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Dear Friends,

Over the last 12 years David Wakuri teamed up with Eric to conduct many short-term pastors courses in Ambunti, Wewak, Goroka, etc. David also did numerous seminars on his own in many villages in the Sepik basin on Marriage, Hard Work/Money Life, 70 Principles, and Leadership. Eric called him “the Senior Pastor of the Sepik River Valley.”

On April 24 David and Eric flew to Goroka to conduct a three-day course for city pastors. During the course of the week David fell sick due to complications from his diabetic condition, and on May 6 he passed away in the Goroka hospital. Eric arranged for a charter to fly him and two of his adult children from Goroka to Ambunti while Doug coordinated reception.

Two funeral services were held at the two churches in Ambunti and a “haus krai” was set up on the PIM premises on Wednesday night. On Thursday, May 11, the casket was taken via outboard motor canoe to David’s home village of Mowi, six hours upriver for burial on Friday morning.

In the midst of all this a crazy thing happened. On Thursday night Eric got a call from a funeral home representative apologizing profusely for a huge mistake. The funeral home, the only one in the northern half of PNG, sent the wrong body to Ambunti! On Friday morning strong persuasion was needed via two-way radio to convince the family in Mowi not to bury the body. They were convinced they had the right body.

A second charter, paid for by the funeral home, was hastily arranged. On Friday at about 2pm a plane carrying David’s body landed at the Hauna airstrip on the banks of the Sepik River. About the same time the canoe arrived from Mowi carrying the “other” deceased man. After being placed side by side on the airstrip, the coffins were opened and the family members all agreed a serious mistake had been made. On Saturday, May 13 David was buried in Mowi. Eighteen different churches from villages near and far sent representatives to mourn and pay respects to David as an honored pastor.

Give thanks to the Lord for the profound impact David had on leaders, pastors and lay persons over the course of the 40 years he served on PIM staff. He finished well. He fought the good fight, he finished his race. Stored up for him is “the crown of righteousness which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award” to him on that day (2 Tim 4:7,8). (David pictured on right)

Pray for an extra measure of the Lord’s strength for David’s widow Marlene and his adult children Jeffrey, Dorcas, Penni, Manuel, Rachel, Christina and Clive and their families.

Thank you for your love for those at the ends of the earth.

Eric and Penny Schering

