



Brian and Helen's News & Views

June 2014

The Word Comes to Arop-Lokep

I (Brian) was privileged to fly to a remote and idyllic volcano island, called Long Island this month, and witness the arrival of the complete New Testament for the Arop-Lokep speaking people-- to encourage the island church. I was not alone, and many others from various parts of the world also came to witness this historic event.

But what an Island! By small plane one crosses the towering Finisterre Mountains on our Northern coastline, and across a blue and white-capped Astrolab Bay. The "green" of the island's two mountain peaks were off in the distance, coming nearer and nearer. Approaching the tiny coastal airstrip, the pilot expertly lands on a grass-covered runway and quickly too... the runway is a bit short for my taste. All around is luxurious and green vegetation, with palm trees swaying in the breeze, colorful flowers everywhere..... and then....

Before the plane doors open, our ears hear the cadence of classic native drum beats and a dancing team decked-out in colorful array, waiting for the passengers to disembark. Amidst a flurry of decorative feathers and swaying bodies, someone greets us and "paints" our faces with two red swatches, on left and right cheeks. Welcome to Long Island!



Sissy D'Jernes and friends arrive with the Arop-Lokep New Testament in book form and by portable audio-player

What a marvelous time of celebration the next few days would bring! We had a short hike along the beach to the village where translators Jeff and Sissy D'Jernes had worked for over 20 years. There were elevated village huts reserved as our quarters for a few days and nights, with open windows to



Traditional Celebrations at Long Island, in Madang Province

catch the cool sea breezes. Plenty of food and good water.... in fact there were quite a few fresh water springs pooled up near the beach at many points. Once settled in our temporary quarters, we could intermingle with the people as they were making their "mu-mu" feast preparations.... a few pigs had been slaughtered for the next day celebrations.

On the day of the actual dedication we were escorted to a covered, thatched meeting area, right on the beach, and the New Testaments arrived by a traditional sailing canoe to this spot with a "dressed up" Sissy and Jeff in traditional style adornments. There was much singing, and dancing. Long speeches of course, by various dignitaries – some coming from Madang Town across the bay. The most noteworthy words were spoken by our PNG Director, Paul Minter (or at least of the ones I could understand in the Tok Pisin language) where Paul spoke about the true food of God having come now to the Arop-Lokep people.

"Before the Word of God was like a foreign food coming down from the Highlands... something you don't normally

eat and not particularly tasty. *Today* the Word of God has come in your own language, and it's like the "real food" from Long Island that you eat so well and heartily." But more.... "Don't think this is the end of a long process... this is just the *beginning* for the church... now you must learn to listen to what God is saying and apply it to your own lives. The choice is yours; this is a grand beginning for the church, not an end...."

So very true. And this of course, is what it's all about for Helen and myself. We have roles in support of translation teams, whether they be Papua New Guinea nationals trying to complete their own New Testaments with adequate preparation and training, or a qualified expatriate team.... all are called upon by God to do such a marvelous work. So many language projects would not reach the goal, were it not for others behind the scenes to help out. This is our part. So just about the time when we wonder "Is it worth it all.....", a once-in-a-lifetime event comes along! Seeing the smiling and happy faces of the Arop-Lokep, makes it all worthwhile.

Many thanks to our supporters reading this letter, in a very real sense you had a part in it all too. We thank you for your continued support of our ministries, here in Papua New Guinea.

What is Brian Doing These Days?

At a recent meeting called the "Eurasia Media & Distribution Consultation" (EMDC), several experimental software development concepts were discussed, centering around the easy electronic publishing and distribution of vernacular texts via mobile phones and tablets. Simultaneously, SIL Int'l and partners are busy placing finished New Testament translations onto the worldwide ETEN database making vernacular Scriptures freely available to minority language communities. (see: www.everytribeeverynation.org)



Mobile phones are quite popular now, and one even sees them in places where there is not yet a mobile tower, but with anticipation that service is coming to their community

One promising new mobile software system allows for display and "reading" of vernacular language text in real time on the phone with a highlight of the actual text read by the phone itself. The phone "speaks" in carefully recorded vernacular language, as the text is highlighted on the screen of the phone. Thus the phone itself "reads" Scripture and announces it while guiding the user. In this



Imagine Scriptures in your language easily passed from one neighbor's phone to the next

manner new readers can learn to associate vernacular words with what they are hearing while enjoying the Scriptures themselves. Simple controls make it easy for users to go to any part they wish.

But even more exciting is the possibility of passing both text and audio playback files from phone to phone via common bluetooth phone connections by wireless means.

Suddenly the complications of electronic distribution in a world without the Internet, has been solved as friends share their phone resources one person to the next. In this manner hundreds of individuals could receive God's Word in an already widespread tool – the modern mobile phone. In PNG the smart-phones required for this are becoming quite common. This "mobile-phone-as-media" concept could revolutionize Bible distribution in the third-world, since the layout, editing, printing and distribution of books, in any form, is extremely expensive.

As for my part in all of this, I am involved with a team that "alpha-tests" this new technology in the field.

What is Helen Doing?

Helen is a perpetual motion machine, a "wonder woman" in disguise, doing many caring activities for many people. We are sometimes reminded of this in the marketplace when friends give us extra produce free. Nice.

The clinic has recently undergone some major personnel changes and this has taxed the remaining staff. When new expatriate personnel come, they are not immediately ready to serve in the third-world context and this puts even more strain on our limited personnel to train well. In addition, some of our most qualified nationally trained staff are leaving. Our clinic has basic technology that is not widely used in PNG, so new PNG medical staff also require much training.

Another challenge with our PNG patient services, is a recent cut in government funding. It is difficult to continue to provide the level of service needed with decreasing financial and human resources. We are finding it difficult to meet the needs in the Aiyura valley.

- Brian and Helen

"You have given me greater joy than those who have abundant harvests of grain and new wine. In peace I will lie down and sleep, for you alone, O Lord, will keep me safe"

- Psalm 4:7-8

Prayer Requests:

- That Helen continues in good health, and with wisdom trains various staff members at our clinic. Helen needs strength and stamina, working very long hours. Praise that Dr. Jeff is returning soon and two new doctors will be here to help in a few days. But she has had quite a few fairly sick missionary children to care for recently.
- In addition PNG is in the midst of a measles epidemic. As a result, our PNG clinic is getting busier. We need to find both time and finances to reinstate our regular mobile immunisation clinics. We also need to do large scale mobile clinics in which we supplement children's measles immunisations with extra doses, in case they are not fully immune.
- Answer from last time: Brian is feeling less discouraged, while still trying to do too much <grin>. Thanks.
- That we could continue to invest a bit of our time with good friends, like Sylvia (for Helen) and Jerry (for Brian). That they would grow and bear fruit for the Lord.
- "Lord, may Your will be done. May Your Kingdom continue to go forward in this great, wide world...."

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