



# The Owen Outreach

A Quarterly Update of the Ministry of Todd and Angela Owen  
Serving with Pioneer Bible Translators

Making the New Testament Possible for the Somau Garia People of Papua New Guinea

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## Do You Have That New 4 x 4 Yet?

Over the last few months many of you have been asking the questions that I'd like to answer in this edition of *Outreach*. I'd also like to do more than simply sate your curiosity and concern. I'd like to challenge you to prayerfully consider whether or not *you* might be part of the answer to some of the prayer and financial needs listed herein.

Question Number One. Four Wheel Drive. Since last writing, we have received about 10% toward what we would need if we have to buy a new vehicle, rather than buying something second hand. "Why don't you just plan to buy secondhand?" I'm glad you asked. The infrastructure in Papua New Guinea is crumbling. Roads are in constant disrepair. Disrepair in Papua New Guinea means that the side of the mountain is crumbling away because of heavy rains and the road drops five, ten, twenty, even a hundred feet in some places. Disrepair means driving in and out of holes that are literally deeper than the truck is tall. Disrepair means driving through thirty-yard long bogs that are the slime version of quicksand. In addition to infrastructure problems is the local view of a vehicle: "Why do maintenance on a vehicle—it still runs?" or "out of sight, out of mind"—for example, you don't see oil, so you don't change it, or add it, etc. Or thirdly, "why use the *real* replacement part when you can use rope, bailing wire, etc.?" Needless to say, finding a secondhand car that has been well maintained and isn't falling apart can be a bit of a challenge.

It's important that our replacement vehicle be reliable. We use it for so many kinds of ministry. Ambulance. Delivery truck. Transportation to and from town (supply runs, medical runs, meetings, R & R). Bus. One year we took a co-worker and her security dog over 335 kilometers for the dog to have surgery (yes, he's the only vet we can get access to in our part of PNG). Getting stuck out in the middle of nowhere can be a bit dangerous in our part of the world.

We are asking the Lord to provide the vehicle that He wants us to have to be able to fulfill our ministry in a way that glorifies Him. That may mean a new vehicle or it may mean a used one that He himself is going to bring to our attention at the right time.

*Pray with us that the Lord will provide both the money and the vehicle that will best suit the needs of our ministry to the Somau Garia people, the other missionaries in our branch that we minister to/with, and our family. Ask the Father to assemble the circumstances that will enable us to replace the vehicle at the right time with the right vehicle. Ask the Lord to give us eyes to see Him at work and hearts that are patient and submitted to him as we seek and pray and wait on him.*

In this edition of  
*Outreach* . . .

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Spring 2004

## Whatya Doin' This Summer?

Date	Destination	Activity
April 18	Joplin	LDU 401
April 20	Memphis, TN	Depart for Florida
April 24	New Smyrna Beach, FL	Vacation
April 28	Ormond Beach, FL	Tomoka Christian Church Missions Team
May 1	Selma, AL	Overnight
May 2	Plantersville, AL/Jackson, MS	Plantersville CC, Overnight en route to MO
May 22 - 28	Bethel, MO	Bethel Christian Church VBS
June 2 - 4	Watertown, SD	Southlake Church of Christ VBS
June 6 - 11	Dallas, TX	Pioneer Missions Institute (to teach Phonetics/Phonology)
June 12	Joplin, MO	Overnight en route to SD
June 14 - 18	Bruce, SD	Preston Christian Church VBS
June 27 - July 1	Wooster, OH	Parkview Church of Christ VBS
July 9 - 11	Joplin, MO	Reed Family Reunion
July 14—July 31	Joplin, MO	Packing, Moving, Preparing for Departure
August 1—12	Various places	"Goodbye" ☹
August 13	Tulsa/Chicago/Tokyo/ Port Moresby/Madang, PNG	Paradise, Man! (or not)



## Anybody Prayin' for Ya?

Many times over the last seven years the evil has been palpable—usually surrounding times of death, when the Somau Garia have the most interaction with the spirit world. Other times have seen usually loyal and good friends turn to slander and back-biting and have threatened the unity and ability of the translators to work. Many other times have been marked by severe illness and death.

The enemy of our souls is aware of our presence among the Somau Garia people and is busy at the work of trying to tear down all that God wishes to establish.

At those times, we especially feel a deep emotional need to know that the prayers of the saints are going up, ever before the Father, interceding, petitioning, and thanking God for his mercy, grace, and power.

America is a difficult place to find the kind of quiet rest that encourages prayer in our lives. The modern American lifestyle is at odds with the kind of life habits that gravitate toward worship and prayer, Bible study and that sort of stillness that enables us to hear God

speaking to our hearts. I speak from personal experience, not from a condescending or self-righteous position.

Peter writes that “the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour” (1 Peter 5:6). John speaks thus of him, “But woe to the earth and the sea, because the devil has gone down to you! He is filled with fury, because he knows that his time is short.” (Revelation 12:12). The closer we draw to the conclusion of the age, the more we see Satan’s influence in a culture that is virtually spinning out of control. The cravings of our culture drive us to pack more activities into our days, eat more food, spend more of our money and time on the kinds of things that do not ultimately satisfy and take us to the edge of collective insanity.

(You knew that there was a prophet hiding in there somewhere, didn’t you?)

What shall we do then? Shall we buy our culture and swallow all its deceptions—wondering why we’re doing it, feeling helpless to stop?

I suggest a few simple things.

First, simplify—time, money, surroundings. Second, look to God for the emotion/psychologically driven needs rather than looking to food, sports, activities, etc. Third, nurture your commitment to look to God through the habits of prayer, fasting, and hiding God’s Word in your heart.

There is nothing radical or brilliant in these few simple suggestions, but there is wisdom in them.

The catalyst against cultural decline in America is a renewed student movement toward mission work. The infrastructure that underlies thousands of new missionaries spreading around the world is prayer, relational support, and financial support. A country without adequate infrastructure is unable to develop. A missionary movement without adequate infrastructure is unable to develop properly.

In the last *Outreach* we issued a call to prayer. We renew that call and ask you to commit to intercede for the Somau Garia people and the Owen family. And when you do, drop us a note and let us know—we would appreciate it.

## Whatya Been Doin' the Last Few Months?



*Samuel performs a sign language song for the Young at Hearts class at CCO. Samuel enjoyed learning a new way to serve others and spending time in fellowship with other CCO kids. Way to go Samuel!*

Last writing, Josie had just joined us. At this writing, she is 11½ weeks old and growing (literally) an ounce a day. She's been an "easy" baby, she doesn't cry a lot, though we still have to get up with her about once a night.

These weeks and months since last writing have been busy ones in many ways, compared to those preceding them.

I (Todd) have had the privilege of seeing God's hand at work first hand through teaching and sharing in several classes at Ozark Christian College (OCC, my alma mater). Historically, some of the most effective mission activities have had their roots in student movements. God is stirring the hearts of young people toward leaving the comfort, ease, and familiarity of America behind to carry the gospel firsthand among the most unreached peoples of the world. Even being involved in the tiniest way to prepare these young men and women for missionary service is a great privilege and is refreshing to my soul.

We have also been working with our brothers and sisters at Christ's Church of Oronogo (CCO), raising

missions awareness and building relationships. I have been teaching mission lessons to the kindergarten through sixth graders on Wednesday nights and have been involved in teaching the missions section of Life Develop University (a discipleship course). I have also been working off and on with the staff and fellow missionaries toward organizing missions awareness generally in the small groups ministries and among the congregation.

One huge benefit to having been based in Joplin most of the time is that it has given our children the opportunity to be involved in regular church life, with adults teaching their classes, having friends their own age to interact with, etc.

The kids have really enjoyed being involved in the youth program, especially one program called "Cross Training" held on Sunday nights. Andrew got involved in a drama group (see the picture below) and Samuel was part of the sign language class (above). At the conclusion of the training, the kids took their skills to a local nursing home and then later to church to perform at a banquet for the "Young at Heart" class. I believe one of the most important things that they brought away from the course was the need to skillfully and joyfully serve others.

Abigail continues to improve her reading skills and loves to read stories to Mom and Dad. She, like her brothers, has really enjoyed being involved in church life at CCO.

If they will miss anything, I think that the kids will most miss being involved in church at CCO and the friendships that they have made and

cemented this year.

We realize more and more each day how important it is to make the most of every opportunity—our time here is short.

Even so, we are looking forward to getting back to Papua New Guinea. Despite the challenge of the culture and the environment there, there is a certain simplicity to life there that is hard to find elsewhere. In the village setting, at least, there is no e-mail, phones, faxes, TV, etc. There is not the media push that there is in America. Life tends to be more focused (that can be both good and bad). We exercise a lot, eat more simply (usually), and spend our time doing more constructive things.

And those are just personal advantages. Our prime motivation is the knowledge that God has asked us to go and extend his Kingdom through the ministry of Bible translation—and to do that with the Somau Garia people of Papua New Guinea. Joyfully, willingly, we move to serve our Master.

*Andrew plays a policeman in the time of King David, investigating the disappearance of David when King Saul was pursuing him. He worked for several weeks to learn his lines and did a great job.*





On the front page we asked the question, “Do You Have That New 4 x 4 yet?”

You’ll see pictured above the type of truck we’re looking for. Most of you will recognize the Toyota emblem on the grill, but won’t recognize the rest of the vehicle. This is Toyota Land Cruiser J78 model, fitted with a snorkel that allows you to drive through deep water without ingesting water into the cylinders (if the water is that deep, I’m staying home!). Notice that all the loose bits, like the exhaust system, etc. are tucked up above the differentials? Or that it comes with a brush guard to keep tree limbs and four-legged animals out of your radiator?

If you’re interested in contributing toward this very important need, please make checks payable to **Pioneer Bible Translators** and send them to:

Todd & Angela Owen  
Pioneer Bible Translators  
P.O. Box 52  
Joplin, MO 64802

Please also include a note mentioning that the contribution is for “vehicle replacement”.

Please know that whatever contribution you can make toward this need will be deeply appreciated and will assist the Somau Garia people in having the Bible in their own language.

# Gap Corner

## How Should We Pray?

“I looked for a man among them who would build up the wall and stand before me in the gap on behalf of the land so I would not have to destroy it, but I found none.”

Ezekiel 22:30

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The verse above is oft quoted in relation to intercessory prayer. The context is not as well known. God’s people, Israel, were involved in the most vile practices imaginable, though in present-day America, more and more of the things discussed in Ezekiel 22 are being brought out of the closet and considered entertainment. One of the most condemning things written in this passage is found in verse 12: “and you have forgotten me, declares the Sovereign Lord”.

God searched and could not find a single person in all of Israel who would be willing to stand before him—that is to say, between God and his object of wrath. The idea was that the person standing in the gap would fill the shoes of men like Abraham or Moses, who begged God not to destroy his people—and God listened to these men. Why? Because they were men God had appointed to fill the role of intercession in their day.

Presently, intercession is not by means of priest or patriarch. It is on multiple levels (Jesus lives to intercede for us . . . The Spirit intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express . . .), one level being God’s people, making all kinds of prayers, requests, and intercessions. Today, God is asking his children—from every nation, tribe, people, and language—to build up the wall and stand in the gap between God and those who would be destroyed. Are you engaged in this vital Kingdom work? Let’s build a sturdy wall and stand for the Somau Garia people before the Lord in that gap (so that they might know and live for Christ):

- ✠ Ask God to raise up five Somau Garia men who will love and serve Him only, to be evangelists who will preach the good news fearlessly.
- ✠ Ask God to bring reconciliation between clans who are at odds with one another and are not working well together.
- ✠ Ask God to prepare our hearts and lives for our return to Papua New Guinea mid-August, 2004.
- ✠ Ask God to provide for a newer four-wheel drive to replace our ageing and beat up vehicle.
- ✠ Ask God to provide insight and wisdom as we plan and meditate on our goals and objectives for the coming three years of ministry.
- ✠ Thank God that Angela’s best friend in Uria, Korenime Lim, gave birth to a baby boy April 7 and is reportedly doing well. Many of you have been praying for her safety for many months now.
- ✠ Ask God that he will bring about a sweeping repentance and a time of revival among the Somau Garia people, that they might know Christ and him crucified.
- ✠ Ask God for travel mercies for our family as we begin our longer travels and share our ministry with many of you these next several months.
- ✠ Ask God to speed Josie’s visa through the offices of the PNG Embassy so that our departure won’t be delayed.