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A Tribute to Jacob Luke: RIP

Jacob Luke, who grew up on the LCMS mission field in Papua New Guinea and was the founder and owner of a major trucking company, was unexpectedly taken from this earth last month. His father, Luke Luai, worked as an Evangelist with Rev. Harley Kopitzke and other missionaries. Jacob had retired and was beginning his vision of starting a Lutheran church, health center, school, and university at his village. Below is a report of his passing from Ezekiel Peter, one of his close colleagues:

Jacob Luke's funeral service on Thursday, August 4 completed two weeks of mourning and tributes after he passed away on July 21 in his Elaiplam garden. His mourning started with a funeral in Lae where his Mapai Group business is headquartered. Mourners and tributes flooded in from his many family, social, and business partners and admirers of his philanthropy. The Governor General and the Morobe Provincial Government led by now Governor-Elect Luther Wenge and caretaker Deputy Prime Minister and Lae Member of Parliament John Rosso gave him the highest respect. Rev Dr. Jack Urame, Head Bishop of the ELC-PNG preached for his funeral service at the soccer stadium in Lae on the wider suffering and loss that had resulted following Jacob's demise. The Bishop described Jacob as a person with Christ's miniature attributes and his early departure was a shock to society. One significant aspect of his life many testified was Jacob's way of helping some small people become business men and women. He was a big loss to the trucking industry having set up all small truckies never showing the Mapai muscle to bully them. The astute nature of his business success was his purchase of bigger trucking companies namely Whagi Valley Transport, Hagen Hauliers, ABCO, Kutubu Transport, and East-West Transport. All the owners gave him their companies because of

their trust in his ability to manage the risky business in land transport. Truly the population of the Highlands Highway had a reason to pay respect to a trucking icon when his hearse (photo lower left) left Lae for Mt. Hagen. Everyone stood along the highway from Wararaisby dawn to reach Hagen on the 30th at midnight. This is one event that united the entire Highlands more than anything else. The man had become so close to every person, village, and tribe from Lae to Lakolam. His hearse and the over 400 vehicle convoy was given respect as oncoming traffic stopped. His respect in the Eastern Highlands Province and at the Mapai depot in Goroka was ecstatic as the Apo country's respect to the man who saved countless lives by donating them oxygen bottles during the Covid-19 pandemic that hit the province hard. His body was held in Mt. Hagen for two days because this is where he started Mapai from humble beginnings and got married to a local woman as his first wife. The people of Enga acted in the same respect so extraordinaire fashion and manner. Wabag town was packed and the serenity offered was so royal. Rev Dr. Ron Rall represented the LCMS at his funeral service. His preaching really touched hundreds of lives to see that our places on earth are temporary. Dr. Ron preached on John 14:1-6 highlighting Jesus' words that He went to prepare a place for everyone in Heaven and will come back for all. He said Jacob left all his temporary places--Yakadaka to Kundis to Pausa and Hagen to Lae, Goroka and Lakolam to be with the Lord Jesus in Heaven. His casket was taken by Lutheran pastors of the GLC-PNG to his final resting site in front of his newly built Mukures Home at Lakolam village. His 12 children and 6 grandchildren led the procession (photo above left). The entire mourning population followed the casket to his burial. Still many are unconvinced that the man had gone. Some 700 employees, business partners, and hundreds of people



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A Tribute to Jacob Luke (ctd.)



Jacob Luke with Rev. Harley Kopitzke

GIVE THANKS FOR:

- The life and service of Jacob Luke and his father, Evangelist Luke Luai.
- The Lutheran Heritage Foundation and Concordia Gospel Outreach for their donation of books.

PLEASE PRAY FOR:

- Those grieving and suffering at the loss of Jacob Luke, including the Sanguma victims.
- Repentance and changed hearts.

PROJECT UPDATES:

- The 2019 Lutheran Heritage Foundation book shipment and the 2021 Concordia Gospel Outreach book shipment from Concordia Publishing House have finally reached their destination at Timothy Lutheran Seminary, Birip. The 2022 LHF book shipment was placed on a container ship in Bangkok, Thailand a few weeks ago and is enroute to Lae. It is expected to arrive in early September. Thanks be to God!

remain in shock and sadness. In the last few days following his burial his Titi tribe had come to terms with the wider suffering and loss that had resulted following Jacob's demise. They reconciled and vowed to support the Lakolam and Monokam Projects started by his Jacob Luke Foundation. Something that stands out in the minds of businesses house leaders missionaries and community leaders like Chief Paul Kurai is to protect and support Jacob's legacies through his Jacob Luke Foundation. Timothy Watato, Operations Manager of the Mapai Group of Companies, assured the funeral service that the business will operate normal as the late Jacob retired two years ago at the management level. Jonathan Parker of the PJV vowed for continued business partnership with the Mapai Group. Ezekiel Peter of the Jacob Luke Foundation said projects will continue operations next Monday. He

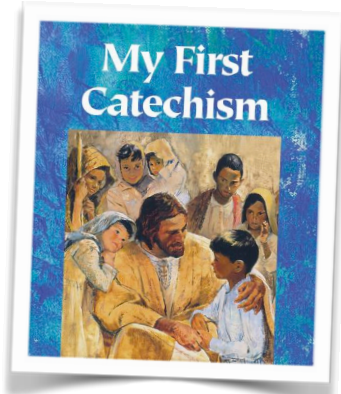
informed the gathered that Americans invited by the late chief Jacob Luke have indicated to arrive in PNG next month. Major activities of the funeral program end today. Life after Jacob will be hard but everyone will pick up because in his wisdom he had left all things in good hands for continuity and betterness.

Tragically, in the shock of his passing some villagers accused nine women of being Sanguma (witches) and causing his death. They were tortured in an attempt to restore his life. Five were rescued. Four succumbed to their injuries (see article below). Jacob Luke himself vehemently preached against this practice which has only come into the Enga Province within the last decade. Please keep all in your prayers as well as the barbarism in our own society.

Lord, have mercy!



Thank you to Concordia Gospel Outreach and Concordia Publishing House for the container of books given to the Lutheran schools of the Enga Province. They were delivered early August. One of the books given is shown on the right.



There are many opportunities to serve as short-term or GEO missionaries. Check out the current list and download an application at lcms.org/service. Click on "Service Opportunities."

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