

## ABOUT BTA

### Membership:

- 51 language workers involved in translation, literacy and scripture use activities in their own languages all around the country.
- 23 Administrative staff—of which 2 family units are seconded from Wycliffe USA and Wycliffe Australia.
- 10 members serving in the SIL Ukarumpa operations.
- 11 Board members.

### Language Work:

- 16 New Testaments completed.
- 17 NT translation work in progress; 3 preparation stage; 2 retranslation; 1 revision
- 23 OT translation work in progress with 4 doing NT revision at the same time.

### How can YOU be involved?

- **PRAYER.** Subscribe to BTA's monthly *PrayerConnect* by writing to:  
[prayer-coordinator\\_pngbta@wycliffe.org](mailto:prayer-coordinator_pngbta@wycliffe.org).
- **GIVE YOUR TIME.** BTA needs volunteers to help out in various projects and activities either in administration or language work.  
You can also find out about language programmes in your area and how you can be involved.
- **FINANCES.** Give financially.

For inquiries write to: [director\\_pngbta@wycliffe.org](mailto:director_pngbta@wycliffe.org)

*In Our Words* is the official BTA newsletter that is printed two times a year. Our goal is to inform our constituency, the church, and the public about what we do.

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The official newsletter of the PNG Bible Translation Association

# IN OUR WORDS

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## Bible Storytelling Making Headway

A two week Bible Storytelling Workshop in July trained 20 men and women from 15 language groups all over the country, to craft stories from the Bible.

A pilot storytelling workshop done in the East Papua Area in 2009 was followed by two other workshops this year, training 33 people from nine language groups.

To enhance and develop their skills in Bible storytelling, four of those trained in East Papua helped facilitate this national workshop alongside Jim and Janet Stahl, Oral Approaches Coordinators from The Seed Company.

Participants of the workshop have gone back to their homes and shared with others what they have learned. David Loea, a student at the Pacific Adventist University (PAU), who attended the

workshop as part of his internship program reports, "PAU students are now involved in Bible Storytelling in the University's Radio program. The stories were taken from the Pentateuch with 13 stories aired on radio 2G 97.9 FM in October, told by 13 different students."



Pastor Joshua Banau and translator Charles Kowak from Manus crafting a story and practicing on each other.

The Urat language team conducted a workshop for the South Seas Evangelical Church in October for

three Urat dialects in East Sepik Province with 35 participating. Six pastors requested help from BTA to conduct a

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## From the Director's Desk

Our hearts are full of praise and thanks to God for His blessings on our lives and efforts in bringing His Word to our people this year. This edition of our newsletter provides samples of things we are thankful to the Lord for. Rejoice with us as you read about the Bible stories being broadcast through word of mouth. The training a number of Papua New Guineans have received have caused a great wild-fire! People in language communities around PNG are hearing God's stories told in their own languages.

Praise the Lord with us for the enthusiasm of the Keakalo people of Central Province to have the Word of God in their language. They are showing how we are encouraging local language communities with their churches to participate in Bible translation. Then there is the incredible story of how God turned sad hearts from mourning to praise. The translators from the SomSiBo group of languages have reason to rejoice in the Lord's goodness. When thieves broke into the house they were staying in and stole computers where many years of translation texts were stored, they thought they would have to re-do those books again.

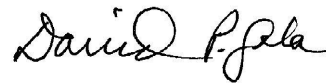
Read about the joy our staff had when

they visited New Zealand from August to September. They had a great reception from Pacific island communities living in Aotearoa (NZ). These communities had the unique opportunity to re-connect with the missionary legacy of their forefathers who had taken the gospel to PNG in the past two centuries. Many were challenged to consider following in the footsteps of their ancestors.



We stand in awe of our Almighty God. He is really 'on the move.' We are living in exciting times of unprecedented missionary opportunities. May the Lord bless each of us as we reflect this Advent Season of God's redemptive act in sending his Son, the Messiah Jesus Christ, to earth. May we join the angelic choir in singing,

“Glory to God in the heavenly heights, Peace to all men and women on earth who please Him” (Luke 2:16, The Message).



David Gela - Executive Director

### Correction

The last issue of *In Our Words* in June 2010 should have been **Number 7** instead of Number 5.

## BTA Team Tours New Zealand... continued from page 5

man who led his father to the Lord. When the Tongans heard that Simon Savaiko, the Literacy Point Person and Language Programme Coordinator for the Gulf-Central-Western Area, came to the Lord through the ministry of a Tongan minister, Reverend Sione Kami, they were joyous and welcomed him like their own. Badi Vila, the translation facilitator for the Tairuma speakers in Kerema, found a record in a Samoan Church about a missionary lady who died in Kerema. They also met Mei who was born in Kerema and was named after the place where she was born.

A godly old woman called Auntie Myrtle, told the team she had been praying for PNG for the past fifty years. She was full of praise to God to see the people whom she had been praying for, for the first time.

The team had a great reception almost



The Tuvalu community entertaining the team with a dance number.

everywhere they went. They were blessed and were challenged themselves like their hosts, who listened to their testimonies and stories about God's work in PNG. An older lady in Laidlaw College



Kevin Salisbury, a Pacific islander at heart, introducing the team to the Pahina Tokelau Church. He was responsible for making connection with the Maori and Pacific Island churches.

exclaimed, “I am only a cleaner, what can I do?!” ♦

You can be involved in the Bible translation work in PNG by praying, giving and going. To know more about BTA visit our website at [www.pngbta.com](http://www.pngbta.com) and for inquiries write to: [director\\_pngbta@wycliffe.org](mailto:director_pngbta@wycliffe.org)

## Translation Awareness in PNG Churches

Over 70 church leaders from 30 churches and mission organisation from across Papua New Guinea gathered together to discuss the use of Mother Tongue Scripture in churches in January this year. The purpose of this PNG Scripture Engagement Conference was to bring together church leaders to learn about the work of SIL and BTA and to engage the church in the Bible Translation work.

This conference gave rise to the Bible Translation Weekend (BTW) that is

jointly run by BTA and SIL personnel. The Church Engagement staff go to churches by invitation during the weekend to share about translation work in PNG. Starting in March churches in Lae, Kainantu, and Aiyura have been inviting the Church Engagement staff.

The general response from church goers is, "We did not know about BTA." After being informed they are enthusiastic to pray and are willing to give towards Bible translation work. ♦

If you are interested to have a BTW in your church email Steven Thomas at [Churchengagement-coordinator\\_pngbta@wycliffe.org](mailto:Churchengagement-coordinator_pngbta@wycliffe.org) or call 325 1132.

## Bible Storytelling Making ... continued from page 1

workshop to find the appropriate translation of key Bible terms to help them preach better in the local language.

Participants from Manus Island are receiving requests to introduce Bible storytelling such as the Evangelical Church of Manus during their annual general meeting. The church leaders saw how powerful storytelling is so they pledged to adopt it in their church ministry. This was followed by another invitation to tell Bible stories at a Pastor's retreat.

The storytelling method was also

introduced to the Youth in Rabaul and has been adopted to help teach Religious Instruction to children.

Most recently, a woman from Kimbe, West New Britain after hearing the story of David and Bathsheba confessed, "The story convicted me because I am like Bathsheba and this story is actually for me." Another woman said, "we feel that storytelling is a powerful tool to convict people so, can I request on behalf of these women that BTA come to West New Britain and teach us storytelling in order to encourage us to start a ministry in this area?" ♦

## Mourning Turns To Praise

### The Somba-Siawari Computer Theft Story

In early June this year, three translators from the Somba-Siawari language group in the Morobe Province went to Ukarumpa, Eastern Highlands Province to attend a back translation workshop. After the workshop, they planned to stay longer so they could spend time with their supervisor and transfer all their translation documents to a new computer. However, a thief broke into their flat early in the morning and stole their two computers before this could happen.

The couple Rumu and Fesi worked through the night and into the early morning until about 2 a.m. Just one hour later, Fesi's brother Taitus who was sleeping in another room heard a loud banging noise and went out of his room to investigate. He was surprised to see a man in the living room, lower face covered with a black cloth, and had a bush knife ready to strike. Shocked, Taitus quickly went back to his room. The thief took off with the translators' computers. These computers had 39 books of the Bible and all their literacy work. Some books were ready for consultant checking, and others ready for village checking. They had not backed up in a year.

The Somba-Siawari people received their New Testament in 1996 through the work of a Finnish couple, Soini and

Kaija Olkonnen. In 2001 Taitus and his wife started work on the Old Testament. Even though Taitus was a Bible teacher and helped translate the New Testament, it was not until he was village checking the book of Daniel that he "understood" who God is and became a Christian. Rumu was one of his students, and under his teaching, he became a Sunday School teacher, worship leader, and later became part of the literacy team.

Rumu married Taitus' sister, Fesi, last March. They had waited several years for God to make it clear that He had chosen them to be man and wife, and for their families to confirm it. They are passionate about getting God's Word to their people. Asked why they are translating the Word they said, "We want our people to change and turn to God. We want our village to be healed, and those not saved to know God."

When security was notified soon after, the thief had already gotten away.

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# Keakalo People Want Own Translation

Keakalo, a language spoken in the Maopa Circuit, along the Aroma Coast in Central Province is spoken by 20,000 people. When searching the web for the Keakalo language you will hit a dead-end. This may be because Keakalo is classified in the Ethnologue as a dialect of Keapara.

The Keakalo people have been hearing the Word of God being preached in Motu since the London Missionary Society brought the good news to the coastal area. Deep in their hearts they longed for the Word of God in their own language. Consequently, they formed a committee and began to translate Matthew. The work however, did not progress further.

A new translation coordinator, Rupa Geno, was appointed in 2007. He visited the BTA office to inquire about translation and literacy and this resulted in BTA's involvement in providing training and guidance to the Keakalo translation work.

Simon Savaiko, the Literacy Point

Person and Language Program Coordinator for the area, conducted a translation awareness workshop in 2008 attended by 75 church leaders. This



A school teacher heading a discussion on the Keakalo alphabet.



Literacy workshop participants displaying their prized books.

workshop heightened the interest of many to be involved in translation work. This workshop was followed by an adult literacy workshop in August where the participants produced 32 story books. Using their own alphabet to write down the very first written stories in their language made them proud of their language.

Reverend Seri Frank who went to observe during the workshop held one of the books as if he was holding a treasure. He opened each page carefully savouring the simple delicious taste of home

spoken Keakalo. Then he said, "For over 100 years we heard the gospel preached in Hiri Motu, but this book tastes so much sweeter!"

The community chose two people to attend a comprehensive literacy course

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# Keakalo People Want Own ..... continued from page 4

in Ukarumpa. In the last two years Simon Savaiko has mentored them and they completed their training successfully in August.

At long last, a basic Bible translation workshop was held this year ending a 25 year wait for this kind of training so that God's Word could be put into their language. Some representatives who came to the workshop were already translating. They knew they needed training but, they could not wait any longer and they went ahead and started translating. They had tremendous difficulty with this as they did not actually know the translation steps.

The workshop provided them with the basic translation tools so they could move ahead with their translation. All the local churches took turns preparing meals for the workshop. Even Member of Parliament for the Abau Open Electorate Dr Puka Temu was involved in funding this workshop.

As a start they listed two hundred words in the New Testament that are difficult to translate—words such as circumcision, lion, synagogue, devil,

and temple. Simon said, "Sometimes it took a long time for them to come to a consensus. During the discussions the leaders expressed their opinions but were very careful with what they said. That part of the discussion blessed me the most."



Reverend Gairo presenting certificates to the translation workshop participants.

This is how the work is being done in the Keakalo area: Each local church group does the initial translation. Self checking is then completed within their own small groups, after which, group checking is done within their own church. Later, representatives from each local church will become involved in village checking.

Another group will translate back from Keakalo into English for consultant checking and then this is checked again by the representatives of each church before the final checking.

The New Testament translation project includes composing songs to raise awareness among the people regarding the translation project and involving the community in checking the translation work. ♦

## USA Discovery Team Back in PNG

For the past twenty years Wycliffe USA has been sending out university students overseas in the months of June and July to discover their calling in missions.

Thus, the name Discovery. Teams have come to PNG from 1992-2005 but since 2005 there has been a five year absence. This year, ten students in their early 20's came and were jointly hosted by BTA and SIL with Mark and Estella Trostle facilitating this trip.

The team's first stop was at the BTA headquarters in Port Moresby to learn about BTA, meet the staff and hear from Director David Gela. From there they went for two weeks of orientation at SIL's Pacific Orientation Course in Madang. There they learned a lot about PNG history, culture, and geography. They also got a head start in learning to speak Tok Pisin. They then spent the weekend in Amele village, living and learning from various families.

After the two weeks of orientation were completed, the team was split into pairs and sent out to different parts of the country to learn about the various components of Bible translation. Three pairs were sent to SIL allocations while the

other two pairs went to live with BTA field teams.

Jason Cho and Brett Wilkes went to live with Translator Mumure Ttopoqogo in Guhu Samane in Morobe Province. Jason, who is Korean-American, spoke numerous times at youth events and at church. Brett who had previously studied some Hebrew at university was able to help with some of the Old Testament translation that was being done. There were many tears shed when it was time for them to leave the village.

Laura Mace and Liz Walche spent their time in Saroa, Central Province with Translator Pastor Kidu Magi. Since both

Laura and Liz majored in linguistics at university, they were able to contribute to a grammar workshop. Both of them expressed interest in coming back to PNG to serve here in the future.

If these students come back as missionaries, it can take at least five years to finish their studies and go through the application and preparation process. Like many past Discovery participants, they may decide instead to be involved in missions by giving financially or praying. ♦



Laura Mace teaching in a grammar workshop for the Sinaugoro translators in Central Province.

## BTA Team Tours New Zealand

A five member team from BTA travelled around New Zealand speaking in a total of 63 meetings from 25 August – 24 September.



Tour members (L-R): John Gareits, Simon Savaiko, Steven Thomas (team leader), Badi Vila, Meya Ivano, and Steven Ttopoqogo

Papua New Guinea was once the frontier for the Pacific Islanders to bring the gospel of Jesus Christ. The tour was organised by Wycliffe New Zealand as part of the Pacific Advance strategy of the joint Asia-Pacific Wycliffe Area and the SIL Pacific Area. The goal was to encourage many more Pacific islanders to become involved in Bible translation.

The team was invited to speak in churches, youth meetings, small groups, and visit schools. They met with Caucasians, Pacific Islanders, and also Papua New Guineans who are studying in New Zealand. The Pacific Islanders include Samoan, Tongan, Maori,

Tokelau, Tuvalu, Cook Island, and Fijian – all have had a missionary touch on the lives of Papua New Guineans, especially in parts of the islands and the southern region. They share with the Papua New Guineans many cultural similarities— song, dance, food, — so they were able to relate well. The meetings were sometimes emotional.



Mr John Rentz organised the tour and he and Kevin Salisbury took turns driving.



Visiting the grave of former missionaries in Rukumoaana Marae. The family were grateful for a good closure.

Many surprises awaited the team including the discovery that it was the Pacific Islanders who were the first missionaries to come to PNG. John Wesley Gareitz, our translator from Bougainville, met the daughter of the

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## In Focus: Meya Ivano

I come from a family of nine: four brothers and five sisters. I am the seventh born in the family. Both my parents have passed away.

I graduated from National High School in 1984 and was accepted to study chemical technology at the University of Technology in 1985. Due to student unrest, I withdrew from studies after attending only a day of lectures and returned home to Alotau.

I taught for a while at a local Bible School then left to work with the United Church youth group and Sunday School. From 1997-2001, I worked as a pastor to a local congregation. I was released from pastoral duties to take up translation work in 2001.

My beloved wife Jayne and I have an only child, a beautiful girl, whom we named Hulele, a Tawala word which means rainbow in English. She is 13 years old and is in Grade 8.

I gave my life to the Lord in 1978 when I was thirteen at a youth camp and praise the Lord, He saw to my growth over the years. Jayne made her commitment in 1985 while Hulele, our daughter, accepted Jesus as her Friend in 2000.



The Ivanos: Jayne, Hulele, Meya

The Tawala Bible translation began in 1974 by an SIL team. The New Testament was dedicated in 1985. Translation work on the Old Testament began straight after this but stopped until 2000.

Since then, the work is slowly but surely gaining momentum. Currently there are seven translators who are still undergoing training leading the translation work. They are assisted by more than fifteen others who are taking on the job training. We have translated thirteen books of the Old Testament so far. They are all at various stages of progress.

Storytelling is the latest strategy taken up by the Tawala translation team since March 2008. Being a cultural norm, storytelling has a great impact on people. Our folks would rather hear a story than read a book. We hope to craft 40-50 Bible stories in Tawala over a three-year period. ◆

## Mourning Turns To Praise ... Continued from page 3

Colleagues stayed with the three translators praying with them until morning. Hearing about the incident Estella Trostle, a BTA staff member, invited them to her home and spent time talking and praying with them. She recalls Fesi saying, "My heart is breaking and it feels like a part of me has been snatched out of me." Taitus, her brother, felt all their hard work was gone in a matter of minutes. They are thankful, though, that the thief only took the computers and they were not harmed. Taitus thought of trying to defend himself, but decided against that since the man had a knife.

One thing they felt was that they must forgive the man who stole their computers. They prayed for him and his salvation.

They found comfort in God's word especially Psalm 37 and 1 Peter 5:7. They prayed for the Lord's protection over their hearts and for the Lord to return their computers.

Unknowingly, the Lord answered their prayers even before the theft occurred and it is beautiful in our eyes. Last year this team was told that their computers

were old and they needed to be replaced. A few months ago, a missionary couple who had previously worked with them, sent two computers to Ukarumpa to help meet a need in translation, but had not yet designated them. When this situation became known, the donor asked that these new computers be given to them.

Even the data they thought lost has been recovered. For the last year Fesi had in her possession a backup CD of the translation work, though she didn't know what was on the CD. When she

was getting other programmes installed on her new computer, she gave the SIL PNG Computer department this CD. As she went through the data, she realised all the work through 2009 was there! Additionally, they had left an old

computer Rumu used for literacy at the Computer Department, and those files were transferred to a newer computer. When they looked, they found all the translation data for the last year on this computer! Apparently whoever backed up the other info, thought to do a backup on all their computers! ◆



L-R: Rumu, Fesi, and Taitus after receiving their new computers.