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# The Storyboard

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**Editor's Notes:** *In this issue we share about the broader **Body of Christ** as it relates to Christian ministries overseas. It is broader than the one-to-one relationships of Christians or the relationships within a church family. Our goal of providing God's Word to Bible-less peoples is enabled by **Strategic Partnerships**, working together with many other organizations.*

*In past issues we've introduced you to our work alongside translation groups such as SIL, the PNG Bible Society, the Bible Translation Association of PNG, and the United Bible Societies. We've also mentioned other groups in PNG who enable our work to progress, such as Missionary Aviation Fellowship and Christian Radio Missionary Fellowship.*

*In this issue we focus on strategic partnerships we have formed with Outreach International PNG, The Seed Company, and the Fred Hollows Foundation. PBT benefits from each of these unique partnerships, and each partnering group also benefits, each in their own way. Ultimately, the Kingdom of God progresses on many fronts by working together. We really do need each other.* — Lori Witham

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## Strategic Partnership: Translating for the Baegu

An interview with Erastus Otairobo

*Erastus Otairobo, from the South Pacific nation of Solomon Islands, is the central figure in a unique partnership between PBT and The Seed Company, whose mission is "to complete Bible translations in the heart languages of people without God's Word through partnering with national colleagues, prayer supporters and investors, and like-minded organizations." PBT is blessed to have Erastus serving our team as a translation consultant. The Seed Company partnership enables him to accomplish something he has longed to do for many years:*

*translate the New Testament into Baegu, his own mother tongue. We've asked Erastus to tell a little of his story.*

**Tell about your background in translation work.** For seven years, starting in 1981, I was involved in translating the New Testament into Solomon Islands Pidgin.

Then from 1989 until 1991, I coordinated Solomon Islands national translators' involvement in Bible translation. Then for two years I took up training to do translation checking, and in 1994 I began work as a translation consultant in the Solomon Islands. In 2000 I moved with my family to Papua New Guinea. The following year I began work as a translation consultant through a partnership agreement with all four of the Bible translation organizations in PNG. Then in 2007, I started working solely with PBT.

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Erastus Otairobo working with PBT Director Kyle Harris.

**You mentioned your family. Could you tell us a little about them?** My wife Lois is from the West Sepik region of Papua New Guinea. She is a nurse and is employed at the hospital in Madang. She and I have two daughters in university, a son in primary school, and another son who is not yet attending school. Two grandsons also live with us as their parents are still doing university studies.

**How did you become involved in the Baegu work?** For many years I was looking for an opportunity to do Bible translation in Baegu, my own language, or to assist someone else to do the work. When I moved away from the Solomon Islands to live in PNG, it became even more difficult to work with the Baegu language. But then the *AdaptIt* and *Paratext* computer programs were developed to assist even mother-tongue speakers to do translation in their own languages. So I contacted *The Seed Company* about the possibility of them assisting with financial help. I started to work under this organization in September, 2008, and the translation of the Baegu New Testament is now possible. [Editor's note: *The Seed Company* was already involved in projects in the Solomon Islands, so they were positioned to provide the needed support in the Solomon Islands. However, since Erastus lives in PNG and works with PBT, we can provide day-to-day technical and administrative support. What a partnership!]

**Tell us a little about the Baegu people.** The Baegu language is spoken by approximately 6,500 people in about 40 villages. There are Roman Catholic, Anglican, South Sea Evangelical, and Seventh Day Adventist churches, as well as some charismatic groups in one or two villages. The people rely heavily on subsistence farming for their food, and they use mostly forest resources for their housing and other building



Erasmus Otairobo working with three other Baegu speakers to check his translation of the Gospel of Luke.

work. In the villages, most of the people are church-goers and speak their language very fluently.

**How often do you visit the Solomons and what do you do when you are there?** I visit the Solomon Islands twice a year to run small training workshops, do village checks, and have the translation checked by the consultant when ready. I am writing this article from the Solomon Islands, and right now I have four Baegu speakers working with me: two Anglican priests, one South Sea Evangelical Church Pastor and one Catholic layman as the Gospel of Luke is checked by consultant Pat Andrews of *The Seed Company*.

**How are PBT and The Seed Company helping with this program?** When in PNG, PBT provides me with office space, facilitates communication, and assists when the computer runs into problems. I provide PBT with assistance as a translation consultant. *The Seed Company* assists with finances, and helps in the Solomon

Islands with expertise and to coordinate efforts with the Baegu translation.

**What is the status of the Baegu translation? That is, how much has been done, and what are your goals for the first two years of this program?** Because of this partnership, I can rejoice in the initial progress of the Baegu program. Currently all the Gospels, half of Acts, I, II, and III John, and I and II Timothy have been drafted using the *AdaptIt* computer program, while Luke's Gospel chapters 1-7, John's Epistles, and I and II Timothy are now in second draft. We are hoping to have the books of Luke and I and II Timothy in trial use by September, 2010.

(Additional information is available at [www.theseedcompany.org/story/north-malaita-cluster-solomon-islands](http://www.theseedcompany.org/story/north-malaita-cluster-solomon-islands) and [www.theseedcompany.org/project/north-mailata-ig-cluster](http://www.theseedcompany.org/project/north-mailata-ig-cluster) and related links.)

## **Strategic Partnership: Outreach International** by Lori Witham

PBT has partnered with Outreach International PNG (OIPNG) for many years. OIPNG missionary Jesse Pryor grew up among the Ap Ma people, where his parents John and Bonita were Bible translators serving with PBT. Jesse and his wife Karie came to PNG in 2004 to minister among the Ap Ma particularly in the areas of literacy and church growth.

PBT has benefited from our partnership with OIPNG as Jesse and Karie have provided encouragement to Ap Ma translator Maso Leko (pictured in the Winter 2008 *Storyboard* sporting a big smile in celebration of the completion of

Ap Ma Acts). We have also benefited from Jesse's handyman expertise.

Jesse and Karie, in turn, have benefited from their partnership with PBT by having access to our housing, vehicles, office equipment, and other resources in Madang. We have also arranged flights, purchased cargo to ship to them, and in general provided them the same services we offer our own village-based teams.

As Jill Riepe, our newest branch member, begins living among the Ap Ma and helping to facilitate Maso's translation work, PBT's partnership with OIPNG is taking on a new dimension. For example, the lumber for Jill's village house will be

provided by a portable saw mill that is part of OIPNG's community development strategy. Jill can share in an occasional evening meal and a good chat with the Pryor family. And Jill and the Pryors can share flights between Madang and the village.

But most importantly, because of the strategic partnership that God provided, His Word will be available to the Ap Ma people in their own language sooner, and when they receive it they will already be able to read it and they will have experienced the Body of Christ in action.

*(Additional information is available at [www.oipng.org](http://www.oipng.org).)*



A strategic partnership between PBT and OIPNG benefits PBT's Jill Riepe, who will serve alongside Ap Ma translator Maso Leko, and OIPNG's Jesse and Karie Pryor (with children Eli, Naleh, and Judah).



## **Strategic Partnership: Sight for the Visually Impaired** by Kyle Harris

Bible translation and literacy go hand in hand. A big part of our work involves developing alphabets for the languages in which we work, training writers and teachers, and teaching people to read and write in their own language, usually for the first time.

Often, however, we run into a problem with our adult literacy efforts. Wherever people live, as they approach their 40's their eyes start changing. When that happens, North Americans head to the optometrist in search of glasses.

But what if you lived in a place without an optometrist or a ready source of reading glasses? And what if you couldn't afford glasses even if they were available? That is exactly the situation faced by many of the villagers with whom we work. They have no source for glasses and no money to buy them if they did.

So last year, when one of our supporting churches offered to purchase and ship several hundred pairs of reading glasses and sunglasses, we jumped at the offer. Within a few months eight boxes of glasses – almost 2,000 pairs – arrived and we began the distribution.

First we made sure that all of PBT's national staff in Madang, along with their families, were taken care of. Then we made glasses available to the other PBT missionaries to distribute to the people among whom they serve.

In the tropics sunglasses are important for helping prevent damage from the intense sunlight. So we sent sunglasses to some of the village schools to enable the children to begin taking care of their eyes at an early age. Kathy and I also plan to make vision screening a part of every adult literacy effort in the Lower Ramu area.

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Now she can see to read God's Word!



## Take Time To Pray

Prayer is vital to every aspect of our lives and ministries. We invite you to join us in giving thanks and lifting these requests:

### Thank God:

- For strategic partnerships that expand the impact of our ministries.
- That our long-awaited, much-prayed-for office extension is completed.
- That the book of Acts in the Ap Ma language has been printed and will soon be available to the Ap Ma people.
- That typesetting of the book of Acts in the Akukem language is nearly complete.
- For significant progress in translating the New Testament into Waran (William and Robin Butler) and Tay (Steve and Rhonda Hayward).
- For continued provision of financial resources for our ministry.
- For providing six laptop computers for use by national co-workers when they are in Madang.

### Please Pray:

- That God will raise up missionaries and mother-tongue translators to finish the task of Bible translation here in Papua New Guinea.
- That God will also raise up literacy specialists and urgently-needed administrative and technical services personnel. Pray especially for an IT specialist.
- That God will enable us to build much-needed housing for national co-workers when they come to Madang for checking sessions, training, and other work.
- That God will continue to open our eyes to opportunities to broaden our impact by partnering effectively with others.
- That the Kingdom of God will be extended in PNG through our ministries as you partner with us in prayer and giving.

*We invite you to join our branch prayer team. To receive weekly updates of praises and prayer requests via e-mail, please write to [prayer@pioneerbible.org.pg](mailto:prayer@pioneerbible.org.pg).*

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*Bringing God's Word to Life!*

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for more information about these  
and other personnel needs.

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As we distributed the glasses, we discovered two problems. The first was that we did not really have any good way to check recipients' eyesight. Our method was to give the people a sheet of paper with writing on it and have them test the various strengths of reading glasses until they found one that worked. This was okay but not very scientific. The other problem was that as word of the availability of glasses spread, we had more and more people dropping by to get a pair. It did not take much imagination to see where this was leading.

Then one evening at a friend's going-away party, Kathy and I sat next to a young couple who were in Madang with the Fred Hollows Foundation. This foundation is dedicated to providing eye care throughout the Pacific area. Through the local hospital, they are training Papua New Guineans to serve as optometrists. They were planning to send out trainees to do clinics around Madang province but were having a hard time

obtaining the needed eyeglasses. By "coincidence" their first clinic was to be held in Bogia, the town closest to the Marangis and other Lower Ramu people groups we serve. However, without eyeglasses, they would have to cancel it.



Getting an exam at the eye clinic in Bogia.

Kathy and I saw this as a possible answer to prayer. We offered to provide some of the remaining glasses for their clinics if they would take care of the distribution and would also make sure that the people knew that they were provided by Christians in the U.S.

On January 23 the optometrists went out to Bogia and held a two-day clinic, during which the Fred Hollows staff examined 160 people. They fit 34 people with reading glasses. They also distributed sunglasses to 57 adults and 36 children, stopping only because they ran out.

The clinic was a resounding success and we are looking forward to developing a long-term partnership both with the Fred Hollows people and with the Christians in the U.S. that will enable similar clinics to be conducted throughout the Madang province.

One of the more satisfying parts of our work here is helping meet the physical needs of Papua New Guineans, especially when the need we meet is so directly related to our overall purpose for being here: providing God's Word in the languages of the people we serve and enabling them to read it.

*(For more information on the Fred Hollows Foundation, see [www.hollows.org/PNG/](http://www.hollows.org/PNG/).)*