



Brian and Helen's News & Views

Eastern Highlands Province

May, 2010

A Trip to Aitape West Translation Project



The translation team at Aitape West working out how to express the Book of Acts in the clearest way possible. Note the heavy use of laptops

When the Lord Moves...

For months we and the village have been struggling with multiple break-ins and overall thievery. The police have long since suspected certain youths in our community. Recently, at a set of services (Easter week) many young men gave their lives over to Christ and now profess faith in Him. Instantly reports of nightly thievery stopped. The Lord answered our prayers!

Pray For:

- Pastors Karl (EBC) and Manuko as they and other lay leaders attempt to disciple and bring to Spiritual maturity these young men.
- The clinic will be short staffed for the next 4 months. In addition Helen will be orienting a new doctor. Pray for strength for the clinic staff and good health in the community.
- David (in the USA) continues to advance his skills in advanced web design and recording arts. Pray for more work in these fields.

- Brian gains new insights and finds new solutions to empower PNG citizens to engage unassisted in our work.

Helping the Aitape West Translation Project

Recently translation consultant, John Nystrom, invited me (Brian) to visit the Aitape West Translation teams, now working at their center for translation half-way between Vanimo and Aitape Town on the North Coast. This group of men come from 11 language groups and work together in parallel while translating various books of the New Testament. We have discovered that something wonderful happens when PNG men work together in groups, helping each other and encouraging each other in this task. These men come and go during the year, alternating between several weeks of intense book study and translation, and then taking extended breaks by hiking back to their remote villages.

Recently, I flew by small aircraft to Tadjji airstrip and we rented a truck and driver who met us there. Then we journeyed for around one and a half hours, on a fairly nice dirt road from Aitape Town to the village of Arop, where the translation center has been built. We forded only one major river to get there, and I was thankful the waters were low both coming and going. The season was relatively dry.

The Aitape West Translation team are well trained in the use of laptop computers, with custom software, and are

relatively "high tech" in their dependence upon a large solar array to supply power for their laptops and also any evening florescent lighting. These men will work all day and into the evening hours when they are together, pausing only to sleep, have a morning devotional time, and of course meals. It is a rather intense time; this last time they were working through the translation of the Book of Acts into their respective languages.

So where do I fit in all of this? I was to be their "electrical" and computer consultant. They have had a history of totally wearing out and destroying their rather large lead-acid battery bank... the one that stores solar energy to be used via a rather large inverter for feeding power to the main translation building. There is a supplemental diesel generator, but it was used far too much and diesel fuel is hard to get to the village at appropriate times. I stayed for two weeks, making improvements around the place. I quickly assessed that the "load" of running 12 or so normal laptops (many of which were dying and needed replacement) was WAY too much power consumed for the size solar array and batteries that they were presently using. There simply was not enough capacity. No wonder their batteries were wearing out, too soon.



Installing a new Xantrex C-12 Solar Controller in translation consultant Beth Fuller's village house

But I have been studying in my "solar laboratory" at Ukarumpa, alternate forms of laptops commonly called "netbooks" that have recently hit the marketplace in the USA and Europe. These netbooks are

found to consume around one fourth the power of a normal computer. I was pleased to recommend they replace all their aging laptops with the Asustek Model 1101HA, which at the time was still available. Over the intervening months, John Nystrom was able to obtain and import this recommended model, and now reports that they easily keep their batteries charged and have far less dependence upon their diesel generator now. They also purchased a whole new set of lead-acid batteries which helps a lot. In effect their buckets for holding energy had capacity now, and were not filled with "rocks" so to speak.

What else did I do there? There were plenty of "handyman" jobs around, like fixing and modifying a washing machine and putting in a new light-fixture in a house. I also helped one of our single women, Beth Fuller, figure out why her house solar system was not working quite right. We replaced her solar controller and also re-wired with heavier gauge wires. That plus a cleaning of the dirty solar panel glass, and things sprung back to life for her.



Basic Transportation

I also hiked about one hour's walk to the coast in an attempt to catch the Aitape Town mobile cell tower signal and practice getting email messages via a 3G modem. That had the potential to work,

however failed, primarily due to the entire digital network being down at that particular period of time. I was very disappointed in this. Eventually, the mobile tower companies will be extending their networks further into the bush, and this service will be nicely available for the Aitape West team. They are still waiting.

In the two weeks there, we visited a new Lutheran Church and its grand opening and dedication in another locale. It was special to join into their celebrations at that time. We also attended an independent church, nearby that had its roots with ancient Plymouth Brethren missionaries that came long ago into the region. They had a rather lively worship service with lots of singing in vernacular.



I was amazed at this unusual preparation of sago by a young woman out in a courtyard area

And in the village of Wauroiyn.... I witnessed a totally new way to prepare sago. Instead of the traditional process that makes a sticky paste-like food, this village cooked the sago into thin tortilla like pancakes and then wrapped

their meals of rice, fish, or yes, even crab meat, into Mexican style treats! Those were wonderful meals (I am not a fan of sago served the other way).

There's a rumor that I might get invited back this year at another point and help with the redistribution of some high power distribution wires for the center. Perhaps time will permit a return trip where I can meet this fantastic group of men, working together to translate the Word of God for their own peoples in their own unique languages. In the USA we take for granted access to the Scriptures; not so for the peoples near the great Sepik River. Please pray for their continued success in these endeavors.

Staying Connected

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