What a terrible display of vengeance!

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# **ORCHIDS ON A WASTE HILLSIDE**

By

**Marilyn Lavy Sturtevant**

5

## **POLITICS, THIEVES, AND VANDALS**

One hundred and nine seats make up the national parliament in Papua New Guinea. In July 1982, a general election was held to determine the members of Parliament for the next term.

The period of campaigning before the election date proved to be disruptive to student life here at PNGBI. Many politicians used our campus for speechmaking. Some were well-mannered and orderly. Others were not.

"The missionaries do not own you students. The government owns you. Vote for me and I will make PNGBI a government school," shouted one politician over the loud speaker. In the past some nationals have made an issue over the lack of state-approval at PNGBI. But the missionaries have tried to maintain license-free status. This politician was referring to this issue.

On the morning of election day a candidate woke the boys in their dorms at 6:00 a.m., urging them to vote for him. At breakfast a different man made his speech. Ample opportunity was given our students to hear the political candidates.

Millions of dollars were spent on the campaigns. Ridiculous promises were made and lavish gifts were distributed. In fact, lambakey Okuk, the deputy prime minister at the time, made world news by giving away 4,000 cases of beer at a cost of \$48,000.

When the election results were known, which took several weeks, trouble rose. Tribal fighting broke out in the highlands. The reason: their candidate friend didn't get elected to Parliament! The Moke tribe around Mt. Hagen threatened to burn down Hagen town because none of their men won. Sure enough, the provincial voting house was reduced to ashes one night. Several houses were likewise set to flames. The police caught a gang pouring gas around a bank, in preparation to igniting it. Roads to the gas depots were blocked at nights to guard them from being blown up.

An evening curfew caused all residents to vacate the streets in the evenings. Police were ordered to shoot at any who broke the rule. During this time, Cliff Cranston and Bill Mincer drove through Mt. Hagen at 2:00 a.m. on their way home from Lae. They saw the police riot squad with red handkerchiefs over their faces. But though they were followed out of town, they weren't shot at. Perhaps the PNGBI insignia on the door identified them as harmless.

Thievery and vandalism cause us many distresses. Usually Steve takes a national boy along when he goes to town shopping. Then while he goes to the stores, the fellow can watch the truck.

One day Susie Lorimor went along with Steve. They bought their boxes of groceries and loaded them on the back of the truck. The guard stayed with the goods, until he remembered something he

needed. The store was right in front of the parking place. Just a quick dash in and out is all that it took. But in that unguarded minute three cases of food disappeared from our truck. We never saw them again.

One day Steve and I took a Gospel team to an outstation along a back road. The road was washed away at the bottom of a gully. Another truck was stuck in mud there. Several nationals were helping the folks in distress So we parked our truck at the top of the hill and walked from there. Passing the working people, we greeted them warmly.

"Where are you from?" Steve asked the group.

"We are from Hagen," they replied.

I wondered then if it was safe to leave our truck alone, but I said nothing. So we continued on our way unconcerned. Along the road Stephanie and I picked some wildflowers. Sweet smelling lilacs were blooming in the ditch. It was a pleasant walk both to and from our meeting.

Jason arrived back at the truck first. "The door is unlocked," he shouted. We all knew we had locked it before we left.

So we gathered around to investigate. The little ventilator window on the passenger's side was hanging by one connection only. Checking inside we found the tool box missing. A couple individual packets of the disposable towelettes in the glove box were torn open. The rest were all intact. Apparently the thieves couldn't think of any use for such frivolous items in their way of life! The bananas I had brought along to munch on were gone, of course. But we were thankful that nothing of any greater importance had been stolen.

At our home we often discovered something missing. Usually it was shoes off the front porch or clothes off the line. But sometimes it was from the house.

In the early months of our term I had a young girl from the village working for me. She helped me with housekeeping and laundry. One day she washed my set of cloth Christmas napkins.

"You have plenty of these cloths," she told me.

"Yes," I replied.

A few weeks later after she had quit working for me, I was teaching my women's Sunday school class. In walked a cute little girl with a Christmas napkin tied on her head for a scarf! Could it possibly be from any other source than my house? Hardly. I went home and counted my set. One was missing. I never got it back.

After that I hired another girl, Kupana. She began as a very good helper, whom I could trust completely. Then her family problems began. She lost out with the Lord and her marriage broke up. I continued to keep her, trying to help her spiritually.

One day I noticed my purse had been tampered with. A few days later Steve's billfold was found in a mysterious place. When he checked the contents, \$48 were missing! I felt crushed. I had trusted Kupana and tried to help her while she was going through terrific battles. Sad-heartedly I dismissed her.

Some young girls brought a baby parrot for me to buy one day. We raised that bird till it became a real family pet. Its antics amused us continually. For a year and a half we thoroughly enjoyed our pet.

When the Thompson's left the field, all the missionaries went to the airport to see them off. Very few people were left on the station that morning. When we returned our cage door was wide open and the bird was gone. We looked all over for it but found it nowhere. Later a couple boys told me our bird was taken by a local boy. We were very sad to have to part with our pet and missed it so much. We never got a chance to get another.

The administration building was a common target for thieves. A couple times it was broken into and robbed. The robbers got away. Another time the attempted break-in was a failure.

It was three o'clock in the morning. Stealthily a gang of burglars drove into Pabarabuk through the secluded coffee-garden road. Noiselessly they brought their truck to a halt by the administration building. It was night before pay day — an excellent time to get some cash!

The thieves jumped out and surrounded the door. One held a gun as protection for his buddies. Another began ripping the screen to reach the window pane near the door. Soon they would have the door open. This was sure to be a winner this time!

Inside the building two night watchmen were sound asleep. Just a few feet from their mats was an alarm installed a few weeks before. If need be, they could try it out for usefulness.

Scratch! Scratch! What was that noise? Instantly the guards were on the alert. One pulled back the curtain of the front window and looked into that gun pointed at the door! That was enough for him.

"Sound the alarm!" he whispered to his mate. Without delay the command was carried out.

I was restless and awake at 3:00 a.m. All was quiet and peaceful outside until that weird, wailing shriek of the burglar alarm screamed through the darkness. I lay there a few seconds listening to its noise, not realizing its importance. Then I woke Steve. When he heard it, he jumped into his clothes and ran out to investigate.

By then there was yodeling and yelling everywhere. A stampede of students, staff, and night watchmen pounded past our house. From the sounds of the chase no thief would have a chance of escape, I thought.

When Steve had his curiosity satisfied, he returned to tell me the story. At the sound of the alarm, the burglars jumped into their truck. They sped out the back way through the coffee trees and were well out of reach when the unorganized chase began in earnest.

Nearing the little village, the gang was stopped by the villagers who heard the yodeling from our station. When they recognized the men, they allowed them to pass on through to their escape.

"Why did you let them go?" our men wanted to know.

"Because you didn't come quickly and they wanted to go," was the reply.

So much for that band of robbers. Two hours later Steve and I finally drifted off to sleep again.

Not only thievery but also vandalism is a growing problem. Though it is unusual for missionaries to become victims of vandalism, our truck was hit once.

Friday, September 9, 1983, Steve and Jason went into town on business for the school. A student went along to guard their purchases. Finishing their chores about 5:00 p.m., they loaded up and headed home.

Crash! Smash! Shatter! It all happened so quickly. A stone came crashing through the windshield. Steve had just gotten a glimpse of a boy standing by the roadside with the rock in his hand. Momentarily the truck careened crazily. Steve fought for control and slowed to a stop.

As they assessed the damages, thankfulness welled up in their hearts. The stone that crashed through the windshield also snapped off the rear view mirror and sailed on through the back window. Nothing stopped its motion as it flew off the truck and landed on the ground. Steve never saw the rock that hit his truck except for that fleeting glance he had of the boy by the roadside.

Shatter-proof glass is not commonly sold in Papua New Guinea. So the two windows showered tiny pieces of glass over Steve and Jason. Steve had a few minor cuts on his cheeks and had dried blood on his face when I saw him a few minutes later at home. Jason had a cap on his head and was looking down at the moment of impact, so he escaped unscathed. The boy in the back felt some glass on his back but had no scratches at all.

A few weeks later we received a letter from Sister Marie Poe. "The Lord woke me up at midnight a couple weeks ago and told me to pray for you," she wrote. Figuring the time change, that could have been the same time Steve was in danger.

So whatever the distress or danger, the Lord takes care of His own in answer to prayer!

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# ORCHIDS ON A WASTE HILLSIDE

By

**Marilyn Lavy Sturtevant**

**6**

## **GOD'S CALL**

As the day dawned on Sunday morning, September 9, 1979, I crawled out of bed and went to make breakfast. Conflicting emotions struggled for dominance in my heart. Our life was unraveling. The future was uncertain. But my trust was in God. Though I might not be able to see even two weeks ahead, I could trust Him who knows the future.

Steve and I had been married for seven years. Prior to our marriage, I had been a missionary school teacher at Katiloma in the highlands of Papua New Guinea from 1967-1971. Steve had been engaged in Christian service, too. He was assistant pastor of a church, director of the Earnest Christian Broadcast, and teacher in a small Bible college.

Our marriage in 1972 united our separate efforts in the Lord's work. I became involved in Steve's interests by teaching in the Bible college, helping with transcribing radio tapes, and working in the church. Two children, Jason and Stephanie, came along to bless our home-life in our big, old farm house on the plains of south-central Nebraska.

In September 1977, Steve started Fletcher Christian Academy, using ACE curriculum, at our church five miles from our home. When the Nebraska Fellowship of Christian Schools was begun, he became vice-moderator of that organization.

Now events of the past months began pointing us to a different direction for our lives. The Earnest Christian Broadcast had been terminated due to lack of finances. Now difficulties had arisen in the academy and other arrangements had to be made. Today the decision would be made concerning Steve's position as principal.

As the time for Sunday school neared, I hurried the children into their clothes. During the services Steve and I relaxed in the knowledge that God had all things in control. In the afternoon a baby-sitter stayed with the children at our house. We rode the motorbike to the school five miles away for a meeting with the school board. It took only a few minutes.

With the unsigned resignation paper in Steve's pocket, we left the meeting to make our final decision. We both felt peace and assurance that was God directing us to sign it, thus setting our lives on a new course. It was frightening and exhilarating at the same moment.

"Do you feel terrible?" I asked.

"No, I don't. Actually I feel relieved of a big burden," Steve answered.

"So do I," I returned. "What does it mean? Our whole life must change around. Why don't we feel bad?"

"I don't know why we don't, but the fact remains that I feel as light as a feather," Steve voiced his feelings.

That evening in church a home missionary from an Indian reservation spoke about their work. Feeling free and disentangled, Steve and I took in all the possibilities of mission work. With the resignation papers signed, our future was open to the will of God.

Back home we put the children to bed. They soon were sound asleep. But Steve and I were wide awake. Again we spoke of the lightness we felt about the future. We were open and waiting for the Lord to direct. Steve, in his customary manner, was pacing back and forth in the living room, while I sat on the old couch. As we talked, the minutes ticked by. The cuckoo clock announced the midnight hour. Still we talked on.

Suddenly, while Steve was talking, he said, "I think the place God wants me to work is New Guinea!" At the exact same moment my heart knew that was God's will, too. A great joy bubbled up in my soul, while Steve was experiencing his own elation over the realization. Right then I knew I had hoped for this moment for eight years, though I had never told Steve.

No sooner does Steve know what to do than he begins planning the details. So he began figuring out how to get to New Guinea. But it was late. We had to get some sleep. Tomorrow was a big day. "Just don't tell Jason," he told me. "He is a talkative four-year-old!"

Steve was already gone to Kearney to an ACE workshop the next morning when the children awoke.

"Mommy, I had a dream last night," Jason informed me, entering the kitchen.

"You did? Tell me about it," I said.

"We were living in a little house on a mountain. There were lots of trees around. Rocks were close to the house. It was painted green. We can't take our kitties there. Mommy, can we go to live in that house?" His words tumbled out in his excitement to get all the story told at once.

Immediately I recognized the significance of the little fellow's dream. We loved our big farmhouse. It could be a traumatic event for the children to uproot them from their home, unless God was in it. Surely God was taking an interest in our children's needs and preparing Jason for the coming changes in his life. I was thrilled.

When we joined Steve at the convention in Kearney that evening, I took the first possible chance to tell him of God's dealing with Jason. He felt the same way I did about the dream. Assurance flooded our hearts that this was surely God's direction for our lives.

Before the week was over Steve had called Rev. Jacob Miller at Summerfield, Florida. Again God gave assurance that we were following His will when Mr. Miller told about the need for a missionary to start an ACE school for missionary children in New Guinea.

From then on plans began to take shape fast. We applied to the Evangelical Bible Mission and were approved. We sold our farmhouse in record time. By the end of November we had moved out. After Christmas we began deputation services. Then we were on our way to New Guinea, May 23, 1980, just eight and a half months after God's call came to us.

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# ORCHIDS ON A WASTE HILLSIDE

By

**Marilyn Lavy Sturtevant**

7

## PABARABUK

Pabarabuk was the station to which we were appointed to labor. It is situated twenty-six miles southwest of Mt. Hagen, the main city in the Highlands of Papua New Guinea. To reach it we must travel the only main road, the Highlands Highway.

The side road leading to Pabarabuk leaves the Highlands Highway just a couple miles before it crosses the boundary between the Western Highlands Province and the Southern Highlands Province. A large sign is posted high above the ground with the emblem of PNGBI and "5 km." painted on it.

Winding down this dirt road, towards our station, we pass the Kugla Community School. A group of buildings, mostly of grass material, are here for the children from Pabarabuk and surrounding villages to attend school for their first six years.

Passing the school, we wind around several curves, back and forth, till we come to a little bridge. Conspicuous to American eyes, but long since unnoticed by seasoned missionaries, is the absence of any side railings. So we have a clear view of the lovely little creek, rushing merrily over the large rocks and swishing around the bends in the riverbed before skipping out of sight.

After crossing this bridge, the road begins to rise. Round and round, back and forth, over the ruts and bumps we go. It is impossible to stay out of the holes. To dodge one is to hit two others.

Along the road we pass a neat grass house on the right with a fence of pointed stakes in front. It is the tribal home of Nambuga Mara, the premier of the Western Highlands Province.

Five or ten minutes later, a second bridge comes into view at the bottom of another ravine. It is a wooden structure made by laying several huge tree trunks over the chasm. A deck of boards nailed crosswise over the trees has board runners running lengthwise across the bridge for smoother driving.

Now just five minutes more of this road will bring us to the station's coffee gardens. Crossing the cattle guard in the road, we enter the PNGBI campus. Soon the road splits into a "Y" and we bear to the left. The right one is the less-used coffee garden road.

Now we pass the mechanics shop on the left and view the two-story building straight ahead. It houses the store, the carpentry shop, and a boys' dorm above. The upper story protrudes over the bottom floor, creating an overhang.

Now the road turns sharply right. On both sides are vegetable gardens for the dining room. But not far ahead we come to a white frame house on the left. It is a single story structure, trimmed in

green. A trellis in front by the road is overgrown by a yellow-flowering vine. This is where we lived for four years.

On the right side of the road is a large black house. It is two-storied, with a porch running all across the front. Vines are creeping up the far end of the porch. In this house lived the Taylor's, the Rose's, and the Rich's at different times during our term.

A bit farther on the left again is a yellow frame house. It is about the same size and shape as ours and has many flowers growing around it, too. It is where Esther Hershey lives. Marie Trapani also lived with her when we first came. Mincer's lived there while Esther was home and then till they went home for furlough.

Now we come to a dip in the road. A road to the left leads back to the pig and chicken houses. But down at the bottom we cross a tiny stream and then ascend to the main part of the station. On the hillside we see a real beauty spot. White stones are placed in a pattern to spell PNGBI. A green, carpeting flower grows all around and among these big stones. Flower beds and exotic trees cover the entire slope.

Reaching the hilltop we see a flat, grass-covered strip stretched out ahead. This used to be the old airstrip. Now it serves as the playground. Along both sides are the main houses and buildings of our station. A low hedge at this end strongly suggests we park our vehicles and walk from here.

The first building is on the right. It is the administration building. It is also a white frame structure with a set-in porch in the center front. In this building are the offices for the school.

A road to the right of the administration building leads to the clinic buildings. They can easily be seen from where we are. To the left of the administration building another road leads to the local church, the guest house, the local village, and the lane by the girls' dorms and national staff housing.

But let's walk up the right hand side of the airstrip. This first house is where Wehrman's lived when we first came. Rich's moved into it, and later Susie Lorimor and Jo Eleanor Jones lived in it.

The second house is where Dortha Ellis and Beverly Wickham were. Later the Davolts moved there, followed by the Ben Smith family.

The third and last house in this row is where Pilipo Miriye, our school principal, lives. This completes the residences on this side of the airstrip.

Now we come to the chapel. It is a large building with a classroom built on each side. These classrooms can be opened into wings for the church, if extra space is needed. The sanctuary seats around four hundred. A middle aisle leads to a front podium. The words "WORSHIP THE LORD IN THE BEAUTY OF HOLINESS" are affixed across the front wall.

Beyond the church are more classrooms and then the student teacher housing.

Let's cross the end of the airstrip in front of the chapel and visit the line of buildings situated up the left side of the field, and parallel to the row we have just passed. First are two boys' dorms. Next is a large classroom-library complex. This is where Steve taught a number of his classes. After that is a smaller building, housing the sewing room and the child evangelism room.

As we pass the sewing room just a few steps farther is a white, two-story, frame house. Daniel and Helen Glick lived here when we arrived. Later they moved to Mendi. The Cranston's then moved into it and have lived there ever since.

Next to this house is a small house with myriads of flowers surrounding it. They were planted by Susie Lorimor in years past, when she lived there. But now Wane Ninjipa, our assistant business manager, lives here with his family.

Now we come to a very long, low building. It is the dining hall and kitchen for the student body. Behind it there are several large copper kettles with open fires beneath them. This is where the rice and kaukau is prepared everyday, along with the accompanying soups.

Passing the dining hall we come to the last building. It is our ACE classroom. Here is where I spent many long hours. In the middle is the main learning center. On the right side are the kindergarten classroom, the office, the store room, and restrooms. On the left are the lecture room and the library.

This completes our little tour. Now we can descend the dirt stairs, pass through the overhanging vines near the flowerbeds by the PNGBI rock pattern, and walk down the road. A couple minutes' walk will bring us up the other side of the valley and around the corner to the Sturtevant's house, where we can rest and visit.

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# ORCHIDS ON A WASTE HILLSIDE

By

**Marilyn Lavy Sturtevant**

8

## NEW MISSIONARIES

"New missionaries are coming today." The announcement was made to the students of PNGBI. But Peter Roka, like most of the rest of the students, was only mildly interested. Probably they wouldn't be any different from other new missionaries he had seen come before.

Peter is from Katiloma. This was his first year at PNGBI. He considered it a privilege to attend this Christian high school for grade six graduates not selected to attend government high schools.

"Here comes the yellow minibus!" Someone announced the arrival of the bus carrying the new missionaries. Many crowded around to get a good look. Curiously they peered in at the balding man, his graying wife, and their two young children.

"That's Miss Lavy!" Peter called excitedly. He recognized his primary school teacher whom he had bade farewell eight and a half years before. The message spread. Soon all the eleven Katiloma students knew Miss Lavy had returned. They all came around for a handshake.

I was as surprised as they were. Of course, I had expected to see my old students sometime. But I hadn't thought that some might be attending PNGBI when I arrived. But when I heard the murmur, "Miss Lavy, Miss Lavy", spreading through the crowd, I knew someone had to be there from Katiloma. But I didn't recognize anyone. Each of them had to come and introduce themselves. Sure enough. I remembered each one. Perhaps I was as excited as they.

The second night we were on campus, we were being entertained at Wehrman's home. Kevin and John knocked at the door after supper.

"We want Miss Lavy to come with us," John said.

Surprised, I went along with the two boys. They led me to the dining hall. There a group of Katiloma students were waiting for me. They gave their simple, heart-warming speeches of welcome to me. Tears of happiness flowed. They were remembering the day of my departure. How sad they had been that day! Now their beloved teacher was back again! To show their appreciation, each one gave of his meager allowance. They placed a sum of about \$12 in my hand.

Tears came to my eyes. I was overcome with thanksgiving. Now it was my turn to give a little speech. I, too, remembered how sad I felt when I left New Guinea. For years I had no hopes of returning. Now the Lord had opened the way and I was back — with my husband and two children! The paths of the Lord are filled with joy!

Attending missionary camp meeting in 1980 at Kauapena was like no other experience for us as new missionaries. We found it a great delight to gather there with the other EBM missionaries.

The skies poured rain down upon us relentlessly. The grounds became waterlogged. We sank in the mire as we walked from building to building.

The electricity gave problems the first night. Again and again the lights would go off. But no one seemed much concerned. Someone just turned a flashlight on and proceeded with the service. I thought they would not be able to finish the service. But after a few months in Papua New Guinea, I learned to react with the same degree of nonchalance to electricity problems.

In spite of the torrential rains and the power difficulties, the Lord's presence was with us. Gerald Bustin was the evangelist. His gift of drawing the national brethren in with the missionaries yielded great dividends among us before the camp ended. He aroused interest among the nationals and missionaries alike by announcing ahead of time that he was going to preach on Papua New Guinea's biggest problem on Friday night. When his audience was assembled that night, he gave a very clear message of eternal salvation through Jesus Christ. The major problem the world over is that men reject their saviour. The altar was lined that night. Many received help in their souls — nationals, missionaries, and missionary children alike.

The crowning service was the last Sunday evening. There was no preaching that night — no need for it. The Holy Spirit was doing the preaching. Before the special song was finished demonstrations of holy joy were changing to prayer burdens bringing tears of contrition and repentance. The room was crowded with nationals, many of whom could not understand English. But they could understand the power of the Holy Spirit. And they responded. The altar area was packed with seekers till there was room for no more.

That night victory came. Several whom the missionaries had been burdened for found their way back to God and right living at that altar service. There was much rejoicing as sinners and backsliders made peace with their Creator. Camp meeting 1980 ended in triumph!

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# **ORCHIDS ON A WASTE HILLSIDE**

By

**Marilyn Lavy Sturtevant**

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## **HIGHLANDS CHRISTIAN COLLEGE & ACADEMY**

Highlands Christian Academy was the name chosen for the Accelerated Christian Education School we opened at Pabarabuk. Three pressing needs converged to utilize its resources. First is the education of missionary children.

During its first four years, 28 children from 14 EBM families have been enrolled. A small number of these studied at home under the tutorage of their mothers. Their records were kept in our office. They joined us for testing, field trips, and year-end activities.

Besides EBM families, six other missionary families entered 13 more children in HCA. These families added other nationalities. They came from New Zealand, Canada, Australia, and England. In addition to missionary children, six prominent English-speaking national families sent ten Papua New Guinea children to study here.

The second program to utilize the HCA learning center resources necessitated a name change to Highlands Christian College and Academy. The need for national teachers for PNGBI engendered the Year 11 and 12 program, in which a few hand-picked graduates of PNGBI could further their education in return for their help in teaching classes or doing secretarial work. Plenty of recruits were always available for this program, but the number has been restricted to between four and six per year.

The third need met by HCCA was the English pastors' school. In the mornings the ministerial students attended biblical and theological lectures in the lecture room. In the afternoons they picked up academic subjects by doing ACE individualized work in the learning center. Anywhere between one and seven have been in this program at any one time, but the emphasis is to increase this number.

HCCA first opened in our living room in July 1980. We soon moved to the conference room in the administration building where we finished out the school year. In 1981 we moved into our present building, which was then only roughly remodeled from the old carpentry shop.

Before the 1982 school year, much more remodeling had been done. No longer did the pencils, pens, and crayons fall down beneath the floor through the multitudinous cracks. Much to our relief, a ceiling had been installed, reducing the heat radiating from the tropical sun on the galvanized roof. The building had also been lengthened, adding the lecture room, the library, and more space in the learning center. Steve's flare for decorating resulted in the orange and black colors from the PNG flag splashing over pale blue walls. With room for 41 students, the learning center was nearly full at times. But the number fluctuated with the coming and going of missionary families.

With Steve fitting more and more into PNGBI activities, supervising the ACE school landed on my shoulders. To help me I had various monitors. Susie Lorimor took the learning-to-read groups in 1982 and 1983. Glenna Mincer and Beulah Rich were full-time monitors in separate years. Jim Rich and Bill Mincer helped part-time during their free periods from teaching in the institute. Steve always tried to be present for our opening exercises. Naoma Cranston and Mary Smith helped with extra-curricular activities at different times.

A typical day in the learning center is a flurry of activity, a bit like a whirlwind on the Nebraska prairie. Our school day began at 8:20, in time for Steve to teach the first period class in the institute and still get back for opening exercises.

Ding-a-ling-a-ling! All the children filed into the hallway and from there into the learning center.

"Stand in front of your desks," Steve ordered. "We will begin with the pledge of allegiance to the Christian flag." (The national flag salutes were discarded when nationalities increased.)

Then we all sang together, "Onward Christian soldiers, marching as to war.

"I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help. The morning exercises included singing a hymn together, reading a Scripture in unison, and prayer. Then stars and congratulation slips were awarded for completed tests from the previous day.

"All right, everyone get to work," Steve commanded. It was the signal for the students to begin their daily work. I immediately called to the testing table any students who had prepared for tests the day before. The monitor began checking each child's work of the previous day. Steve went off to teach another class somewhere else. Mornings were filled with studying. In the afternoons we had Physical Education, Art, Music, or chapel.

At 2:45 p.m. the day was over for the children. But the secretarial work was still to be done. Tests must be graded and their results recorded. New tests had to be prepared for the coming day. New books had to be issued to those who had completed their tests. Often I spent two hours after school doing that kind of work, before going home to prepare supper for my hungry family.

Our school year began in early February and concluded in late November. It was divided into four approximately nine-week periods.

During each quarter we scheduled one fun day for all the children. One such day was the British Commonwealth holiday honoring the Queen's birthday. The highlight that day was watching the children eat cream pies with their hands tied behind their backs!

Another activity planned for each quarter was the field trip on the last day. Only those students who had completed one-fourth of a year's work that quarter were eligible to attend. They all worked hard to go along. Quite often every single student was qualified.

One such trip was scheduled for June 22, 1983.

Toot! Toot! At 8:15 am. everyone piled onto the back of the white Ford Trader - a five-ton, flat-bedded truck. Spirits were high as we bounced out the road to the highway. At the road junction were some more of our children waiting for us. When we got to Hagen we met our children from other stations who also joined us.

Our first stop was the Hagen bakery. Fascinated, the children stood around the varied activities proceeding simultaneously in the single-roomed bakery. In the center was the huge oven, heated by a fiery-hot gas burner in its belly. Slowly circulating around its burner, like riders on a ferris wheel, were trays and trays of breads, rolls, meat pies, sponge cakes and cream buns. When the crusts were lightly browned, the worker slipped them off the trays and put them to cool in front of a fan.

In one corner two men were working at very long tables making meat pies. What a long piece of dough that was! It was spread over hundreds of small pie pans. One fellow was fitting the dough down into each pan while the second was pouring in hot spicy meat filling. Finally a long piece of dough came out of that big roller machine nearby. The bakers spread it atop all those tantalizing pies. With a swish of the rolling pin across the tops, those pies were all ready for the oven.

Along the wall another man was making sponge cakes. A big electric mixer was beating his cake mixture. When the consistency was just right, he set up his cake pans nearby to receive the batter. Then with lightning-quick reflex, he used his bare hand to grab the exact amount of batter and plop it into the pans without a drop of batter splattered between the bowl and pans! Amazing!

In still another corner of the room a big kneading machine was being fed bags of flour and huge chunks of shortening. Soon great globs of bread dough came rolling out the chute. One worker divided it into two. Half went to a roller-coaster type of machine that made perfectly shaped loaves and landed them in trays in the raising machine. The other half went to a cream bun machine that cut out and rounded perfectly shaped buns.

Needless to say, no one got bored at the bakery. Then we went to the radio station and the cola bottling company. We ate our picnic lunches by a water pool. At last we found a nice little stream to splash in before the outing ended.

At the end of every school year, we held an awards banquet. We awarded highest scholastic achievement, highest number of PACE's completed, greatest improvement shown on achievement tests, perfect attendance, Scripture memory, and other things. The mothers helped prepare food for these occasions. Every year it proved to be a lovely ending to our school term.

Teaching in HCCA proved both stimulating and rewarding to me. The questions needing answered ranged from kindergarten to high school level. With so varied an age group and ethnic background, the teaching certainly had to be individualized to suit each need. Certainly a dull moment never existed!

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# ORCHIDS ON A WASTE HILLSIDE

By

**Marilyn Lavy Sturtevant**

**10**

## **PERSISTENCE PAYS**

Steve entered wholeheartedly into campus life as soon as we arrived. Winston Wehrman had him teaching his classes within a week. Soon he was given his own classes to teach, mostly Bible classes. A few weeks later the board appointed him to be the school pastor. When Wehrman's left, they appointed him to take Brother Wehrman's place as deputy principal. This job took him into the very heart of student life and problems. He was chosen as a class sponsor by one class. His sincere interest in the students made a favorable impact. They reacted with straight forward friendship. He soon had some close friends. Raimon was one of them.

Raimon is a boy from the Sepik Province. His childhood home is near the coast. Being skillful with numbers, he has been used as secretary for Brother Wehrman and Steve and as store manager for Brother Cranston. He was in his first year at PNGBI when we arrived.

Raimon's first impressions of Steve came on the day of our arrival. Running along with the excited group of students, he waved at the new missionaries fresh from America. But he was astonished by his first look.

"I was scared of Brother Sturtevant because he was well built and very tall. I was scared that he might be a very hard teacher," he recalls.

Since he was Brother Wehrman's secretary at the time, an early introduction was natural. Now Steve knew his name. But this created a problem for Raimon.

When Steve led the church service, he like to keep the service moving and to get people involved. So he would often call on people to testify. At first he knew only a few boys' names so they got asked frequently. Since Raimon was one of the few, he had to testify often. But he didn't know what being a Christian was then. So when he entered the chapel, he would try to find a place where he could hide down among the students to escape Steve's recognition.

Nevertheless before that first year ended, Raimon got that problem solved. The Lord sent a mighty revival. He was one of the many who found out what real salvation was. Then he knew what to testify about.

But another problem arose. Any time or any place Steve would ask, as they met, "Raimon, do you have the victory?" If he had been walking closely with the Lord, he could answer easily. But if his relationship had become clouded, he was embarrassed.

When he saw Steve coming along the road, Raimon would look for a different path to bypass him. He would think of some way to prevent the inevitable questions. Yet he found out that even if he eluded Steve, he would still meet him in another place and have to face the questions.

When he became Steve's secretary in his third year of school, the friendship grew. He realized Steve's deep concern for his soul. Steve seemed to sense when he was having spiritual problems. At first this worried him, till he learned to confide in Steve.

"How are you getting along spiritually?" Steve asked Raimon when he came to work different times. Confidence began to develop. He soon learned to share his problems with him.

"The Lord has a beautiful plan for you," Steve told him often. Then their discussions would end by both of them going down on their knees. With all his problems committed to the Lord, Raimon went away with a lighter heart. What a big help that was!

Now Raimon considers Steve as his best friend. He appreciates the burden he carried for his soul. No longer does he fear his questions, but welcomes them as an encouragement to his spiritual life.

Rake is another of Steve's close friends. He was a fourth year student in 1980. The Lord spoke to him during the revival that year. He knew God's will for him was to come back to PNGBI and train to be a teacher. Steve counseled and encouraged him to obey God.

On the day of graduation, Rake graduated highest in his class. Before he left that day Steve questioned him again, "Are you going to come back next year?"

"Yes," he replied. Then he went to Hagen and applied for a job with Posts and Telegraph Company. Because of his high academic record he immediately received the position. He began making money.

But Steve carried a burden for his soul, knowing he was out of God's will.

Then Rake backslid. He tasted of the sins of the world. Deeper and deeper he went, till he was in a tangled mess. Still Steve prayed for him.

One Sunday in September 1981, Steve took a Gospel Team to hold a service at Hagen. Unaware that Steve would be there, Rake came to church. He was surprised. He tried to hide from him and slip away quickly after church. But, no; Steve hurried back through the crowd and grabbed his hand, happy to see him again.

The love and concern Steve showed made him feel terrible. His sinful deeds confronted him. He was too ashamed to look at Steve. Then Steve suggested they pray. A well of tears opened up. He confessed his sins. New determination sprang up in his heart. He wanted to be a Christian.

But the temptations reappeared. His determination waned. Again he found himself in sin. Two other times Steve found him and prayed with him, producing the same end results. Still Steve never gave up.

Then a sad letter came one day in November 1982. It was from Rake. "I never dreamed I would do the things I am doing. I wish I were following the right way again. When I remember the Christian life I lived before, I can't eat or sleep. I just weep. Is it too late for me to come back to PNGBI and obey God's will for me?"

Steve wrote back. "Rake, come and stay with us a couple days. We will pray. God will help you get back to the place you ought to be."

So Rake came and stayed a few days. Steve counseled with him. Much prayer ascended to heaven. Before he left Steve said to him. "I love you as a father would." Those words stuck in Rake's heart.

Though he went back to his sins again, he didn't forget those words of Steve's. He couldn't get away from the bonds of love drawing him to the Savior.

Steve continued to pray. God heard. At last Rake fell under awful conviction. A friend invited him to go along to church with him in Hagen one Sunday. He was ready to surrender. He had come to the end of his resistance against God. Tears of contrition and prayers of repentance flowed from his heart. Our forgiving Lord accepted this broken-hearted wanderer.

Back to Pabarabuk he came. It was September 1983. Rejoicing followed. Steve received the answer to his prayers before we returned to the States.

"I praise God for you, Brother Sturtevant," he said. "It was the burden you carried for me and the love you showed me that caused me to repent. If it were not for you, I don't know where I would be."

For a week he stayed with us. Then he moved into the teachers' housing and began substitute teaching where he was needed. He proved a real benefit the last quarter of the school year. At last he was doing God's will.

Now he plans to come back to PNGBI and train to be a teacher.

Lazarus was in his first year of school when we arrived. He was not a Christian. He soon learned to avoid meeting Steve. He told me, "If I saw him coming down one path, I would change my direction so I wouldn't meet him. I didn't want to come into his eyesight."

The reason for his aversion was the questions Steve asks. "Do you have the victory? Are you praising the Lord? Did you read your Bible this morning? Did you pray? Are you shining for Jesus?" He had a whole list of searching questions that were hard to answer if you weren't sincerely trying to follow the Lord.

But Lazarus had a tender heart. He enjoyed the Doctrine of Holiness class and the Christian Beliefs class Steve taught. "I would often put my head down so as not to meet his eyes," he said, "but I would listen carefully to every word."

While in class he had a strong desire to be a Christian. But when he was outside among the fellows, he found it hard to resist temptation. When dirty stories were told or suggestions to steal food were made, he would yield all too often.

Then at nighttime he would be so afraid. His bed was next to the windows. After lights out, he would gaze at the sky above the mountains and feel afraid. "What if Jesus would come tonight?" he thought. That question haunted him, till his dreams were filled with missing the rapture.

One day Steve met Lazarus walking along. "Do you have the victory?" he asked.

"No," he replied.

"Do you read your Bible?" Steve continued.

"No," he answered again.

"Why?" Steve wanted to know.

"I have too many studies," Lazarus returned.

That same night Lazarus had a dream. He dreamed that Brother Wehrman and he were standing beside the administration building and the rapture took place. Brother Wehrman went up to heaven. He tried to jump up and follow him, but something pulled him back down. He tried to pray but that didn't help. An inexpressible fear came over him. Then he awoke. Out of bed on his knees he confessed his sins to the Lord and found peace that night.

But one restitution needed to be made about some money he had stolen from his father. He confided in Steve, who prayed with him for courage to confess.

Vacation came and Lazarus went home. Defeated, he returned to school after vacation. He had been too frightened to tell his father. Again temptations easily overwhelmed him.

Then one Sunday night Steve preached a sermon about lying to God. Lazarus was gripped with conviction. But he went to bed without getting the victory.

Knock! Knock! I woke up. "What time is it?" I asked Steve. It was 4:00 a.m. Who could be knocking at our door at this hour?

Steve pulled on his robe and went to find out. There stood a very frightened boy. Lazarus had had a dream again that the rapture was taking place. He could see others going up while he was left behind. What fear filled his soul!

Not daring to wait till light, he came in the wee hours of the morning, begging Steve to pray with him, With his heart prepared thus, it didn't take the Holy Spirit long to witness to his heart. Victory came! The Sun of Righteousness rose in his soul before the earth's sun dawned over the eastern mountains.

But the restitution was still not made. More vacations came and went. Still Lazarus struggled. Steve encouraged and prayed with him different times.

At last time came for him to graduate in December 1983. His father came two weeks early to be with him. A couple days after his arrival, Lazarus had a bright, shining face!

He came to Steve. "I confessed to my father," he said joyously.

"What did he say?" Steve wanted to know.

"He said it was all right because all he owns is mine, too," replied the happy boy.

Now a light-hearted youth is planning to enter English pastor's school to train to be a Bible teacher.

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# ORCHIDS ON A WASTE HILLSIDE

By

**Marilyn Lavy Sturtevant**

**11**

## **HIGHWAYS AND BYWAYS**

A frequent activity Steve enjoyed was going to outstations. As school pastor he often organized Gospel teams to sing, testify, and preach at these weekend visits. Mostly they were Sunday morning meetings at nearby outstations, but often they were long distances away and entailed overnight visits.

The first overnight trip Steve took was to Marapul. Alko and Ura, two students at PNGBI, had begged him to go home with them. Not wanting to disappoint them, he consented. The date was set for the third weekend of March 1981. They left on Saturday.

Marapul is a distant outstation over a high mountain ridge. The trail is steep and slippery. Twice Steve fell along the treacherous path. When he grew tired and disheartened with the rough road, the boys cheered him along. They were very helpful to this big missionary who was new at this kind of trekking.

Often Steve stopped to take in the rugged beauty of the untamed forests and craggy mountains. But starting down the trail again, he began to think he couldn't make it. Nevertheless he did survive the walk and experienced a very interesting weekend.

Arriving at Marapul, Steve and his Gospel team of six boys discovered a fight had taken place there the day before. The local pastor had been shot in the hand with a pit-pit arrow, while trying to stop it. Now the men were preparing their weapons for a war of revenge. But since the team had come, they would put off their plans for a little while and have church!

Saturday evening the rain poured down. The church roof leaked profusely. Therefore Steve couldn't hold service the first night. So many men of the village gathered around the fire on the floor of the pastor's hut. They asked Steve questions all evening.

They were amazed to see him willing to eat and sleep with them. The Catholic missionary who visits there once in a while has to have certain foods prepared to his liking ahead of time. Furthermore he would never sleep in one of their houses. If his provisions were not arranged when he arrived, severe tongue lashings would be forthcoming. But this man from the Bible mission was content to eat and sleep with them!

Sleeping accommodations were rather primitive, Steve had to admit. The whole team slept on the board floor together in one room. Steve slept fitfully, with the feeling that bugs were crawling over him. Sure enough the sensation was confirmed the next morning when he looked into his travel bag and found it teeming with cockroaches. Determinedly he shook them out and proceeded with the morning tasks.

No water was heated nor was any even carried into the house. Steve took his bag and headed for the nearby stream with the boys for their morning bath. Nothing compares with a morning wash in a cold mountain stream.

About seventy people gathered in the church for Sunday morning service. After the meeting the local Catholic church leader and his parishioners gathered around Steve. That was a good opportunity to tell them about Jesus. Eagerness showed in their faces as they drank in the message of salvation from sin. The leader himself showed keen interest. Steve invited him to come to Pabarabuk for a visit sometime.

Then it was time to leave. The people supplied them with cooked food to eat. They expressed their deep gratitude to this interesting missionary who had shared their way of life for two days. So far removed from roads, they saw few white men. They were sad to see him leave.

Retracing their steps up and down those steep ravines, even more treacherous after the rains of the night before, they finally arrived at home. Steve was covered with mud. He was bone weary. But he was content that he was doing the work Jesus left for him to do.

Plans had been made for us to take a Gospel team to Tonga River station on September 17, 1982. Word had been sent ahead by some messenger. Our truck was in the workshop with major engine problems. But John Davolt had hoped to have the needed part to fix it for us that very morning.

Then word came that John Davolt had not received the part and couldn't fix our truck that day. Our hopes were dashed to the ground. We sent word to the boys in their classes. Disappointedly we resigned ourselves to the changed plans.

About 11:00 a.m. Jim Rich heard of our problem and suggested an alternative solution. His truck was available for our use, though it had no headlights. When Steve was reluctant to drive it, Jim even volunteered to be our chauffeur. It wasn't difficult to pick up our scattered plans and get ready to go.

By 2:30 p.m. we had all our camping equipment, our Gospel team, their guitars, and our family packed tightly into Rich's Land Cruiser. Hopefully we would be able to drive there in the four hours of daylight we had left. We would try.

It was after 5:00 when we stopped at Mendi for gas. If all went well, we should be at Tonga River station before dark. Sure enough at 6:30 we pulled across the two rickety old bridges on the edge of the station. Thankful for the Lord's help in timing, we looked ahead to the twinkling lights in the houses on the station.

We all jumped out of our cramped positions and stretched our limbs. The station family gathered around us. Since the Roses had left, no missionaries were here any longer. Noae, the head pastor, looked after the station, keeping the generator running for the lights. As they began welcoming us, we noticed they were surprised at our arrival. We soon realized the message had not been received here. They were not prepared for us and were embarrassed. But no matter. We soon set them at ease by showing them we had arranged for our own food and lodging. All we needed was the key to

Rose's house and some firewood to use for cooking in their fireplace. Those items were quickly produced and we settled in.

Since our coming had not been announced, only the station family gathered in the front room of Rose's house that night to have devotions with us.

The sun came up bright and clear Saturday morning. The mountains were gorgeous, as the mists parted, revealing the splendor of the peaks of Mt. Giluwe. The view was awe-inspiring.

The station is situated on the top of a ridge that plunges a couple hundred feet to the Tongo River in the chasm below. The slope is wooded, the home of various birds. They wakened with the dawn to sing their songs of praise to the Creator. Away from the noise and clatter of busy Pabarabuk station, that serene morning at Tonga River station was like soothing music.

Later in the morning we all went with Noae to a pig feast. He had been asked to talk to the folks there about his recent trip to USA. The Gospel team could use that opportunity to have an open air meeting.

The road was passable as far as the Mendi River. There an ancient bridge spanned the wide rushing river. Its rotting logs could no longer be trusted to bear the weight of the truck. So the vehicle was parked and we walked from there, two or three miles to the site of the feast.

Along the way we had to ford a river. It was wide and rushing but not deep except in a narrow section. Many willing hands stretched out to us to steady us over those parts. In the warmth of the morning the coolness of the water was very refreshing.

The children and I lingered along the way. The Gospel team had already begun their service when we arrived. Noae stood on a stump during the meeting and talked about his impressions of America. Joe, the student pastor in the Gospel team, brought a concise message.

While we watched the proceedings of the pig feast, some of the ladies had curious cuts of meat in their string bags. We drew closer to better view the contents. What we saw was very unappetizing. It was the entrails of several pigs. They were carrying them down to a nearby stream to wash them out. Nothing is lost when these folk kill pigs.

Tiring of the pig feast, the children and I left early so as to get a head start on the men. Stephanie and I went first. Along the way we sat down to rest under a tree overlooking the river we had to wade. Soon we had attracted a crowd of children. They were simply enthralled with Stephanie's playfulness. Stephanie isn't a bit shy. The little brown children soon found her a charming friend.

When Jason caught up with us, the boys followed him; and the girls went with Stephanie. Jason was collecting stones. This intrigued the little fellows. They kept producing one rock after another for him to inspect. They beamed with pride if he chose one of theirs to put into his pocket.

As we poked along, the others caught up with us and helped us over the rippling stream we had to cross. Soon we arrived back at the truck and drove to Tonga River station.

On Sunday morning the people came in from the outstations. Word had been sent that missionaries were here. Six different pastors came with their congregations.

I was especially interested in their version of Sunday school classes. The people all sat outdoors on the grass. There were four groups of them. The little children played happily around the perimeter of the groups. A dog came along to the class that I sat with and made quite a disturbance. When one of the toddlers wandered too far from her mother, a loud yip from the dog brought the mother dashing to her rescue. Soon the class was back to normal again.

Sunday school was all conducted in the local language. Each leader led the class in quoting scripture verses. Choruses, too, were sung in each class. Evidently missionaries had done translation work in years gone by. I was seeing the fruit of their labors. Now these Christians were teaching their own people scriptures and songs. It was a real encouragement to me.

When it was service time, Noae beat a stone against an empty bottled-gas tank used for the bell. Everyone gathered in the church. Only two benches, placed at the front, were in the church. Our group quickly filled those. The congregation sat on the woven grass mat covering the dirt floor.

After introductions the boys sang and testified. Steve preached from I Corinthians 13. A good season of prayer, in which all participated, concluded the service.

As we shook hands with the friendly people, their love and appreciation was evident toward us. After a feast of mumued food, we took our departure and headed back to Pabarabuk.

Steve's final overnight trip was taken to Gomi, after Jack Taylor's had gone home. Steve had promised to go before our furlough. So Friday, November 4, 1983, was the date he set. He chose a Gospel team and left in the morning. Of course, Jason couldn't miss such an adventure, so he went along, too.

The journey to Gomi from Pabarabuk takes five hours. A newly opened access road reaches only part of the way. The trek from its end is very steep, down and up the river gorges. But being fresh for the hike, they energetically set out on foot with their supplies for the weekend in knapsacks on their backs.

The first difficult path was the one through the Nebilyer River gorge. It was nearly vertical! All the descriptions of its severity were appreciated. Nevertheless its beauty was so spectacular that Steve spent several minutes catching the splendor on his camera.

The bridge across the river was made by felling several large trees across its span. Far below roared the galloping stream through a pinched passageway. While his Gospel team crossed the logs singing his favorite chorus, "Jesus is the Answer", Steve filmed them on his movie camera. What an object lesson! As the trees provide the answer to the impassable canyon, so Jesus provides the

answer to all of life's problems. Yes, Jesus is the answer! That noble thought has made a lasting impression on the minds of Steve's Gospel team members.

The rugged walking didn't end with the ascent of that river gorge. No. There was mountain after mountain to scale. To Steve, it seemed the road was either up or down the whole way. To the boys with him, it seemed that Steve stopped to rest longer than he walked between his rests.

At last they made it to Gomi. Steve used the key to Taylor's house and disappeared for a couple hours. The boys supposed he was resting all that time. Steve vouched that they were right! He was exhausted. But not they, though they admitted it was a hard trek. They found a ball and played on the small basketball court.

Different boys preached in the weekend services held in the crowded, newly-built station church.

Steve's intention is to engage the boys in witnessing and personal work. This strengthens their faith in God. Those who are called to preach find ample opportunity to practice on these weekends with Steve.

The return trip was begun as soon after the Sunday service as the gear could be packed. This time Jason was sure of his road and quickly left his daddy in the rear. Several boys went along with him at his speed, while Steve and a couple others poked along behind.

"If Brother Sturtevant walked for 15 minutes, he rested for 20 minutes," Simon told me later. "If he were going up a steep hill, he would go for only a few rods before he sat down to rest."

Simon was so very solicitous of Steve's welfare and was greatly impressed with his determination to traverse difficult paths for the Gospel's sake. He noted the sweat trickling down Steve's face and the weariness that beset him. The sacrifice of his beloved missionary made admiration grow in his heart. He was challenged to give his own life fully to the Lord in carrying on this great work.

The scene that evoked his deepest sympathy took place on the steep descent to the Nebilyer River. Simon was right there with Steve. They were moving along quickly — too quickly for the treacherous path. A protruding tree root, unseen by Steve, snared his foot and he lunged forward. Grabbing a nearby tree, he swung himself around, breaking his fall. The near accident caused great concern for Simon. He could easily imagine his dear friend tumbling headlong down the mountainside to the rushing river below. With what carefulness he watched over him the rest of the way to the river!

Relating the incident in chapel that evening, he revealed how frightened he was for Steve's safety. "You know how fat Brother Sturtevant is. If he had started rolling, he would be just like a stone and wouldn't stop till he reached the river," he said in grave tones. Everyone agreed — except the missionaries who thought it funny!

When they had reached the next to the last hill, Steve sat down for a rest. He called to Simon, "Sing your song, 'One More Valley, One More Hill'."

So Simon sang,

"You've got one more valley, one more hill.  
Oh, you can lay down your heavy loads,  
When you get home."

A couple hours later they arrived home, where they rested. Even Jason was exhausted.

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# ORCHIDS ON A WASTE HILLSIDE

By

**Marilyn Lavy Sturtevant**

**12**

## **THE CHIMBU**

The Chimbu Province is rugged mountain country, peopled by a hardy stock who have long been noted for their immorality and thievery. The term "Chimbu woman" was almost synonymous with "prostitute". As for travelling through the province with a truck of goods, the risk of being robbed was always there.

Throughout our missionary term Steve took six trips into this area, helping to establish outstations and open new areas. His first trip was with Dean Rose in June 1981. When he returned, he had an interesting story to tell about their adventures.

Deki is a little outstation way back in the Chimbu mountains situated on a high ridge. The ridge is about ten yards wide, dropping hundreds of feet on both sides. On this ridge is built a little grass church. Konda, a national pastor from the Pabarabuk district, had felt God leading him to pastor this work. His fellow pastors had laid hands on him in prayer and sent him out in Jesus' name. Brother Rose and Steve were now taking him to begin his work.

The road to Deki had not been maintained since 1976. Consequently it was in need of repair in many places. Bridges were old and rickety. One in particular looked so bad that Steve said to Brother Rose, "I want out before you cross this one." So he got out and walked across.

Then he focused the movie camera on the truck while Brother Rose drove it across. Halfway over the bridge, the branches, placed crosswise on the large logs spanning the chasm, parted. The wheels of the truck slipped down into the crevice between the logs. The angels of the Lord were there to keep that outer log from breaking under the weight. Into that frightening moment Steve injected a bit of humor. "I don't know if this is any consolation or not, but I got all the action," he informed Brother Rose.

By jacking up the wheels and putting more limbs into the gaps, the truck was finally brought back up to the bridge surface. An hour had been spent in overcoming that predicament. After bumping over deeply rutted roads, they finally reached a landslide that completely blocked the road for further travel. They parked the truck and trekked from there.

Traversing the Chimbu mountains is like having a panoramic view of overwhelming beauty displayed all around at once. Looking forward there are astounding heights, dotted with gardens planted to steep, steep slopes. To the side is a beautiful waterfall, cascading down large rocks, dancing its way to the valley far below.

Through this wonderland of untamed beauty walked Brother Rose and Steve that June day. Stopping at one of the many gurgling streams to refresh themselves and get a drink, Brother Rose

stepped on a slippery rock in the middle of the stream. Quick as a wink his feet slipped out from under him. One leg was pinned between two rocks. For a few seconds he disappeared under water. How thankful they all were when he reappeared and stood up, demonstrating he had no broken bones!

Then a slow rain began falling on them. Being high in the mountains it was chilling. But in spite of all the adverse circumstances, after walking two hours, they at last made it to Deki.

The people welcomed them. Food was waiting for them, in true New Guinea hospitality. Word had been spread of their coming and the people gathered into the little church for service that night. The next day Konda got settled into the house they had prepared for him. It was a lonely outpost in a remote place. To Konda, it seemed almost as far from home as the missionaries themselves came to work. Before Steve and Brother Rose left, he took their hands and begged, "Please pray for me."

By retracing their steps back to the parked truck, Brother Rose and Steve were on their way home. This time when they came to the bad bridge, they made sure the limbs were placed properly before attempting to cross. And they made it.

Steve returned with a vision and a burden for the Chimbu. Ever since that first trip he took a special interest in that area. He found it heart-rending to hear the people in various places saying, "We want a pastor." The darkness of the heathen is appalling and it gripped his heart.

On another trip to the Chimbu, Steve took Jason and a Gospel team from the school. In the front seat beside him sat John Dai. He was a second year student at PNGBI. His father, Kuman Dai, is the opposition leader of the provincial government in the Chimbu.

Travelling toward Gumine, the government outpost where our main church is located, John kept up a running commentary on the surroundings. "A truck drove off the cliff here," he said. "Everyone was killed." What a cheerful thought as they twisted and turned on their treacherous road through rugged mountains!

"Here a man was captured," he continued, "and they cut him up bit by bit. The Chimbu way is to cause as much pain to our enemy as possible." What a comforting thought about these people!

Darkness had fallen before they drove into Gumine. But the pastor was waiting for them. They soon had a place to lay their blankets on the floor in his house.

The next morning Steve broke the group into two teams so as to hold meetings in two different markets. A boy named Casper came up to him at the meeting he attended. "My heart jumped for joy when I heard you this morning. I had to meet you!" Casper exclaimed. He had found the Lord while away at agricultural college. Life at home in the Chimbu wasn't too congenial for Christians. What a joy to find some Christians at that Saturday morning market!



A Bible study was planned for the evening. Steve hoped to use one of the classrooms of the community school. To get permission he had to find the headmaster at his house, where a lively drinking party was in progress.

At the appointed hour many young people came. The Gospel team sang and testified. Some came to the front to pray. Then there were lots of questions to be answered.

But the devil tried his best to disturb the meeting. In the midst of the service a drunk man burst into the room and fell to the floor. "The world is coming to an end," he yelled. Then the headmaster came in, also intoxicated, and tried to impress everyone with his religious knowledge. But not all was lost.

A Catholic catechist thanked them for coming. He said, "We have tried to teach the young people, but they aren't interested. Yet they come to hear you!" He couldn't comprehend that.

Casper was also at the meeting. Steve invited him to come over to the pastor's house for a chat. So when the headmaster turned the lights out, he went along with them. Before going to bed, Steve had a good time explaining the deep things of the Christian's walk. The young man showed real soul hunger.

Before church the next morning a boy named Ben knocked at the door. "I'm hungry for your words," he said. "I'd like to come to your school and learn more about God's Word." He was the son of the drunk man who had come into the meeting the night before. They took him along to church with them. At the end of the service he wanted to pray. The Lord helped him, but his understanding of holy things was so limited. As they prepared to leave in the afternoon, he clung to their hands as if to say, "Don't leave us!"

Again Steve returned home with a burdened heart for sin darkened Chimbus.

On the last trip Steve took to the Chimbu, the children and I went along. It turned out to be a very interesting weekend.

The road off the Highlands Highway is very crooked, hilly, and bumpy. We made many hairpin curves and crossed many bridges with rushing streams beneath them. Sometimes the road was perched precariously on the side of a canyon with the ground rising nearly perpendicularly on one side and dropping at the same angle on the other. All along the way we saw landslides of various sizes. Erosion had caused deep gullies in the roadway in many places. After two hours of this bumpy travel, we arrived at Gumine.

Andano and his wife, Name, persist in the face of difficulties to keep preaching the Gospel here. At the time of this trip they were being forced out of the house they had lived in for two years. Another was granted them farther up on the side of a mountain. Several repairs were needed before it would be livable. The boys in the Gospel team helped with whatever they could to restore it while we were there.

During our stay our family was given a little eight foot by eight foot room with no beds or furniture of any kind. We had our sleeping bags and two air mattresses along. One of the mattresses refused to hold air, so Steve and I squeezed onto one. The children slept on the wooden floor.

Our diet was rice with fish and vegetable soup three times a day. We had kaukau to eat for a couple meals and a few goodies I had brought along. Name cooked the food on a small, smoky stove in one corner of the main room.

No water was piped into the house, but a water tank at the end of the house caught rain water off the galvanized roof. All our dishes, clothes, and bodies were washed in the same basin with cold water from the rain tank. I had taken some bleach and dish soap along to help counteract germs that could be so easily transmitted by such methods.

For lights at night we had our kerosene pressure lantern. If we hadn't taken ours, our lighting would have been Andano's tiny hurricane lamp.

The toilet facility was a little square metal building situated a short distance from the back door of the house. Everyone used the same place. A five gallon bucket with no lid was placed on the solid concrete floor. That and a roll of tissue completed the furnishings.

A little band of Christians met every evening in the pastor's house for devotions. Their hunger for spiritual knowledge was touching. Though only a small number of the group were children, every night they asked me to tell them a Bible story in Pidgin. They showed keen interest in every word, though I told them the most common stories of David and Goliath, Daniel in the lions' den, etc. It was refreshing, reminding me of the years at Katiloma when that area was newly opened to the Gospel.

On Saturday the pastor from Deki walked in and begged us to go to his station for Sunday services. I wasn't anxious to go into the bush, as the town living was primitive enough for me. But Jason was even more anxious to go than Steve. So Steve divided the Gospel team so I could continue services in Gumine while he took some with him to Deki. With this accomplished, they started out.

They faced several disadvantages. We had had a flat tire while coming in on Friday and were now using the spare. There was no way to get the tire fixed in Gumine. No fuel is sold in Gumine and no one had any extra. So Steve couldn't fill up before the trip. The battery in our truck was dead so we had to park it on a hill. Then a little push would start the engine again. The road was in bad condition. Heavy rains had made it even more difficult. Our truck was only a two-wheel drive.

Nevertheless, in spite of all the disadvantages they drove within an hour-and-a-half walk of Deki. They parked the truck and trekked the rest of the way over the abandoned road blocked by landslides, over log bridges, through streams, and finally down a steep, rocky, foot path to their destination.

They were welcomed by some very friendly Christians with a feast of mumued food. Then they gathered in the church for an evening service. Several had come out to hear them.

When they settled down to sleep for the night, Jason must have been the only one to rest well. The Gospel team boys couldn't rest because rain leaked in on them most of the night. Steve couldn't sleep because he was thinking about getting out that road again the next day. All the problems they had encountered on their way mounted up before him. He was convinced there was no way to overcome all those obstacles without divine intervention. The most discouraging thoughts drove sleep from him. He spent the night asking the Lord to help him out.

When morning came, the gratitude of the people was again expressed by the food they prepared. This time it was chicken they produced. In friendly conversation over the meal, one old man said he thought God looked like Steve! All the boys thought that was really funny. Steve objected to the comparison.

After the morning service, they hiked back to the parked truck. There they prayed that God would help them overcome all the difficulties. Then they began exercising their faith and gave the truck a push. After a few sputters, it started.

About a half mile away they met their first steep climb up a mountain. After attempt upon repeated attempt, they stopped to pray again. The local people began calling out to their friends to come and help. One fellow brought along a native vine rope. This they fastened to the bumper. While about twenty men pulled, about that many pushed from behind. THEN — the vine rope broke! The clouds were bending low, threatening to drop their moisture. But those men persisted. At last after several more attempts, their persistence won out! They made it to the top of that mountain! Praises issued from many lips.

The next problem was met a few feet farther on. The road had been so washed out that the truck, sliding into the wrong rut, became high-centered. When they got past that, the engine overheated with the extra exertion. They had to stop and put more water into the radiator.

On the way up another slope the engine stalled. Now what? The truck wouldn't start backwards. Somehow Steve managed to get it turned around and headed back down the mountain, backing over a rickety old bridge in the process. Then they were on their way again.

But not for long. The next bridge had to be repaired. In spite of the repairs, they still broke through; but they managed to get on across anyway. At another bridge, the back wheel of the truck went through the limbs. It took about twenty men to lift the truck back onto the logs.

Stopping along the road at a waterfall, they spent several minutes refreshing themselves. Steve slipped on one of the rocks and nearly fell over the edge. The angels of the Lord were there, too.

As the result of tribal fighting, the top boards of one of the bridges had been removed. Police had been using the road to get back to the war zone. So the people had removed the boards to stop the police. Fighting is sport for the Chimbu. Neither side wanted it stopped.

But the dismantled bridge was a hindrance to progress. Steve had to ford the river. Going up the opposite bank they got stuck. But again they worked until they got up to the road surface again.

Back at Gumine they tallied their statistics. High-centered — four times, broke through bridges — four times, stuck — numerous times, nervous stomach and headache — one man's!

Steve called it a small miracle. But from my point of view that miracle took an awful lot of hard work and determination to bring it about. Perhaps the miracle was in the endurance of the team and their captain!

Jason's reaction was altogether different. He thoroughly enjoyed the adventure. He came back with the idea that he would like to be a missionary to Deki when he grows up. He began to spin tales of what he would do about the roads. His enthusiasm was a definite contrast to his father's exhaustion that evening.

Our plans had been to return to PNGBI the next day. But due to excessive rains that weekend, several landslides had been triggered along the road back to the Highlands Highway. So we waited till we heard that the ground had been cleared enough for passage. By then it was too late in the afternoon to start out. So our stay was extended another night. It was probably to Steve's benefit that he had another night of rest after his harrowing experience on the road to Deki.

On Tuesday we were able to get through even though the roads were not completely cleared. So we made it back home to Pabarabuk safely. And that was the trip to end all trips to the Chimbu.

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# ORCHIDS ON A WASTE HILLSIDE

By

**Marilyn Lavy Sturtevant**

**13**

## FAREWELL

As we neared the end of our final school year, many students came expressing their appreciation to us. From those words we learned about their response to our ministry.

Steve was the sponsor for the eighth grade class. At the end of the year they had a class party. After everyone had eaten of the mumbled foods, different ones gave speeches. Some of their hidden sentiments were revealed.

I was not prepared for the surprise I received when the first boy spoke. Norman received his first schooling at Katiloma, entering school in 1969.

Norman's speech contained four points. First he thanked Steve for his encouragement to follow the Lord. His second and third points portrayed thanks to Sister Lorimor and David Timmy, two teachers who were present. His fourth point was directed to me. He expressed his appreciation for my vision of New Guinea when I was young. He remembered the hard work I put into the school at Katiloma, making special mention of his first year in 1969. He expressed his gratitude for the privilege of attending school both at Katiloma and at PNGBI. Then he presented me with a token gift of their love. My cup of joy was full.

Other speeches followed. Simon spoke a few words of appreciation to Steve. Mentioning his help in problems and difficulties, he thanked him for both spiritual and physical encouragement. He thanked the Lord for "laying a good desire on Steve's heart to help such a poor person like me."

Two farewell songs were sung to us. The quartet of girls sang a farewell song written by another girl. A sextet of boys also sang a song written by one of them. Two guitarists added background strumming. They all sang with such spirit and feeling.

We were convinced of their love and appreciation. And if that weren't enough, there was still the final farewell at the Hagen Airport.

Hagen Airport intertwines missionaries' emotions. It is something like a hospital where people are born and where they return to depart from this world. It sees happiness, elation, and expressions of joy over new arrivals; sadness, dejection, and expressions of sorrow over those who leave.

Here at the Hagen Airport we began our new lives as missionaries eagerly welcomed by our new "family". What a warm feeling to be embraced by fellow missionaries! Admiration had welled up in our hearts for these stalwart souls who had weathered many a storm before us. Their smiling faces had given us confidence that understanding and helpful advice would surely be available among them.

As willing hands relieved us of our many bags, we had sensed the assurance that our future burdens would likewise be shared. Then we had been whisked off to Pabarabuk, our new home.

The next years found us back at the same airport among the "family", greeting or bidding farewell to other missionaries. Our emotions were intertwined with theirs.

Now it was our turn to leave. The long, low terminal building came into view, so conspicuously insignificant and tiny in comparison with airports around the world. Mixed feelings swept over us. Many friends came to surround us with warm feelings of love. A goodly number of the encircling arms were brown ones and their embraces tear-stained. Parting brought sadness to our loyal friends; only the promise that, the Lord willing, we would return in a year, injected hope into their dejection.

When the call came to board, I headed for the door. But, no; I couldn't go that way. A great crowd was pressing from both sides of the doorway, lining a very narrow pathway through which we had to slip. This way they had one more chance to grab us by the hand or hug us in one last sorrowful good-bye.

Then we were gone!

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## ORCHIDS ON A WASTE HILLSIDE

By

**Marilyn Lavy Sturtevant**

**14**

### **EXCEEDING ABUNDANTLY**

A modest church building sits along the Highlands Highway just a half mile up the road from the PNGBI road junction. Its corrugated iron roof and louvered glass windows are complemented by the woven pit-pit walls. It has no steeple nor sign to indicate it is a church. Its floor is the packed earth, covered with more woven pit-pit. No benches are spaced through the room. No ceiling hides the underside of the corrugated roof. The only attempt at interior decoration is some old, battered, Sunday school pictures placed at random on the front wall, without thought given to symmetry. Across the front is a podium with a simple, box-shaped pulpit in the center.

Nonetheless this is a sacred building. God has deigned to meet with hungry souls here, thus sanctifying this humble house for the worship of the triune God. Here the original flames of the revival of 1980 were kindled. That had taken place before our arrival in PNG, but when we visited here in August 1980, the revival fervor was still high.

Arriving early we spent a few minutes just getting acquainted with the people. They were grateful for our visit. Being new we had some explanations to share about ourselves. The children were shy, being unaccustomed to the people. Steve couldn't understand their Pidgin English. So I ended up being an interpreter.

When the service began, we were seated on the platform, where wooden slabs were placed against the wall for seats. Crowded onto that church floor were about four hundred people. Others were pressing at the open door and windows unable to enter.

The singing testimonies, and prayers of the congregation left no doubt that God was alive in their midst. The accounts of the dreams and visions they gave were reminiscent of the prophecy of Joel.

Steve was asked to preach. It was nearly 12:00 when they were ready for the sermon. Under the direction of the Lord he told of our calling to New Guinea. He had a very understanding and receptive audience as he told of the convincing events God used to show us His will. Jason's dream about moving to a new house on a tree-covered mountain sounded like the experiences they were having. Their appreciation of the message was evident in their handshakes and greetings after the service ended.

Kandulope Yakubu was the channel through whom God began a wonderful revival in 1980. He is a remarkable man. Early in his teens, the arrival of the white man was exciting news in his area. He told me, "Nambawan wiska i kamap" (His first whiskers grew) at the time of G. T. Bustin's missionary enterprise in 1948.

Being too old for primary school when the school opened here at Pabarabuk, Kandulope had to content himself with being a mission helper. Showing himself apt at learning, his services were soon being sought as an interpreter. He was asked to assist at Tambul when that station was opened. As he interpreted for the missionaries' messages, his heart was touched. He sought the Lord for his own salvation. Down through the years his life has been marked by consistency, as he began preaching the Gospel on his own. When the first ministers were chosen for ordination in the Papua New Guinea Bible Church, Kandulope was one of them.

Takame became his wife in 1952. Six children have been born to them, three girls and three boys. He has never taken a second wife, which is unusual to his age, culture, and lifestyle, but a clear indication of the power of the Gospel in this highlander's life! For several years he has been the pastor of the Papakolia church four miles from Pabarabuk.

Early in the year 1980 this pastor was earnestly waiting on God for a spiritual move among his parishioners. An apathy had settled down on them that his preaching didn't penetrate. He desired a miraculous move from God upon them.

As Cornelius of old, his prayer was heard. One night in a dream a beautiful song came to him. He saw all his people grouped about him. They, too, were singing this song. His heart was filled to overflowing with joy in the Holy Spirit. In his happiness he found his eyes running over with tears. Out of a full heart he prophesied. "Jesus is coming!"

When he told his congregation of this dream, the effect was electrifying. From all over the little church prayers began ascending to God for forgiveness of their sins. As they prayed through to real victory, others became hungry. The revival began to grow. Neighbors started coming to church who hadn't been interested for years. People who had never been in the church before came to see what the excitement was about. They, too, felt the power of Jesus' love and their hearts were melted. Just how many were converted is hard to calculate. But the normal attendance of 125 jumped to over 400 in just a few weeks.

Such a stirring couldn't be contained. When the Easter convention was held for all the outstations of the Pabarabuk district, God came. The Friday morning service had already started as the people from Papakolia arrived. The effect was immediate. The Holy Spirit fell with deep conviction on souls as they filed into the church at Pabarabuk. Soon many were crying and confessing their sins. The two prayer rooms at the front of the sanctuary were soon filled with weeping penitents. But it wasn't long till the prayers of confession were changed to testimonies of praise to the Lord of hosts.

This spirit of revival continued throughout the weekend till holy fire spread among the people of the local congregations. When the convention was over, they all went back to their own churches and began holding nightly services.

Into this atmosphere we arrived on May 25, 1980. In the evenings we could hear the local people in their church services, praying and praising the Lord. It sounded like camp meeting. For several months they kept up the nightly services. And God honored their persistent supplications.



The final quarter of the 1980 school year at PNGBI had begun. Revival was spreading around the hills and valleys nearby. Word was coming that people were being converted from the Catholic missions as well as unreached heathen. How our hearts longed for revival at PNGBI! As we waited on the Lord in prayer, God was preparing something very special for us. When the answer came, it exceeded our highest hopes. He is the God of the exceeding abundant.

"Would you preach for us each night this week?" Pilipo Miriye asked Steve on Sunday, October 5. Of course he consented and began preparing some messages. It was God's time. Steve was God's man. The messages he brought were God's messages.

After the sermon about the goodness and severity of God on Monday night, many students came forward to pray. The next night the sermon was about "No Thieves in Heaven." Conviction was heavy on the congregation. Many remembered their stolen items. Confessions and restitutions were made in large numbers.

That was the night that Paul Wagun got soundly converted. He realized he had never been truly saved before. His heart was melted with conviction as he confessed his sins to God. "I knew God wanted me to be a teacher, but I wanted to be a policeman," he related later. But he found that great peace filled his soul when he yielded to God's will. His testimony was vibrant and infectious. Others wanted what he had found.

That night a student named Biyabe had a dream. Judgment Day had come. He saw Steve and Jason there and they seemed very happy. But he was very sad. "I was not ready," he said. But the next night he got ready.

Wednesday's sermon was on the Great White Throne Judgment. That night many made confessions and got right with God. Those who had already plunged into "the fountain filled with blood," prayed for those who were still holding back.

The revival was on. God had taken over. From then on the missionary's main job was to stay out of the way and let God work. The next night confessions and testimonies took up most of the time. There was time for only a short sermon after 9:00 p.m. Friday evening service was the same way. That night the praying and seeking went on unabated until 1:00 a.m.

Students waited their turns in line to get to the staff members in order to make their restitutions to them. I had some of the Katiloma students come to me and confess things they had taken from me ten years before. God was dealing and doing a thorough work of cleaning out past sins in their lives.

At the request of the students, Mr. Miriye asked Steve to continue the preaching services the following week. They decided to give the students a night off on Saturday so as to get some rest, for they were praying late into the nights. Even though no service was held, groups of students continued their intercessions to God for several hours that night.

It was Sunday night, October 12. A whole week of heart preparation had preceded this service. While standing and lustily singing, "I've anchored my soul in the haven of rest," the glory fell.

Several minutes were given to loud praises and exultant worship of the Blessed God. Many had already made their peace with him and joined in extolling His Name. The atmosphere was fanned with angels' wings.

Students, who had sat through many a service without showing any demonstration of the life of the Spirit, now were running and leaping about the sanctuary. After a few minutes they found some who still had not made their peace with God. So they had a season of prayer with them. As they found victory they joined those still praising the Lord.

More confessions needed to be made. Again the students lined up by the teachers, waiting their turn to speak with them about their wrongs.

All night long that service continued. Some students never went to bed. Others went to bed, then awakened and returned to the church to join in again.

The next morning there were no classes. The vibrant jubilation was still continuing in the chapel. Finally about noon everyone was tired out. They were sleepy in the service that night. Steve preached on holiness. Many came to pray, but weariness of the flesh set in. Sleep was needed.

At the same time the revival was in progress in the school chapel, the local church people were still having their nightly services. God was likewise visiting them. The young people and children were responding en masse to God's call.

The children from Pabarabuk village who attended Kugla Primary School were sharing their happiness and joy in the classroom. They didn't know how to contain their enthusiasm. The classes were interrupted with the praises of God.

The headmaster didn't approve. He threatened them with the punishment of digging toilet holes if this interference didn't stop. That didn't dull their spirits any. Finally he dismissed the school.

The Pabarabuk children banded together and marched back to their village singing the songs of the revival. Along the way they broke off ferns and flowers. These they waved above their heads, singing and praising as they walked along.

As this joyous procession arrived on the campus, their presence was soon felt. It was Tuesday afternoon after classes were over. The students were working at their regular jobs. As the sounds of praise resounded through the air, students and missionaries alike left their work to investigate. Soon the cause was known. The effect was electrifying.

"I don't know what to preach tonight," Steve said to me that evening.

"I don't think you will have to worry about that this evening," I replied.

Sure enough there was no preaching that night. The holy joy was all over the campus. The students gathered for service and spent the whole time praising God, demonstrating their happiness by running, jumping, clapping hands, hugging one another, laughing, shouting, and singing.

That night the local young people left their service and joined the students. Some of them still wore their native dress of tanket leaves.

Wednesday we heard that the outstations were gathering in for the evening service. Mr. Miriye decided to preach in the local language to the congregation as so many would not understand English.

To accommodate the large crowd, the removable walls of the chapel's adjoining classrooms were taken down. Now the chapel area could hold a thousand people. They had it packed that night. Many sat on the floor crowded tightly together in the aisles and around the altar area.

As Mr. Miriye preached, the fire fell on that waiting congregation. To hear that many people praying and weeping at the same time that others were praising God and shouting was to experience a bit of Heaven's jubilation.

Thursday evening was another service of rejoicing. By this time sinners were pretty scarce, because hard hearts had melted under the sweet penetrating influence of the blessed Holy Spirit. The students knew best how to ferret out the recalcitrant. God had done exceeding abundantly above what we were able to ask or think.

With this great joy in their hearts, the students were anxious to go back to their own villages to tell what had taken place in their hearts. So school was dismissed on Friday. Many students took advantage of this long weekend to go home. Burning with enthusiasm, they preached and testified. The glory was infectious. God began to repeat revival around that area, "till burning lines of Gospel fire" began spreading through the land.

The students who stayed back on campus were anxious to share their faith, too. Someone suggested a market meeting. Some went to nearby markets on Saturday morning. Others jumped on the school truck and went to the Mt. Hagen market. Wherever the flaming evangelists went, God went before them.

Like the disciples of old who had been sent out two by two, the young evangelists returned full of joy. Their reports of spiritual awakening brought much rejoicing to the Sunday evening service. When they had all tallied their figures, they found that between five and six hundred souls had been converted in the different services that weekend. What thanksgiving took place!

As a clincher to their faith, Steve proposed a baptismal service. At first mention he thought about half of the student body would respond. But as he began pressing for names to list, the number dwindled. They were full of many questions. "What happens if I commit sin after I am baptized? Will the Lord forgive me again?" "If my whole body doesn't get under the water, does that mean sin is still in my life?" "What if I still have unconfessed sin back at my home?" And on and on. This was

the first time a baptism had ever been conducted at PNGBI. Many misgivings and misconceptions had to be explained.

At last 67 young people counted the cost and decided to be baptized. Before November 9th they had learned the Apostles' Creed and an old hymn to sing for the morning service. During the service each candidate stood up in front of the congregation and gave testimony to faith in Christ Jesus. It was a precious service.

When the morning service was finished, the whole congregation walked down to the Pupu River. Several hundred were there to witness that baptismal scene. The blessing of the Lord was upon us. As the candidates stepped into the water, songs swelled up on the shore, songs of decision to follow Christ, songs of joy in serving Jesus, songs of consecration. Two at a time, the 67 young people were baptized by the ministers. When at last the line was finished, shouts of praise began to ring through that river valley. A significant milestone was passed. The young people were appreciating its importance in their hearts.

As the end-of-school activities ushered the students off campus, the local people came in from the outstations for the regular Christmas convention. It turned out to be the largest gathering of Christians they had ever had. The effects of the revival were everywhere evident.

Various activities were planned for the weekend. One of the programs was a play enacting the Great White Throne Judgment. It was totally planned and put on by the local pastors and their people. It was all conducted in the vernacular; we could only guess what was being spoken. But the actions gave plenty of clues.

The stage was set on the lawn. An old Christian man who represented God, was set on a chair — in the front of the stage area. Before him stepped the members of the congregation. A smoky fire was kindled at one side. In the center front were several white robed individuals who escorted those who passed the trial into the presence of the Lord. A horned creature grabbed the arms of those who failed the test and pushed them through the smoke of the fire where they were obscured from view.

The drama brought a solemn feeling on the congregation as each examined his own heart in the light of the judgment questions. It set the atmosphere for Steve's message of the morning. Through an interpreter he preached to that overflowing crowd in the school chapel, estimated to be greater than a thousand in number.

But greater victories were ahead for this convention.

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Pabarabuk station was astir with activity. The weather was overcast, warm and humid. Clouds hugged the mountain range beyond the station. Hardly a breeze wafted through the wide valley. But the benediction of the Holy Spirit could be sensed. Today a seal would be placed upon the effects of the revival in our area.

The old airstrip was adorned very simply. A roped off area had an arched bamboo gate in it. Four Christian men staked off a circle in the middle of that square. Into it they placed an old tire. Then they carefully arranged pieces of firewood on top of it.

Little children ran around, sensing the excitement of their elders. Older children and adults crowded close to the rope fence, pressing in on all sides, four and five deep, straining to get a good observation point.

When all was ready, a flame was ignited on the pile of wood. The blaze began licking around the sticks.

A hush settled over that crowd, as Pastor Philip, from the local Pabarabuk church, took the megaphone and stepped into the square. First in the local tongue and then in Pidgin English, he spoke of how the missionaries had brought the words of the everlasting Gospel to their area. He told of G. T. Bustin, the first missionary. The message of God's love was brought to this valley through his ministry. As a result five men had burned their poisons and their witchcraft items in the name of God. At a later time the warriors of the tribe burnt their bows and arrows, indicating they would fight no more.

Now, today, December 13, 1980, the men had decided to burn their body decorations used for singsings. They realized they were inseparably connected with immoral practices. Moreover they were contrary to the teachings of the meek Nazarene, who now had control of their lives.

When Pastor Philip's speech was concluded, he went over to the men at the village. They had prepared their ornaments for destruction. He led them, four abreast, back to the expectant audience.

They came, heavily bedecked with brilliant bird-of-paradise and parrot plumes, possum fur headbands, long flowing woven bark cloths hanging from bark belts, and rustling tanket leaves in the back.

As they marched along they sang. The words of the song they sang mean, "I have heard the words of Jesus, and I will follow." Some were overcome with emotion and were weeping openly. Each of them realized the importance of the step they were taking. The national pastors had schooled them well.

The missionaries knew nothing of this part of the program. We all were looking on in wonderment. God was writing some things on their hearts without our help.

Around the audience a ripple of anticipation rolled. Many a wife, mother, or sister broke out into weeping.

The brave band of decorated men, led by the pastor, marched into the square, through the arching bamboo, and around the fire. After completely circling it once, they stood in formation facing it. Immediately the first row of four men stepped forward. Stripping off those gorgeous head-dresses, they cast them determinedly into the hot fire. They took off the rest of their native costume, to stand

clothed as Christian tribesmen. When they were finished, they moved aside and stood in a line. The second row of four stepped forward and did the same. One man shouted triumphantly as he ridded himself of those heathen trappings. The third, fourth, and fifth rows continued to follow suit, until all stood together completely free from their decorations.

Then a wave of joy swept through the audience. Missionaries joined in the praises with hands raised toward the open heavens. A long line of Christians passed along shaking hands with those victorious men. Great was the rejoicing in the decisive step they had taken. It was indeed a day of crowning triumph for the revival burning over the highlands.

In retrospect, the 1980 revival greatly encouraged the faith of missionaries, gave new life to hundreds of souls in the highlands, strengthened the national church, and started a chain of revival fires that can still be found aglow in various parts of the highlands. God had done exceeding abundantly above our expectation.

### **THE ONE LEFT BEHIND**

"Don't look back," came the call  
As they fled the burning wall  
Of that city that Lot loved so well.  
But his wife could not resist  
Looking back one last time, there to be  
Just a stone LEFT BEHIND!

A young man to Jesus came  
To ask Him of the way.  
But he found that the cost was too great.  
The things that he owned,  
He turned back to, to be  
The one LEFT BEHIND!

Demas left Paul alone  
And returned to his home,  
This world drawing him away.  
The curtain then falls on him;  
And the things he hoped to find,  
Caused him to be the one LEFT BEHIND!

Friend, you may be here now,  
Having your hand put to the plow,  
And looking back, have failed in your task.  
"Later on I'll serve God,"  
Now runs through your mind,  
But by then you may be LEFT BEHIND!

Two shall be in the field,  
And grinding at the mill,  
When our Lord shall come for His own.  
One glance away, and then one back,  
Oh, how sad it will be to find one caught away  
And the other LEFT BEHIND!

LEFT BEHIND forever and ever,  
With no hope for eternity,  
Missing out on the joys  
That the others will find.  
Dear Lord, don't let me be  
The one LEFT BEHIND!

Author unknown

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# ORCHIDS ON A WASTE HILLSIDE

By

**Marilyn Lavy Sturtevant**

**15**

## **SPIRITUAL OUTPOURINGS**

The Gospel team from Tambul was on campus. They came bringing Spirit-filled messages in song and testimony. Ken Thompson had brought them at Steve's invitation. It was revival time, October 1981. Gerald Bustin was to be the evangelist, but he couldn't come till Monday. So Ken Thompson and his Gospel team held the opening services the preceding weekend.

Before the sermon on Sunday night, Ken and Vicki sang a special song. They sang it with such unction and compassion, "Dear Lord, don't let me be the one left behind."

Conviction fell like a blanket all over the congregation. Girls began weeping openly. Then loud crying replaced the weeping. The whole student body seemed moved to tears. Many hastened to the altar. The prayer rooms and front corners filled up with hungry seekers, smitten with conviction. Those who couldn't get to the front fell on their knees right by their benches. The presence of the Holy Spirit was evident all over the chapel that night.

John Wina had been seeking the will of the Lord for his life. This was his final year in high school. He had the feeling the Lord would call him to preach, if he seriously sought His will. But hindrances barricaded his decision.

He yearned to be a carpenter and go into subcontracting. He had learned building skills while working with his missionary at Katiloma. His experience was broadened at PNGBI when he worked with Dean Rose in the carpentry shop. He had both a talent and a love for carpentry.

Also his family had expectations for him. They wanted him to get a job and make money for the tribe.

But the sermons Steve had been preaching lately stressed seeking God's will. Money-making jobs might not necessarily be the Lord's will. All these thoughts were struggling within his being that night.

When deep conviction fell upon the student body during Thompsons' song, the Lord spoke to John to go forward and pray for knowledge of God's will. In weeping and contrition he made his way to the front. Kneeling by the choir benches, he poured out all the desires of his own heart before the Lord.

When the Lord pressed upon him his call to preach, a battle began raging within. Peace came when he yielded to the blessed Savior's will. That was the night that he settled it to preach the Gospel.



"We don't want to keep those new rules! We don't like this food! We're not being treated fairly! We're going home!" These words were shouted by irate students early in the school year of 1982. Soon the rebellious spirit had infected a sizable group of young people.

Some of the leaders of the discontented were the ones on whom we had placed so much trust and hope. One was Paul Wagun, who felt God had called him to teach. He had stayed back to help teach in the institute and had been a great help the previous year. Now here he was making a placard with all the students' grievances.

Another leader was John Wina. He had graduated the year before and felt God's call to preach the Gospel. He was enrolled in the English pastors' school for the year 1982. But he, too, was caught up in this unrest. He used his influence to get his best friends to side in with him.

Soon twenty-four students packed their bags, requested their tuition money back, and set off for home. A few days later several more left.

Heartaches are stifling. Betrayed trusts are painful. Dashed hopes are distressing. Missionaries are very human. Through those turbulent days we suffered and prayed.

Into this charged atmosphere came Bob Brock from Tambul. Steve had engaged him as evangelist for the opening revival of the school year. Under the circumstances the first couple services met with little response from the students.

Then the day John and his best friends left, God began answering the earnest prayers of his children. Paul had seriously considered leaving that day, too, but changed his mind at the last.

The opening exercises were finished. The evangelist began preaching. In his characteristic straight forward manner, he was declaring the truths of God's Word. Paul was sitting back in the rear of the chapel at the end of a pew. His bitter heart was revolting at the truth he was hearing from the pulpit. Hatred filled his heart. His emotions became so intense that he decided to leave church.

As he rose to make his escape, his heart was smitten with terrific conviction. He fell to the floor in awful agony of spirit. At the top of his voice he began crying out to God.

An uneasy hush settled over the congregation. This outburst had taken everyone by surprise. As the screaming continued undiminished, the preacher realized his sermon was at an abrupt end, punctuated by screams of soul anguish. The effect was such that deep conviction fell on the whole student body. Our own tears were mingled with the students' that night. We realized a Higher Power was taking over where our poor, feeble efforts were in vain against the onslaughts of the evil one.

"I saw hell opened up for me," Paul said later. "I thought I was dying and going right into it." God had mercy on his soul and brought him through to glorious victory.

Though several of the students who left in that unrest never returned, some did. One was John Wina. Leaving school, he went to work with his uncle Kaga, who was running for a government

position. Being out of God's will, John soon lost God out of his soul. Throughout the year, he tried building for money. But he wasn't satisfied.

In October of that year he was at his home in Katiloma when his missionary, Robert Harvey, preached a sermon on the will of God. That night he prayed his way back to God. "I regained the victory I had lost," he told me later. Rejoicing, he came back to Pabarabuk and asked for admittance in the Pastors' school for the 1983 school year. He was accepted.

During the year 1983 his uncle died. His family tried to persuade him to give up his schooling and take over Kaga's business. But firmly he told them, "I fear God more than you. I must preach or lose my soul." A week after the funeral he returned to school and took up his studies again.

Often he preaches in chapel and at outstations. His testimony now is that it is sweet to do the will of God. The shine on his face is evidence that he is finding it satisfying.

Two novelties that Steve instigated when he became school pastor were the Holiness Convention and the Missionary Convention. Special emphasis was put on the teaching of holiness and of missions during these separate weekends.

The second Holiness Convention was held in April 1982. Robert Harvey was invited as the speaker. His messages were direct — the spoken word of the Lord struck conviction in the hearts of the students.

The unusual moving of the Lord came on Saturday evening, April 24. A number of students responded to the altar call. When most had left the church, five or six remained to pray with Rev. Harvey and Steve. Then one of the seekers struck fire!

A few minutes later Paul Wagon prayed through to a clear experience of holiness. His heart overflowing, he began shouting the high praises of God. God came down on that little group. Glory crowned the mercy seat.

That couldn't be contained. A little hallelujah band marched across the campus, spreading their holy joy everywhere. Through the boys' dorm they went, exhorting others to enter this land of perfect love.

Paul ran through the halls shouting, "You're missing it! You're missing it!" His new-found rapture made others thirsty for that living water, too. Soon a line of boys filed back to the chapel. Praying resounded in the church again until the midnight hour. Many found their souls' desire that night.

The morning service resounded with vibrant testimonies from all over the sanctuary. The notes of victory were infectious. Conviction fell on others who hadn't found their souls' satisfaction yet.

In the evening the song service was interrupted by one young lady. "I'm not right with God," she declared.

Following her to the altar was a whole host of other hungry souls. The Holy Spirit concluded the Holiness Convention. A burden of prayer settled down for two hours, with many obtaining the help they needed. It was a sight to make the angels rejoice.

Nor did the Spirit lift when the meeting closed. In the following week Steve's reading class was broken up when the spirit of prayer fell on his students. Two boys, Noki and Benedict, were sanctified during that prayer meeting, while the class prayed on disregarding the bell.

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For the school revival in March 1983, Robert and Lily Harvey were called in as co-evangelists. They faithfully delivered the Word of God in chapel and evening services.

During the first half of the meeting few seekers were at the altar. After much prayer and fasting, the Lord began drawing in the nets. When a few began testifying to victory, others got hungry.

As the second week neared the end, many sought the Lord every night. The final Saturday evening arrived. Several boys stayed late and prayed till they struck fire. Some of them were seeking holiness of heart. God answered in mighty power on their souls. He gave them a new song in their hearts. Their joy knew no bounds.

Sunday morning the fire spread. During Sunday school, a class of boys began praying. Their prayer meeting lasted the entire Sunday school hour. Sunday worship service commenced under this blanket of prayer.

The boys who found God in the night had a special song to sing. They sang the words the Lord had put in their hearts in their midnight prayer meeting. "I will serve Him! I will love Him!" With such fervor and anointing they sang! The glory of the Lord descended. Weeping and audible praise reverberated through the chapel.

The atmosphere of praise brought a burden for lost friends. Soon the altar was lined. The front corners and prayer rooms filled up. Hungry souls sought the Lord all over the chapel that Sunday morning. The spirit of prayer lasted till 11:30 a.m.

Victories brought testimonies. The testimonies, interspersed with confessions, lasted till 2:00 p.m. By then the emotions had subsided. But God was not finished yet.

At 6:30 p.m. all the students and staff gathered outside the chapel around an open fire. Onto that fire went many worldly music cassettes that had somehow made their way to school. Other unholy items also met their doom in that fire. It was a solemn assembly that witnessed that destruction of the enemy's articles. With lighter consciences the students entered the chapel for the final service.

The Spirit was still moving. Testimonies continued late, giving only a few minutes for the evangelist to deliver a short exhortation. At the conclusion, immediately the unsaved streamed to the

altar. Their Christian friends made a wall of prayer around them as they cried to God for salvation. What wonders were wrought in that service only Heaven will unfold!

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For our final revival in October 1983, Steve asked David Stalder to be the evangelist. Our hearts were thrilled with the results.

Approaching the chapel for the Tuesday evening service, earnest praying could be heard coming from an adjoining classroom. At the opening strains of song, the praying ceased.

In reverently marched a long line of boys, some with tears streaming down their faces. The Spirit of God was hovering over us. The opening exercises were all conducted with the realization that God was with us. Many were under conviction for unconfessed sin.

Sensing the solemnity of the hour, Steve cut the preliminaries short. As the sermon time neared, he announced one last hymn. His choice was, "There's a Great Day Coming." The message of the song intensified the burdens laying heavy on many hearts.

At the conclusion of the song, David Stalder stepped behind the pulpit. Weeping was heard coming from the audience. He started to speak, but the weeping increased in volume. After a moment of indecision, he gave up trying to preach.

In one accord the students all moved out of their seats and found places to pray. Some knelt by the altar, some by the front seats, in the choir benches, the front corner benches, and overflowing into the prayer rooms. For an hour and a half souls sought the Lord and made their peace with God.

That move toward God came early in the week. Throughout the rest of the services the emphasis was on holiness of heart. Several prayed through to sanctification during those services.

Raimon was one of them. "I was very hungry for holiness. When I yielded all my life to the Lord Jesus, a warm feeling of His love came into my heart," he testified later.

Those who were victorious carried a burden for others of their classmates who were resisting the Spirit. By the close of the week few sinners were still on campus. The key to the great number of conversions was the concern each Christian carried for his unsaved friends.

God's gracious works came as a hallowed benediction to our years of missionary service at PNGBI.

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# ORCHIDS ON A WASTE HILLSIDE

By

**Marilyn Lavy Sturtevant**

**16**

## AMAZING GRACE

I first met Paka Kili in America before we went to New Guinea. His preaching and his testimony were thrilling to me in those days. Sometime after he returned home, the devil got him sidetracked.

Because of his high position in the community and his good education, he was chosen to be Speaker of the House in the Southern Highlands provincial government. Following the track of so many other politicians, he slipped from his high morals and ethical standards. He was also deeply engaged in business for himself and was holding down a full-time job at a sawmill.

He soon found himself too busy to go to church. For a time he still called himself a Christian, till he remembered the verse in Matthew 7:21. "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven." How he despised the thought of being a hypocrite! He gave up his profession of Christianity.

About this time Paka's daughter, Charity, began coming to our ACE school. I taught her the ABC's along with Stephanie and four other children in September, 1981. Later her two sisters entered, too.

In our opening exercises Steve gave opportunity for the children to voice their own requests. I can remember a very frequent request from the lips of Charity. "Pray for my daddy." The Lord used that child's burden for her daddy's salvation.

Soon after his return to the Lord, he came to our second missionary convention, the last weekend of August 1982. When he shared his testimony, the account was very moving. Conviction fell upon the congregation. Robert Brock did not get to preach his sermon that night.

The darkness was engulfing. The loneliness in his heart was stifling. He described it as one in a foreign country always wanting to return to his own land. Having been brought up in the mission church and experiencing God's love, Paka always felt love and friendliness toward everyone. It was a new experience to find absolute hatred in his heart toward people.

He wanted to forgive and be friendly again, but he couldn't find the will power within himself to do it. The devil possessed him. No, it was like the man who had been delivered of one devil only to find seven devils had taken his place.

Christians tried to approach him about his needs. They were repulsive to him. He wanted nothing to do with him.

He was homesick. Waves of nostalgia made him long for the times when he was at home with the Lord's people. He tried and tried to recapture that feeling, but just couldn't.

One night he had a dream. A crowd of people of all the nearby tribes had gathered for a happy affair. He approached them and endeavored to join them. As he neared, they began to step back away from him. He turned to others to join them, but they did likewise. It seemed that everywhere he looked someone had something against him.

Spears appeared. He was the target of those spears. Jumping into his vehicle, he tried to drive away in escape. The shotgun he had in his truck wasn't powerful enough to hit his pursuers, though the arrows they shot could easily reach him.

At last he drove out of their reach, but couldn't escape the loneliness of the road home. A sweet melody, as from a beautiful choir, swelled hauntingly in his ears. He was running and the lovely melody was chasing him. When he stopped to concentrate on the music, it all disappeared. He awoke. Oh, how pungent the truth of his dream! It pictured his condition very well.

Nevertheless he wasn't ready to come back to God. That hatred was eating him. Other men in politics were playing dirty tricks on him. He had the pay-back spirit in him. Revenge tasted sweet. What he envisioned for revenge would change the complexion of the whole country. He planned to invite the communists into the highlands. A rebel gang in every town would test the present government's strength. He knew how to do it, too.

But God wasn't finished yet. Paka fell sick and lay on his bed; he was very weak. It seemed like a hard job just to keep breathing. Dismal thoughts flooded his mind.

"Oh, Lord, why didn't you take me a while ago when I was right with you? Now I will go straight to hell. I'm not ready to go to heaven," he prayed.

The Lord gave him another chance.

Into his miserable life, God inserted some little girls' prayers. He has three daughters, Charity, Helen, and Hope. For the meal grace he called on them to pray. Invariably whichever one prayed, she would say, "Oh, Lord, help Daddy." Those petitions haunted him wherever he went on his job. The tentacles of God's love were closing in on him.

In his earlier years, Paka had loved to sing and accompany himself on his guitar. During these couple years of darkness, he couldn't bear to play or sing. Then one Saturday evening in August 1982, he picked up his guitar. Sitting on his couch with his three little girls coloring books around him, he began to strum.

"I've wandered far away from God; now I'm coming home." The word came tumbling out.

Little Hope began crying, with her hands folded in front of her as in prayer.

Paka stopped. "Why are you crying?" he asked.

By then all three were in tears. "We don't know why we are crying," they answered. "We are just crying."

All the way through the four verses he sang that hymn, while they cried.

Misery! Misery! Misery! That's what his life was.

The next morning he walked up to Kauapena to church with his family. He intended to ask the people there to pray for him. His life was unbearable.

When it came time for testimonies, he stood up. The words tumbled out in rapid succession, confessing his wicked life.

"Oh, I'm a sinner. I've been so wicked. I hated all you people. I'm so tired of the life I'm living," he unloaded. Tears broke his voice.

Soon he was on his knees with many Christians around him. Others felt the burden of their own needs. God came in a gracious way and met many needs that day. The happiest was probably Paka, when he found relief for his misery.

The words of a hymn came to his mind. He began to sing. "Amazing grace, how sweet the sound, that saved a wretch like me." The heavens rejoiced and so did the saints on earth!

As he retold the joyful account two weeks later, we also felt the blessing of God. He said, "I now feel at home with God's people again. It is a wonderful feeling, but I am so unworthy of it."

Then we joined him in singing. "I once was lost, but now am found, was blind, but now I see." Heaven bent low.

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# ORCHIDS ON A WASTE HILLSIDE

By

**Marilyn Lavy Sturtevant**

17

## **A KIDNEY FOR ETERNAL LIFE**

Oki, better known now as Faith, is Paka's sister. She married and bore one child, Joslyn. Not long after her daughter's birth, her husband was killed in a car accident. She found employment in Lae to support herself and her daughter. Her strong faith in God supported her in her times of trouble and discouragement.

In September 1982, she fell sick. Various symptoms indicated a complicated functional disease. Four times she was taken to the hospital at Lae with a greatly reduced hemoglobin count. Not well enough to work at her job, she returned to her home near Kauapena. Her daughter Joslyn enrolled in our ACE school.

In December, she was admitted to the Hagen hospital with an even more drastic reduction of her hemoglobin. During that stay the doctor found she had kidney failure and recommended overseas treatment. The details for her travel never worked out.

Late in December Pilipo Miriye, a relative of hers, anointed her and prayed for her healing. A week later, with kidneys in nearly total failure, she was sent home to die.

Instead of taking her to her home, they brought her to Pabarabuk. The next day her loved ones gathered around, waiting for her seemingly certain death.

God had something else in mind. Pilipo went to pray with her. Then Kaltiye, the farmer at PNGBI, went in later and prayed for her.

Her cousin, Stephen Mann, was there. During the second prayer time, he felt divine interference and opened his eyes. A vision of angels appeared to him and a light shone all around the room. He addressed the angels and claimed healing for Faith.

Faith jumped up, grabbed both Stephen's hands, and cried, "I'm healed!"

Alarmed, he pushed her back down, but she jumped up again. A second time he pushed her down, but she got back up. Then he realized she was healed. He told her to go to the washroom singing the song of the lame man healed in the temple. This she did, "walking, and leaping, and praising God!"

While she was doing this, the swelling in different parts of her body went down to normal. She wanted to bathe. While she was gone, her relatives knelt and had a praise meeting. The presence of God filled the room. Tears flowed freely down their cheeks.



After her bath, she wanted to go to Pilipo's house to eat. Stephen rushed ahead to bear the good news. His knock went unanswered because they supposed he brought news of her death.

When he shouted, "It's a miracle!" they opened from the inside and received the onrush of the presence of God. All agreed on the healing. Faith immediately went into the kitchen and ate a kaukau, the first solid food she had eaten for a long time.

Kaliye's wife, Kondonu, was in her house wondering why her husband didn't return. Stepping outside, she looked toward the main part of the station. She saw a bright light above Miriye's house with streams going to the church, Cranston's, Smith's, Jones' and Lorimor's, and to the Sturtevant's houses. Four girls with her were also eyewitnesses of the phenomenon.

The story of the miracle has a sequel. Paka and Faith have a brother named Silas. He was not a Christian. When Faith received the mighty healing from the Lord, he went to visit her. He did not believe she was well again. He thought he could see in her eyes the look of a sick woman still. He strongly opposed the Christians and their prayers.

When Faith was taken back to their home at Kauapena, Silas lined up several witch doctors to come and work their enchantments over her. Time and again Paka or another Christian relative would intervene and keep the sorcerer away. Finally one day Silas succeeded. A witch doctor came into his home where Faith was staying.

As the medicine man and his helpers entered, Silas carefully noted what they were carrying. They had only leaves in their hands. He watched as the man knelt beside Faith lying on her bed.

After his preparations were complete, he began rubbing his hands with the leaves. Then he massaged Faith's abdomen, kneading it and squeezing it until a stone appeared in his empty hands. He showed the stone to them, and, taking his pay, left them in awe at the mysterious appearance of the rock. He declared it came from Faith's ailing stomach. Indeed they could see no other explanation for it.

Nevertheless this "trip to Endor" displeased the Lord. Paka and the many other Christians who had prayed for Faith's healing were very disturbed with Silas. Now her kidney failure was as bad as before.

How unnerving it was for Silas and Paka to watch their sister slowly dying before their eyes! They spent many evenings talking together. They knew now the only hope for her would be a kidney transplant, which would have to be done in Australia.

Even through this backset or recurrence of her disease, Faith did not lose her sight of Jesus. She was willing to die if only her brother Silas would come to Jesus. In her extreme weakness, she kept committing herself to the Lord and asking for His will to be done.

When there was no other hope for her, Faith was sent to Australia. She cannot remember the trip — she was in a coma. At the hospital she woke up. A dialysis machine was hooked up to her body. Her condition soon improved.

"There's no doubt now. She needs a new kidney," the doctors said.

The message was sent back to her brothers. Would they help their sister? For two weeks more they deliberated. They knew their village elders wouldn't understand. This had to be kept a secret.

Somehow the word got out. The male relatives were very angry. Imagine! A man giving up part of his body to save the life of a woman! Unthinkable! A man's body should never be marred for a mere woman. It is the women and children who cut off fingertips for grief when a man of the tribe dies.

At last Silas and Paka made their decision. Silas would go and donate his kidney. Paka was the oldest and had already risen to a high position in the community, the church, and their own tribe. There would be greater trouble if he should go than for Silas. The arrangements were made.

As he left Hagen airport, Silas was overcome with emotion. He wept and wept. The gravity of Faith's condition as well as the strange operation ahead for himself was overwhelming. He was much cheered when he met his sister alive and seemingly well again in the hospital in Sydney, Australia.

The doctors did a lot of tests on him. At last they told him, "You can help her. Your kidneys and blood are just right. If you give one of your kidneys to Faith, she will probably live." He was also informed of the risks involved. He knew he could die of the operation or have poor health the rest of his life. He would always carry the tell-tale scar.

The day before the operation came. Was he ready for this? Would he actually allow himself to go through with this? Many doubts flooded his mind.

That evening he spent a long time in Faith's hospital room. The two of them talked intimately. Faith talked of her faith in the Lord Jesus. Silas thought of his lost soul.

Here were a brother and sister, born in stone-age New Guinea, raised in the transition period when Western advances in medicine were as mysterious to their people as witchcraft is to us. Here they were about to yield their bodies to the skills of these white doctors, to discover for themselves the great powers claimed for Faith's healing. Their dissident relatives were many miles away. That was a good thing. How could they understand these things?

At last Silas had to leave Faith so she could get some sleep. From him sleep had fled. The condition of his soul weighed heavily on his mind. Should he die, his reward would not be heaven.

All the Christian teachings flooded his thoughts. In his mind's eye, Jesus appeared to him as He dies on the cross. Suddenly he realized the meaning of the cross. Silas had been asked to give just

one kidney to save the life of his blood sister. But the Lord Jesus had given His life's blood to save the whole world. Why had He done it? Because of love.

Down on his knees he went. There in that hospital room he repented of his sin. Jesus poured in the oil of gladness. What peace and contentment flooded his soul! The thought of the operation could not trouble him anymore. He was safe in the arms of Jesus!

The operation was a success. Silas returned home first. He came to our chapel and testified, "I lost a kidney, but gained eternal life."

Faith remained in Australia for several months for close observation. Then she, too, returned and gave testimony to the wonderful way God strengthened her through her long illness. She felt it was God's way to get to Silas' heart.

A few weeks later she came back to talk to me. "I am returning to my old job in Lae," she said. "I want to take Joslyn out of your school and transfer her to our ACE school in Lae."

Now she is working steadily and leading a normal life, with only infrequent, scheduled trips to the doctor. All praise to God!

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## ORCHIDS ON A WASTE HILLSIDE

By

**Marilyn Lavy Sturtevant**

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## ORCHIDS ON A WASTE HILLSIDE

Following the final revival of 1983, 32 young people requested baptism. The service was scheduled for the next Sunday. After the morning service, the congregation wended its way down the steep path to the Pupu River.

The sun shone upon us unmercifully. Several of us shielded ourselves with umbrellas. The baptismal candidates, dressed in white, were interspersed among the other students and our umbrellas. What a colorful, ambitious crowd wound their way down the mountainside that day!

Where the narrow footpath was shaded by grass and weeds, we slogged through mud. Where the sun's rays had already baked the reddish, bare earth, we slipped on loose soil. Some places the road was etched with foot-deep ruts from the heavy rains. Never was the path smooth. On the steepest descents we had to watch our steps carefully. Before reaching the gentler slopes of the flood banks, our leg muscles were straining and our knees were trembling with the exertion.

The younger ones took short cuts, picking their way precariously down the nearly-vertical slopes of the gorge. Along one of those steep paths, Jason found a gorgeous orchid in bloom. He broke off two stalks of blossoms and brought them to me.

How lovely and delicate they were! Five slender, yellowish-green petals tapered to sharp points as a background for the exquisite lavender centers. Each stalk boasted ten or twelve blossoms, the lower ones already past their peak of elegance, the higher ones still unopened buds. These rare specimens of loveliness were growing unobserved on a waste hillside. God's handiwork was unappreciated because of its location.

While watching the young people being baptized, I was reminded of those beautiful orchids on that waste hillside.

Consider Ona. As a child her parents had died. She had had no one to care for her. A missionary family had come to her village and had taken an interest in her. When they went back to America, a pastor took her and provided her a home till she had completed her primary schooling.

When she applied the PNGBI, she was accepted for the 1982 school year. She completed her second year before our furlough. Both years she worked in my house in the afternoons after classes.

During the school revivals, she had been tender and open to the leadings of the Holy Spirit. A couple times she had come, begging my forgiveness for a misdeed she had committed.

She is one of God's rare orchids from the waste hillsides of Papua New Guinea.

Another candidate was Thomas. He is from a good family. Serowa, his father, was one of the first Christians at Tambul station. In the early days of the mission he became convinced of the truth of the Gospel. The witch doctor's concoctions did nothing for his sickness while the prayers of God's saints brought immediate healing.

In the face of stern opposition, Serowa went around destroying spirit houses and sites of ancestor worship. In such a zealous family was Thomas reared.

Thomas' interest in spiritual things is quite evident. He has sought and obtained holiness of heart. Being a very conscientious boy, he often engages on soul-searching. He has a real aptitude for learning. After graduating from PNGBI, he enrolled in the Year 11 and 12 program in HCCA. He applied himself very diligently to his studies, improving his education remarkably. From this program he graduated in December 1983.

What a rare orchid for God's bouquet!

Then there was Norman. He was a young boy in primary school when I was teaching at Katiloma in 1969. He was bright little lad. In the intervening years he wandered out into the ways of the world. Then one day God got a hold of him. He applied to come to PNGBI in 1982.

At the beginning of his first year, some marked dissatisfaction arose among the students. Several began stirring up trouble and some were persuaded to leave school. Norman was caught in that trap and left one day. My heart was heavy.

He came back to get his clothes that evening. I found him and talked with him, trying to persuade him to stay. I reminded him that the Lord had led him here after a life of sin. In answer to prayer, he changed his mind and stayed, though his close friend, John Wina, left. I was thrilled for Norman, while sad about John.

During his two years at PNGBI, Norman matured spiritually. Being apt at carpentry, he was used in that shop to great advantage.

When he had spiritual battles, I prayed harder for him. Many times he sought the Lord and was strengthened after falling into some temptation.

Now at the end of his second year of school, he testified, "I want to show the world that I am going to be a Christian. So I am being baptized."

Yes, here is another orchid for the Lord.

Finally, consider Joe Katen. He is a fine-looking young man, married, and the father of a darling little, one-year-old girl. He is a pastoral student in the English pastors' school.

Joe comes from the Sepik region of PNG. He was influenced by the Catholic mission as a child. He grew up away from religious influences in his youth.

In Lae while working at a job, he met and lived with Maria from the Chimbu. When Maria got saved at the Lae church under Gerald Bustin's ministry, she persuaded her boyfriend to come to church with her. Soon he, too, was gloriously converted. Not long after his salvation experience, he felt God calling him to preach the Gospel.

Brother Bustin counseled with them and then married them. At his recommendation, Joe entered pastors' school at HCCA in 1982. Though he has battles with discouragement, he has never lost sight of his high calling in Christ Jesus. He carries a burden for his Sepik people. He wants to go back to his area with the truth of the Gospel and start a church in Wewak.

Indeed he is a rare specimen for God's bouquet!

And each of the others has his own story of the wonder of God's love reaching him in his darkness.

Often as we travel around the country, we overlook the waste hillsides. We suppose any loveliness hidden there must be so insignificant as to merit none of our attention. On the other hand, a close scrutiny might yield a rare specimen of beauty fit for a king's bouquet.

Papua New Guinea is like a deserted hillside in the big, busy world. For years the world's technological advances have bypassed this island. Many people in the highlands especially are still living the same way their forefathers lived a hundred years ago. They feel quite progressive to possess a steel ax head, a long machete knife, and a metal spade. With these improved tools, they continue their subsistence farming and hunting as they have all their lives. We might say the world is passing them by with hardly a second glance.

These young people, whose testimonies and stories are recorded here, are only a small number of the unique specimens of God's handiwork in Papua New Guinea. What a privilege has been ours to help pluck some for God's bouquet!

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# ORCHIDS ON A WASTE HILLSIDE

By

**Marilyn Lavy Sturtevant**

## GLOSSARY

Brother: common title used among fellow Christians

Bustin, G. T.: pioneer missionary in Papua New Guinea, as well as other countries

Cranston, Cliff: missionary business manager at Papua New Guinea Bible Institute

Cranston, Naoma: wife of Cliff Cranston

Cranston, Timothy: son of Cliff and Naoma Cranston

Davolt, John: missionary mechanic at PNGBI, who became the pastor of the Mt. Hagen church

Ellis, Dortha: missionary at PNGBI

Enga: province in PNG north of Western Highlands Province

fortnight: every two weeks

Glick, Dan: missionary at Tambul Evangelical Bible Mission station

Glick, Helen: wife of Dan Glick

Hagen (iui gn): major tribe near Mt. Hagen, WHP

Hershey, Esther: missionary registrar at PNGBI

Jones, Jo Eleanor: missionary school teacher at PNGBI

Kaltiye (cow te' ya): national farmer in charge of agriculture at PNGBI

Kaupena (Cow a pen a): EBM mission about seven miles from Pabarabuk

Kaugel (ka gl) River: large, rushing river flowing between Pabarabuk and Kauapena

kau kau (cow cow): sweet potato; staple food of highlanders

Kugla (co'o gla): clan of local tribesmen

Lae (lay): coastal city of about 80,000 population

Lorimor, Susie: missionary teacher at Highlands Christian College and Academy

Mendi (men de): provincial capital of Southern Highlands Province; population about 4,000

Mincer, Bill: missionary teacher at PNGBI

Mincer, Glenna: wife of Bill Mincer

Minj: sub-district of WHP

Miller, Jacob: secretary of EBM

Miriye, Pilipo (me' re' ya', pe' le' pa): principal of PNGBI

Mt. Giluwe (glil oo' way): second highest mountain peak in PNG

Mt. Hagen (ha gn): provincial capital of WHP; major city in highlands; population about 13,000

mumu (moo' moo'): steam-bake food in pits in the ground, using very hot stones, sealed in with large leaves

Nebilyer River (ne'b ul yr): river flowing near Pabarabuk station

Ninjipa, Wane (ninje pa, wane): assistant business manager at PNGBI

Pabarabuk (pa ba ra book): name of local clan of tribesmen around the Pabarabuk mission station

Palike (pa le'ka'y): clan of local tribesmen of the Meam

Papakolia (pa pa' kol yi): local, out-station church of the Pabarabuk district

Pastor Philip: national pastor of the local Pabarabuk church

Pidgin English (pijim): Melanesian trade language understood by most young people in Papua New Guinea; used by missionaries to communicate the Gospel in the villages

pit-pit: tall, reed-like grass used in building by the nationals

Pupu River (poo pu'): small river bordering Pabarabuk station

rascal: thief, vandal, thug

Rich, Jim: missionary teacher at PNGBI

Rich, Beulah: wife of Jim Rich



Rose, Dean: EBM field leader in 1980 and until his furlough in 1982

sing sing: a native dance that varies from tribe to tribe. The sing sing usually is objectionable to evangelicals because of its association with immorality and, in some cases, spirit worship.

Smith, Benny: son of missionary Ben Smith

Smith, Melody: daughter of missionary Ben Smith

Tambul (tom bool): EBM mission station; location of Pidgin Bible School

tanket: long, broad leaves used by men in their native costume

Tari (tar' e'): major tribe in the Southern Highlands Province

taro (tar o): edible tuber

Taylor, Jack: missionary mechanic at PNGBI who later pioneered mission work at Gomi

Trapani, Marie: missionary teacher at PNGBI

Ulke (ool kay): clan of local tribesmen of the Meam tribe

Wehrman, Winston: founder and vice-principal of PNGBI

Wickam, Beverly: missionary nurse overseeing clinic work at Pabarabuk

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# ORCHIDS ON A WASTE HILLSIDE

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**Marilyn Lavy Sturtevant**

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