

Keeping Our Partners Informed

The changes in our ability to communicate from the field over the past few years have been absolutely astounding. When we first came to PNG in 1985 we only received mail in the bush when an airplane flew over and threw out a mail bag. Today we are able to send and receive email daily right from the village. In the past it was hard to communicate current prayer needs and to update our supporters regularly. By the time a prayer letter was printed, mailed, and received in the states the events and prayer requests were often out-dated.

When we decided to return to the field in 2001, one of our highest priorities was to develop a team of committed prayer partners to undergird this work in prayer. But those prayer partners need quality information if they are going to be able to pray specifically and effectively. That is where our web site comes in.

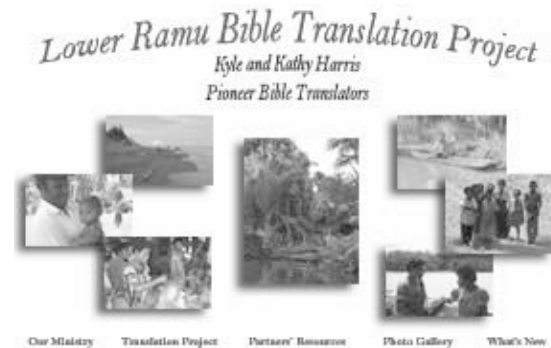
Recently we completely reworked our web site at www.flyingfox.org to make it more focused on the work we are doing and the people we are targeting. We also tried to put a lot of information on the site concerning prayer needs for the program and for the specific language groups. The intention is that our prayer partners and supporters can go to the web site to find information about how the ministry is progressing and about specific needs that they can pray about.

Last time out we did a test to see if we could use the HF email dial-up connection to update our web site from the bush. It worked. So we put a page on our web site that we could update weekly with current prayer requests and a short one-paragraph description of the last weeks activities. You can access that page at www.flyingfox.org/pr_prayer.html

In addition to the web site, we are also continuing to send monthly email prayer letters to our prayer

partners and monthly update emails to the rest of our supporters. If you would like to have your name added to either of those distribution lists, please just send us an email at kandkharris@flyingfox.org.

Our thanks go out to all of our prayer and financial partners. We could not begin to do this work without you.



This is the home page of our web site. You can access the various sections by clicking on the links at the bottom.

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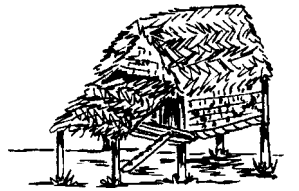
Pioneer Bible Translators is a member of
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Ramu Ramblings

Kyle and Kathy Harris
Pioneer Bible Translators

*Serving the people of the Lower Ramu river valley
of Papua New Guinea*



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Of Boat Problems, Pirates, and God's Protection

I heard it said once that if God truly wanted to punish us he would give us what we pray for. A good example of that might be our multiple attempts to return to the village in February and the amazing way that God took care of us by not giving us what we asked.

February 17th - First Attempt

The trip began smoothly with nice weather and calm seas. About an hour north of Madang is an area that is notorious for heavy seas. Sure enough as we approached the cape, we could see big waves breaking. Having already experienced waves like that once before we didn't feel it was necessary to repeat the experience so we turned back to try again the next day.

February 18th - Second Attempt

We got up at 5AM, took all the cargo out to the boat, loaded up again and started off. This time we barely cleared the harbor. The boat just did not have the power it should. Full throttle barely got the boat up on plane. Well that was not going to do - especially if the weather gets rough. So it was back to the marina where the mechanics discovered something wrong in the carburation. A couple days later we were ready to go again.

February 21st - Third Attempt

Once again everything started off well. Even through the cape the seas were light. The boat was running fine and we figured that we would be

arriving at the village before noon. Then the weather went bad. A storm hit with high winds and heavy rain. The worst however were the waves that this kicked up. In short order we were in the same stuff that we had turned back to avoid on the 17th. We cut speed and were making fairly good headway until we noticed the motor was falling off. The impacts of the waves had torn the two top bolts through the transom and the motor was just hanging on the two bottom bolts. (We discovered later that when the boat manufacturers fitted the motor, they neglected to put in the steel reinforcing on the top bolts. The impact of the heavy seas just tore the top bolts through the fiberglass). OK, back to the marina. The mechanics quickly fashioned some steel plates for reinforcing and had the motor back on in a day.

Before this attempt we had emailed our prayer partners to be praying. We sensed that something (or someone) was keeping us from getting to the village and just felt like we needed additional prayer support. So we renewed that request before the fourth attempt and felt a great deal of confidence that God had His hand on this trip.

February 24 - Fourth Attempt

This was the best day yet. Light seas and the boat was performing well. God was answering all the prayers that were going up. In a few hours we were past the half way point and enjoying the sunshine, dolphins, flying fish, and scenery. Then we lost our brand-new just-out-of-the-box prop. Well we

So What are These Workshops Anyway?

In a multi-language program like the Lower Ramu Bible Translation Project, it is impossible for the expatriate missionary to perform all the functions of drafting, revising, and checking the scriptures, let alone handling all the literacy work. Therefore a program of this type has to be heavily dependent on the participation of men and women from each of the language groups. These people will be trained to perform the various functions in a translation and literacy program. The missionary then will function as a trainer and equiper, an encourager and resource person, and will be responsible for overseeing the translation process to assure that the resulting translation is accurate.

Most of the training will be done in various workshops. These workshops vary in length from two days to three weeks and may have thirty or more participants. Kathy and I will run some of the workshops. Others will be run by other missionaries or trained nationals. Following is a short description of each of the types of workshops that will be held.

Translation Awareness Workshop: These two-day workshops are designed to introduce the participants to Bible translation. The goal is that by the end of the workshop, the people of the language group will have a good idea of what is involved in a translation and literacy program. They will know what they can expect from us and they will know what we will expect from them. Topics covered include, types of Bible translation, how translation and literacy workers are selected, how the Bible will benefit the people and impact the community, and what each of the roles are in a translation and literacy program. A heavy emphasis is placed on encouraging the people to see this as something that they can do. By the end of the workshop our desire is that they will see this as something that they want to be a part of and that they will be ready to begin.

Alphabet Design Workshop: Once the people have decided that they want to begin a translation program, the next step is to help them to develop an alphabet for their language. All of the language groups have people who can read and write in either English or Melanesian Pidgin. But they find it hard to write in the vernacular because most languages in PNG have sounds that do not occur in English or Pidgin.

2003 Workshop Schedule

- March 31 - April 11: Writers' Workshop at Bosmun
- April 21-25: Alphabet Workshop at Marangis
- April: Alphabet Workshop at Kayan
- May 5-16: Writers' Workshop at Marangis
- June 16- July 4: Translation Workshop (Jonah)
- October 6-24: Translation Workshop (Ruth)

At the alphabet design workshop the first assignment is to have the participants write a story in their language. This may sound unusual, given that they don't have an alphabet yet. But by attempting to write a story they quickly identify those sounds in their language that are problematic. After the stories are completed, someone is asked to write their story on the blackboard. Together with the participants, we analyse that story word by word and write on the blackboard each of the sounds that are encountered.. By the time the story is completed we have a tentative alphabet. Once the alphabet is in place, most of the first week is spent in finding examples of each of the letters in word initial, word medial, and word final positions. Through this process other letters are usually discovered as well. The second week of the workshop is devoted to producing a spelling guide and a story book in the vernacular using the newly devised alphabet. These will be used in the villages to check the alphabet and to begin teaching others to read and write their language.

Writers' Workshop: This two week workshop is designed to teach people how to write stories in their language. During the first week each of the

participants will write a variety of different types of stories. These stories will then be collected into several different books that will be used in initial literacy efforts in the language group. The Writers' workshops are important because it is through these that we begin identifying people with the gifts and talents to work in the areas of translation and literacy. Since the books that are produced are illustrated, we also find out who the good artists are.

Translation Workshop: The training of the translators is accomplished in the translation workshops. Over a three week period, the participants are trained in translation principles and practice as they work through a book or scripture portion. The early workshops focus on short, easily translated books such as Jonah and Ruth. Later workshops cover longer and more difficult sections. Our plans are to hold 3-4 translation workshops a year for the first two years. By the end of that time it is hoped that a solid team of trained translators will be ready to work on their own. (Of course we will provide assistance, further training, exegetical help, etc.)

God's Protection

(Continued from page 1)

didn't actually loose it - it was still there. It just wasn't spinning. At low speed it sort of worked but not at high speed. Nine hours after we had begun we were back in Madang. There we found that the rubber gasket that acts as a shock absorber had failed and was allowing the prop to spin freely at high RPM.

By now were were baffled. In four attempts we had experienced four completely different unrelated problems that had caused us to turn back. There were many many people praying for trips 3 and 4 so it was hard to believe that the enemy could be the cause of all this. We began thinking that maybe there was some reason that we were not supposed to be in the village right now.

Then Steven Piki arrived in Madang from the village

and stopped by to visit. He told us that the day after our fourth attempt a gang of men armed with shotguns and pistols went up river looking for a boat to steal. An hour or so up river from our village they encountered a boat belonging to the Australian Churches of Christ bringing some national pastors and their wives back from a conference. Like pirates on the high seas, the gang got the drop on the pastors, ordered them and their wives to jump into the river. While the gang made their way back downriver towards the ocean with the stolen boat, the swimmers dragged themselves safely to shore.

Ours is the fastest sea-worthy boat in the area. And we normally have enough fuel around to go about anywhere. Had we been in the village as scheduled, that boat would have been quite the target tied up along the bank of the Ramu. And the only way to have gotten it going would have been to come to our house for the keys to the motor and electrical system and whatever else they might have wanted to take. We can't know what might have been, but we are very thankful to have been nowhere near the village. God is good. And what a wonderful reminder that was to pray - and then to trust in His provision, care, and protection. He does have things in control.

March 4 - Fifth Attempt

Finally we made it to Tambapmining! It was a completely uneventful trip and Melissa had a short but enjoyable stay with us in the village.



On the Way back from the village, the seas were like glass. Melissa tries her hand at driving.