

## More Than A Theological Education

*Janice M. Nielson*

Chapel service was over and Dorome and her good friend Kim, Mi Kyoung (Hannah), were seen walking hand in hand across the campus bridge to learn English, the language that made such a friendship possible. Dorome had come to the Philippines with her husband, Mundua, all the way from Papua New Guinea (PNG), and Hannah and her family from Korea. No two countries, languages, or cultures could be more different, yet in God's providence, lifelong bridges of love, understanding, and acceptance have been made for the Kagls, the Kims, and the Kingdom.

For Mundua and Dorome, leaving the highlands of PNG and coming to Manila to attend seminary training within such a multicultural faith community would be more than a good graduate level education. They never dreamed that such a setting as Asia-Pacific Nazarene Theological Seminary would offer them so much more than the training needed to go back to minister among their own people. But just as it has been for so many of the 106 graduates now serving throughout the Asia-Pacific region, Mundua and Dorome are experiencing the extra blessings and challenges of living together with and learning from many different people. They are learning the beauty and life changing reality of the seminary motto: "Bridging Cultures for Christ." They are witnessing the amazing miracle of Christ's love when so many cultures seek to learn from one another. Only within such a diverse yet supportive community as APNTS can students and faculty have the opportunity for developing lifelong relationships that would otherwise be impossible.

Mundua was an elementary school teacher in PNG. Tribal fighting claimed the life of his uncle, the one responsible for raising Mundua since his father's death. Mundua felt an obligation to seek revenge for the killing of his uncle! Although he had no desire to be part of a "payback," his society demanded it, and he did not see how he could escape it. At this time a Nazarene pastor visited the Kagl home. Mundua was torn inside and really didn't want to talk to the pastor. But after several visits, being confronted by

the gospel and convicted by the Holy Spirit, Mundua and Dorome accepted Christ as their personal Savior. Mundua now saw that he could never carry out his plan for revenge. He and his wife were baptized, joined the Church of the Nazarene, and were influential in seeing many others in their village won to Christ.

Then God's further plan for Mundua and Dorome began to unfold. They moved to the Kudjip mission station where Mundua continued to teach school. Eventually they felt God's call into full-time ministry, and Mundua became the pastor of the Sidney Knox Memorial Chapel. After several years, Mundua realized his need for further education and began praying about the possibility of going to seminary. Mundua testifies to a vision in which God showed him that it was His will and plan for Mundua to come to the Philippines for his theological training. God miraculously provided the needed scholarship funds, and in 1992, Mundua, Dorome, and their daughter, Esther, age 13, became the first PNG students at APNTS.

It was here the Kagls and Kims became best friends. Such relationships, binding together such diverse backgrounds, do not happen easily nor do they come without a painful process of learning and growing together. Mundua and his family lived next door to Joshua and Hannah. After time, the two families became good neighbors and accepted each others' many differences. They not only lived and studied together, they even worked together to start a Filipino church nearby.

Thank the Lord for a place such as APNTS where such barriers can be broken down and where the boundaries of God's kingdom know no limits! Although there are different models for theological training, educational theory states that effective transformational learning takes place within a supportive faith community where strong relationships are formed. That truth has been substantiated in the Kagls' lives. After graduation in April 1996, they returned to PNG to pastor the church in Port Moresby, where their congregation includes students and faculty at the extension campus of the Nazarene Bible College. They praise God for their experiences, classes, and friendships at APNTS, knowing they will significantly shape their future ministry.