

Beyond Words

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Wycliffe
GOOD NEWS IN
ANYONE'S LANGUAGE

STEP by Step

Strengthening Tokples* Education in Papua New Guinea

Now in its 13th year, the SIL-developed STEP course equips PNG teachers to serve their own communities through initiating and sustaining mother-tongue education and literacy programs for all ages. SIL, along with members of the Bible Translation Association of PNG (BTA), provide the instructors and mentors. To date there

are over 215 graduates ranging from mother-tongue preschool and elementary teachers, to adult literacy instructors and church workers – most with significant leadership roles within their communities.

The STEP course covers a period of two years, consisting of five one-month classroom modules. In between each classroom module participants return to their local communities to complete assignments, putting into practice the concepts and skills they have learned.

Some of the graduates now teach under the national multilingual education system as well as train other mother-tongue graduates. For example Wionare Mitimuc, a STEP graduate, mentored two STEP participants from related dialects of the Nankina language. Together these three men have already established 25 schools with over 900 students in the mountain region of the Madang Province. Eager to apply all they have learnt they have also held leadership-training courses in their area and the local people have asked for more.

For others attending, the STEP course has completely changed the direction of their lives.

Fesi Nanjim, Morobe Province, is one such woman. Her vision is now far-reaching.

It is children like this young boy who are being educated by their own people

My plan ... is to help people in my language area to become literate, to read and write in their vernacular and to understand the real purpose of their lives.

I want to help literacy trainers train others; help translate lessons and edit curricula and produce materials on the computer for both kids and adults, for church and government purposes.

I want to help in the community and also help translators spread the Good News of Jesus Christ throughout our country of Papua New Guinea.

I believe that our heart language is our life.

*Tokples = mother tongue

Editorial

► **Barry Borneman**



One of the benefits of the current economic climate is that it gives us cause to consider our financial priorities. When we have abundance we can give widely, but when we have less, or are uncertain about the future economy, we naturally give much more attention to where we allocate our resources and to the values that are important to us.

We in Wycliffe Australia have a wonderfully loyal and committed team behind us with over 4,800 individuals and churches Australia wide supporting our Bible translation, literacy and discipleship efforts and we are so thankful for them. Without this support our contribution to the Bible translation movement would simply grind to a halt.

Over the past year Wycliffe Australia has indeed seen a 4% increase in financial support for our members and a 14% increase in support for special projects, though the latter has begun to ease off in recent months.

In this edition of Beyond Words we give special emphasis to our two core financial needs; support for current and new Wycliffe workers and funding specific projects where our Aussie colleagues work.

Special projects – impacting lives

Wycliffe Australia regularly receives requests to fund specific aspects of a translation and/or literacy project. Last year we allocated \$355,000 to support 34 special projects in 12 different countries. This year we are committed to 28 projects at a cost of \$334,000, with a number of other potential projects currently being processed. (See insert *Overseas Project* newsletter for more details of some of these.)

Wycliffe Australia supports these projects because they are about impacting lives for good and seeing the Kingdom of God at work. We also simply want to give our Aussie colleagues and the communities in which they work a helping hand, and of course it is those who fund these projects that make this possible.

Often these projects lead to quite unexpected outcomes as the Holy Spirit takes our (collective) small efforts and does something beautiful with them as in the Moba literacy project in Togo (see story below) and teacher training in PNG through the STEP course (cover page story).



Moba Literacy

The majority of Moba adults living in Togo, West Africa, do not read or write. Most are poor and too busy struggling with the day-to-day problems of providing basic needs for their families to labour at a new skill such as reading. There are few schools in the villages where most Moba live, and educating their children is not a priority – perpetuating the illiteracy problem.



In 2008 the Moba New Testament* was dedicated and many people bought copies. But how meaningful can it be if it can't be read? As a solution to this dilemma the

local churches asked for help to start literacy classes in their villages so the people would be able to read and study the Moba Scriptures and related materials themselves.

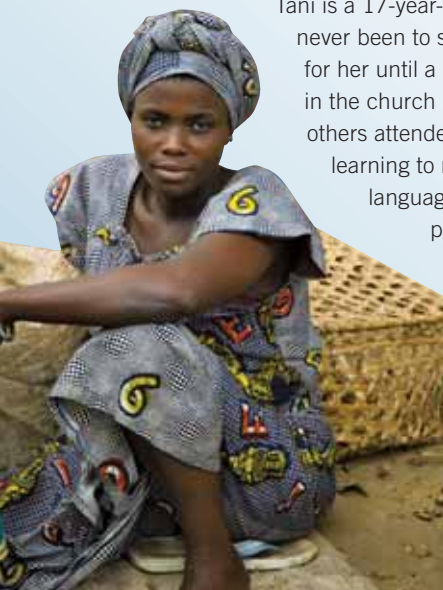
The Moba translation and literacy team were happy to oblige and with the help of funding were able to set up a number of classes. These classes are organised in small groups (currently mainly among women and young girls) in the villages where the people live. This helps with perseverance and motivation among the participants.

Apart from the Scripture in their language other material is also available such as local newspapers various types of books such as health, numeracy, stories from the past, etc ensuring all Moba the ongoing opportunity to use their literacy skills.

*Aussie translator Jann Russell was a key person in this project.



Unexpected outcome



Tani is a 17-year-old Togolese young lady who had never been to school. Reading was not an option for her until a Moba literacy program began in the church in her village. She and eleven others attended classes for five days a week, learning to read and write Moba, their heart language. Encouraging one another and persevering they came to the end of their classes and sat the test. Tani was one of the ten who passed.

Graduation day was a day of much joy and celebration as each received their diploma. Tani was excited, looking forward to the benefits of

being 'literate'. Would it really make a difference in her life? She was soon to find out.

After the graduation, Tani went once more to sell her produce at the village market. A fee is required from all who sell at the market place and, as was his usual habit, the ticket collector handed Tani a ticket of 50 francs and asked her to pay 200! Now that Tani could read (and having learnt numbers as well) she knew she was being cheated and refused to pay the 300% extra! However, she did pay her 50 francs, sold her produce, went home and told her story.

Three significant things happened immediately. The ticket collector was publicly shamed on being discovered a cheat, Tani experienced direct monetary benefit and thirdly the local village people spread her story resulting in many people asking to be enrolled in the next Moba literacy class. An unexpected outcome of just one person learning to read!

No simple confession

A STEP graduate from Madang Province conducted a two-week teacher training course at the request of people from the Yout village. During breaks and after classes he visited the villagers and prayed for the sick. On three such occasions the origin of the sickness was sorcery, and the victims immediately recovered when Wionare prayed for them. All were victims of the same sorcerer, who had come to mock and laugh at the expected failure of prayer. Instead he witnessed the power of God. After the third occasion he trusted in Christ and confessed his belief.

It was no simple confession. He led the graduate and church leaders to his secret hideaway in the bush where his sorcerer's tools were hidden. He then destroyed them publicly. For ten years this fierce-looking man had been a feared killer but as soon as the items were destroyed he was freed from bondage and was visibly changed. The joy of the Lord became evident in his demeanour. Now this man is no longer a feared killer – he is an enthusiastic and helpful member of the community, participating in worship and other church activities.

Wycliffe Australia has been supporting STEP participants over the past 4 years, and is committed to continuing. Last year \$22,000 was given by generous Australian donors.

Supporting Wycliffe Members personally

Wycliffe Australia's core function is to provide people for the 'mission field'. People who have a heart for the translated Scriptures into the languages of the world; people who have a desire to share their faith, their life, their skills with some of the poorest and most marginalised communities in the world.

It is people working with people that makes Bible translation and discipleship happen and when you get behind a Wycliffe member through prayer and financial support, you are essentially creating the space and opportunity for this to happen.

Currently there are 1,998 such translation projects underway but with over 2,000 languages still without the Scriptures in their heart language the need for a new generation of 'workers' is critical. Andrew and Hilda Steele (Solomon Islands), Jason and Karen Griffiths (Philippines), and Rachel Borneman (Northern Territory) are some of the new generation getting ready to begin their 'field-assignments' mid-year once they have received sufficient personal financial support to go. They are ready to go and ready to be sent.

[\(continued on back page\)](#)



A typical village location in the mountains of the Madang Province

Supporting Wycliffe Members personally (continued from inside)

► Andrew and Hilda Steele

Andrew and Hilda Steele have long dreamt of returning to the Solomon Islands, Hilda's home country. 'The Word of God is



a part of me ... I would love to be there teaching people to read God's word in their own mother-tongue', says Andrew.

Andrew and Hilda met in the Solomon

Islands, but have lived in Australia since they were married. They joined Wycliffe in 2006 with the plan to return to Hilda's home area and encourage the acceptance and effective use of the Scriptures amongst the people, using the translated Pijin Bible. (The Bible was dedicated in July 2008 and Hilda, as one of the translators, was part of that celebration.) Andrew and Hilda are keen to begin their work. In their own words,

... to get the people back into the Bible, reading it [and] making the Bible part of their lives. That is our heart. We want to see the Bible as part of their heart, a daily thing ... the change that it will bring into their lives, that is what we are looking forward to.

► Rachel Borneman



Born to missionary parents, Rachel Borneman is no stranger to the joys and struggles facing indigenous young people. She has grown up with them, gone to school with them, been adopted into their family system (with her own Aboriginal skin name) and has seen first-hand the change in the lives of those who trust in God.

Seeing the difference God can make in their lives, as well as his call on her own life is what motivates Rachel.

I want to encourage indigenous young people to grow in their relationship with God using the Scriptures in the language they best understand ... I want them to know God loves them for who they are ... that they don't need to become a 'whitefella' to be Christian.

Rachel is excited to be part of the new Discipleship initiative Wycliffe is forging in partnership with YWAM (Youth With A Mission). Her vision is to see young Aboriginals become the people God wants them to become. Her plan is to get alongside these young people, to nurture them and encourage them to spend time in the translated Scriptures – through Bible study and story telling, camps and discipleship. And her goal is to return to the Northern Territory to begin this work by the middle of the year.

► Jason and Karen Griffiths

Running a scuba diving business in Tasmania consumed the lives of Jason and Karen Griffiths. They had been Christians for many years but for Jason particularly, Christianity had become disconnected from his business and the rest of life. A crisis arose and Jason had a choice – go God's way or his own. As the Holy Spirit convicted him, the Word of God became living, powerful and life changing, and Jason committed himself to following the Lord come what may.



Our lives have been altered through God's living Word and we have grown so much through it. We cannot imagine what it must be like for people and churches that do not have the Bible in a language they understand.

Jason and Karen recently spent 12 months in the Philippines bringing God's Word in story form to the people of Mountain Province. Seeing the excitement of these oral learners as they understood Bible passages for the first time, Jason and Karen felt a real longing to be involved long-term.

They plan to return in July to head up oral Bible story initiatives and work with mother-tongue translation teams. Their role will involve facilitating training, mentoring local workers and stepping out in faith as they find ways to help bring the Good News of Jesus to their new friends who have not yet heard it clearly in their heart language.

For other new Wycliffe members check our website: www.wycliffe.org.au

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