

MENYA MATTERS

September 2015 Carl & Pat Whitehead

July-August Accomplishments:

Pat and I arrived back in Akwanja village on July 7th, travelling by helicopter for the first time in many years, since our ATV was waiting for parts. It was nice being home for lunch instead of for supper. Jay Patiqu's wife and daughter, Ruth and Jill, were among the many people gathered on the soccer field, not to greet us but to participate in a week-long Bible conference held by the local Seventh-Day Adventist Church. They were enjoying a volleyball break when we arrived but the posts and net were quickly removed.

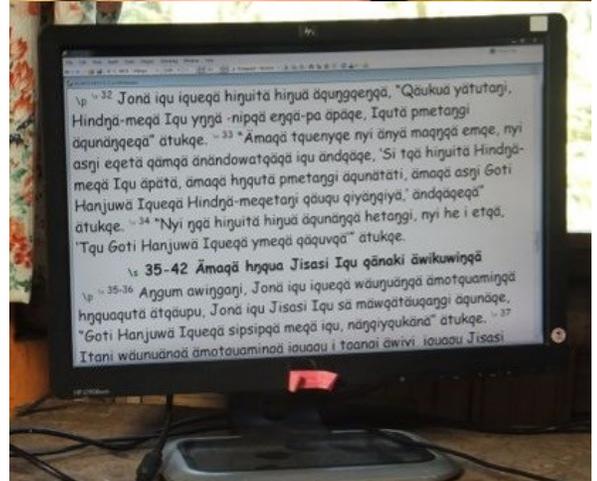


After 2 days, I left Pat to meet up with the 15 people at the 8th stop of the literacy and translation Awareness Patrol that they began the previous Thursday. They were encouraged by the welcome they received, and an initial training course for interested Menya teachers will take place next week. They visited 10 villages in all and I rejoined Pat on Sunday afternoon.

Work has not progressed as expected since then, however. In the next 5 weeks, Jay was only free to work 1-2 days a week with me on checking his revision of Mark. I spent the bulk of my time using the specially-designed program to get started on the consistency checks, making the spelling of all names consistent and compiling data on the various ways that we had translated terms such as (high/chief) priest, temple, demon and dove. On August 17th we began the process of reading through the entire Menya New Testament to ensure its clarity and consistency. Since then a group of 8-12 have met for 3 days most weeks, thus allowing them to continue with their other responsibilities. They represent at least 5 villages and 3 denominations, some walking over an hour each way to participate. I project the scripture on an external monitor so that they can all read it and see the changes we are making. There has been good discussion and many changes, mostly affecting spelling and style, but some clarifying meaning. As has often been the case, we are not progressing as quickly as we would like but the speed is picking up and, more importantly, the end product will be better because of the process.



Meanwhile, Pat was continuing with the development of literacy materials that will be used in teaching the school children to read Menya and then to transfer their reading skills to English. She also pushed on with the task of filtering through hundreds of pictures and illustrations that could be used in strategic places in the New Testament. She was not able to begin the audio-recording of the scripture because her computer decided that it could not find the battery that was in it and sometimes lost its connection to the external, solar-charged battery also. This meant that it could shut down at any time, which is not conducive to a good recording experience. After being like that for a month, it became stable again for a couple of weeks before starting to act up again. The computer is the super-thin MacBook Air that we bought last year and we have been warned that service for them in PNG is very difficult.



We had a pleasant break one weekend when one of the New Tribes Mission families from near Menyamyama came for a visit. The road to our village and beyond has been graded, so they had a relatively smooth trip on their ATV and their teenage boys came up on their mountain bikes. The road is now in better condition than it has been in over 10 years. We are, therefore, looking forward to getting our ATV back before much longer and before the rains come, but more of that overleaf.

September Activities:

On the 7th, we walked the 20+ kms to the New Tribes families' home just beyond Menyama, to spend a couple of days there before Pat returned to Ukarumpa. Since we are frequently staying in the extra house that they have there, Pat offered to make proper cushion covers and curtains for it. She completed the preparatory work in our village but wanted time there to do the final fitting. All involved are happy with the result. The orchid shown here was in bloom at the corner of our Ukarumpa house to welcome her home there on the 9th. I came back to Akwanja the same day but head back down there tomorrow in order to participate in a Wycliffe Canada Board virtual meeting. Because of these trips and other meetings affecting members of the read-through team, we are only getting 1 day at it these 2 weeks. Next week the Menya literacy teachers will be conducting an introductory reading and fluency course for people newly interested in learning, and eventually teaching in their own villages.



Back in Canada, this week our son Sean will be moving from Winnipeg to BC, where he will be working (and initially living) with Jason. Meanwhile, Windsong, Korin and his girlfriend, Kristina, are wrapping up their summer jobs at Barkerville heritage gold mine village. Korin and Kristina are making plans to spend a year working in England, starting in the near future.

October-November Anticipations:

From Oct 7—Nov 18, Pat will be co-coordinating and teaching in this year's Initial Skills Course. Since the staff will be more-experienced and she is not leading it alone, it should be less intense for her this year, but there is still much to be done before it starts. I will be staying on in the village here at least until the end of October to push ahead with the read-through. Then on Nov 18th we will both be heading back to Canada for three weeks for me to attend the Wycliffe Canada Board meetings and for us to both spend some time with our children and Pat's parents. We don't plan to visit England however so we probably won't see Korin. We will arrive back in PNG on Dec 8th and may be back in the village before Christmas. That is yet to be decided.

A National Concern:

Much of PNG and the surrounding area is suffering after several months of drought, compounded by frost in higher regions. There are predictions that this could continue well into next year.

The Menya New Testament Publication Project:

We have mentioned this in several of our recent letters. The estimated need for typesetting then printing and shipping of 1000 copies of the New Testament was USD19000, so the Canadian project was approved for CAD20000. The fall in value of the Canadian dollar affects that as well as our personal support. Donations received to date are CAD4340 and we have been informed of plans for further gifts. We are in communication with the Scripture Publication Funding office of SIL International regarding funding from other sources.

Praise & Prayer:

- **Praise** for safety and good reception on the awareness patrol. **Pray** for the fluency class Sept 21-25 and for ongoing learning.
- **Praise** for the team gathering to read through the entire New Testament. **Pray** for continued cooperation and alertness for the team, and for the other aspects of the preparation for typesetting some time next year.
- John M, a source of stress for several years, is part of the team and contributing well, but not without issues. **Pray** for full reconciliation between him and his wife, Micah, who is currently in the coastal city of Lae. The younger children are with John.
- **Praise** that Pat's computer has behaved since she returned to Ukarumpa. **Pray** for a solution to the problem.
- **Praise** for Jay Patiqu's concern for his people as well as for the translation process. **Pray** for wisdom as he deals with many serious problems in the area, in his roles as ward councillor and deputy president of the Local Level Government Council.
- **Praise** for the staff and students in the Initial Skills Course (ISC). **Pray** for good preparation and the teaching-learning process.
- **Praise** for the donations that have been given toward the printing costs. **Pray** for wisdom and patience as we await God's leading and provision.
- **Pray** for the people of PNG and for the government and aid organizations as they seek to relieve the food shortages.
- **Praise** for the grading of our local road. **Pray** that the last ATV parts will soon arrive so that we can experience the safer ride.

Contact us at:

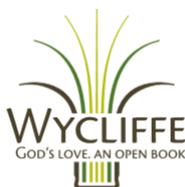
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