



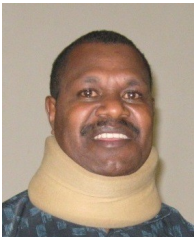
UPDATE FROM PAPUA NEW GUINEA

(Below is the recent report of Victor and Ana Fangonon Opungu in their ministry in PNG.)

Translators' Training Course (TTC)

Thank you for all your prayers for the TTC where Victor was the principal. All participants, staff and mentors stayed healthy throughout the course except for a few people who had colds. Only one man had to go home on the last week because of death in the family. TTC has four levels but this year only TTC 1-3 was offered. Those who came for TTC 1 have to complete their homework before they can come to TTC2 and the same with TTC 2 and TTC 3. Fewer translators come to the higher levels. Pray that the participants will be able to do their homework so they can come back.

God did a marvelous thing during this TTC. A young man who came to the course, unbeknownst to everyone, was a hardcore criminal. This young man heard pastors and leaders of the churches share God's Word in the morning devotions and prayer time and accepted the LORD as his Savior. He came as one dead in sin but went back a new creation in Christ. Praise the LORD for what He has done.



Steven Ttopoqogo, the TTC principal who prior to the TTC had an accident and whom Victor filled in for, says "THANK YOU" to all of you who prayed for him. He is now back at the SIL training center in Ukarumpa with his family. He came back in time for his wife's delivery of their fifth child, a boy named Jacob Israel.

BTA National Conference

BTA had its national conference after the TTC, also in Ukarumpa. More than sixty members from all over the country travelled by air, land and sea to attend this bi-annual meeting. The conference theme was “Owning God’s Word, Transforming PNG.” This is the first time that the pastors and churches from around the training center were fully involved in a BTA conference taking care of all the logistics, cooking, and leading the evening worship services. We pray that this will be the start of the PNG churches owning the Bible translation work in the country.

LPM Workshop

Conference was followed by the Language Program Management workshop that just concluded 19th June. Sixteen language program managers, coordinators, and leaders attended. Victor was one of them.

Plans for Building Our House

Now what is next? Our major need now is to have a house in the village so we can go and live there. However, we are not able to build a house yet due to some difficulties. Victor’s brother, Pascal, has offered to cut trees from the forest with a chainsaw. However, the rains have made the roads into the bush inaccessible so he can’t go in to cut lumber. He is still waiting for the rain to stop. It’s supposed to be dry season now, however, the weather is unpredictable and it has changed so much that we don’t know when the wet season will stop and the dry season would begin. Right now it is raining forever. Pascal’s old chainsaw is also having problems. So, with all these concerns we do not know when we can start building.

Housing Solution and Administrative Assignment

After discussion with our BTA director about our work and our housing need he has invited us to help in administrative work. As part of the BTA staff we can stay in one of the BTA flats in Port Moresby or in Ukarumpa for a lower rent.

So now in addition to Victor’s work in the village his admin job includes 1) Checking scriptures for BTA people; (2) Assisting in translation-related training programs; (3) Website development, i.e. maintaining, updating information. Ana’s work includes (1) Assisting with Media/Communications. In particular putting together quarterly ***In Our Words*** newsletter, developing language programs and members profiles, and other media items; (2) Assisting in the centre hospitality and accommodation; and (3) Planning ‘Community Development’ - looking for creative ways to sustain Bible translation programs/projects.

We thank God for solving our housing problem. Although we have a choice to live in Ukarumpa where the weather is cooler, cost of living is lower, and fresh fruits and vegetables are abundant there is a problem with its proximity to the village. We have to fly back and and forth, which is not practical. If we live in Port Moresby Victor can go to the village more easily to check on the Mekeo Old Testament Bible translation work and also the building of our house.

Something about Victor’s village.

The village is about 3 hours ride on a 4-wheel drive but about 6 hours or more by public transport from Port Moresby. The roads are so bad that sometimes people get stranded and have to spend the night on the road. In the village there is no running water and electricity. We get water from public wells, manual water pumps or catch rain water. Some people use solar power for electricity, others use generators while others use kerosine lanterns.

Translation Work

Victor finished the first draft of Psalms last March. He plans to work on the book of Isaiah next. There are also two men who started translating again. One is translating Nehemiah while the other plans to work on one other book.

Praises:

1. For a successful Translators' Training Course (TTC).
2. BTA bi-annual conference went well.
3. Victor learned a lot during the Language Program Management course and hopes to implement what he learned.
4. Baby Zeitl is growing big and strong each day.
5. For sustenance from the Lord.
6. Victor and the team have translated a number of OT books starting from Genesis to 2 Chronicles.
7. For you, our prayer partners and friends, who pray for us each day.
8. The translation office here in PNG have allowed the SIL missionary who worked with us in Mekeo to do some of the consultation of the OT work in Mekeo. He knows the language so a back translation to English is not needed.

For Prayer:

1. For Victor that even when he will be busy with some of the administration work, he will have time to work on the translation of the book of Isaiah.
2. That the Lord will help us in doing the 2nd & 3rd draft, do back translation, do a village check and then consultant check them. We are still a long way from completing this project and so would really appreciate your prayers.
3. For Ana that while she is helping in the Admin she will still be able to take of Zeitl.
4. For Victor's brother to be able to cut lumber and have it ready to build our house.