

# Pacific Island Ministries

PO Box 1765 \* Grass Valley, CA 95945 \* 800-697-7718 \* Fax 530-272-6832

Box 4056 \* Taber, Alberta T1G 2C6 Canada

Private Mail Bag \* Wewak, ESP \* Papua New Guinea

[www.piministries.org](http://www.piministries.org) \* [pimusa@ncws.com](mailto:pimusa@ncws.com) \* [epsim@ncws.com](mailto:epsim@ncws.com)

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Dear Friends,

From the hills around Telefomin in Sandaun (Sundown) Province from a village near Eliptamin comes this story of two young Bible school students attending the PIM Nagri Bible Institute. “Both Andy and I were born into a Christian family and attended Sunday school from a young age,” Colina recounts, her hair standing up at different ends, “We were both baptized as teenagers, but then Andy backslid.”

“My parents complained when I married a man who wasn’t attending church. I didn’t hound him but kept my peace in the Lord. A couple years after we were married, our pastor asked Andy to play the keyboard in the church services. The senior pastor took Andy under his wing and disciplined him. It wasn’t long before Andy fully committed himself to the Lord and began working alongside the pastor.”

After a few years an issue surfaced with the pastor and the church board suspended him. The board tapped Andy as a temporary fill in, and Andy responding to their vote of confidence took on the challenge even though he had zero Bible School training. After Andy served a couple of years as pastor, the board reinstated the pastor, which was fine with Andy.

Andy felt the desire to get more Bible training so one day his pastor was traveling in the Frieda River area and happened to see an application form from Nagri Bible Institute. He filled it out and sent it in for Andy without even asking him. When the pastor came back to Kobeks, their home village, he told Andy he was signed up to go to a Bible school which was to start in three weeks!

Adjusting to the Sepik diet at NBI was a challenge. In Eliptamin, they were used to sweet potatoes as a staple, supplemented by a rich variety of vegetables—broccoli, squash, cabbage, carrots, tomatoes—and lots of wild pig. In Nagri the staple was sago made into a gelatin-like paddy, soup with spinach like greens, and fish if they were fortunate. (Eric’s take: Eating sago is akin to chewing on a piece of rubber!) After finishing his first year at the Bible School, Andy and his family returned home for a year of practical work under his senior pastor. Now the family is back again at Nagri for their last year of study.

Colina remembers as a young woman of 20 that the ladies asked her to be the secretary for their women’s group. Over the years she’s enjoyed both teaching and reaching out to women in her church and in the larger community. The other women in the valley all recognize her as a leader, often asking her to be the main speaker at retreats. “When I see a blessing on my work, I realize God has given me this work to do,” she smiles. (Below: Andy, Colina, daughter Dimela, infant Revith)

We have here an opportunity to look into the faces of the Christian poor around the world. Andy and Colina have very little income – like most Papua New Guineans they are subsistence farmers. With his aspiration to be a pastor, their poverty level is not likely to change. Regardless, there’s an unmistakable joy in their lives and a confidence that the Lord will care for them. “Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God” (Lk 6:20).

“Ask of me and I will make the nations your inheritance, the ends of the earth your possession” (Ps 2:8).

The opportunities and needs in PNG are great. Your gifts and prayers are making an impact. Many thanks!

Eric and Penny Schering



PS We’re looking forward to Doug Heidema coming to help out for few weeks in April.