

My Life

by

Desmond Venigo

I was born on the 9th of September 1980, in Boku Rigo District in Central Province. I am now residing in 8 Mile Settlement in Port Moresby. I have lived here for twenty years. I have one sister and two brothers, all of them younger than me. I started school in 1987 at Boku Primary School and I passed my Grade Six examination in 1998. After this I was selected to attend Kwikila High School, where I studied for four years, to complete my Grade Ten.

My father and mother were married in 1964. They were married for a long time, fifteen to sixteen years, without having any children of their own. My father married a second wife in 1976, twelve years after marrying his first wife. He was confused that his first wife was unable to have any children during all their years married together.

One Saturday afternoon during the time when I was at school I thought of asking my father about how and why he had two wives. I wanted to know what interest he had in having two wives, and not only one woman to share his life with. He told me that he got married to a second lady because a man needs his own children to look after him when he gets old in the future. He told me that his marriage situation with his first wife was very good and very happy but the problem was that the first wife could not give him a baby, even after all those years of being together.

My father told me that he went with his first wife to see a doctor about why the lady could not have a baby. The doctor examined the lady and told my father that she would not be able to have any children for medical reasons. So after this my father and my mother both decided together that my father would take a second wife who could give him a baby.

My father's second wife had a baby very quickly after they were married.

His dream of having a child was fulfilled by his second wife.

After three or four years of being married to his second wife, my father's first wife had a dream. She dreamed that an Angel was standing at the top of four steps, carrying a baby, and that the Angel told her to climb the steps and to come and get her present. She did what the Angel instructed her to do, she climbed the four steps and took her present, a baby, from the Angel.

After her dream, my father's wife woke up and told my father what had happened in her dream. My father and his wife believed that after this dream they would be able to have a baby, and almost straight away the vision of the dream was fulfilled. My father's wife had four children, three boys and one girl. The first born was a boy. And that was me.

According to her dream, my mother saw four steps and eventually my mother had four children. After the fourth child, she had no more children, and she believed that she would not be able to have any more. My father always reminded me of this story for many years as I was growing up. He told me that this story was a very good story about patience. Some things do not happen for a long time, but he always told me that I must be patient and that I need to have faith and that eventually things will happen and be good.

So in my family I have one father and I have two mothers. There are eleven children all up, four children from my father's first wife, and seven children from his second wife.

My father's wish to have a lot of children to look after him in the future came true.

During my education in high school I had weekend leave to spend with my family in 8 Mile Settlement, where they lived. During one of my journeys to 8 Mile, I was in 4 Mile, waiting at a bus stop to get a PMV to Gordons, and I saw a man collecting dirty scones from the rubbish drum to eat. He ate the dirty scones right in front of me there on the street. That was a very important moment for me because I realised how unfair this wonderful life could really be for some people. This wonderful world that God created for us didn't make any sense at this time, and from that moment I decided to

co-operate with my street brothers and pass time with them to really understand the street life and how hard and how terrible it was for a lot of them to be a street kid and to have to survive on your own with no support or help.

From there I really disturbed my concentration on my high school studies and I was fully committed to suffer with my brothers in the streets of 8 Mile. We got into many problems and did many crimes. Every day of my life was hard. But many of my brothers died from this game of life. And only after many bad things happened did I learn what was the right thing and what was the wrong thing to do with my life.

Now I am continuing with my education at the College of Distinction to get my revenge for disturbing my studies so badly. I am also studying again to change from the bad to the good and to help my street brothers by showing a good example of doing something good and positive. I want to show the young street kids, the next ones coming up, not to choose the same life that me and my street brothers experienced, and not to ruin their lives and spoil their futures.

After realising from our actions that the life we were leading was not the right choice to take with our lives, we started to think positively and make decisions for ourselves to communicate with each other and our community. We wanted to help each other and also help our community here in 8 Mile. I got together with my street brothers and we developed a project for ourselves that would be beneficial to the community, and that would help people to gain a better future in the coming years. We all decided and agreed not to do any more crime activities in the new Millennium. We wanted to secure a safer community and to rectify some of the problems that were facing our country's future. We were thinking of the next generation, we wanted them to benefit from the true meaning of life and healthy living. We wanted the young boys to grow up here in 8 Mile Settlement learning of this wonderful life created by our heavenly Father, and his purpose of making this wonderful world.

From this combination of positive attitudes we all looked for ways and means to exercise what we had discussed to see the improvement of our behaviour. During that period I learnt from two senior education teachers, Mr Kirina Boioy, and the late Mr K Wilson. These teachers told me to

attend the Educational Youth Institution in Boregaina Rigo District, Central Province, in Papua New Guinea. They encouraged me to study Business in Sales & Marketing, and so I did what they instructed me to do and I completed my course in 2002. I had my job training with Steamship *Stop & Shop*, where I worked in the merchandise division for two weeks. I then applied to the Pacific Youth Council Desk (PNG) in January 2003, where I started volunteering for youths in the PNG. I worked as a youth volunteer for four years, and after those years I came back to my brothers in the street in 8 Mile, to review our first discussion all that time ago.

We discussed the formation of a youth association for 8 Mile, under the act of the *Co-operation of Investment Promotion Authority*, formed in 2003. We launched the initiative on Saturday, the 25th of September, 2004. The opening presentation was made by Mr Robert Tifi, of the PNG National Youth Commission. Also in attendance were Mr Joe Mesa, First Vice President of the Pacific Youth Council, the Honorable Mr R Sandaya, from the Embassy of Indonesia, as well as the community leaders of 8 Mile Settlement. From this time the youth association was formally known as the DEYA Youth Association Inc. (*Developing Eight Mile Youth Association*).

Immediately DEYA had financial problems. We had no money to do activities that we wanted to do to help the youths of the community and so we decided that we, as individuals, needed to go out and try to raise finances to help self-sponsor DEYA, so that we could fund the activities that would benefit our community.

I began to think of what I could do myself for this task to help raise money for DEYA and I wanted to get out of the settlement and make some money, so I traveled to a gold mine in Central Province. I wanted to establish a relationship between 8 Mile and the Toloku Gold Mine and this trip was very enjoyable. I met a lot of new people and I visited many places where I had never been before.

The environment up there at the gold mine was very beautiful, very different from the environment of 8 Mile Settlement. There were people there from all over Papua New Guinea and from countries all over the world. I learned how to work in the gold mine and I got some good experience working there for a number of months. But life there was very

expensive, compared to life in 8 Mile Settlement. It was very expensive just to buy food there, for example, a scone that costs 20t in 8 Mile would cost 50t or K1 in the gold mine. It is much cheaper to live in 8 Mile Settlement than in the gold mining area.

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This story was written by Mr Desmond Venigo on the date of 1st June to 5th June, 2009, in 8 Mile Settlement.

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