

Lee Eby Primary School in Papua New Guinea

by Wes Eby, Global Representative

Join me in an adventure, will you? Let's visit the Wahgi Valley in the highlands of Papua New Guinea (PNG), where the Church of the Nazarene established mission work in 1956. The first missionaries, Sidney and Wanda Knox, carved out a mission station at Kudjip with the purpose of bringing the message of hope and salvation to the thousands of people living in the valley. In succeeding years, several additional missionaries arrived to support the missional outreach, among them Lee and Carol Anne Eby in 1963.



The Ebys, with their two children, settled at Tun, about eight miles from Kudjip, where Carol Ann taught first and second grades in a day school started by Wanda Knox. Lee, an ordained elder, was given the challenge to begin a Bible school for training national pastors, a dire need since only missionaries served as pastors of churches that had been planted. During Lee's first year, along with making plans for the Bible school, he plunged headlong into learning New Guinea Pidgin, the primary language of the people used for trade and communicating outside their own tribal groups.

Mission officials decided to locate the school at Tun, where the Ebys were living. A year later, the Bible school opened with six students and "Professor" Lee as the only teacher. Along with teaching and administrative duties, Lee kept busy with various jobs, such as maintenance and upkeep of the buildings.

Several years later, another missionary was assigned to help with the teaching load. Also, the school where Carol Anne was a teacher closed, so she helped with teaching, worked with the wives of the students, and helped with publications for the mission field.

Nine years later, the Bible school moved to a choice piece of property on a main road, providing easier access to the campus. Since land cannot be purchased in Papua New Guinea, the Church of the Nazarene obtained a 99-year lease for 60 acres on the Tuman River. After the relocation of the Bible school, the student enrollment increased, and more missionaries joined the teaching staff. Then in 1975, a New Guinean became a member of the faculty, an occasion for celebration. After 17 years, Lee left the school, now the Nazarene Bible College, when the enrollment was around 50.

Lee and Carol Anne devoted 20 years of their lives to mission work in Papua New Guinea. The last two years, Lee was appointed field director. This assignment moved him away from direct responsibilities at the Nazarene Bible College (NBC). Carol Anne still worked with publications for the field, including Sunday school materials, in New Guinea Pidgin and English.



In response to a request from the local people, a primary school was built near NBC on the leased property. Later, a teacher-education school was established on the Tuman property. After the Ebys returned to the States, the people of PNG honored Lee for his years of dedicated service to NBC and education by naming the elementary school the Lee Eby Primary School.

Today, the Lee Eby Primary School (*pictured on left*),

providing education through the eighth grade, has 300 students with 13 teachers. The students are children of the teaching staffs of the Bible college and teacher's college as well as students from the local village. Also, students at the teacher's college can use the Lee Eby Primary School for a required practicum.



Now the school that Lee established is the Melanesia Nazarene Bible College, which has 321 students and serves the Melanesia/South Pacific Field. Lee Eby stands proud and gives God the glory for His guidance in starting a higher education institution for training hundreds of pastors and Christian leaders that today reaches far beyond the Wahgi Valley.

After returning to the States, Lee and Carol Anne settled in Nashville, Tennessee, where Lee worked with World Relief helping to relocate refugees from various countries. He also taught classes in citizenship and English. Trevecca Nazarene University (TNU) hired Carol Anne as an English professor. Although both have now officially retired, they are active at the Trevecca Community Church of the Nazarene on the campus of TNU and volunteer for Ten Thousand Villages, a nonprofit organization that markets handcrafted products made by disadvantaged artisans in more than 35 countries.

Nazarene Educators Worldwide congratulates Lee on the honor the people of Papua New Guinea bestowed on him. We thank both Lee and Carol Anne for their many years of service to the Lord and the Church of the Nazarene, fulfilling its mission of "Making Christlike disciples in the nations."

Wes Eby lives in Lake Alfred, Florida. He taught in public and Christian schools as well as at the university level. He served at the Global Ministry Center in the Publications International Office, the Herald of Holiness Office, and the Global Nazarene Missions International Office. You may contact Wes at weseby@tampabay.rr.com.