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Erratum

We apologise for the confusing website information we printed in the last issue of *In Our Words*. The correct domain name of the BTA website should be: www.pngbta.org.

In Our Words is the official newsletter of PNG Bible Translation Association. The first issue came out in April 1997 followed by a second issue in July 2000. The third issue was in August 2004 followed by a fourth issue in June 2007. Issue five was released in June this year. This issue is number six, hence, it is labeled **Number 6**. From this time onwards we will number our newsletters according to chronological order.

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Contributors in this issue: David Gela, Sineina Gela, Duncan Kasokason, Simon Savaiko, Steven Thomas, and Estella Trostle



The official newsletter of the PNG Bible Translation Association

IN OUR WORDS

Number 6 November 2009

Equipping Women Literacy Trainers

God laid it on the hearts of Swiss Christian women on 6 March 2009 during the World Day of Prayer to do more than pray. On this day, Christians from all over the world came together to focus their prayers on the nation of PNG. Through their network and partnership with Wycliffe Switzerland they gave towards their sisters in PNG to help learn the skills of helping others to read and write.



Participants making story books using binding tape and cardboard for cover.

28 August 2009 in a beginner's literacy trainers' workshop.

These women representing nine languages and five denominations are leaders or workers in their communities and churches.

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From the Director's Desk



God is doing incredible things around the world. I praise the Lord that I'm alive to see it.

Consider Papua New Guinea. Over a century ago Pacific islanders brought the gospel to the New Guinea Islands. They were followed many years later by missionaries from England, Australia and New Zealand. After each wave of God's movement, the local church grew.

Today, Papua New Guinea missionaries are educating and training local pastors and other church and community workers, who in turn are providing leadership in their own churches and communities. Papua New Guinea missionaries in a number of mission organizations are involved in translating the Word of God, teaching literacy skills and promoting the Scriptures, and some going to other countries to plant churches.

BTA works in PNG along with many national churches, Christian leaders and international partners. This year, one main focus of BTA's work has been literacy, especially literacy for women and young girls who lack literacy skills because of various social and economic reasons. The lead article in this news-

letter shows an initial step BTA has taken to address this need.

I thank God, too, for the increasing partnership of God's people around the world in the work in Papua New Guinea. Two USA churches, in particular, have committed themselves to sending their members to PNG as part of giving opportunity and exposure for God's kingdom agenda. Oak Cliff Bible Fellowship in Dallas, TX has been partnering with BTA for two years.

In addition to financial support, their members come and participate in outreaches, visiting villages and doing practical things to help BTA. This year Asbury United Methodist Church of Alabama sent 11 of their members to visit a language group that they are financially supporting.

As you read this issue of *In Our Words*, praise God with me that He continues to give us these unique opportunities to see and participate in what He is doing. Consider how the Lord may want you to join in His Kingdom work.

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He challenged the women to make use of the training they received and make a difference in their communities and churches.

Guest Speaker, Mrs. Sunema Bagita, Principal Advisor in the Division of Community Development, reiterated Mr. Gela's message saying, "This training is very crucial for you all who will make a difference in the lives of our illiterate women and girls population in the communities you represent. Make it your dream to reach the unreached..." She commended the women for leaving

"Many of the wives of pastors in remote islands do not know how to read and write. They feel marginalized. I want them to become literate so that they can read the Word of God for themselves."

their families to attend this two-week training and quoted this saying: "When you educate a man, you educate an individual. When you educate a woman, you educate the whole world."

Assignments were given to the participants to take home, and they were encouraged to report their progress to BTA's East Papua Area Office in Alotau.

The privilege to be the focus for the World Day of Prayer may come only once in a life time, but the ripple effect of the prayer of the righteous and the giving of the faithful will continue to change people's lives. To God be the glory!



These women (one not pictured) received certificates on graduation day for successfully completing the Beginner's Literacy Trainers Workshop.

Monsoon Trains BTA on Web Development

Monsoon Communications, a ministry of the Asia-Pacific Wycliffe Area, is helping BTA develop its own website.

Part of the assistance is training BTA personnel to develop and manage this website. Thus, in September this year, Monsoon sent Kenji Kondo to Port Moresby to conduct an initial training. He introduced Drupal, the program they are using in developing websites. BTA had a website developed

In July and August of this year BTA received two USA partner churches: the Oak Cliff Bible Fellowship and the Asbury United Methodist Church.

Oak Cliff Bible Fellowship (OCBF) located in Dallas, Texas joined BTA from 9-21 July, working with churches and promoting Bible translation work in PNG. A team of 19 was led by Mark and Estella Trostle who have come to work under BTA in Church Engagement (See *In Focus* about the Trostles).

This was the fourth OCBF team to come to PNG, but the second in partnership with BTA. Last year, they concentrated in Port Moresby but this year they divided up and ministered in both Port Moresby and Lae in Morobe Province.

Eight women and a young boy stayed in Port Moresby to train women in teaching Sunday School, Christian counseling, and sewing. Women from several churches in Port Moresby enrolled in these classes that ran from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. each day, beginning the day with devotions. Estella Trostle says, “The women were so excited and eager to be in each class. We kept

hearing over and over how thankful the ladies were for this opportunity. Certificates were given to those who attended.”

They also conducted a one day Vacation Bible School on the BTA grounds.

The second group consisting of ten young men and women went to Lae with Steven Thomas visiting



BTA staff and board members welcome and pray for the OCBF team.

several schools, a village, a prison, a hospital and the market sharing their testimonies, music, drama, teaching, and connecting with the people.

Steven shares visiting Wampit village, whose New Testament was translated and dedicated in 1966 by the PNG Bible Society. “There was only one surviving copy

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BTA—SIL Interface

In June 2009 SIL PNG and BTA administrative leaders agreed to find ways to build greater understanding, which they hope would result in working together more effectively. To begin this process, they met for an “interface” retreat in September of this year.

Those who attended from BTA were David Gela, the Executive Director, and its four Language Program Coordinators (LPC). The SIL group comprised of its Director, Tim Lithgow, the Associate Director for Language

Affairs and several of its Assistant Regional Directors.

The group spent a weekend at the Christian Radio and Missionary Fellowship facilities at Goroka. They spent time getting to know each other, reflected on the Word of God, worship, prayer, and sharing with each other their organization's work plans and goals.

At the end of their time together, the group expressed that the retreat had been most helpful. They resolved to continue to schedule regular times of interface.

Overseas Partner Churches Visit BTA

The workshop was held at the Alotau United Church. Each day started with devotions at 8 a.m. and ended with prayer at 4 p.m. Two components of the workshop were materials production and teacher training skills. The workshop included: making a cultural calendar; story writing; making big books; doing a literacy awareness campaign; soliciting community support; developing lesson plans; practice teaching; and learning a Bible study method.

BTA's Literacy Point Person and Trainer, Simon Savaiko, conducted the training. In his extensive experience in literacy training all over the country, this was the first training ever that had all women participants. He found the women very eager to learn and they worked hard to complete each day's lesson.

A pastor's wife who has been teaching other pastors' wives basic literacy said,

"Many of the wives of pastors in remote islands do not know how to read and write. They feel marginalized. I want them to become literate so that they can read the Word of God for themselves." She went away with more confidence and very encouraged to continue what she is doing.

A retired primary school teacher said, "I was taught how to teach little children but teaching adults is a skill in itself. This workshop has helped me to know how to work with illiterate adults."

On closing day, BTA's Executive Director David Gela thanked Wycliffe Switzerland for their partnership with BTA in making this training a reality.

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Some of the big story books the women wrote and designed in their own languages, which they took home to use in their literacy classes.

Pilot Storytelling Workshop

BTA and The Seed Company (TSC) organized a pilot Bible storytelling workshop held on 6-17 July 2009 in order to offer BTA staff and members a storytelling experience so they can be involved in designing future Bible storytelling projects as a support for the Bible translation effort in PNG. At the same time, East Papua language teams got training in crafting and checking Old Testament stories in their languages. A third purpose was to trial workshop materials being developed for the Pacific adapted from the OneStory approach.



The right gestures and intonation makes a good storyteller.

Teams from six language groups participated in this workshop. They learned to tell Bible stories using the five parts of a story. The participants also practiced the techniques of a good storyteller, which include using voice, posture, and hands to help the story. Good intonation and gestures go together.

BTA would like to continue training these first participants, and several other languages in East Papua. BTA would also like to run a Bible storytelling workshop that would help at the national level.

Participants of a national workshop would be representatives of various regions of PNG who would hopefully carry on the Bible storytelling work and train others in their areas.

PNG Bible Agencies Meet

On 20 August 2009, six Bible-related agencies united in a special forum for the purpose of serving the people of PNG together. The newly formed PNG Bible Agency Forum is comprised of leaders from the Bible Society (BS), Pioneer Bible Translators (PBT), New Tribes Mission (NTM), Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL), Scripture Union (SU), and Bible Translation Association. (BTA). The inaugural meeting was held at the BTA headquarters in Waigani.

While this Forum is new, its members are not; most have been working in PNG for 25 to 50 years. Each has witnessed the



The men and women representing the various Bible agencies in Papua New Guinea.

transformational power of the Bible in the lives of ordinary people and communities, and each is committed to making the Bible available in the diverse languages of PNG.

Each member organization brings to the Forum its unique identity and strengths, but each exists to serve the people of PNG through contributing in different ways to the Bible translation movement. During their meeting, each Forum member presented their distinctive contribution to the collective task in rural education, literacy, language development, training Papua New Guineans in related trade fields, publishing and book distribution, and in strengthening churches in PNG. Better communication and cooperation can only benefit the people of PNG.

Future plans for the new PNG Bible Agency Forum include discussion of strategies for more effective collaboration. Six organizations, one forum, one goal: working together to see PNG transformed and strengthened by the Word of God.

Introducing Our New Board

On 13 June 2009 a new Board was elected by the BTA members at their National Conference. Five people were re-elected and six new ones added, with two alternates, making a total of 11 members.

The members were drawn from the public representing a wide range of areas: church, business community and the government. All of them are professing Christians who desire to advance the ministry of Bible translation in Papua New Guinea.

One of our founding Board members, Cholai Polume, retired from the Board this year. He had



From L-R: BTA director David Gela, Pastor Marco Paul, Andrew Kwimberi, Mrs. Marco Paul, Justice Les Gavara-Nanu, Gail Edoni, Dominic Sebong, Saki Ipata, Brian Kakini, Orim Joel, Dr. Sam Lahis. (Not pictured: Ruby Zarriga and Pastor Anthony Dalaka)

contributed greatly to our work. The new Board members are comprised of:

- Andrew Kwimberi, Chair, a lawyer by profession who also serves as a lay pastor of a local church in Port Moresby.
 - Dr. Samuel Lahis, Vice Chair, an agriculturalist in a government department.
 - Gail Edoni, Secretary. Serves as External Relations Officer for SIL PNG.
 - Saki Ipata, Treasurer, accountant with Petromin, an oil company.
 - Dominic Sebong, economist also with Petromin.
 - Brian Kakini, a town planner serving at the University of Technology administration.
 - Orim Joel, a printer at SIL PNG for more than 30 years.
 - Pastor Marco Paul
 - Pastor Anthony Dalaka
 - Justice Les Gavara-Nanu. Serves as judge in the National Judiciary.
 - Ruby Zarriga, serves in the government national planning and treasury department.
- The new Board met for the first time on 10-11 July for orientation and business meetings.

In Focus: The Trostles

In 1981, a young pastor from the USA went on a short-term mission trip to Papua New Guinea. As he spoke to the people, he needed a translator. A young PNG Christian was chosen to interpret. The pastor was Dr. Tony Evans, of Oak Cliff Bible Fellowship (OCBF), and the interpreter was David Gela.



On 3 May of this year, David Gela stood before the OCBF congregation in Dallas, Texas as Mark and Estella Trostle were

commissioned to come and serve with BTA. They realized clearly the Lord's leading in their lives, and it started 28 years ago, even before He called them to Bible translation.

The Trostles have been members of Wycliffe for almost 20 years. They served in Wycliffe's Discovery program for 11 years, organizing short-term trips around the world for university students. They also led Discovery teams to PNG from 1994-2004.

In 2005, at the request of Dr. Tony Evans, Wycliffe seconded them to OCBF to help develop their missions program in this large predominately African-American church. Mark served as OCBF's missions coordinator for four years.

Mark and Estella Trostle with their two sons: Micah (10) on the left, and Timothy (12) on the right

During this time OCBF adopted BTA as one of their "Kingdom Agenda Missions" partners. This July the Trostles led their fourth OCBF missions team to PNG, the second in support of BTA.

The Trostles thought the Lord was leading them to PNG in the early 90's, but instead the He used them to expose hundreds of others to the Bible translation work in PNG and around the world.

God has given them the desires of their hearts, to serve in the "land of the unexpected", under the leadership of two great ministries, OCBF and BTA, that focus on the Word of God. They live in Ukarumpa, and assist Steven Thomas in Church Engagement.

Overseas Partner ... continued from page 3

in the whole village, if not in the whole language area. The Bible was brought to us to see firsthand." As a result, the people were happy to give the copy to BTA to help them have it reprinted.

A week later, at the end of July, ten people from the Asbury United Methodist Church in Alabama came. Their main purpose was to see firsthand the Bible translation work they are supporting, as well as a missions exposure trip for the young people in the team. They were lead by their Senior Pastor, Dr. Mark Lacey.

The team spent two days in the Rigo cluster area in Central Province, an hour's drive from Port Moresby, where four

related languages are doing Bible translation using

the Adapt It program. The group sat in and even participated in a village checking session on Job 3:1-3 in the Sinaugoro language. A translator read the passage and the village

checkers and people sitting around discussed and made comments on the passage. They asked Pastor Lacey to explain what "the day of his birth" meant. After more than an hour of discussion the group came up with the appropriate translation of "Job cursed the day of his birth."

After their stint in Saroa they went up to Ukarumpa in the Eastern Highlands Province to visit the SIL center there. On their return to Port Moresby they met again at the BTA office for a farewell dinner.

Pastor Lacey said of the



Village checking of Job 3:1-3 in Saroa Village