



The Storyboard

Winter 1999

published by the Papua New Guinea branch of Pioneer Bible Translators

Editor's Corner



The general direction of this issue of The Storyboard took a different slant not long before we started putting it all together. The Lord recently allowed us to witness closure on several things as we near the end of 1999 and we feel it important to share these praises with you, resolutions to long-term projects, as we begin 2000 A.D.

This issue also wraps up our theme for this year of "The Potter at Work." Be sure to read the article by Marsha Relyea about lessons learned from a village potter.

As always we invite you to send us feedback. Normally we do not focus on current events in this



publication, as often by the time you receive them they are no longer up-to-date. We do want to remind you that prayer requests shared on our weekly Wednesday morning radio prayer time are available via email. To receive this please send

the request to <pbtpng@global.net.pg>. In addition, our international office in Dallas, Texas publishes a monthly prayer guide that you can request of them by email <pbt@xc.org> or in writing to Pioneer Bible Translators / SIL Box 255 / 7500 West Camp Wisdom Road / Dallas TX 75236.

As we end this year, we want to say thank you for your prayers, support of PBT and for being personally interested in us and the work the Lord has given us in this country.

Diminished Interest

As of October we are debt free on all of our properties here, at least according to our records with the Papua New Guinea Banking Corporation. Pictured are Eunice Messersmith, our Assistant Director and Administrator of Finance, and Lois Bayyom-Nai, our Bookkeeper, soon after acquiring the paperwork. We were able to pay off a 28.5% loan in PNG. (This high interest rate was because of an error made by the bank when working out the amortization schedule on the property we purchased about a year ago).



We are not in the clear just yet, however. Evangelical Christian Credit Union (ECCU), with the backing of the PBT board and our Stateside administration, allowed us to take out a 48 month loan at 10.5% interest, saving US\$80,000 in interest! Currently we still owe around US\$90,000. We are thrilled to be at this point, but are certainly still accepting donations. If you would like to help us become debt free, please do the following:

1. Make out your check to **Pioneer Bible Translators**
2. Enclose a note clearly earmarking it for **PBT PNG ECCU Mortgage**
3. Mail it to: **Pioneer Bible Translators**
c/o Paula Berrier
SIL Box 255
7500 West Camp Wisdom Road
Dallas TX 75236.

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Dear Diary

by Lori Witham, Desktop Publisher

September 14, 1999

Yesterday I printed off an entire New Testament! Per the Bible Society of PNG's request, I have been working with Omolpi Kuling, a Papua New Guinean translator with the Mendi language group, to clean up the Mendi New Testament text and get it ready for typesetting in Singapore. Then, so she could proofread and see what it would look like, I quickly typeset it without any illustrations, then printed it off. Halleluia! Everyone in the office has been excited to see what we have been able to help accomplish.



Lori and Omolpi with parts of the Mendi New Testament

if I ever get discouraged or feel like this work is "just another job." What a wonderful job God has blessed me with!

November 17, 1999

Yesterday I printed off another entire New Testament! The day after Omolpi left our office, Fay Christensen, an Australian Churches of Christ Mission translator, came in to work with me. Fay works with the Rao language group and is here in town for two months so I can help typeset the Rao New Testament. This is the very first complete New Testament PBT has typeset. Fay came to PNG in 1974. She began translating the New Testament on tablet paper, manual typewriter, cassette computer tapes, floppy disks and eventually graduated to a hard disk. Administrative tasks took her away from the job so many times and for such long periods that her work became rather disjointed. However, she managed to either hand write or print out the entire New Testament with the exception of Romans, Galatians and Colossians. She even published Acts. The only problem was that none of it was on readable disk. The cassettes had molded, as had the floppies. So back in April 1993, Joyce Nordhelm, who worked with PBT, began typing to disk Fay's New Testament from the handwritten copies, and completed it in six months. From 1993 on all of the checks were done on all 26 books and the entire New Testament was completed in October of this year.

Fay and I sat in front of the computer for nearly two months. But even with those two months, after working so many years I am sure it is pretty incomprehensible for Fay that the work God gave her to do, to help provide the Rao people the New Testament in their own heart language, is completed. But despite many discouragements, hardships, and trials, Fay believed God had a job for her to do, so she stuck it out. God blessed her willingness to serve Him no matter what. He enabled the work to progress, and because God's will was for them to have His word, and Fay obeyed His will in her life, the Rao people now have God's Good News.

Editors note: Please consider this a praise and prayer request as these two books go to the printer and into the hands of the Mendi and Rao people!

Omolpi blessed me yesterday. When we were waiting for the printer and talking about what we did, she started crying tears of joy. She said before she came to work in the PBT office, she was really worried that she wouldn't be able to work with me (national women are sometimes intimidated by us "white skins!") But she said I was really easy to work with and explained things well. I replied I was grateful to hear that, because before she came I also was worried I wouldn't be able to explain things well! I hope I remember Omolpi's joy for a long time to come, especially

His Steadfastness

by Fay Christensen, Australian Churches of Christ Mission

Twenty five years ago a skinny little blonde started learning the Rao language. Today a not-so-skinny and not-so-blonde is making the final corrections on the New Testament in the Rao language.

It has been a long haul, and there have been times when I wanted to quit. At such times, God sent some encouragement my way.

Once, years ago, I felt really down. I was working in administration and trying to type up handwritten copies of the translation in my spare minutes. On a good day I might get a page typed. I told God I was ready to quit. "No one but me cares if this gets finished. If no one else does, why should I?" I wailed to God. The next day the computer department of Pioneer Bible Translators asked me, with no idea of what I had been thinking, if I could use a typist for anything! I hastily handed over about 15 handwritten New Testament books.

Another day I was in the village working on reading books. It was hot and I was grumpy. "People never read these things anyway. Why do I bother?" There was a knock at my door. Jimjari, a co-translator, stood there. "Could you give me about ten copies of each of the books you have done? I have been reading one and it is good, and I want to take some home to others."

Then there was the day I read a Bible story in Rao for the first time in one village. As I finished they spontaneously broke into loud and prolonged applause, eyes shining.

Thanks, God, for keeping me going until the Rao people could have your Word in their own language.



Hot off the press ... the Rao New Testament



Fay holding 25 years of hard work

Very Important Visitors

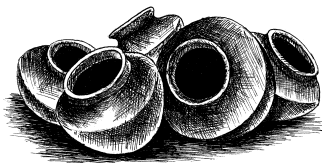
Internship 1999

It was a pleasure to welcome four college-aged young adults for the summer months. After a delay in obtaining visas, Patrick Mahoney, Jerry Uhlig, Ryan Dodd and Melissa Harris (Team Coach) arrived a couple of weeks behind schedule, but eager to dive in to life in Papua New Guinea. They had several opportunities to experience PNG by land, air and sea. They learned from Papua New Guineans and more about the translation, literacy and support roles here. It was a special joy to welcome Melissa back.

She spent most of her growing up years with her parents, Kyle and Kathy Harris, and brother, Tim, in the village of Pasinkap and then in Madang town as her dad served as our Director. Please join us in praying for Patrick, Jerry, Ryan and Melissa as they seek the Lord in determining their career paths.



*Armed and dangerous,
Jerry and Ryan in PNG regalia*



Hard-working, smiling faces...

by Steve Hayward

During the first two weeks of November we had a visit from six people from the Maryland Community Church (MCC) in Terre Haute, Indiana. That church has been long-time partners with PBT, having been associated with Jan and Eunice Messersmith for nearly 20 years. Gary Greven, Norm and Sherrie Cheesman, Marsha Doan, Cathy Thompson, and Sheri Trendelman came to visit, but they also came to work, and we got in lots of both while they were here. They turned an old, long, dirty, empty room in the back of our office building into two bright, clean new offices and a meeting/lunch room, with a couple of days to spare! We thank the Lord for the work they did, but we thank Him even more for their encouragement to our PBT missionaries here as we shared and prayed and played together.



*Cleaned up after a hard day's work, left to right:
Dr. Gary Greven (also a long-time member of PBT's
board of directors), Sheri Trendelman, Marsha Doan,
Sherrie and Norman Cheesman, and Cathy Thompson*

Cultural Learning Styles: A Lesson from the Village Potter

by Marsha Relyea

We had been at Ukarumpa in the Highlands of PNG, where I was on the teaching staff of the literacy supervisor training course, called the STEP course. Our family had been planning to be out in the village to do translation checking for six weeks, and then return to Ukarumpa, where I would be involved in teaching again. The principal of the course had asked me to develop lesson plans for a portion of the next course on the topic of "learning styles."

Now, "learning styles" is a very broad topic. And there are many different theoretical models which one can use to understand them. You can think about sequential processors versus simultaneous pro-

cessors. You can think about formal versus informal learning styles. You can consider convergent versus divergent thinkers. You can think about the holistic, right-brain style versus the analytical, left-brain processing style. There are many other learning style models as well.

Basically, we want the literacy supervisor-trainees to understand that different people learn differently, and different cultures learn differently. As a teacher, one needs to be aware of how his student learns, so that he can meet him where he is, and make his teaching relevant to the way his student processes and learns. This is a fairly sophisticated concept. I struggled

with how to relate this important idea to Papua New Guineans in concrete ways. And I struggled with this question: exactly how would one characterize the major cultural learning style of Papua New Guineans? And I struggled with how to say these sorts of abstract concepts in Melanesian Pidgin, the trade language in which I would be teaching. When we went to the village, all of these questions were simmering on the back burner in my mind.

One sweltering Friday afternoon in the village as the week's translation checking session drew to a close, Afangi, one of the older men on the village checking committee

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Cultural Learning Styles continued from page 3

approached me. “Marsha, I promised you long ago to show you how we Aruamus made clay pots. It would not be good if I died and I had not kept my promise. Several days ago my nephews gathered the clay and it is ready and waiting at Tongbur village. Tomorrow I will show you this custom.” One time Afangi had given me one of his clay cooking pots as a present. Ever since then I had wanted him to demonstrate this ancient art of pottery making. Afangi is one of the few men left in our village who has this skill. Because of lack of interest on the part of the younger generation, he has not passed it on. I have been worried (and so has he, I think) that the skill will die when his generation dies.

So, I was thrilled that he was going to demonstrate his pottery making! It did not take long for word to get around the village. The next morning bright and early Afangi arrived at our house. Young village girls (including my daughters, Heather and Brigette) had walked to Tongbur village at daybreak to carry back the clay. Gradually, as Afangi set up his work area under our house, quite a large crowd began to gather. This was the “happenin’ place.” Afangi was showing how to make Aruamu pottery, and people wanted in on the occasion.

Afangi made a tray out of bark. He took a hunk of clay and began working it with his skilled hands, rolling it into a long snake on the bark tray. He worked quietly without saying a word. In a very short time one of the young men in the crowd hacked off a piece of bark for a tray, and then reached down and tore off a lump of clay and began working it with his hands, rolling it into a long snake on his tray. And then a young mother did the same; and then a teenage boy did so; and then one of my daughters joined in; and then several children grabbed lumps and gave it a go. Soon a very large group of pottery-learners were hard at work. Afangi progressed with his pot, forming the base, and then using the long snake-pieces to wrap around for the sides, applying just the right amount of pressure, and the right amount of water to make the clay pliable. All of his imitators watched out of one eye, and then tried it themselves. Little pots began to emerge....



The raw material from which Aruamu pots are made

I sat cross-legged on the ground and watched in fascination. Dear, old Afangi was not only teaching me (and many others!) about making Aruamu pottery. He was teaching me about *Learning Styles!* There it was before my very eyes — a Papua New Guinean teaching other Papua New Guineans in a normal, everyday learning situation.



Alphonse holding an Aruamu clay pot

I fished around in my bag, pulled out my little notebook, and took notes on what I was observing.

Some characteristics of PNG learning styles:

- learning by observation
- learning by doing
- learning by imitation
- learning by trial and error
- learning through real-life performances
- no pressure of time limit on learner to learn
- learners are just living; learning just happens; learning is unconscious, informal
- no tests or assessments; but other people know whether the person knows things or not
- learning by persistence and repetition

And I knew I was beginning to get a handle on the cultural learning style of Papua New Guineans. This was primary research at its best! Over the next few weeks I was able to observe first-hand many other village-level learning situations that helped me gain insight, solidify my thoughts, and design a culturally relevant approach to teaching literacy supervisor-trainees about learning styles. Thank you Lord for using my friend Afangi, the village potter, to teach me!



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