

FROM THE CHAIRMAN'S DESK.

by Dot Vincent



As one member said, Tehillah is an infant organization, gradually growing, but always growing whether the steps be big or small. Praise God for His guidance, provision and intervention. As we grow the multitude of responsibilities that Ernie & Marilyn currently have will need to be taken on by others.

Board members are now scattered from Townsville down to the Gold Coast. We had the privilege of all being together for our recent meeting on 17th July at the Gunders home in Hervey Bay. Otherwise phone & email are used to keep in touch.

Communication is important, and we recognize this will be all the more so for our missionaries on the field.

The uncertainty regarding the situation in Bougainville has led to delays in our 4 missionaries returning there, but now we have assurances from people on Bougainville that it is safe for males and females to go.

Shane & Karen flew to Port Moresby on the 8th August, where they met with the Secretary of the United Church. It is through him that we will apply for Work Visas (permitting a 3yr stay). These Work Visas will enable the projects planned to be commenced.

These projects have been opened to us by God – they have not been of our own initiation.

Waiting has been difficult. Uncertainty has been trying. But it is important to wait for God's timing, and now the doors are opening to allow us in. Our plans are to train Pastors, build their Training Centre, re-establish the coconut plantation. There are many skills to be taught (this did not happen during the 10 yr 'Crisis') and basic commodities to be sourced within their own environment.

While equipping these people for better living, eg solar lights, coconut oil for cooking, fuel and medicinal purposes, always the most important goal will be to lead these people to a knowledge of our Lord Jesus at both introductory and deeper understanding levels.

Prayer is of the utmost importance.

You will find enclosed a copy of our Prayer Diary. In addition to this broad outline of prayer needs, monthly prayer points will be available via email, or posted if you request it.

Serve the Lord with gladness.

Come before Him with Praise and Thanksgiving.

THE FLEET GROWS!

Keen eyes, open ears – these led us to another vessel!

A 30ft fibreglass boat with 180hp inboard/outboard motor is about to join Tehillah's fleet to operate in the waters of Bougainville.

Another incredible story of God's provision. The present owners were keen to sell – they wanted the funds from the sale of the boat to help build a Church in the Philippines. Ernie and Marilyn were contacted, "Do you think this boat would be suitable for your work in Bougainville?" On inspection it was found to be the exact vessel Ernie had in mind for running quick trips from the In-service Training Centre to nearby islands, villages and Buka Town.

But how could Tehillah finance such a project? Tehillah couldn't – but God did!

We are now praying about a suitable name for this addition to Tehillah's fleet.



"Rub his belly, Ernie! Rub his belly!"

CAVIES READY FOR 2 MONTH STINT



Shane & Karen have been kept busy over the last few months with some study courses, one in Mission Perspectives and

another in Language Learning. The Mission Perspectives Course concentrated on subjects like: cross cultural pitfalls and traps, the reasons for cross cultural mission and how to be better prepared spiritually for when things don't seem to be going right. This course was very informative with a lot of useful information that will be used in their work with Tehillah.

The Language Learning Course was conducted at the SIL/Wycliffe Training Centre in Melbourne. It was an intensive two week course on language learning techniques incorporating the use of phonetics and non English ways of communicating as well as learning to increase the assimilation of a second or third language. The time in Melbourne allowed them to do some visitation with supporters and report on their work with Tehillah to date.

An unforeseen bonus also came in the form of some very valuable new contacts with two missionaries, one in the Solomon Islands and another just north of Bougainville on Nissan Island. These missionaries are helping their local people with producing coconut oil either for domestic use or for export. Shane is hoping to introduce the production of coconut oil, along with other village based technology as part of his ongoing ministry in Bougainville with Tehillah.

At the moment Karen and Shane have just arrived back in Bougainville. What they would like to have taken in terms of resources and equipment is severely restricted by the airline baggage limit and what they can actually carry in their backpacks but with the gospel in their hearts then that is all that really needs to go and God will supply the rest when it is needed.

Ernie & Marilyn are preparing "Special Effects" for another voyage to Bougainville. Departure date depends on progress by the United Church of PNG on their work visas.

Bougainville Elections

The electing of an autonomous government for Bougainville has been very significant for this people group. Building up to this event the atmosphere was tense.

The United Nations had been working quietly for 5 years preparing for this important step towards future independence from PNG. With the re-emergence of Francis Ona from his mountain stronghold just a few weeks prior to the election the UN representatives were nervous. How would the people react to this rebel leader? Would they shun him or follow him? Would they listen to him as he declared the forth coming election to be illegal and urged the people not to vote? What would happen? There was the possibility that this could turn into their worst nightmare.

We prayed fervently for the process to be peaceful.

The following is a paraphrase of Andrew Laming's article which appeared in the Courier Mail on 6th June, 2005.

"The Constitution for Bougainville was approved by Papua New Guinea's parliament late last year. Since then, the island has stuck doggedly to its ambitious election timeline, even when that meant a six-week campaign and just a handful of rallies.

The daunting job of monitoring the election, which took place at the end of May, rested with 11 members of a United Nations co-ordinated international observer team, drawn from the Commonwealth, the Pacific Islands Forum, Japan, New Zealand and Australia. Following the 190 mobile polling teams meant criss-crossing 12,000 square kilometres of jungle-covered islands, unsealed roads and the odd volcano. Some villages were reached only by walking tracks, while others were on remote atolls hundreds of kilometres out in the South Pacific."

(One of these atolls – Mortlock – was visited by Ernie, Marilyn and Paul on 'Special Effects' in 2004. It is only 4 feet above sea level – about 400 people live there and you can imagine the excitement when visitors drop in. No doubt the election team received the same warm welcome we did on their arrival for this historic milestone. Ed)

"The election took almost 2 weeks to complete. In each village the ballot boxes were set up outside under the trees. Unarmed police were conspicuous but their role was limited to supporting polling staff and shooing away the village dogs. Indelible ink marked voters as they collected their 4 ballot papers: one for president, one for their local member and one each for their regional women's and ex-combatant representatives. In remote mountain villages where lower literacy led to longer queues, entire communities waited patiently.

For those who missed out at busy booths, the only alternatives were to truck, trek or boat to nearby villages on following days. One 70 year old man who could remember bringing food to Japanese Soldiers during the Second World War, walked 3 miles down a rough mountain path with the aid of a walking stick, to vote.

After voting closed, ballot boxes were sealed to a round of applause from onlookers."

The new Bougainville Autonomous Government was sworn in at a colourful ceremony at Hutjena on Buka Island on 15th June, 2005.

We praise God that our prayers were answered – the whole election process was peaceful and our friends in Bougainville are looking forward to a bright new future.

Bougainville rebel leader Francis Ona dies

- By ABC Pacific correspondent Sean Dorney - Monday, July 25, 2005.

The man who began the 10-year secessionist war on Bougainville, Francis Ona, is dead.

Mr Ona died in his village near the abandoned Bougainville Copper mine after a short illness.

A former surveyor with Bougainville Mining Limited, Mr Ona sparked the Bougainville secessionist war in November 1988.

He began sabotage attacks on the mine at Panguna in support of demands for the equivalent, at the time, of \$14 billion in compensation for environmental damage.

Mr Ona became supreme commander of the Bougainville Revolutionary Army and steadfastly refused to negotiate with the Papua New Guinea authorities, even boycotting the talks in New Zealand in 1997 that eventually brought peace.

He rejected the autonomy deal that has seen the emergence of an elected, autonomous Bougainville Government. The Parliamentary Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Bruce Billson, says the Government is unlikely to send a representative to Mr Ona's funeral.

"Given the history there and that Mr Ona's status is as a self-declared leader of Me'ekamui, that's not a recognised jurisdiction, and the Government's work is supporting Joseph Kabui and the newly-elected autonomous Bougainville Government," he said.

But Mr Billson says the state funeral being held for Mr Ona provides an opportunity for the people of Bougainville to consolidate the peace process.

"This is an opportunity for reconciliation, to reach out for supporters of Mr Ona and to look forward to a more positive cooperative future in the management of Bougainville's affairs," he said.

PLEASE

Pray for the ongoing process of reconciliation, and for long term peace.

Pray for Godly wisdom, and a genuine desire to serve others, in those elected to the new government.

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Tehillah: (Hebrew)
The outward, visible expression
of praise and worship.