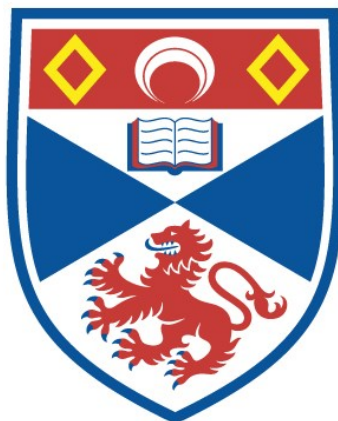


# **Translating identities: ‘being a missionary’ in Papua New Guinea**

E. Mei-Li Roberts

A thesis submitted for the degree of PhD  
at the  
University of St Andrews



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*Translating Identities: 'Being a  
missionary' in Papua New Guinea*



**Submitted by: E. Mei-Li Roberts**

**For the degree of: PhD (Social  
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## *Abstract*

Many studies of missionaries have taken an historical perspective, looking particularly at missionaries' role in colonialism. However, missionaries are still very much part of contemporary Papua New Guinea (PNG), with a significant number of expatriate missionary groups working in PNG. This thesis is a study of a present day mission in PNG, SIL International, formerly known as the Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL). It examines the way in which the mission community is constructed and the boundaries and divisions within the community itself. It attempts to challenge some of the stereotypes of missionaries and show that there are different views of what it is to 'be a missionary' even within the missionary community itself. I focus particularly on what it means to 'be a missionary' and the ambiguities and ambivalences between the ideals and realities of mission work.

The focus of the study was on SIL members themselves and their identities as missionaries rather than the effect of their missionising on others. This is examined through a number of different themes. Debates about the fence surrounding the mission station highlighted the way in which it created both a physical and a symbolic boundary between those living inside the fence and the people living outside of it. Related to this were debates regarding the mission station, Ukarumpa and how SIL members should 'communicate the gospel'. SIL's main goal is Bible translation and the thesis explores the challenges and problems of translation, both the practical aspects of Bible translation and translating between cultures. Literacy work is also an important part of SIL's goal and is shown to be especially significant in maintaining a good relationship with the PNG

government. Finally, notions of 'home' and 'belonging', particularly in relation to the children of missionaries, and the notion of 'citizens of heaven' is shown to help shape SIL members' identities as 'missionaries'.

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## *Introduction*

The stereotype of the nineteenth century missionary is still a prevalent image of missionaries and, indeed there are some who believe that missionaries no longer exist in 'a multicultural, post-Christian (even postmodern) world' (Swanson 1995: 6). Accordingly, many studies of missionary activity have taken a historical perspective, focusing primarily on the early period of missionary contact and on conversion, looking particularly at missionaries' contribution to the colonial encounter. In fact, some have argued that in the final analysis Pacific Christianity must 'be understood in terms of colonization' (Beckett 1978: 209; cf. Huber 1988). However, as this study will show, processes of missionization are not only confined to the colonial past, but are ongoing practices continuing today and are a significant part of post-colonial Melanesia.

Historian James Reed [1983] has observed that "the Protestant missionary movement began to wane in the 1920s and, despite periodic atavism and latter-day nostalgia, the decline continues to this day." But William Hutchison [1987] terms this "a bit of conventional wisdom that was both accurate and wildly incorrect." On the one hand, if defined as a significant movement of the Protestant establishment within the mainstream of American culture, Hutchinson points out that foreign missions had indeed diminished almost to extinction by the mid-twentieth century. But on the other hand, marginalized fundamentalists and independent evangelical "faith missions" had picked up (and even expanded) the foreign missions enterprise where the liberalized mainline denominations had left off.

(Swanson 1995: 6)

In this study, I attempt to challenge some of the stereotypes of missionaries by looking at a contemporary mission setting in Papua New Guinea. Missionary activity is often viewed as monolithic and

unified, however, like other colonial projects it 'is not a unitary project but a fractured one, riddled with contradictions and exhausted as much by its own internal debates as by the resistance of the colonized' (Thomas 1994: 51). As Langmore shows in *Missionary Lives: Papua, 1874-1914*, there is variety and diversity both between different missions and among the individuals that comprise those missions.

### **Literature Review**

There are several different approaches to the study of missionaries ranging from studying the missionaries themselves to the indigenous response to their presence. In *Mission, Church, and Sect in Oceania* (Boutilier, Hughes, and Tiffany 1978), a pioneering work examining the role and effects of missionaries in Oceania, some of the main issues regarding mission activity are raised. These are: the relationship between missionaries and anthropologists; missionization from an historical perspective; local-level missionary adaptation; and the indigenous response to missionization. Here, I intend to examine these various approaches through a review of the literature concerned.

The relationship between missionaries and anthropologists has often been one of deep ambivalence and contradictions.

Anthropologists and missionaries have, at least in stereotype, been at odds with one another for many decades. The caricatured missionary is a strait-laced, repressed, and narrow-minded Bible thumper trying to get the native women to cover their bosoms decently; the anthropologist is a bearded degenerate given to taking his clothes off and sampling wild rites.

(Keesing and Strathern 1998: 377)

In practice, moreover, anthropologists and missionaries not only stereotyped each other but sometimes cross-dressed and entered into

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myriad mutable varieties of personal and professional relationships, in which certain broad patterns can be traced.

(Douglas 2001: 40)

Although early anthropologists relied heavily on missionary publications and there have been many missionary ethnographers, the general attitude of anthropologists toward missionaries has been negative.

(Stipe 1980: 168)

Criticism of missionaries, present and past, is as pervasive in academic discourse as it is in the wider literary circles addressed by Hitchen's Mother Teresa book. Indeed, any scholar who embarks on missionary studies aiming to contribute to the literature on colonial/postcolonial society (as opposed, say, to missiology or mission history) is likely to encounter dismissive critique and negative stereotypes of missionaries from the start.

(Huber and Luktehaus 1999: 5)

Early ethnologists depended on missionaries for information about indigenous people and a few missionaries were noted ethnologists themselves, such as Maurice Leenhardt (Clifford 1982, Douglas 2001, Rosenstiel 1959). 'Indeed, Pacific ethnography was largely a missionary preserve until the emergence of a fieldwork-based secular anthropology at the end of the nineteenth century' (Douglas 2001: 40). Early missionaries' encounter with anthropology helped them to change some of their cultural assumptions and attitudes towards indigenous people (cf. Langmore 1989). However, this relationship became strained as anthropology negotiated its professional identity in part against missionaries, who were considered to be biased and amateur observers and worst of all, irresponsible meddlers in native cultures. 'They personify what anthropologists find most distasteful-ethnocentrism-for they proclaim their own way of thinking and living as the only true one' (Van der Geest 1990: 588).

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Many commentators have argued that it is this close historical connection between the missionary enterprise and ethnology itself that has resulted in some of the attitudes that anthropologists have held. As Kenelm Burridge noted, 'In the suggestion that there were oedipal overtones to attitudes toward missionaries is the implication that the relations between missionaries and anthropologists have in them something profound and elusive' (1978: 7).

Mary Taylor Huber argues that it is the competition vis-à-vis "the people" that is the significant factor in the hostility that anthropologists show towards missionaries in the field (1988: 3). 'Perhaps what has most distinguished missionaries from other outsiders in the anthropological bestiary, however, is missionaries' claim of moral right to question the morality of another people's way of life-to minister to another people's "soul"' (Ibid: 4). Daniel Hughes suggests that it is the anthropologist's concepts of cultural relativism and functionalism that are at the heart of the controversy between missionaries and anthropologists. Anthropologists viewed missionaries at best as 'agents of change' but more generally as 'destroyers of cultures' (Hughes 1978a). Similarly Priest argues that, 'a key source of anthropological opposition to missionaries: anthropologists' approach to morality. Earlier in this paper we noted [...] that anthropologists constitute a community of scholars committed to cultural relativism and [the] claim that relativism is definitive of anthropology. The anthropological doctrine of cultural relativism as applied to moral values and norms is double pronged. [...] To level a moral critique against any aspect of another culture is to be guilty of the sin of ethnocentrism' (Priest 1987: 23).

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Stipe suggests that 'two common presuppositions contribute to the negative attitude of missionaries to anthropologists: that primitive cultures are characterized by an organic unity and that religious beliefs are essentially meaningless' (1980: 166). He argues that in some instances 'the antipathy of anthropologists toward missionaries lies in the fact that missionaries take seriously and teach other people religious beliefs which the anthropologists have personally rejected' (Ibid: 168).

Nevertheless, as Sjaak Van der Geest shows in *Anthropologists and Missionaries: brothers under the skin* there are a great number of similarities as well as differences between anthropologists and missionaries. Firstly, they are both guests in a foreign culture where they often meet. Both anthropologists and missionaries share an ethnographic interest, for instance, a number of missionaries became professional anthropologists, such as Codrington and Leenhardt in the Pacific, and Junod, Westermann and Edwin W. Smith in Africa (Van der Geest 1990: 590). However, anthropologists generally mistrust missionaries' ethnographies, claiming that they present biased pictures of indigenous cultures due to their religious beliefs. Missionaries also frequently conduct ethnographic research in order to carry out more effective mission practice. Leenhardt was an exception in his ability to avoid the pitfalls and exploit the advantages of his double role (cf. Clifford 1982). Anthropologists have often criticised missionaries' involvement in the colonial enterprise, however, they have now begun to recognise their own role in colonialism. Often the local populations saw missionaries and anthropologists as more or less equivalent, both undesirable aliens. 'One of the reasons why anthropologists are a curse for the Sioux,

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according to Deloria, [cf. Deloria 1970] is that they rob the Indians of their identity by imposing upon them an exotic-cultural identity from an imagined past' (Van der Geest 1990: 590).

Van der Geest compares the anthropologist to a kind of missionary. 'If, however, anthropologists take ethnocentrism and the imposition of alien premises as characteristics of the missionary, they also define themselves as missionaries' (Ibid: 591). This is because, he argues, practising anthropology involves translating and reinterpreting. Both missionary and anthropologist appropriate a culture by understanding it in terms of their own beliefs. However, both anthropologists and missionaries are conscious of their ethnocentric points of departure and of their bondage to prevailing political and economic powers, and try to free themselves from these, although not always successfully (Ibid: 593). A final hidden similarity that Van der Geest outlines, is that anthropologists also bring about cultural change. For example, Deloria's critique referred to above, shows that if change is accepted as 'normal' then prevention of change is another type of cultural 'change'. A more simple form of change, often unintended, is the mere presence of the anthropologist or missionary. 'The culture which missionaries and anthropologists carry with them is "contagious"' (Ibid: 594). Although Van der Geest discusses 'anthropologists' and 'missionaries' in general terms, he acknowledges that the reality is more complex, and many individual missionaries may answer more to the stereotype of the anthropologist and vice-versa. In a critique of Van der Geest, Robert Rapoport points out that differences in the orientation of specific missionaries are a matter not simply of personal style, but also of formal creed and organisational structure.

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'Furthermore, the relationship between anthropologists and missionaries depends not only on occupational lineage, but also on the relations between public and private spheres of each in relation to their formal professional roles' (1991: 741).

Missionaries can also be seen to be similar to anthropologists, and in some areas have the potential to become better anthropologists, according to Van der Geest. Firstly, he points out that many missionaries spend a longer period of time in the field than anthropologists, leading to better language learning and a greater integration into the local community. He compares missionaries to immigrants who are building up a new existence abroad and who need to establish lasting relationships with the environment, whilst anthropologists are visitors. Nevertheless, he acknowledges that this is rather a rosy picture, and that not all missionaries speak the local language fluently or identify themselves with their environment. However, he does believe that their length of time in the field makes their perspective on the society more 'realistic' (1990: 596). He agrees with Hiebert (1978: 169) who compares anthropologists and missionaries:

Despite their [the anthropologists'] intimate association with people during their fieldwork, they remained ultimately segregated from them. Anthropologists returned to the safety of their academic environments where they could talk about 'their people'. In the long run they shared even less identification with the 'natives' than the missionaries.

In the study of religion, Van der Geest believes missionaries have an epistemological lead over the anthropologist in that they are more able to take the religious part of religion seriously. 'The missionaries' greater openness to transcendental experiences can make them receptive to local religious opinions. Even if they are strongly



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opposed to certain religious ideas or practices, as many missionaries indeed are, that attitude shows more empathy for the religious experience than the glib reactions of anthropologists who find it 'very interesting' but are not touched by it' (1990: 596). Again, Rapoport disagrees with this argument that anthropologists might do better work, particularly in the study of religion, if they were religious believers themselves. Rapoport points out that religious belief may have the effect of closing the mind to a respectful consideration of other religions (1991: 742). Also, it is important to distinguish between the characteristics of the missionary role and the anthropological role as professions. A missionary's beliefs in both the public and private spheres of their life must be the same, however an anthropologist may practise their profession while holding a wide range of private convictions. He argues that the key anthropological orientation is not doubting *per se* but the combination of curiosity, astonishment, sympathy and enthusiasm (Ibid: 742). In conclusion, Van der Geest argues that it is these hidden similarities that cause the hostility and ambivalence between missionaries and anthropologists. 'Anthropologists and missionaries thus both threaten and complement one another's thinking' (1990: 597). Rapoport agrees that 'the relationship between the curious missionary and the apostolic anthropologist is more likely to be fruitful if there is a recognition of the diversities and commonalities both within and between their professions' (1991: 743).

Many studies of missionary activity have looked at it from an historical perspective, particularly at missionaries' role in colonialism. A historical study of missionary activity also helps to give a better understanding of Christianity in contemporary

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societies. Studies of this kind help to contribute to an analysis of how the conversion process came about. *Missionary Lives: Papua, 1874-1914* attempts to challenge popular stereotypes of the nineteenth century missionary through presenting the lives of the missionary men and women who worked in Papua from 1874 until World War I. Langmore compares and contrasts the four missionary societies in Papua at the time, the London Missionary Society (LMS), The Australasian Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society (AWMMS) the Sacred Heart Mission (SHM), and the Anglican Mission. Within this group biography, she covers various issues such as the background and motivations of the missionaries, their perceptions of the indigenous peoples and what they were trying to achieve, and their relationships between each other and other colonial agents. Although much of what Langmore discusses is looking specifically at these four missions in a particular era, many of the issues she raises can also be applied to studies of contemporary missions.

Firstly, Langmore shows how although the stated aim of all the missions was evangelism, in fact their decision to become a missionary was prompted by a complex of motives. For some it was a means to a higher social status, for others the romance and heroism of missionary life was the attraction. Still others sought an escape from modern industrial society, viewing Papua and the Papuan way of life as somehow purer and simpler than the complexities of industrialism. Many of the missionaries received very little specific training for the field, which to some degree reflected current thinking on the Papuans, who were viewed as more “savage” than African “barbarians”. Missionaries generally arrived with preconceived ideas of what the Papuans and Papuan culture was like, ideas that often

changed with prolonged contact with the Papuan people, and with the influence of anthropological thinking. Both the Protestants and the Sacred Heart Mission believed their objectives were to “civilise” as well as “convert”, whilst the Anglican Mission repudiated the link between Christianity and civilisation and tried to divorce Christianity from its Western context.

Many mission accounts tend to omit the presence of women. Indeed, Bowie comments that ‘In being seen as adjuncts to men, rather than as historical protagonists in their own right, women have been systematically written out of historical and anthropological records’ (1993: 1). However, Langmore points out that of the 327 missionaries who served in Papua until 1914, 115 were women. Gender was important both in the way work was organised and also in the messages that the missionaries communicated (Huber & Luktehaus 1999: 12). For instance, Jolly and McIntyre argue that the study of Christian missionaries is important in looking at domestic transformations in the Pacific (Jolly and McIntyre 1989: 4). Certain aspects of women missionaries’ experience were considerably different to that of their male colleagues, not least because it was so often officially unrecognised and unrecorded (Ibid: 13). Women in all the missions except the Anglican Mission, had a subservient status to the men and were seen as auxiliaries to the men rather than having authority of their own. Huber and Lukehaus also point out that, ‘Although women’s missionary experience has differed from men’s, it cannot be assumed that women’s missionary experience everywhere has been the same. It is always important in mission studies to recognize how varied missionary organizations have been [Beidelman 1974; see also Huber 1996]. Gender, especially, has been

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construed differently according to missionaries' nationality, denomination, and class affiliations' (Huber and Luktehaus 1999: 2). Women's missionary experience has also changed over time, for instance within a number of contemporary missions, women can apply and be accepted as members on an equal level to men.

Although missionaries are often seen as being part of a sinister trio of capitalist imperialism with traders and government agents, Langmore shows how missionaries often worked in opposition to both traders and government agents in order to protect Papuan rights. Missionaries also often competed among themselves, especially between the Sacred Heart Mission and the Protestants. In this study, Langmore helps to give us a better understanding of missionaries' role in colonial society and therefore how their presence has affected Papuan life today. This study is limited in that it focuses only on the missionaries and their point of view and does not look at the indigenous people's perceptions of the missionaries and their work. However, in this restriction Langmore states that she does not intend to perpetuate the ethnocentric heresy that Europeans were the actors in the contact situation and Papuans merely the passive reactors (1989: xviii). Rather this is meant as a complementary work to studies looking at Papuan responses to the intrusion of missionaries and other foreigners.

Langmore's study looks at several different missions within a specific time period. In contrast, *The Bishop's Progress* explores the changing nature of the Society of the Divine Word (SVD) in the Sepik region of Papua New Guinea as the missionaries attempted to reconcile the ambiguities between effective practice and authentic ideals (Huber 1988). Huber discusses both the ironic way in which

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missionaries are interpreted by anthropologists and also the ironic way in which missionaries represent themselves. It is through the imagery of three bishops - Eberhard Limbrock, Joseph Loerks and Leo Arkfeld - that the missionaries were able to make sense of their work. 'By representing their bishops through skills uniquely valuable in the New Guinea situation, the missionaries display a gap that has been central to their experience, but bring effective practice and authentic ideals together again' (Huber 1988: 20). This gap between effective practice and authentic ideals Huber defines as a "frontier" (Ibid: 21). Each bishop's image represents new frontiers that the missionaries encountered.

Eberhard Limbrock represented the material base on which the mission was founded. Material concerns affected the mission from its very beginning. Due to the nature of the Sepik region and its lack of active administrative and commercial support, the mission, under the leadership of Limbrock became the most active economic agent in the region. This not only caused conflict with other colonists, who censored this blurring of religious and economic domains, but also caused internal contradictions within the mission itself. "Material" work was expected to remain subordinate to "spiritual" work such as prayer and preaching, however, conditions in the Sepik began to deconstruct this ideal hierarchy between "material" and "spiritual" work. It was only after the mission was able to survive the isolation of World War I through Limbrock's foresight that he was viewed as a hero. 'For this mission, the heroic period is not represented as a time of spiritual prowess unencumbered by material concerns, but as a time of unprecedented material upbuilding instead' (Ibid: 68). Through the image of their bishop, Eberhard Limbrock, the mission

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was able to reconcile the ideal of “spiritual” versus “material” work, and physical work became an honour rather than a subordinate task.

It was not only the divisions of spiritual and material labour that were vulnerable to frontier conditions, but also hierarchical divisions. The Catholic mission’s intent was to make and implement central policy, creating a centred community in the Sepik, and therefore achieving the diocesan structure of a mature Catholic church. The uniquely decentred social and cultural world of the people the mission was working amongst made this ideal impossible. As a result each mission station was distinct, with the role of the individual priest gaining precedence. This contradiction between ideal and practice was reconciled through the image of Joseph Loerks, a former boat captain. He was seen not only as a leader but also as the “unifying principle” for the entire Catholic community in the region. Community had changed to a “rule of order” to which individuals could separately adhere, and the centre of community was less a place for companionship and ceremony than a state of mind (Huber 1988: 104). The Sepik after World War II was very different to the region before the war and these changes brought into question conventional ideals about the practice of mission itself. The new frontier became the “cultural gap” that seemed to limit the region’s people from participating fully in the church and the modern world. As a result, new ideas for ministry were introduced and spiritual work diversified to include both social and technical services.

Again this was represented in the image of the bishop, Leo Arkfeld, an airplane pilot. Aviation imagery is important here as a means of representing missionization. ‘Frontier aviation (that is

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missionization) does not exactly lend itself to official rules and regulations, but requires ingenuity, flexibility, and God's blessings for success' (Ibid: 140). The imagery of the flying bishop challenges conventional notions of ministry, arguing that development ministries are consistent with the mission's broader ecclesiastical goals. The new frontier is now "localisation", which can be seen in the image of the flying bishop changing to that of a "feathered bishop", wearing a mitre of Sepik craftsmanship on his head, and sometimes robes with a Maprik design on the back. Localisation brings its own problems as well as creating an ambiguous position for the missionaries themselves. As a result of the establishment of local priests, the missionaries are displaced by the discourse about an authentically localised Catholic Church.

Similarly to Langmore, Huber looks mainly at the missionaries themselves, and how their experiences changed the mission project itself, rather than their effect on the Sepik region and its people. One criticism of Huber's study is that she bases her case on a small number of sources and mainly published sources at that (Ranger 1987:183). Although she sets out to reveal a succession of self-images, these are more public images than self-images, produced by formal chroniclers of the mission. However, private experience is not always the same as public imagery. Therefore, this imagery of the bishops may mask lines of division within the community that also helped to shape the missionary experience. Irony is not only to be found in the missionary experience, but also the whole dialectic between indigenous and missionary Christianity.

Although Langmore and Huber concentrate mainly on the missionaries and their perspective, the purpose of the missionaries

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was to try and plant and build local churches. Anthropologists in the Pacific often conducted 'salvage ethnography', in an attempt to understand indigenous cultural and social systems before they were swept away by the forces of modernisation (Barker 1990a: 7). In more recent years, however, anthropologists have begun to study colonial and post-colonial changes in Oceanic societies, including missionization. This local adaptation of mission Christianity has taken many different forms. As Daniel Hughes states, 'mission activity is a dynamic process that changes dramatically in response to the goals of the islanders and those of the missionaries' (1978: 201). Although missionaries are often stereotyped as being inflexible, it can be shown through these local-level adaptations, that the missionary movement as a whole cannot be described as inflexible. Rather it is a dialectical process of interaction between cultural groups with widely divergent goals and with frequently differing interpretations of their interaction (Ibid: 203). For instance, Peel comments on the response to CMS missionaries amongst the Yoruba:

The mismatch between Yoruba expectations and CMS intentions does much to explain the variety of reported Yoruba responses to missionary preaching. Coming from outside with the self-image that they were *freely* offering something of transcending value which the Yoruba could not see that they needed, the missionaries felt justified in intruding on situations and asserting their views in ways that often provoked highly negative reactions. (2003: 158)

Jeremy Beckett shows how the transition of the Torres Strait Islanders from mission to church to sect is best understood in terms of changing conditions and changing roles (Beckett 1978). He makes an important distinction between mission, church and sect. For Beckett, a church is a religious institution that reflects and transmits



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the values current in its own society. In contrast, a sect is a religious institution that stands apart from its own society and either rejects or attempts to change the current values of that society. A mission is the sending forth of spiritual agencies from a church or a sect to spread the gospel. It assumes a discontinuity and an inequality between the main body of believers and those to missionized.

Another important concept in a study of local adaptations, is that of partial equivalences. These allow both sides to share a minimum interpretation of events while adding their own interpretation to the shared meaning. This can be seen in a study of the rise of the Pentecostal Christian Fellowship church in the West Solomons. Here, Frances Harwood shows how whilst Goldie and his fellow missionaries interpreted their interactions with the Solomon Islanders as the successful conversion of the people to a religion, the people themselves interpreted the same events to mean that they were actively selecting and elevating Goldie to the position of their leader and protector (Ibid: 204). Exposure to other Western contacts and the retirement of Goldie himself shattered this set of partial equivalences and led to the rise of the Pentecostal Christian Fellowship church. Harwood suggests that this does not show a rejection of Western presence but rather the latest in a series of accommodations of partial equivalences. As shown in Huber's study, mission practice has also changed due to conditions in the Pacific. In *Mission, Church, and Sect in Oceania* both Francis Hezel and Gerald Arbuckle trace the effect of Vatican II on Catholic missionary attitudes and practice.

Like local adaptations, the indigenous response to the missionary enterprise has not always been uniform. In order to become an

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authentic part of the religious experience of Oceanic peoples, Christianity needs to enter into local world-views, aspirations, and concerns of Pacific islanders. Indeed, some argue that it is still too early to speak of “Pacific Christianity” as an aspect of indigenous culture due to the fact that Pacific cultures still remain oriented to indigenous traditions and ideologies (Barker 1990a: 1-2). However, as Barker states, ‘we need to give our informants’ involvement with Christianity the serious attention, that, from the indigenous point of view, it seems to deserve. Otherwise we will continue to produce ethnocentric understandings of indigenous Christianity, even if fashionably critical of “missionization”’ (Barker 1990b: 194).

Barker outlines three main perspectives on missionization and Christianity in Oceania. The first is the missionary encounter, looking at missionization in terms of missionary aims and values. Much of this literature is written by missionaries themselves. The second perspective is that of post-colonial or nationalist histories, primarily written by secular professionals and indigenous nationalists. Its evaluation of Third World Christianity has been ambivalent, in some cases arguing that missions must be understood in terms of colonisation whilst others have shown the ways in which missions have both aided and impeded colonial domination (Beckett 1978: 209, cf. Huber 1988). However, again these studies are based upon European observations and Eurocentric concerns. The final perspective is the anthropological perspective. Many anthropologists have viewed Christianity primarily as a missionary imposition. Some have assumed that conversion would eventually lead to the collapse of native cultures whilst others have viewed Christianity as only part of the superstructure of native life, with traditional religions lying

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under the surface of village Christianity. Barker critiques this tendency to focus on the Western/indigenous encounter rather than people's experiences and understandings of Christianity. He points out that all three of these perspectives return to the missionary. The first church perspective presents Pacific Christianity as a product of mission Christianity or a general Christian systemic; in the second nationalist perspective, Pacific Christianity is seen as one event in the Western conquest of the region; and in the third anthropological perspective, Christianity seems to be a superficial form lying above continuing cultural structures (Barker 1990a: 9).

Many scholars, including anthropologists have looked at the early period of contact and conversion. *Christianity in Oceania* takes Christianity in the region as a given, and looks at the different distinctly Oceanic Christianities that are present in contemporary Pacific societies. A variety of approaches and perspectives are used by the authors in this volume, however, there are two broad themes explored, the local face of Christianity as part of the popular religions of island communities; and the global face of Christianity as part of the larger regional and international social and political systems.

One of the key issues in the study of Christianity has been conversion. However, this is a difficult concept to study. 'Not always an exclusivistic change of religious affiliation requiring the repudiation of previously held beliefs [Nock 1933], conversion assumes a variety of forms because it is influenced by a larger interplay of identity, politics, and morality' (Hefner 1993: 4). For instance, Horton argues that 'acceptance of Islam and Christianity is due as much to the development of the traditional cosmology in

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response to other features of the modern situation as it is to the activities of missionaries' (Horton 1971: 103). Peel comments,

The concept of "conversion" is not without its difficulties: it is hard to use it comparatively without extending the theological or phenomenological assumptions of a Euro-Christian and Protestant background to historical and cultural settings where they do not apply. Moreover, the interiority of the experience of conversion, psychologically conceived, makes it of problematic value when our subject matter is a large-scale process of religious change where we have little or no evidence about the inner states of the individuals concerned. Here the only *workable* definition of conversion is the process by which people come to regard themselves, and be regarded by others, as Christians.

(2003: 216)

As is shown in *Christianity in Oceania*, local popular religions consist of both indigenous and Christian ideas and forms. This can be seen among the Kove of West New Britain (A. Chowning), the Mengen of East New Britain (G. Trompf) and the Misima (M. Macintyre) all of whom combine elements of "cargo" thinking with Christian millennialism. However, Christianity is also bound up in regional and global economic, political, and social organisations, and proclaims itself a universal religion, therefore, it is also important to look at the larger contexts that guide and constrain islanders (Barker 1990a: 15). For example, among the Kragur villagers on Kairiru island in Papua New Guinea (M.F. Smith), Catholic missionaries played a large part in Kragur villagers' early encounters with the outside world, and the villagers' involvement in church activities still shapes their notions of European values and work patterns (Ibid: 16).

In order not to reduce indigenous Christianity to the status of a foreign import or an indigenous innovation, Barker suggests that we imagine indigenous Christianity as suspended between local,

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regional, and global ideal-type poles, each corresponding to a specific mode of production, mode of cultural process, and type of religious organisation (Ibid: 17). This model allows for the study of different influences in a religious field while leaving the question of their relative strength open. It also allows for the possibility of religious pluralism and it suggests that people may engage in religious activities and ideologies in several contexts and at different levels. 'While Pacific Christianity in its local manifestations continues to reflect and nurture the diverse cultural traditions of small-scale communities, as a global religion it has also brought the world to Pacific islanders and encouraged their entry onto the world stage' (Ibid: 21). This particular volume does not attempt a new theory of conversion or religious innovation. What it does do, is to show that Christianity has become part of the indigenous reality of the Pacific islanders. Therefore, it is important to view Pacific islanders as the makers of their own religions and capable of living simultaneously in several kinds of social contexts.

Until recently most Pacific ethnographers excluded missionaries and Christian ideas from their accounts as irrelevant to the "ethnographic present" and, more militantly, a blight on the current cultural landscape. That prejudice was unfortunate for not only did it block recognition of just how exotic and worthy of study are missionaries and the religious ideas they purvey, but it also fostered neglect of how Christian ideas came to be apprehended by local cultural actors.  
(Tuzin 1992:139).

Anthropologists have been slow to study missionaries and their effects on indigenous cultures. As shown above, this is due in part to the ambivalent relationship between missionaries and anthropologists. However, a variety of approaches towards the study

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of missionaries has developed. Many studies have taken an historical perspective, looking at the effects of missionaries during and since colonial times, and also the changing nature of mission practice itself. Nevertheless, as Barker points out, from a historical perspective, Christianity is viewed as primarily a Western import. Yet as noted by Sharon Tiffany, "Pacific islanders have indeed made Christianity their own in a complex variety of ways" (1978a: 305). Therefore, as Barker argues, the task of the ethnographer is 'to seek Oceanic peoples where they actually are rather than where we imagine they were before or where they should be' (1990b: 263).

The section above has focused on the study of missions in Oceania, particularly Melanesia. SIL<sup>1</sup> also works in other countries worldwide, but although there are similarities to mission work in a broad context, both research on missionaries and their individual experiences differs according to regional areas. Beidelman comments that,

Research on missions and Christianity in Africa appears to be more detailed and sophisticated than that in other parts of the missionized world. In confining myself to Africa, I have not distorted our understanding of the state of mission studies, unless it be in conveying a more optimistic picture than is actually the case. There is, however, one aspect by which missions in sub-Saharan Africa (excluding Ethiopia) differed radically from those in the Near East and Orient; they were better able to dominate a politically subject people.

(1982:6-7)

The Comaroffs' (1991) study of the British Nonconformist mission to the Southern Tswana highlight the complex historical dynamics involved in such a study. Many of the early missionaries in Papua

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<sup>1</sup> The Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL), now known as SIL International.

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New Guinea were Polynesians and even Melanesians from other Christianized areas (Whitehouse 2000: 34). Indeed McIntyre comments, 'On Tubetube, and throughout the Louisiades, it is the Polynesian teachers who are remembered as the agents of change' (1989:162). Indigenous peoples' responses to Christianity and missionization are also particular to regions, for instance, the rise of 'cargo cults' and millenarian movements has commonly been attributed to Pacific peoples, particularly Melanesia (Burridge 1969; Kaplan 1995; Lawrence 1979; Whitehouse 1998, 2000; Worsely 1968).

While historical studies of missionization contribute to an understanding of the effects missions have had on indigenous societies, processes of missionization are not something that happened only in the colonial past, but are ongoing practices that are continuing today. Including sisters, brothers, medical and lay missionaries as well as ordained ministers and priests, but not the many lay volunteers who do stints of mission work from a few weeks to a year or more, Burridge estimates a figure of about 210,000 missionaries, give or take a few hundred (1991: 10). As *Christianity in Oceania* shows, Christianity is an established and developing Pacific island religion in its own right. Few studies, however, have made ethnographic appraisals of Christianity as it is currently experienced and practised in Pacific societies (Barker 1990a: 1). Douglas comments, 'white missionaries these days are less threatening to secular romantics because by and large they are safely historical, with the notable exception of the mainly American fundamentalists whose scattered activities in Melanesian villages and towns continue to outrage anthropologists and mainstream Christians alike' (2001: 53).

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There are a number of different missions and churches in Papua New Guinea aside from SIL. There have been a few studies of these missions and churches (Huber 1988; Jones 2004), particularly of these different missions' relationship with Papua New Guineans and Papua New Guineans' response to them (Barker 1990; Dundon 2002; Smith 2002). Although not necessarily a comprehensive list, the following shows the large number of missions and churches that are present in Papua New Guinea which include: the Anglican Church of PNG; Bible Society Work in PNG; the Catholic Church of PNG and the Solomon Islands; Christian Brethren Churches of PNG; Church of God in PNG; Evangelical Lutheran Church of PNG; Hetune - Community of the Visitation, Popondota; the Missionary Aviation Fellowship (MAF) Service in PNG; Nazarene World Missions including the Nazarene Hospital at Kudjip in the Highlands of PNG; New Tribes Mission (NTM) Aviation in PNG; The United Pentecostal Assemblies of Papua New Guinea; The Diocese of Port Moresby Anglican Domain; Christian Brethren Churches of Papua New Guinea; Religious Television Association of Papua New Guinea; Evangelical Lutheran Church of Papua New Guinea; Bible Society Work in Papua New Guinea; Papua New Guinea Church Partnership; Pioneer Bible Translators (PBT) PNG; the Society of St Francis; and the Society of the Divine Word.

The missions closest to SIL's mission station, Ukarumpa are New Tribes Mission in Goroka and the Missionary Aviation Fellowship in Mt Hagen. SIL also work closely with Pioneer Bible Translators (PBT), which is based in the town of Madang. Although SIL members attend local churches in the Aiyura Valley, SIL is the main missionary organisation in the Valley.



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As one of the largest foreign Christian organisations in Papua New Guinea, SIL is a significant part of contemporary life in Papua New Guinea. As well as having SIL personnel working within their local villages, many indigenous people work closely with SIL on the main mission station, Ukarumpa, and as language helpers and Bible translators themselves. Forman points out that for many years only a small number of long-established Christian denominations made up the Christianity of Oceania, however now new missions are coming in and formerly marginal groups are challenging the hold of the long-established churches. He notes, 'There has been almost no critical analysis of the new wave, though its power is being felt throughout the Pacific' (1990: 29).

To conclude, mission studies are important as they show how both missionaries' and indigenous people's identities are changed and shaped through their encounter with the unfamiliar. Jeudy-Ballini comments, 'Relations between native and white people in Melanesia have often been studied with regard to the reinterpretations, manipulations and appropriations of knowledge, techniques, objects or religious beliefs by the Melanesians. The many studies dealing with the so-called "cargo" or "messianic cults" illustrate this tendency or bias. The appropriation of local representations by foreigners, however, is rarely dealt with' (1998: 207). In this study I am intending to focus mainly on the missionaries, including Papua New Guinean missionaries. In this, like Langmore, I do not intend to perpetuate the ethnocentric heresy that Europeans are the actors in the contact situation and Papuans merely the passive reactors. Rather, I believe that Ukarumpa and SIL are an integral part of Melanesian life, and are therefore important in

a study of Pacific Christianity as it is experienced in Papua New Guinea.

### **Themes**

In this study, I examine the way in which the mission community is constructed and the boundaries and divisions within the community itself. In an international and interdenominational mission such as SIL, individuals not only deal with the complexities of living in a country and culture unlike their own but also have to negotiate culture differences with their fellow missionaries. As Huber commented, the very nature of mission communities means that mission studies also 'involve the question of how people encounter the exotic, how they tolerate ambiguity in the different regions of their lives, and how they manage the contradictions that arise from living and working in an unfamiliar world' (Huber 1988: 213). Similarly, indigenous people's perceptions of SIL members will differ according to individual missionaries and their divergent backgrounds and personalities.

While missionaries are still a noteworthy part of life in Melanesia the nature of missions itself has changed. 'In other words, the older, traditional nineteenth-century missionary typically had a divine call; but the new liberal breed was more influenced by a social gospel and motivated by inner-worldly humanitarian concern' (Swanson 1995: 67). The concept of 'mission' and what constitutes a 'missionary' is itself a debatable topic and this is seen in discussions regarding the nature of SIL both by SIL members and outsiders. SIL's professed aim is to study, develop and document the world's lesser-known languages and it does this through literacy and translation, mainly into the Bible. SIL often contrasts itself to other, more traditional

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missions, whose main purpose is church planting and evangelism, although there are a number of other missions in Papua New Guinea also involved in Bible translation such as the New Tribes Mission and Pioneer Bible Translators. Also, within SIL itself there are many different roles aside from the primary ones of Bible translation and literacy. For example, there are a large number of support personnel who work as pilots, teachers, nurses, doctors, computer analysts, accountants, administrators etc.

In *The Bishops' Progress* Huber shows how "material" work was originally perceived as subordinate to "spiritual" work, but due to the nature of the Sepik region and through the imagery of their bishop, Eberhard Limbrock, the mission was able to reconcile the ideal of "spiritual" versus "material" work, and physical work became an honour rather than a subordinate task. In a similar manner, I examine the perceived status assigned to the different roles within SIL and what effect these have on individuals' perceptions of what constitutes 'mission' work. These roles will have an effect on individual missionaries, on both their impact on indigenous people, and indigenous people's effect on the missionaries themselves. For instance, a considerable number of SIL personnel spend only short amounts of time in Ukarumpa and for the most part live in local villages or towns. I explore the means by which they are included and/or excluded from the mission community and how much and in what ways they are part of the local communities in which they live. I also investigate the differences between people who work with SIL on a long term basis as opposed to those who are only present for one or two years.

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Identity is a key question in a study of a group of people who are living in a different culture to their own. Although these missionaries are not native Papua New Guineans, after a long period of living abroad they may not identify with or recognise the cultures from which they originated. I intend to investigate where these people feel they belong and following that, to what extent do they identify themselves with Papua New Guinean cultures. Apart from the large number of language helpers who work with SIL teams, there are a number of Papua New Guineans who work as Bible translators and literacy workers themselves. In 1977 the Bible Translation Association (BTA) was established, which involves local Papua New Guineans translating the Bible in their own languages. I intend to examine how these local missionaries view mission work and their own roles in association with SIL and their perceptions of SIL members. There are also a substantial number of local people working and some also living on, the mission station. I am interested in investigating the reasons why they work for SIL and if this has an effect on their notions of Christianity.

Many studies of the Western/indigenous encounter focus on the impact of missionaries on local people, particularly the transformation of traditional values and religions. Whilst acknowledging the importance of such studies, I would also propose to examine the ways in which indigenous people have transformed missionaries, including their ideas of society, culture and Christianity. 'At best, anthropologists studied "culture contact," the impact of colonial forces upon native societies among which they were doing fieldwork. They wrote little about the profound changes which Europeans underwent as well' (Beidelman 1982: 1-2). The

Comaroffs also comment, 'while many ethnographies discuss the effect of evangelisation on local communities, few explore the impact of the encounter on the consciousness of the Europeans or their societies' (1991: 54). In *Person and Myth* it can be seen from Maurice Leenhardt's experience that conversion was something that could happen to the missionary as well as to the people they were working amongst. Clifford says, 'In the ambiguous freedom of his mission work, Leenhardt had to develop enough self-confidence to see God for himself in strange contexts. [...] He looked for his "God among the pagans," among the others•and in this he opened himself personally to the conversion process' (Clifford 1982: 82). Local adaptations of mission Christianity have taken on a number of different forms. I am interested in investigating if their encounter with these local notions of Christianity has had any significant impact on SIL missionaries, particularly in changing their own notions of Christianity.

### **Fieldwork**

Fieldwork was carried out from March 2001 to March 2002. My main fieldsite was Ukarumpa, the mission station base of SIL, in the Eastern Highlands Province of Papua New Guinea. Fieldwork was also conducted at the SIL Pacific Orientation Course at Nobanob, in Madang Province. I also spent two weeks at an Alphabet Development Workshop held at Laloki High School, just outside of Port Moresby, the capital city of Papua New Guinea.

My undergraduate dissertation<sup>2</sup> looked at the children of missionaries and their identity as MKs (Missionary Kids). I had become interested in the idea of identity and belonging after my own

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<sup>2</sup> Missionary Kids: A Post-Modern Narrative of Identity (Review Essay, 1999)

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experiences of returning to the UK after spending the majority of my childhood in Papua New Guinea as the daughter of SIL missionaries.<sup>3</sup> At the time I had assumed that it was mainly the children of missionaries who struggled with issues of identity and belonging but after speaking to some adult missionaries about the topic of my dissertation, I realised that they also negotiate their identity, particularly what it means to 'be a missionary'. Although there are many different missionaries and missionary communities around the world, I chose to study the SIL mission community of Ukarumpa in particular because of the size of the mission station<sup>4</sup> and the diversity of people inhabiting it. At the time of my fieldwork there were twenty-one different countries represented by SIL members living in Ukarumpa plus the Papua New Guinean employees of SIL. Although all SIL members are Protestant Christians, they also represent a diversity of denominations within Protestantism, for instance Baptist, Methodist, Lutheran, Presbyterian, Pentecostal, Church of England etc.

As an 'insider' there were both advantages and disadvantages to choosing to return to Ukarumpa. Many SIL members were wary of anthropologists due to negative experiences previously, but because

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<sup>3</sup> I was born while my parents were doing SIL training at the Wycliffe Centre in Horsleys Green, Buckinghamshire. They left for Papua New Guinea in July 1977 with two months in Singapore, my mother's country of origin on the way. My brother was born in 1978 in Madang Hospital. They had their first furlough from June 1981 to July 1984, during which my father did his Dip Ling and started his PhD. My younger sister was born at the end of that furlough. They then had another furlough from December 1985 to June 1986 during which my father completed his PhD and had it published. Their final furlough was December 1989 to January 1991 and they returned to Britain for good in July 1994. Most of those furloughs were spent in Britain but with a few months in Singapore at the beginning and end of each furlough.

<sup>4</sup> Ukarumpa is one of the largest mission stations in the world and the largest SIL branch.

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of my personal connection the Directors were willing to allow me to do an ethnographic study of SIL in Papua New Guinea. I was easily accepted by the community, particularly as there were still several SIL members and Papua New Guinean employees who remembered my family.

Sometimes people would make comments such as 'watch what you say, she's writing it all down' (usually in a joking manner). Just before my arrival in Ukarumpa there had been another person who was interested in 'studying' SIL. The people who mentioned him were uncertain whether he was an anthropologist or just someone who was interested in eventually joining SIL, but he spent a lot of time taking notes. Some commented that they found this disconcerting, especially when they had invited him to dinner, which they viewed as a social occasion, and he spent more time writing down what they said than interacting with them. I would more often hear comments that people had forgotten that I was an anthropologist. I believe that my 'insider' status and the fact that most people related to me as 'John and Kwai's daughter' or '*pikinini bilong John*' meant that people were not on their guard around me in a way which they might have been with an 'outsider'. However, my 'insider' status also had its disadvantages. For instance, events or practices that may not have been particularly unusual to me may have stood out more for another anthropologist. When conducting interviews with some of my main informants, some of them would say things such as, 'Oh but you know this already' or assume that I already knew the background to different events. SIL has come under some severe criticism from some sources and praise from others, but in this study, rather than defending or judging SIL's

practices, I intend to examine the relationships within the mission community.

### **Community and methodology**

Ukarumpa is a small community where everyone knows everyone else by sight if not by name. New people are introduced in the Sunday English church service and are asked to stand so that everyone can see them. Those just arriving from POC often also go along to the Pidgin church service and introduce themselves to the congregation. There is also a meal sign-up list in the post office for new people and those returning from furlough/leave or the village, where members of the community can sign up to have them around for a meal during their first few days in Ukarumpa. There are many community events giving opportunities for people to mix and socialise with others. For instance, when I first arrived I stayed with family friends as Conference<sup>5</sup> was on and there was a lack of accommodation available due to the large number of people present in Ukarumpa for Conference. Not only were there meetings going on in the Meeting House during the day but also there were social events organised in the evening such as a jazz concert. During one of the Conference meetings, I met 'Karen', who offered to let me share the house she was living in at the time and also invited me to a 'singles'<sup>6</sup> pizza party. Therefore, from the very beginning I was able to get involved in different sections of the community and get to know new people. One of the advantages of being an 'insider' was that I was easily accepted and there were a number of people, including SIL employees, who still remembered me from my

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<sup>5</sup> See Chapter Two, 'Ukarumpa' for a fuller description of Conference.

<sup>6</sup> The 'singles' group was made up of mainly young, unmarried members although there were a few young couples who came along to the 'singles' social events.



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childhood and were willing to help me make new contacts and help me in my research.

Ukarumpa is also a place where there is always something that you can get involved in or help with. In my first week I met with the Associate Director for Language Affairs to introduce myself and find out how I could get involved in the community. He suggested that in order to get involved in different aspects of the community I put a notice in the weekly bulletin that I was available to help. In order to get involved in different aspects of the community I put a notice in the weekly bulletin that I was available to help. I had a very encouraging response to this and during my time in Ukarumpa I helped a translator edit a revised version of their translation, worked as a classroom assistant at the Primary School, worked in the Directors' Office firstly as the secretary/telephonist and then helped to compile a government document for the Directors' Office for Personnel. I also worked as a teacher's assistant at two short Pacific Orientation Courses and was part of an SIL team at an Alphabet Development Workshop near Port Moresby. I also attended an Anthropology Workshop for new translation teams to get an idea of the type of anthropology training that translation teams receive. On top of this I was able to be very much involved in the 'social' part of the community as well, going to the Friday hamburger nights at the Teen Centre, attending a Bible study group, socialising with the 'singles' group, going to barbeques and meals with SIL members etc. I was also able to get to know a number of Papua New Guinean SIL employees, either through working with some of them, as neighbours or as former friends and acquaintances of my parents. A

description of my main informants can be found in Appendix A: Friends and Informants.

### **Chapters**

Chapter One, *Ukarumpa*, looks at the history and organisational structure of SIL in Papua New Guinea. Here I discuss the dual nature of the SIL/Wycliffe identity and how the two organisations are related. This chapter emphasises the size and complexity of SIL as an organisation.

One of the frequently discussed topics of conversation among SIL members is the perimeter fence surrounding Ukarumpa. Chapter Two, *History of the Land Dispute and Fence*, looks at the history leading up to the construction of the fence and the debates surrounding its construction. The fence can be seen to be not only a physical boundary but also a symbolic boundary for many who live in Ukarumpa, and in some respects is a greater symbolic boundary than it is an actual physical one. This chapter discusses the many different ways in which the fence is viewed as a boundary, whether as a constraining force or as a necessary and safe object.

Following on from the notion of boundaries brought up in discussions about the fence is the idea of reaching across boundaries, the topic of Chapter Three, *Communicating the Gospel*. The chapter looks at the idea of Christian witnessing and the different ways in which SIL members believe that they can be 'witnesses for Christ' both to Papua New Guineans and to each other. This also looks at some of the ways in which some members feel they are constrained in being 'good witnesses', for instance through the presence of Ukarumpa itself. This also ties in with what it means to be a good

missionary as they reconcile the ideals of 'servanthood' and sacrifice with the realities of life in the mission field.

Bible translation is the main purpose of SIL's presence in Papua New Guinea and everything in Ukarumpa can be shown to revolve around that purpose. Chapter Four, *Translation*, looks more closely at the work of SIL Bible translators including the difficulties of translating the Bible and the ambiguities and ambivalences that arise as a result. Chapter Five, *Literacy*, looks at the related work of literacy, which is needed in order for Papua New Guineans to be able to read their newly translated Bibles. In this chapter I argue that although in some ways, literacy is viewed as a second cousin to Bible translation, it is important in preserving a good relationship with the Papua New Guinean government and allowing SIL members to continue to work in Papua New Guinea. However, the ways in which SIL members view literacy may not be the same way that literacy is perceived or used by the people they work with.

Finally, Chapter Six, *Citizens of heaven: Missionary journeys between 'homes'*, looks at the ways in which SIL members define themselves according to where they are from and where they belong. This chapter will show the complexity of SIL members' notions of personhood, through looking at ideas of the individual, the 'home' and Christianity.

### **Conclusion**

To conclude, the aim of this thesis is to examine the ambivalences and ambiguities involved in 'being' a missionary. It aims to challenge stereotypes of missionaries through showing the realities of life on a mission station. The focus of the thesis is on the missionaries themselves and their perceptions of 'being a missionary' rather than

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the perceptions of indigenous people and other expatriates. Through this it will be shown that missionaries themselves have different views and ideals of what it means to 'be a missionary' and how to reconcile these ideals with the reality of life on the mission field.



## *Chapter One*

### *Ukarumpa*

This chapter introduces some of the background and organisational structure of the Papua New Guinea Branch of SIL and the mission station, Ukarumpa. As can be seen from this, SIL-PNG is not completely autonomous and has networks and links to the wider SIL International organisation and to Wycliffe Bible Translators. This chapter gives an overview of the history of the organisation, its relationship to Wycliffe Bible Translators and some of the criticisms of its dual identity and the specifics of the organisational structure of the PNG Branch. This chapter helps to set the scene for the rest of the thesis.

#### **History of the Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL)**

The founder of the Summer Institute of Linguistics was William Cameron Townsend a former Disciples of Christ missionary to Guatemala. He began work with the Mayan Cakchiquel people of Guatemala in 1919 and by 1929 had started work with other groups of people. The organisation known as the Summer Institute of Linguistics began as a summer training program on a farm in the state of Arkansas in 1934 (<http://www.sil.org/sil/history.htm>). The training school was devised to recruit and train young men and women to work with Townsend in Mexico. The students learned how to survive in the outback of the Ozarks and their linguistic theory was derived from Townsend's work on the Cakchiquel language with a Cakchiquel young man assisting. In the autumn of 1935, Townsend, his wife Elvira and several of the students went to Mexico to start their new work. In 1936 more students were recruited

and began working in Mexico. By 1942 the University of Oklahoma in Norman invited SIL to give courses on its campus as an affiliate of its linguistic department. This agreement was terminated in 1987 after controversy about SIL's missionary activity and relationship with Latin American governments. In 1952 summer courses were also offered at the University of North Dakota and eventually at the University of Washington in Seattle, University of Texas at Arlington, and the University of Oregon in Eugene. SIL courses were also established in Australia, Brazil, Canada, England, France, Germany, Japan, Mexico, New Zealand, the Republic of South Africa, and Singapore (later moved to Darwin, Australia). SIL also offers national training programs in most of the countries where they work ([www.sil.org/WCT/wct\\_bio7](http://www.sil.org/WCT/wct_bio7)). The training program started with two students attending and now has a staff of over 5,000 representing over 60 countries, working with 1,800 languages in more than 70 countries (<http://www.sil.org/sil/>). One of the first students in 1934 was Kenneth L. Pike who went on to become one of the foremost figures in the history of SIL. He began work on the Mixtec language in the state of Oaxaca. He was SIL's President from 1942 to 1979 and then President Emeritus until his death in 2000. He also worked at the University of Michigan for many years.

The term Summer Institute of Linguistics now refers to both the linguistic training programs and the various entities engaged in linguistic research and language development work around the world. SIL has since changed its name to SIL International rather than the Summer Institute of Linguistics as it was felt the name was outdated as courses are held all year round rather than only during the summer months.

### **History of SIL-PNG**

The Papua New Guinea (PNG) Branch of SIL is the largest SIL branch worldwide with a total of five hundred and ninety-six members, not including children, assigned there (see Figure 1.1), and accordingly, Ukarumpa is the largest SIL mission station and one of the largest mission stations in the world. Ukarumpa takes its name from an adjoining Gadsup village known as Ukarumpa Village. According to SIL members who arrived in 1956 and 1957, the area where Ukarumpa is situated had no people living there at the time of SIL-PNG's establishment, however it was known to have been the traditional fighting ground of the Tairoras and the Gadsups, the two language groups surrounding Ukarumpa, before the Australian Territorial Government took it over. The Papua New Guinea Government, who rent the property to SIL, now officially own the land although since Independence in 1976 there has been a number of land disputes between the Papua New Guinea Government and the Gadsups and Tairoras. Since SIL have been in the Aiyura Valley there has been an increase in the local population with people from other areas moving into the valley.

Ukarumpa and the PNG Branch of SIL were first established in 1956. Arrangements were made through Australian Protestant missionaries and until Independence in 1976 agreements were with the Australian Territorial Government. The lease for the 500 acres (2 km<sup>2</sup>) at Ukarumpa was signed by Dick Pittman for the Summer Institute of Linguistics October 4th, 1956. In October and November 1956 four men arrived in Papua New Guinea to begin building work on the site leased to SIL in the Aiyura Valley by the Australian Territorial Government. The first to arrive in Port Moresby on



October 15, 1956 was James Dean, who became the first Director of SIL-PNG. He reached the Aiyura Valley on October 23, 1956 to begin work on the Ukarumpa site. Desmond Oatridge arrived to assist him on October 31, 1956 and Alexander Vincent and William Oates joined them later in November. Once initial building work had been started others came to join them including the Dean and Oates families, who arrived in January 1957. An official ordinance to incorporate the Summer Institute of Linguistics into the Territory of Papua and New Guinea was passed on March 14, 1957 and the Summer Institute of Linguistics officially came into operation in the Territory of Papua New Guinea on June 20, 1957 and was constituted as a Mission body under the Summer Institute of Linguistics Ordinance 1957. The branch was given an initial lease for a period of twenty-one years then on October 16, 1959 the lease was extended from twenty-one years to fifty years and in February 1965 was again extended from fifty years to ninety-nine years. The current lease expires on December 10, 2055.

During my fieldwork there were some debates over the need for a central mission station like Ukarumpa. Some believe that a centre like Ukarumpa should not exist at all and that all translation and literacy work should be conducted through regional centres in the various towns around Papua New Guinea. Others, however, think this would not be practical, for instance, it is easier to have a central Aviation department rather than one that is spread out. However, it does mean that SIL has to quite self-dependent.

**Will Ukarumpa expand anymore? What are some of the reasons why Ukarumpa has become bigger since the early days?**

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I don't think it will get much bigger. The only major increase in facilities is likely to be a new training centre. I think it has increased in size in the past because of the need to provide infrastructure for translators. Many SIL Branches have services, materials, supplies available through the town/city in which they live. Here in PNG we are often forced to provide these ourselves. We would like to be able to support local businesses but those that do exist cannot provide the goods services we need. eg. It is increasingly the case that petrol/diesel is not available in Kainantu and local vehicles come to us for fuel.

(ADLA, Brian Hodgkin, February 19, 2002)

One informant argued that the reason Ukarumpa is located where it is was because one of the people in charge wanted SIL to be a 'pioneer' mission and wanted SIL centres around the world to be isolated from the local towns, self-sufficient and not dependent on the locals. However, this particular informant said this just made the local people suspicious, particularly in a country like Papua New Guinea where building up relationships is very important. According to her, the same thing was done in Irian Jaya although people who had been part of setting up Ukarumpa warned against making the same mistakes. This seems to show that although each branch in different countries is autonomous to a certain degree, they are still accountable to overall SIL policies, some of which are not practical in applying to particular situations. However, when I mentioned this to another informant, they said that SIL did not have any choice where Ukarumpa was going to be located as this was where the government said that they could rent. Papua New Guinea was an Australian protectorate at the time so the current Papua New Guinea government may have had a different idea about where Ukarumpa should be located. As will be shown, although Ukarumpa

is a 'centre' for SIL there are also 'regional centres' and the work of SIL is spread out across Papua New Guinea.

# UKARUMPA

**SIL PNG Branch Statistics**  
**As of 31 January 2002**

<i>Total overall languages worked in since 1956</i>	299
<i>Total languages being worked in now</i>	175
<b><i>Total New Testaments completed and dedicated</i></b>	<b>131</b>
<i>Language personnel currently working in PNG</i>	284
<i>Language personnel currently on leave, loan, furlough</i>	70
<b><i>Total number of Language Specialist Personnel</i></b>	<b>354</b>
<i>Support personnel currently working in PNG</i>	193
<i>Support personnel currently on leave, loan, furlough</i>	49
<b><i>Total number of Support Personnel</i></b>	<b>242</b>
<i>Total number of personnel in PNG at present</i>	477
<b><i>Total number of personnel assigned to PNG</i></b>	<b>596</b>
<i>Number of Senior Members</i>	452
<i>Number of Junior Members</i>	66
<i>Number of Specified Term Members</i>	56
<i>Number of Members In Training</i>	22
<b><i>Total Number of Members</i></b>	<b>596</b>
<i>Number of Guest Helpers</i>	9
<i>Number seconded from other Missions</i>	6
<i>Total number of permanent PNG employees</i>	290
<i>Number of overseas countries represented (see below)</i>	21

Figure 1.1

### Countries Represented

<i>Australia</i>	<i>Austria</i>	<i>Canada</i>	<i>Finland</i>	<i>Germany</i>	<i>Hungary</i>	<i>Japan</i>
62	3	31	21	10	1	10
<i>Korea</i>	<i>Malaysia</i>	<i>Netherlands</i>	<i>Norway</i>	<i>New Zealand</i>	<i>Poland</i>	<i>Singapore</i>
16	2	18	1	7	1	3
<i>South Africa</i>	<i>Sweden</i>	<i>Switzerland</i>	<i>Taiwan</i>	<i>Thailand</i>	<i>United Kingdom</i>	<i>United States</i>
2	9	6	1	1	13	378

Figure 1.2

### Setting

Ukarumpa is located 1,600 metres above sea level in the Aiyura Valley ('windy valley' in one of the local languages) near the town of Kainantu, about 50 miles (80 kilometres) from Goroka in the Eastern Highlands Province of Papua New Guinea. The Eastern Highlands Province is characterised by sweeping valleys covered with grass, foothills with light scrub and grass and mountains that can reach heights of 3,600 metres covered with dense forest graduating to sub-alpine grasses on the highest peaks. It has two seasons, the wet season from November to April and the dry season from May to October. Temperatures range between 14°C and 30°C with the dry season being slightly cooler, especially at night. Early mornings are usually foggy and as the day progresses the mist lifts towards the ranges and during the wet season, form heavy rain clouds resulting in afternoon rain. In the evening the clouds move from the ranges to the valleys and eventually sink to the valley bottom.

The Ba'e River surrounds the northern and eastern sides of Ukarumpa and constitutes part of the boundary of the property in the government lease (see map 1). The southern and western sides are surrounded by the typical Eastern Highlands rolling hills covered with grass and pine trees. A six feet chain link fence<sup>7</sup> built in 1996 borders the perimeter of Ukarumpa. This fence also extends further out to surround the perimeter of the BTA (PNG Bible Translation Association) Training Centre and where the BTA property reaches the river a solid eight-foot fence has been built with a small lockable gate through which people can pass. This is usually left open during the daytime and locked at night. Across the river

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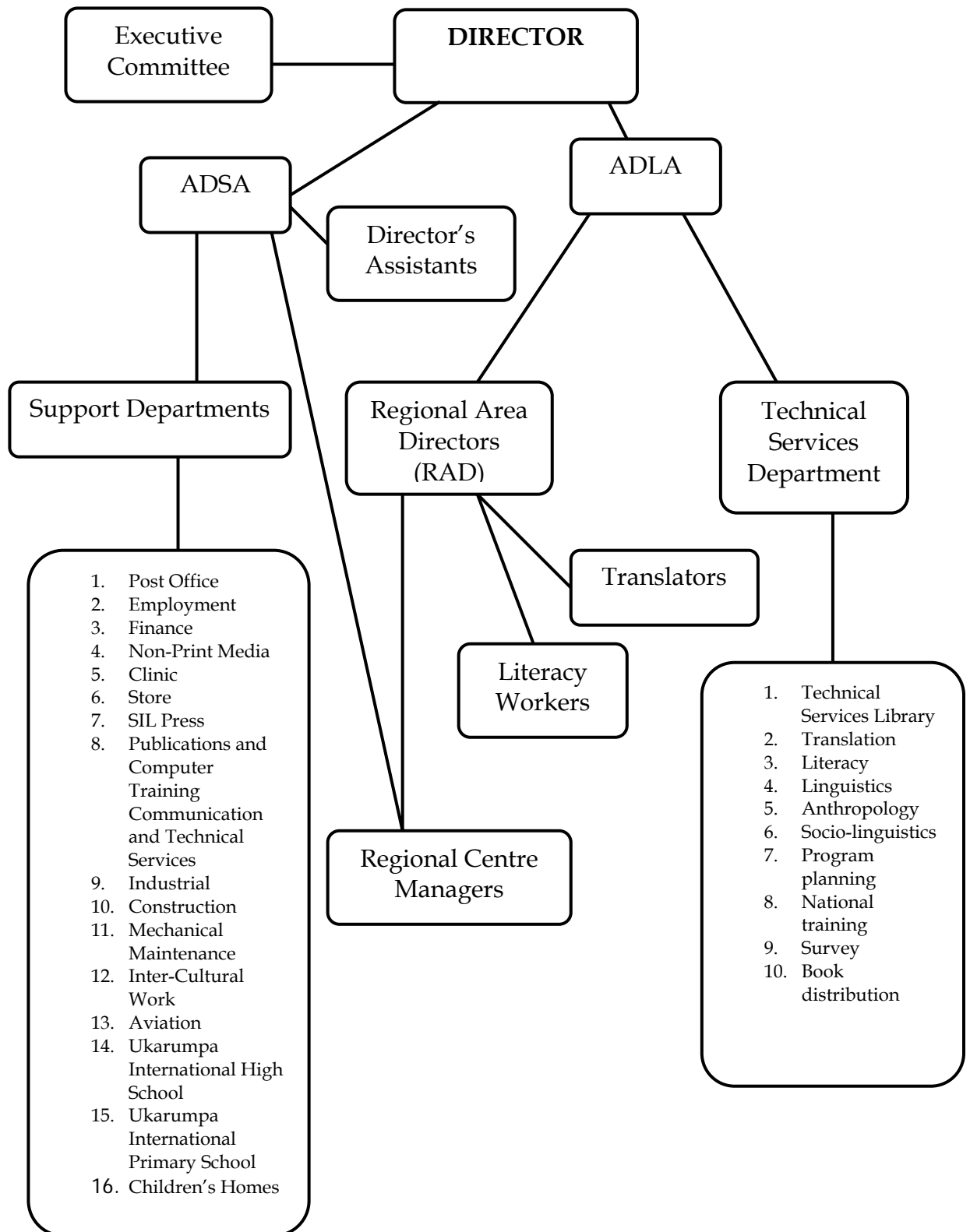
<sup>7</sup> Extended in 2002 by a top section bending inwards that makes it eight feet.

from BTA is a small village. The BTA Training Centre is also included in the lease given by the government. There are also several small locked gates around the perimeter fence surrounding Ukarumpa. The main gate leading into Ukarumpa has only a bar barrier for stopping cars and has no barrier for people on foot to pass through, although there is a small guardhouse next to the gate. SIL have hired an outside security firm, Guard Dog Security who patrol Ukarumpa regularly, particularly the perimeter of the fence, both on foot with and without dogs and in four-wheel drive Guard Dog trucks. Chapter Two, The Fence, will go into more detail regarding the debates surrounding the building of this perimeter fence.

Organisation and membership

*SIL-PNG Organisational Structure 2001*

Figure 1.3



SIL International is affiliated with another organisation, Wycliffe Bible Translators International (WBT International), which is an umbrella organisation under which each Wycliffe Organisation is a member, such as WBT UK, WBT USA, WBT France and so on. When an individual wishes to work with SIL they need to first become a member of one of these Wycliffe Organisations or one of the SIL-affiliated organisations. The Wycliffe Organisations are often known as the 'sending' organisations whilst the SIL Branches are the 'field entities'. Each Wycliffe Organisation has its own acceptance procedures although they are broadly the same. If someone works only in their 'home' country they do not normally become members of SIL International at all but remain members of their Wycliffe Organisation. However, those intending to work in another country, in an SIL Branch, need to also become members of SIL International. A Qualifications Review Committee (QRC) grants them SIL-Approved status at some point during their training period and they are granted full membership in SIL on beginning their assignment. Once they enter their assignment their secondment from their Wycliffe Organisation to the relevant SIL branch or group takes place, for example, SIL-PNG, SIL-Cameroon, SIL-North Eurasia Group. SIL has received criticism in the past, due to the dual nature of the organisation, with Wycliffe being more openly evangelistic whilst SIL emphasises its scientific and linguistic role.

The dual identity was a logical, if not ingenious, solution to the problems faced by the organization. WIL attended to the scientific and linguistic aspects, organized the summer courses, arranged the field work and dealt with foreign governments. The WBT emphasized the religious side of Bible translation, raised money and recruited personnel in the U.S. WBT also took charge of relations with those religious groups, churches, bible associations



and individuals who provided financial backing. Of course, this separation of functions did not imply that the linguists of SIL were not missionaries. On the contrary, they were. The dual identity, however, made it possible to adjust to the requirements of the situation, as suggested by the following excerpt from one of WBT's own pamphlets:

*'The experience of the Wycliffe Bible Translators has shown that an anti-ecclesiastical government can, without losing face, accept a Bible translating organization if it has a positive, scientific and cultural contribution to make to the country' (SIL Doc. 2:3).*

The organization carried the division between WBT and SIL to the point where any relation between the two was categorically denied. It was not until 1953, when the SIL came into serious conflict with the Catholic church in Peru, that Townsend was unmasked and forced to admit to the connection. Even then he maintained that the religious objectives were only secondary while the primary role of the organization was scientific and cultural.

(Hvalkof and Aaby: 10)

The WBT/SIL's expansion and success is undoubtedly a result of its ability to play off its dual identity. The securing of recruits and the decentralized form of fund raising both depend on the ability of WBT to convince home constituencies of its *missionary* aspect. The SIL, meanwhile has cultivated a *scientific* image for itself, and several contributions to this book show how its leadership has pragmatically sought to merge its goals with those of national political elites.

(Ibid: 11)

To protect these state contracts, the Summer Institute and Wycliffe insist that they are two organizations. Once identified as one and the same organization, it becomes apparent that a linguistic institute is a faith mission, whose every activity is intended to serve evangelism.

(Stoll: 4)

To this day SIL can prove, to its own satisfaction if no one else's, that it is not really a religious mission.

(Ibid: 5)

Four of the authors accuse SIL of practicing deceit in their relationships with government officials and/or with their North American supporters. They especially note that there are two separately incorporated organizations, under the names of Wycliffe Bible Translators and Summer Institute of Linguistics. WBT raises money for the missionary work and SIL deals with government officials in whose country the work is being done.

(Stipe 1983: 121)

Despite the accusations that SIL attempt to hide their religious objectives, the current SIL website clearly states that they are a faith organisation:

Founded over 70 years ago, SIL International is a faith-based organization that studies, documents, and assists in developing the world's lesser-known languages. SIL's staff shares a Christian commitment to service, academic excellence, and professional engagement through literacy, linguistics, translation, and other academic disciplines.

(<http://www.sil.org/sil/>, 2005)

This dual identity appears to be a result of decisions made in the early history of the organisation as is explained in an interview between Jonathan Benthall and William R. Merrifield, an SIL anthropologist.

Q. Wycliffe Bible Translators and the Summer Institute of Linguistics are two names for the same organization. What is the reason for this dual structure?

A. This is an artefact of our history as an organization and a response to the two main constituencies we face. Christians at home support us mainly for our interest in Bible translation; many foreign governments tend to relate primarily to our research and educational activities.

Q. Is there anything secret about the organization or its structure?

A. No. One reason our critics have so much data about us is that we ourselves have published very extensively concerning these matters.

(Dec 1982. 'The Summer Institute of Linguistics'. *RAIN*. No. 53:1)

As Merrifield points out, although its critics have accused SIL of deceiving both government officials and their supporters, there appears to be a wealth of material published by both SIL and other sources regarding this dual identity which both government officials and supporters would have access to.

SIL has also been criticised by the authors of *Is God an American?* for involvement with the national governments of the countries they work in.

SIL personnel are also castigated for involvement in and cooperation with the national governments of the countries in which they serve.

(Stipe 1983: 126)

However, as Stipe points out, SIL are dependent on national governments' goodwill in order to remain in the countries in which they work.

Hvalkof and Aaby recognize that SIL could not do translation work without offering services to the respective national governments (p.184), but often seem to ignore the fact that SIL's presence is at the discretion of those governments, which could easily deport them.

(Stipe 1983: 129)

These authors seem to ignore the fact that an expatriate in a country, whose visa can be cancelled at any time, is in a different situation than is a citizen of that country when public condemnation of governmental policies is concerned. Some anthropologists support the use of ethnographic data for political advocacy, but as Preston [1976] notes, such activity would rapidly reduce our field or research to the United States alone. Also, to argue that it is best to publicly condemn the government and be deported suggests that public confrontation is the only method for effecting changes in a system.

(Ibid: 129)<sup>8</sup>

Taylor also concurs with this viewpoint:

Summer Institute linguists face similar issues in that their work depends on the approval of national governments that often act contrary to the welfare of the indigenous groups the Institute works with. The Institute linguists do not publicly protest human rights violations by the governments of the countries in which they work, nor do they encourage the indigenous peoples to organize in protest or to rebel. For this they are severely condemned by critics of political-liberal persuasion. As Bodley points out, the political-liberal strategy for welfare of indigenous groups is to intensify their consciousness of the injustices against them and encourage them to mobilize politically and rebel against the oppressive policies of the countries in which they live. (Bodley 1982:192) The Summer Institute of Linguistics cannot participate in such strategy, since they would be expelled from the countries in question without delay and without recourse.

(Taylor 1983: 101)

In a later chapter I will argue that literacy work is important in maintaining a good relationship between SIL and the Papua New Guinean government as SIL is providing a service for the government at the cost of their own resources.

**Does SIL have a good relationship with the government of Papua New Guinea?**

Yes we continue to relate well with the government, mainly through the Department of Education who sponsor us.

(Brian Hodgkin, ADLA, February 19, 2002)

Every three years SIL has to put together a document for the government, which contains information such as all the job descriptions and codes for each job within SIL-PNG (the codes are given in the work permits), organisational charts showing the

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<sup>8</sup> See Canfield 1983 for a critique of Hvalkof and Aaby.

structure of the various departments, and all the Papua New Guinean nationals who have been trained by SIL, for instance within the various departments such as the Aviation department or the Computer department and training through literacy and translation workshops. The government has to approve this document in order for SIL to apply for work permits. When SIL members apply for a work permit, they have to send in a CV and have to have the qualifications and fit the profile for the jobs they are applying for. Therefore, the Directors Assistant for Personnel, who is in charge of compiling this document, has to be very careful that each job description is correct and does describe what various people are doing. During my fieldwork, I helped the Directors Assistant for Personnel edit and format this document and the job of sorting out the information and matching everything up showed how complex an organisation SIL-PNG is. This document also emphasises how much SIL is dependent on the government in order to stay in the country. There is an aim to eventually 'nationalise' all Ukarumpa departments, for instance the Post Office is now entirely run by Papua New Guineans and this is also outlined in the document. This also comes under the concept of 'regionalisation'

**Can you explain what is meant by 'regionalisation' and how it's being put in place?**

By 'regionalisation' at the present time we are talking more about training of PNGians in the regions rather than moving everything away from Ukarumpa and into the regions. As far as training is concerned we feel that it is probably best to include village, regional and national phases in any training programme. We see advantages to holding more courses in the village but also see the advantages of 'cross fertilisation' in regional and national courses.

(Brian Hodgkin, ADLA, 19 February, 2002)

The Directors Assistant for Personnel commented that the training of Papua New Guinean nationals, which took up the majority of the document, was in many ways more important than the job descriptions of SIL members, as this was what helped to keep SIL in the country.

### **Processes of Recruitment**

People gave different reasons for why they wanted to become missionaries and join SIL in particular (see Appendix B). Some found out about SIL through Bible College/School or through friends and church. For instance, some were recruited through other SIL missionaries coming to their church and speaking about SIL and the work of Bible Translation. Others had been on mission awareness conferences or trips where they had found out about SIL. Many had already had an interest in missions but had decided that SIL fitted what they were looking for, for instance those who wanted to be involved in mission work that had Bible translation, literacy, survey work, anthropology etc. There were different reasons for why people chose the Papua New Guinea branch in particular. These included practical reasons, such as the kind of jobs/roles that were being advertised. For instance, one mission family chose SIL-PNG because it had the most opportunities for his skills as a mechanic, another member chose SIL-PNG because they were advertising for a chemistry/physics specialist teacher specifically (see Appendix B). Others found it easier to get a work permit/visa for Papua New Guinea than other countries.

When people apply to join SIL they are eventually assigned to a particular branch. The assignment is a matter of agreement between the Wycliffe Organisation, the member, their church and the SIL

branch. Some churches want a more proactive role in the assignment than others whereas in other cases it is up to the individual. There is an SIL needs list posted on the SIL International intranet, which includes all the jobs and assignments available in SIL worldwide. These are also prioritised according to what is deemed to be strategic and critical needs. However, if a member wishes to be assigned somewhere in particular then Wycliffe and SIL try to accommodate them within the scope of the posted needs list. There is usually a fairly wide choice for individuals as there are more jobs available within Wycliffe and SIL than the people to fill those roles. It is usually expected that an individual will have decided on a particular assignment before beginning training for that assignment.

#### *Educational and Age Restrictions*

Educational and age restrictions differ for the job that an individual is applying for. As stated earlier, individuals are expected to have the particular qualifications for their job description. For instance, someone joining as a teacher will be expected to have a PGCE degree. There is a lower age limit of eighteen for applicants. Language workers such as translators, literacy and survey workers are required to take the training courses, which include linguistics, anthropology, literacy and survey skills, offered at the various SIL schools around the world, mainly located in the 'sending' countries. Initial courses before taking up an assignment are usually about five months long although previous training is taken into consideration, such as a degree in linguistics, and they may not have to take some courses or parts of courses if they have covered this elsewhere. Those involved in translation work are also expected to have training in exegesis, New Testament Greek, Old Testament Hebrew and Bible

background. This is usually acquired during a period at a Bible College although it can also be done through some form of distance learning or a church programme. A background in missiology and cross-cultural ministry is also considered to be useful but not required. Some gain their Bible training after an initial time overseas rather than beforehand.

Those intending to serve in a 'Support' role do not always have Bible training and 'Support' workers usually only do the Language and Culture Acquisition (LACA) course although they are expected to have the relevant qualifications for the jobs they are intending to do, such as pilots, aircraft engineers, teachers and doctors. They are also expected to keep up-to-date on the necessary qualifications whilst in Papua New Guinea. There may also be additional training such as some IT courses on SIL software and other IT materials used in SIL for those heading for an IT support role. All members are also expected to take a Field Training Course, which in the case of SIL-PNG members is done through the Pacific Orientation Course (POC) held at Nobanob, Madang Province, Papua New Guinea. SIL have been criticised in the past for not have a high standard of training for Bible translators (cf. Stoll, Hvaakolf and Aaby). For example Stoll argues that SIL recruits on the basis of 'faith qualifications' rather than academic ones:

By recruiting for faith qualifications far more than academic ones, Wycliffe acquired some Bible translators who were led to believe that they had been brought into the world for a purpose which proved not to be the case. 'Not everyone makes a good linguist and some teams are just not doing good work,' a SIL professional told me. While academic admission standards have been raised again recently, SIL will be living with the previous results of rapid expansion for some time to come.



(Stoll 1982: 250)

However, although there are also religious and moral restrictions on membership, as outlined below, in addition SIL members are usually trained to a high educational standard and undergo further training throughout the course of their careers as SIL members.

*Doctrinal Restrictions*

SIL members are all Christian Protestants and therefore other restrictions on joining Wycliffe and SIL are mainly of a religious and moral nature. Wycliffe Bible Translators International has the following moral standard legislation and all applicants have to sign a statement to the effect that they have read and agree to abide by this:

Acts or behaviors that violate historically accepted Biblical standards are unacceptable for those who are members of a Member Organization of Wycliffe Bible Translators International, Inc. Member Organizations are expected to have disciplinary procedures to handle a breach of these standards. Unacceptable acts or behaviors include, but are not limited to, adultery, fornication, homosexuality, financial malfeasance, child abuse (sexual, physical or emotional), incest, physical, sexual or substance abuse, acts of violence, serious marital problems that in the opinion of the administrator could lead to divorce, habitual viewing of pornographic materials, indecent exposure and sexual harassment.

SIL also has a similar statement. The Wycliffe Doctrinal Basis includes the following:

*The following is the doctrinal basis of Wycliffe Bible Translators, as stated in the Constitution:*

1. The divine inspiration and consequent authority of the whole canonical Scriptures.
2. The doctrine of the Trinity.
3. The fall of man, his consequent moral depravity and his need of regeneration.

4. The atonement through the substitutionary death of Christ.
5. The doctrine of justification by faith.
6. The resurrection of the body, both in the case of the just and of the unjust.
7. The eternal life of the saved and the eternal punishment of the lost. (Wycliffe Bible Translators International, Application Papers: Doctrine Statements, 2001)

Applicants are asked to provide a 'doctrinal statement' in which they give their 'personal statements of belief on the 7 topics which form the Wycliffe Doctrinal Basis' (Wycliffe Bible Translators International, Application Papers: Doctrine Statements, 2001). They are also asked to comment on seven more topics, not part of the Doctrinal Basis, but which are considered to be relevant and debatable issues. These include: the indwelling of the Holy Spirit and the gifts of the Holy Spirit; the Virgin birth of Christ; the personality of the devil; holiness; security (in salvation); the return of the Lord and the "end times"; the Church. In their personal statements of belief they are asked to indicate the areas in which they have reservations regarding the Wycliffe Doctrinal basis. These are further discussed in interviews later. Here I have quoted at length from the letter to the applicants regarding their doctrinal statements.

Please note that this section should not be viewed as an examination paper which you might pass or fail! We are not looking for a complete systematic theology but rather *your own* personal statements of belief in certain specific areas. As much as you are able to, use your own words and expressions.

If you are unclear about a doctrine or do not have a definite opinion, it is all right to say so. It would also be helpful to mention any reservations you may have concerning a particular area or topic. Not all Bible truth is equally clear and grappling with the apparent paradoxes of Scripture is part of our maturing in Christ.

When writing your statements it would be helpful if you could indicate where you are aware of theological issues on which evangelical thinking

differs and your own understanding of scripture on these points. As someone who will potentially be involved in providing the scriptures for others, whether as a translator or in some other role, it is important for us to know your views on what scripture teaches. Since Wycliffe members come from a variety of church backgrounds, it will also be helpful for us to have some idea of your reactions to other views and issues which may be divisive within evangelical circles. (Wycliffe Bible Translators International, Application Papers: Doctrine Statements, 2001)

In theory, people from any denomination can be accepted as members of Wycliffe Bible Translators, including Roman Catholics as long as they can sign up to the doctrinal basis of belief and demonstrate in their statement that they know and understand what they believe. Nevertheless, although they may have differing views on the various topics outlined above, applicants do have to show that they hold the same fundamental doctrines as held by the members of Wycliffe/SIL generally. Part of the policy documents that applicants need to sign includes the following:

**Co-operation with other Wycliffe members:**

If accepted for service with Wycliffe Bible Translators, I agree to work co-operatively with other Christians who do not have the same doctrinal viewpoint as myself but who have agreed to Wycliffe's Doctrinal Basis, to work under the direction of the administration responsible for work in the country to which I am assigned, and to refrain from any activity which could be detrimental to the work of other Wycliffe members or to the well-being of myself or others. (Wycliffe Bible Translators International, Application Papers: Policy Documents and Signatory Statements, 2001)

Whatever denomination or church grouping an individual comes from, they are expected to be willing to work alongside those from a variety of other church backgrounds, both from the 'sending' countries as well as the 'national' churches in the host country. SIL members in Papua New Guinea do work alongside Roman Catholic

priests and churches, however, there are no Roman Catholic members of SIL in Papua New Guinea as far as I am aware.

### **Fundraising**

SIL members are all volunteers who need to raise their own financial support in order to join the organisation. 'Resources for SIL's work are provided primarily by affiliated organizations in various parts of the world. Major contributors include affiliated member organizations of Wycliffe International, which have a goal of promoting the translation of Christian Scriptures into the world's languages where appropriate. Grants from private corporations and foundations as well as funding from various government agencies have assisted SIL in its literacy and other related projects' (<http://www.sil.org/sil/>).

In addition, most SIL workers develop individual funding resources for particular projects and personal support (<http://www.sil.org/sil/>, 2005). Raising financial and prayer support is described within the organisation as 'Partnership Development' as those providing financial and prayer support are described as 'partners' in the work of Bible translation. Most individuals' source of financial support comes from Protestant churches, family and friends, known collectively as 'supporters'. They are usually expected to spend part of their time during furlough (usually lasting from six months to a year) or leave (an indefinite amount of time) on 'deputation meetings' where they speak at various churches and organisations that have already given them money or new churches about what they have been doing in Papua New Guinea in order to raise more funds. Two-week 'Furlough workshops' run at Ukarumpa help to teach members the

skills needed for successful deputation meetings. Some SIL members commented that they felt uncomfortable with the need to raise support, particularly members from countries or cultures where asking for money was not appropriate. For instance, one informant from Singapore said they found it very difficult to ask for financial support.

### **Relations back home**

'Supporters' are also kept up-to-date while individuals are on the 'field' by regular newsletters and workshops are also run to teach people how to write an interesting and informative newsletter. Newsletters often contain 'prayer and praise points' which outline the things that have been going well and also the problems and difficulties that members have encountered. In a discussion with people from the 'singles' group, one individual said that he finds it difficult to know what to write as there are some things he does not want to mention as he does not want them to be put off missions work themselves or to stop supporting him due to what he has written. He also said that he felt that newsletters could not really explain what it is like in Papua New Guinea and that people need to see for themselves and different people have different ways of looking at life in Papua New Guinea anyway.

Another individual said that she thinks that supporters not only want to know how you are doing 'God's work' but also how 'God is working in your life'. Newsletters to supporters can have an adverse effect on financial support. For instance, supporters from different countries and denominations may have varying views on how missionaries should live. I heard of a few instances where supporters withdrew their support if members mentioned things like holidays,

saying that if they were wealthy enough to afford a holiday they did not need their support. Official newsletters to supporters have to be approved by the Director's Assistant for Personnel (DAP) but private newsletters such as email newsletters do not need an official seal of approval. Some supporters come out to Papua New Guinea on visits to see the work the SIL members are doing, especially pastors/ministers of the churches that are supporting them. Supporters will often also be invited to the dedications of the New Testaments.

Family and friends will also often come for visits to Papua New Guinea. SIL members comment on the hardship of leaving their family and friends behind, especially if they have children who do not have much contact with their grandparents and other relatives. This separation has been made easier by the use of email and digital cameras to keep in touch with people back home.

### **Finance**

Each individual/family works out every year with Wycliffe/SIL what they estimate they will need to live on and carry out their assignment for the year, which is called a 'quota'. Wycliffe Organisations and SIL Branches provide them with figures to aid them in estimating their quotas as to how much it will cost to live and work in a particular location. Quotas are worked out individually and therefore they can differ between people and groups.

From memory my support quota was \$700/month but I know for Americans it was something like \$1000USD/month so it does vary from group to group.

(Karen, email correspondence 2006)

For example, a translation team who are allocated in a village that can only be reached by helicopter will have higher costs than one who is working at an allocation that can be reached by car.

Translators would need more because they have to pay for all the expenses of

running a language project such as travel to and from the village and paying language workers/national translators, etc.

(John Roberts, personal communication)

So a quota for a translation team may reach \$2000USD per month with the additional costs. Money also needs to be set aside for things like furlough flights.

They also have to fill out a Support Quota Worksheet (SQW), which sets out in detail the different aspects of their work costs, called the 'ministry section' and basic living costs. Ministry costs include such things as anticipated costs for language courses, travel, language helpers, study programmes, books and journals, and so on. Living costs can include shelter (housing) costs, personal factors and children's education. Individuals must have a hundred percent of their quota promised in financial support to be allowed to go overseas to start their assignment. The quota is also used to top up support if it falls below a hundred percent. For instance, Wycliffe UK receives donations each month that are not designated for a particular member and these donations go into a Supplementary Fund from which members who receive low support in any given month are able to draw upon to top up their existing support. However, discussion was underway regarding changing the system so that it is no longer based on individual members raising their own support but rather having funds raised by the organisation and members paid a salary instead. Some informants argued that the

quota for SIL-PNG was set too high and was based on what American members needed to live on and that other individuals would be able to live on less. They also argued that this high quota made it difficult for members from countries where the financial support is low to be able to come to the 'field'.

### **Membership**

Within the PNG Branch there are several different categories of membership that people can belong to (see Figure 1.1). Senior Members are those who have been two years in the Branch after completing the Pacific Orientation Course (POC), have a good financial record and are members of SIL International. Members of an SIL Branch are also members of SIL International, however there are people who are members of SIL International but not members of a particular Branch. Senior Members who have come from another 'field entity' can become Senior Members of the PNG Branch with a minimum of six months in Papua New Guinea. Junior members are those who have joined SIL as 'career members' but have not yet been members for two years or those who have not fulfilled one of the other requirements such as being in good financial standing. Specified Term Members are those who have come for a specific amount of time, usually one to four years. Members In Training includes those who are joining the organisation but have not completed all the required courses, such as POC. Guest helpers are people who have come to help in the branch for a few weeks or a few months but have not joined SIL in any official capacity. As seen in Figure 1.1, SIL members are further divided into 'Language Specialist Personnel' and 'Support Personnel'. 'Language specialists' include Bible translators, literacy workers and language surveyors.



‘Support personnel’ are those who work at Ukarumpa in the various ‘support’ departments such as Aviation, the Clinic and the Store and also regional centre managers. I will go into more detail regarding the relationship between ‘Language’ and ‘Support’ workers, and some of the ambiguities within this relationship, in later chapters.

### **SIL Branches**

SIL Branches are not completely autonomous as they are all part of SIL International and SIL International has a constitution and legislation that applies to all the Branches. SIL International divides the world into five areas, Africa, Americas, Asia, Eurasia and Pacific, and each Area has a team who are responsible for strategy in that Area. If a branch is in the country at the invitation of, or under an agreement with a sponsoring body, which may be a government department, a church denomination, a local NGO, or some other national institution, then it is understood that they will be guided by that organisation as to their conduct and what is expected of them. There are also cases, for example in Kenya and Ghana, where all SIL personnel are directly responsible to a national organisation such as the Bible Translation and Literacy (BTL) in Kenya and the Ghana Institute for Linguistics, Literacy and Bible Translation (GILLBT) in Ghana. However, each Branch is responsible for its day-to-day affairs and Branches can make decisions regarding the Branch as long as they are within the SIL International constitution and legislation.

#### *PNG Branch*

The PNG Branch is administered by the Directorate who are responsible for the management and development of the Branch under Executive Committee (EC) guidelines. The Directorate includes the Director, who is the overall leader/administrator of the

Branch, the Associate Director for Language Affairs (ADLA) who is in charge of Language personnel such as translators and literacy workers, and the Associate Director for Support Affairs (ADSA) who is in charge of Support personnel such as those working in the various departments around Ukarumpa. All Ukarumpa departments except for the Technical Services Department (which is under the ADLA) are answerable to the ADSA and ultimately the Director (see Figure 1.3). Regional Area Directors (RADs) are in charge of translation and literacy work in the different provinces around Papua New Guinea and are often a translator or literacy worker themselves and working on their own translation or literacy project at the same time as being RADs. They report to the ADLA. Regional centre managers, who run the various regional centres such as in Madang, Lae and Port Moresby, are under both the ADLA and ADSA. Their role is to support Language work in the various regions so they relate to the ADLA through the Regional Area Director (RAD) on matters pertaining to policy and to the ADSA on matters regarding running the centres. At the time of my fieldwork SIL-PNG were considering getting an extra Associate Director. The Associate Directors would then include the ADLA, whose responsibilities would remain more or less the same, an Associate Director for Operations (ADO), who would be in charge of the departments not directly related to Member concerns, for example the Autoshop, Construction, Aviation, Store, Printshop etc., and an Associate Director for Member Services (ADMS) who would be in charge of departments such as the Director's Assistant for Personnel (DAP) office, counselling, member care, housing, clinic, schools etc. They were having a trial period with a Member Services Administrator,

which would then become the Associate Director for Member Services (ADMS) position if members were convinced of its efficacy.

### *Branch Conference*

Every two years a Branch Conference is held in which various legislatures are voted on that have been considered and then presented by the Executive Committee (EC) throughout the two years. Seven members serve on the EC plus five alternates are elected. The role of the EC is to represent the membership of the Branch and discuss Branch business between Branch conferences (see Appendix B). Throughout the two years between Conferences, minutes from EC meetings are given to members and Open EC meetings are also held, which all members are free to attend. Aside from discussing and passing motions regarding Branch policies, Branch Conferences are also held to elect a new Director or re-elect the present Director to serve for another term. The Director then chooses the ADLA, ADSA and Director's Assistants. In the case of the ADLA and ADSA the Director chooses from a list of nominees put forward by Senior Members. The choice is then ratified by the EC. In theory any Senior Member is eligible to be voted in as Director but it is usually a man and often someone who has worked in a Language role. The ADLA again is usually a Language worker although in theory a Support worker could be elected. The ADLA during my fieldwork was a literacy worker although feedback during the nomination of Associate Directors at his election expressed a concern that he was a literacy worker rather than a translator, which would indicate that it would be highly unlikely that a Support worker would ever be elected.

**Has a support worker ever been Director?**

Depends how you define a support worker. [–] came as a translator but it didn't work for them so he has been in a language support role for many years.

**Is the ADLA usually a language worker or could a support worker become ADLA?**

Yes. In theory it is possible but not likely. In feedback allowed for during the nomination of associate directors the one negative point mentioned about me taking up the job was that I wasn't a translator, just a humble literacy person. So I think it very unlikely that a support person would get the job. Although personally I think that is very short sighted. Translators generally do not make good administrators they have the wrong personalities.

(Brian Hodgkin, ADLA, 15 May, 2002)

During the Branch Conference a new Executive Committee is also elected and again it is Senior Members only who are eligible to be elected although they include both men and women. Only Senior Members are eligible to vote at Branch Conferences although anyone can attend and voice an opinion.

The members of SIL in Papua New Guinea as of 31 January 2002 represented a total of twenty-one different countries (see Figure 1.2 and 1.4), mainly from North America, Australia and Europe but also including an increasing number from Asia. These figures represent adult members of SIL only. There were a slightly greater number of women than men. The age range of SIL personnel is from people in their early twenties to those in their seventies although the majority are generally somewhere in between. The children of SIL members range from newborns to high school age children. Children under the age of eighteen are allowed in the country on their parents' visas but those who wish to stay after the age of eighteen must apply for their own visas and work permits. The majority of SIL members are married couples, usually with children and among the unmarried

members most of these are women. There are no Papua New Guinean members of SIL although the PNG Bible Translation Association is a partner organisation of SIL and composed entirely of Papua New Guineans. Therefore, although there are Papua New Guineans employed by SIL in Ukarumpa in the various departments they have no voting power on how the organisation is run.

### **Pacific Orientation Course (POC)**

Each new member is required to attend the Pacific Orientation Course (POC) at Nobanob, ideally before they arrive in Ukarumpa, although some have already begun work in Ukarumpa before they attend the orientation course. Nobanob is 365 meters above sea level and 12 miles (20 kilometers) from Madang, the principal town of Madang Province. Unlike Ukarumpa, Nobanob has the typical hot and wet climate of the tropics. Temperatures range from 20°C to 34°C all year round. Madang is a popular resort town and many SIL members go to the Madang Resort Hotel and Jais Aben Resort Hotel for their holidays. The participants of POC however, only visit Madang town occasionally.

POC is not part of SIL-PNG but is a function of SIL International and as such comes under the Pacific Area office of SIL International. However, POC is often staffed by members of the PNG Branch and is mainly designed for learning about Papua New Guinea although there are participants attending who also work in other Pacific countries, for instance the Solomon Islands. The SIL staff at the course include the Directors who are in charge of the overall running of the course, Academic Coordinators who are responsible for the lectures and readings during the course, the Centre Manager who is responsible for the upkeep of the site, a nurse, a Kitchen Manager, in

charge of organising the communal meals, school teachers (usually one or two) for the POC school and *Tok Pisin* (Melanesian Pidgin) Facilitators who are there to mediate between the Papua New Guinean *Tok Pisin* teachers and the students. Among the Papua New Guinean staff are various workmen who help the Centre Manager to look after the site, kitchen *meris* (Melanesian Pidgin for 'women') who help the Kitchen Manager with preparing the meals, laundry *meris* who wash the clothes of the SIL staff and students throughout the course, one or two ladies who work in the Nursery looking after children under the age of four, the Office Manager who looks after the accounts for the course among other things and the *Tok Pisin* teachers who are all local men from the Nobanob area.

Participants and staff all stay on the Nobanob site for the duration of the course. The site is enclosed within a barbed wire fence<sup>9</sup>. On the site are five houses for the use of SIL staff members, some more basic than others. There are also dormitories for participants, which are very basic rooms with just the minimum amount of furniture. There are two separate bathrooms for the men and women, which include bucket showers. There is a very large kitchen and communal dining room for all meals. Staff members can eat in their own houses but are encouraged to share a few meals with the participants, especially during the short course. Another large room connected to the dining room is used for lectures and also for socialising in the evening. There is an air-conditioned office for the use of staff members with several computers and desks. This area is officially off-limits to participants although they are allowed to store items that are affected

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<sup>9</sup> See Chapter Three, 'History of the Land Dispute and Fence' for more on fences.

by the humidity, such as musical instruments and cameras. There is also a small schoolhouse and play area for the children.

The orientation course is meant to teach new members about the culture of Papua New Guinea and also the basics of *Tok Pisin*.

The purposes of this short Orientation Course are many, but basically it is designed to aid you in making the necessary adjustments to this new life-style, with a heavy emphasis on learning Tok Pisin and relating to the people of this country. (June-July 2001 POC STM Course booklet)

The course includes lectures in Papua New Guinea history and geography, anthropology, tropical diseases and medicine as well as daily lessons in *Tok Pisin* and also practical skills such as learning how to make a drum oven and weekly hikes and swimming (participants usually have twice-weekly swim sessions in Nagada Bay, at the Lutheran mission on the opposite shore of the Jais Aben Resort). At the end of the five-month long course each participant (except pregnant or nursing mothers for whom the hikes and swims are optional) is expected to complete a three-day hike and be able to swim a mile. This is all meant to prepare the participants for living in a rural Papua New Guinean village and to be relatively self-sufficient.

The children of the participants attend a small school on the POC site while their parents are at the POC classes. During the short course they do different arts and crafts activities, which are used to put together a book about Papua New Guinea. They also have fieldtrips to different places in Madang such as the museum in Madang town and Bilbil village where they can watch people making Bilbil pottery. Like their parents, they also have a short lesson each day learning *Tok Pisin*. Some of the children, particularly

those whose parents have been members of staff a few times, may have made the book about Papua New Guinea a number of times, so they may get individual tuition for their home-schooling. During the long course a teacher is hired to teach the children the normal school curriculum.

There are two types of course run at POC. The first one is a short two-week course during January/February and June/July, which is intended mainly for Specified Term Members, many of whom are Support Workers, and also members who have come from another branch and therefore have had 'field' experience already. The long course is five months long and runs from February to June and from July to November. Career members (including Support workers) are expected to attend this course and some Language workers who are Specified Term Members also attend. Individuals who have previously been in Papua New Guinea as Specified Term Members but who have now become career members are also expected to attend the long course. This course is far more intensive than the short course and includes five weeks of 'village living' near the end of the course. The orientation courses are also open to other missions as long as there is space available and missions such as Pioneer Bible Translators, the Salvation Army and ECB have sent their members along to attend. Numbers vary at the courses from small courses of about fifteen participants to larger ones of around thirty. There are a limited number of spaces on the courses due to the amount of accommodation available.

During my fieldwork I helped at the short two-week POC course in June/July and in January as a classroom assistant for the POC schoolteacher. I overheard quite a few discussions about POC.



People seem to have several different experiences of POC. For instance, the people in charge of POC seem to make a big difference to members' experiences of POC and how much they enjoy or dislike it. For instance, one set of POC leaders were described as being super-strict and hard to get along with, although others said that they were fine and just appreciated people who were willing to help out. Another set of leaders were described as being more easygoing and running POC rather like a holiday camp. The long-course and the short-course were also seen as being very different, with the long-course more intensive. When I first arrived in Ukarumpa I went for a 'girls night' with some of the single women. They made a distinction between 'village' people and 'Ukarumpa' people and were commenting on one individual in particular, who found the five month POC course very difficult, especially as was never going to use the village living experience in his work as he was coming to work in the Computer department and would be based in an office most of the time. One of the leaders at POC commented that some people have said that village living is not really necessary for support teams, however, she believes it is important as they can better understand what language teams have to deal with and also to get to know Papua New Guinea culture better. Someone else also commented that POC helps to create a bond between a group of people so that the new people do not arrive in Ukarumpa not knowing anyone, but will have some relatively good friends already. This was brought out in a conversation with a couple who I met before they had done POC, who said that they felt quite isolated as they had not had a chance to get to know people well and they felt that POC would be an opportunity to do this. Another member also commented that for the long course, they are trying to take you away

from everything you have known before by taking you out of society in order to put you back in again. It could be argued that POC is an important ritual that SIL members need to go through in order to fit in as part of the Ukarumpa community.

### **Departments**

The centre of the PNG Branch's operations is located in the Director's Office in the main administration building at Ukarumpa. Working in the Director's Office is the Director, the Associate Director for Language Affairs (ADLA), the Associate Director for Support Affairs (ADSA), the Director's Assistant for Personnel (DAP), the Director's Assistant for Finance (DAF), the Director's Assistant for Security (DAS), the Director's Assistant for Public Relations (DAPR), the Education Division Administrator, the Project Resources office and the Member Care office (which offers counselling for members among other things), plus other administration staff such as the Office Manager who deals with travel details and other administrative duties and various secretarial staff. Downstairs from the Director's Office is the Finance Office where the accountants working there take care of all financial issues, including consulting on statements, insurance, PNG taxes, Furlough Funds, Support Quota Worksheets (SQWs), Finance Reports and Cheque Requests. It also acts as a small bank and there are two cashier windows where one can bank money, get cash out and transfer funds between member and departmental accounts. All members have their own account numbers and usually pay at the various departments with their account numbers rather than using cash. Next door to the Finance Office is the Non-Print Media Department, which does audio taping for slide presentation, video

taping and duplication, slide reproduction, public photocopying, video production and also sells small items such as film, tapes, books and stationery.

Next to the main administration block is the Meeting House, which is used for everything from church services on a Sunday to concerts and plays put on by the High School. Opposite the main administration block and the Meeting House is the Post Office and next door to the Post Office, the Employment Department, who are in charge of looking after the employment of all Papua New Guineans for SIL including local people hired to look after people's gardens and housekeeping. Both the Post Office and the Employment Department are 'nationalised' in that they are entirely staffed and managed by Papua New Guinean employees of SIL. Once a position has been 'nationalised' SIL members are no longer eligible to hold those positions as they are no longer approved positions for SIL members according to the work permits that the Papua New Guinea Government grant. Every department has some Papua New Guinean Employees working in them but few are entirely 'nationalised'. SIL employees are mainly local people from the nearby area but also include some people from other regions in the country. Directly behind the Post Office and the Employment Department is the Community Library and behind that is the Ukarumpa International High School campus. The High School has its own chain link fence built around it which was constructed in 1995 before the perimeter fence. It has two entrances, which are locked at night.

Down the road from the Meeting House is the Ukarumpa Clinic, which looks after the health care of SIL members and also local

village communities, which includes going on village clinic visits during the week. It also operates a small pharmacy. Clinic staff include SIL doctors, nurses and a dentist and also several Papua New Guinean nurses and medical assistants. In the past pregnant women were able to have their children at the Clinic but now SIL women either go to Cairns, Australia to be delivered or private hospitals in Papua New Guinea. Further on from the Clinic is the Memorial Teen Centre, which was built specifically for the use of the teenagers in the community. Friday nights are 'hamburger night' at the Teen Centre where the High School students sell hamburgers, chips, soft drinks and other fast food to various members of the community who wish to go along. The Teen Centre is also used for a variety of other events such as craft fairs, fund-raising meals put on by the High School students, Monday night basketball and swing dance parties. Near the Teen Centre is the SIL Store, which sells groceries, clothes, stationery and other household items. An eight-foot chain link fence encloses the Store. During my fieldwork meetings were underway with ELHACO, a new company interested in providing expatriate goods in Papua New Guinea, regarding takeover of the SIL Store. ELHACO would be in charge of managing the Store, however the Store would still be owned by SIL. The takeover was put on hold while ELHACO established the import and warehousing side of their business.

Next door to the Store is the Purchasing Department who handle purchasing goods for members and departments and are also responsible for shipping goods to and from overseas through Sea Freight, DHL and FedEx. Behind the Store is the Print Shop, officially known as SIL Press, which does book binding and repair, prints

small booklets and newsletters and also sells items such as paper, poster board and ink. Like the Post Office and the Employment Department, SIL Press is managed and staffed by Papua New Guinean employees. Next to the SIL Press is the Publications and Computer Training (PaCT) Department who help with typesetting and shell book publication, provide computer training classes and also contain the Layout Department, who help with members' newsletters and other publications, and the Print Media Department who design and produce printed materials. Further down the road from the SIL Press is the Guard Dog Security office, an outside security firm, which looks after the security of Ukarumpa. Opposite the SIL Press is the market, which used to be located opposite the SIL Store but was moved during my fieldwork period. It is held on Monday, Wednesday and Friday mornings from around six thirty to eight o'clock during which local villagers and also some SIL employees bring fruit and vegetable produce to sell. Unlike the coastal provinces, the Highlands are cool enough to grow such vegetables as broccoli, cauliflower, carrots, cabbage and lettuce and also year round strawberries. Some tropical fruits such as bananas, pineapples and mangoes are also grown in the Highlands. Other produce such as coconuts and watermelons are imported from the coast. The SIL store does not sell fresh vegetables and only sells imported fruit such as apples so the market is the main source of fruit and vegetables for SIL members unless they grow their own. Many members do have small vegetable plots and banana trees in their gardens. Local people also sell artefacts such as baskets, carvings, jewellery and *bilums* (traditional string bags) at the market throughout the day. Near the Store and opposite the Technical Studies Department are the Pre-School and Kindergarten buildings,

which also have a chain link fence surrounding them. Opposite the Pre-School is a small cemetery where a number of SIL members who have died in Papua New Guinea are buried.

Up the hill from the administration block is the Technical Studies Department (TSD), which provides assistance to translation teams through consultant help and also trains new consultants. It is also in charge of translation, literacy, linguistics, anthropology, socio-linguistics, program planning, national training, language surveys and book distribution, and documents SIL work by publishing academic papers. Near the Technical Studies Department is the Technical Studies Department Library, which holds various linguistic and anthropology books and also completed New Testaments. Located next to the TSD Library are also two seminar rooms for workshops and a number of office cubicles for translators' use. Further up is the Radio Room, which contains the two-way radio for keeping SIL members in villages around Papua New Guinea in touch with each other and people in Ukarumpa, and the Communication and Technical Services (CaTS) Department, who repair electronic equipment, look after the telephone system, provide email and internet connection, organise the radio schedule and also sell items such as transformers, solar panels and batteries. Further up the hill from the CaTS Department are the SIL Guesthouse and the Housing Department, who are responsible for assigning all the houses and lodges to people staying in Ukarumpa. All homeowners are required to rent their house out if they are away from Ukarumpa for more than a month. When renting their houses to others they are also expected to provide them fully furnished with items such as bed linens, towels and kitchenware.

Near the main gate leading into Ukarumpa are the Industrial and Construction Departments, the Mechanical Maintenance Department (Autoshop) and the Inter-Cultural Work (ICW) Department. The Industrial Department distributes LP Gas to homes, picks up the rubbish (collected every Tuesday morning)<sup>10</sup>, provides electrical and appliance repair and is also responsible for road maintenance. The Construction Department has a sawmill which cuts and sells raw timber and also does joinery, builds or adds onto houses, is responsible for the plumbing of the centre by maintaining water and septic systems, rents tools and equipment and also sells items at the Hardware Counter. The Construction Department also helps with building houses for translation teams in their village allocations and also constructing furniture for the houses. The Mechanical Maintenance Department does general mechanical repairs from small engines to vehicles, body repair such as metal fabrication, welding and spray painting, rents vehicles, assists in the purchasing of vehicles and has a towing service, sells fuel such as petrol, diesel, kerosene and oil and also has a Spare Parts Counter. The Inter-Cultural Work (ICW) Department works on establishing friendly relations between SIL and the Aiyura Valley communities.

About a five minute drive outside of Ukarumpa is the Aiyura International Primary School and the Aviation Department, which includes the Aiyura Airstrip and the SIL Hangar. SIL owns seven aircraft, four single engines, three twin engines and one helicopter. Many village allocations that are inaccessible by road have airstrips

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<sup>10</sup> Members are encouraged to burn paper rubbish and use food rubbish for compost. Tins are supposed to be washed and smashed for recycling. Plastic and glass bottles and jars are often given to yardmen/*meris*, *haus meris* or taken to village allocations to give to people there.

and those that are both inaccessible by road and by airplane can be reached by helicopter. During the coffee season SIL planes transport bags of coffee for local businesses and the extra money helps to subsidize SIL flights for members. Aviation also has a fence around it, which is comprised of a five-foot barbed wire fence along the side of Aviation next to the road and at either end, with an eight-foot chain link fence on the other side built in 1998. Local people prevented the enclosure of Aviation by a full chain link fence. The Primary School also has a chain link fence around it and at the time of my fieldwork the Aiyura International Primary School property had been sold and a new primary school was being built in Ukarumpa. In Ukarumpa near the Children's Homes there is also a small *tok ples* (talk place) elementary school for local Gadsup children from grades one to three in where they are taught in the Gadsup language. This school also has its own chain link fence surrounding it.

South west of Ukarumpa is the road leading out to the BTA (PNG Bible Translation Association) Training Centre. In 1974 the PNG Bible Translation Association, a national organisation, was formed to promote more involvement of Papua New Guineans in Bible translation. It is a partner organisation of SIL International and is involved in translating the Bible into the languages of the country and also literacy work. 'To date, BTA members have contributed to seven completed New Testaments and another six New Testaments are in first drafts to be published within the next two years' (Luci Thomas, 2001: 5). It also works alongside the Bible Society of PNG, formed in 1975 and the Pioneer Bible Translators (PBT) who began work in Papua New Guinea in 1977. BTA has been instrumental in



putting together a promotional video, *Kam, Yumi Pul*, literally, 'Come, Let's Pull Together', which urges Papua New Guineans to become involved in Bible translation. 'Erastus Otairobo, a Solomon Islander, has agreed to interface between all four agencies, as well as with interested churches, to ensure maximum use of resources. Each organization will combine their commitment to the training, motivating and assisting of Papua New Guineans – the topic of their new video, *Kam, Yumi Pul*' (Luci Thomas, 2001: 4). SIL members often show the *Kam, Yumi Pul* video at various villages and towns around Papua New Guinea, alongside the 'Jesus' video, which has been dubbed into several Papua New Guinean languages. A number of national training courses attended by Papua New Guineans are run at the Training Centre, often staffed by SIL members. These include the Supervisors' of Tokples Education Program (STEP) and the National Translators Course (NTC). The Training Centre is comprised of a main administration building, a large classroom building, residential buildings for BTA staff, student quarters for students attending workshops and a dining room for communal meals. Recently, plans have been proposed to build a new Training Centre with improved facilities.

As well as the various departmental buildings there are also about three hundred residential buildings, some of which are owned by individuals and the others are the general property of the branch. Houses owned by the branch include 'group houses' and 'translator lodges'. Group houses tend to be rented out to Support families who are permanently resident in Ukarumpa during their time in Papua New Guinea and translator lodges are specifically for translation teams who do not own their own house, when they are resident in

Ukarumpa. Other residential buildings include Children's Homes, which are large dormitory style houses catering for up to fifteen children of usually high school age (twelve years old and upwards) who are looked after by a married couple with or without their own children while their parents are away from Ukarumpa for lengthy periods of time in villages or towns around Papua New Guinea. In the past children used to be left in Children's Homes from the age of seven but later the lower age limit became nine years old. The Primary School provides a village school program for primary age children who are home schooled by their parents (usually their mother) in their village allocations. Parents and children keep in regular touch with the primary school through weekly radio 'skeds' (schedule) with teachers. Children's Homes also cater for children from other missions and some Children's Homes such as Lutheran and ECP are owned and run by these other missions and children from those missions have priority in gaining a place in the home. SIL-run hostels give priority to SIL children. During 2001/2002 there were six Children's Homes open, Dorelo, Teen Manor, Townsend, Rhema, Lutheran and ECP. Some former Children's Homes, such as Dean Home and Nipa, have been converted into housing for large families with six or more children. Interspersed among houses owned by SIL members are the Papua New Guinean employees' houses although the greatest concentration of employee housing is down on Pittman Point Road (see map 1) near the bridge leading into Ukarumpa Village.

The first houses built in the early days of Ukarumpa were *kunai* (grass) and bamboo houses, similar to the houses that local people build although they were square rather than the round houses that

many Highland villages have. Houses were also fairly small as one informant told me:

When we first came, getting timber was very difficult so that we were restricted in the size of houses. A married couple would have six hundred square feet, which was 30 by 20 and for every child you were allowed, of another sex, a one hundred square feet, but if you had three kids you could only have two extra bedrooms, you know one for one, for the boy and one for the two girls, that sort of thing.

However, over the years the style and size of houses has changed a great deal and most of the early *kunai* and bamboo houses no longer stand. Most of the houses today are built out of wood with corrugated iron roofs<sup>11</sup>. Each house has its own individual architecture however these are based mainly on Western-style buildings which range from houses reminiscent of large Swiss chalets to fairly modest bungalows. Many SIL employees now live in the houses built in the early days of Ukarumpa as one of the older members told me:

The thing was though, you see, I was here when those national houses, this one next door, 'Anna's' house, various others that are around the centre, when they were expat housing. I knew the families that built them and lived in them. And the point is when those original owners left current members would not buy them and live in them. So that's why they went to become employee housing, because local members would not accept them. The Scott's had 'Anna's', they built 'Anna's' house.

At the 1976 Branch Conference a motion was passed to limit the size of houses to an upper limit of 1,400 square feet total squarage excluding staff housing for a family with four children or less with an additional 100 square feet per additional child (Motion 48.2

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<sup>11</sup> There are an increasing number of these Western-style 'copper' houses in neighbouring villages also.

Branch Conference 1976). However, this restriction has now been lifted as it caused administrative difficulties particularly regarding resale of houses. Nevertheless, although there are no longer official restrictions, voluntary restraint in size of personal homes for those building new houses is still encouraged.

During my fieldwork I would sometimes hear comments about the size of Ukarumpa and how it has grown in the past few years. However, in an interview with the Assistant Director for Language Affairs he commented that it has remained the same size for the past three years.

**What changes have you seen in Ukarumpa and SIL in Papua New Guinea over the years you have been here? For example, the size of the centre, the type of roles that people have in Ukarumpa, how translation and literacy work is carried out etc.**

The physical size of Ukarumpa, as far as number of buildings is concerned, has remained much the same until the last 3 or 4 years. It is only recently that new structures have been built. Houses have recently increased in numbers and departments have extended their facilities. The reallocation of the primary school is also increasing plant on the Ukarumpa site.

We are also seeing an increased need for additional training facilities and accommodation for National Translators.

The actual numbers of SIL members has fallen since the early 90's. The ratio of translation and support was 1:>1 it is now 1:0.75.

The need for extra facilities at Ukarumpa is due to a shift in working practices of Language teams. In the last few years fewer parents are willing to leave children at Ukarumpa and spend time in the village. This results in either just the husband going out to the village for a few weeks at a time or more language helpers being brought into Ukarumpa.

(Brian Hodgkin, ADLA, February 19, 2002)

As he points out, the number of SIL members coming into Papua New Guinea has actually fallen. The aim is that eventually the work that SIL does should become nationalised with no need for expatriate missionaries.

Ukarumpa is a technologically advanced community with many members, particularly translators, owning their own laptop computers along with other computer equipment such as printers, scanners, CD writers and so on. Some translation teams are also able to email from their village allocations using satellite phones. This is quite different to the early days when Bible translations were done using pen and paper and for the more advanced, typewriters. Many people also own commodities such as video and DVD players, microwaves and washing machines. Again this technological dependency has led to some criticism both from outsiders and SIL members.

In the field SIL is a spectacle of dedication and technology which invites endless speculation. At its 'bases', now being renamed 'centres' to avoid the military connotation, as many as several hundred language technicians, support personnel and children live, work and pray together.

(Stoll 1982: 6)

For instance, on my flight from Cairns to Port Moresby I was sitting next to an Australian research student studying wallabies at a research institute in Goroka. When I told him about my research, he had a number of negative comments about missionaries in general<sup>12</sup> and SIL in particular, including the amount of technology they use. He argued that this was evidence they must be involved with the

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<sup>12</sup> When I mentioned that my parents had worked for SIL his attitude changed dramatically and he went on to tell me about some New Tribes missionaries from Yorkshire who were 'ok'. He said that missionaries in Papua New Guinea isolate themselves from other expatriates and that's why other expatriates dislike them.

CIA, otherwise why would they need equipment like computers etc. This is a popular view proposed by other critics of SIL.

The Central Intelligence Agency became the popular explanation for the Summer Institute's staying power in government ministries.

(Stoll 1982: 14)

However, although Ukarumpa is more technologically advanced than a rural Papua New Guinean village, from what I observed, much of the technology is not any more advanced than many offices and universities in Britain, for instance. Interestingly, despite his criticisms of SIL, this research student was keen to keep in touch as a means of accessing the SIL library for his research. Therefore, despite having many criticisms of SIL he was not above using SIL's resources for his own benefit.

The number of people present in Ukarumpa at any one time varies a great deal as Language personnel in particular are coming in and out of Ukarumpa on a regular basis as their work takes them out of Ukarumpa for lengthy periods of time. Various workshops are held in Ukarumpa and at the BTA Training Centre throughout the year and the number of people in Ukarumpa also depends on whether workshops are running as participants from all over Papua New Guinea attend. There is also a fairly constant turnover rate in general with new people arriving each year and others leaving on furloughs/leave or 'going finish'. In June/July especially, there is usually a mass exodus as many families leave on furlough, leave or 'go finish' when their children graduate from the High School. There are also a number of SIL members who are rarely in Ukarumpa for any length of time such as those who run the various regional centres in Wewak, Kokopo, Madang, Lae and Port Moresby, to name a few,

and also staff at the Pacific Orientation Course (POC). During the day and evening numbers vary also as during the day many local villagers come into Ukarumpa to work as *haus meris* (literally 'house women' in Melanesian Pidgin), doing housework for SIL members, or yard men/yard *meris* to work as gardeners. Local people also sell produce at the market and come in to buy items from different departments such as petrol and kerosene from the Industrial department.

### **'Spiritual life'**

All members of SIL are Christian Protestants and many of the SIL employees also call themselves 'Christians' as SIL-PNG prefers to employ 'Christians'. Therefore, many community events are centred round 'spiritual' activities. Most people will attend Sunday morning services held at the Meeting House. There are two services on a Sunday morning, the Pidgin *Lotu* (Melanesian Pidgin for worship or church) service and the English service. At eight thirty a.m. the Pidgin *Lotu* service starts and is conducted in *Tok Pisin*. The congregation is usually comprised of a mixture of SIL members, SIL employees and often Papua New Guinean 'language helpers' of SIL translators and Papua New Guinean participants of the various workshops held in Ukarumpa and BTA. The service usually starts with the congregation singing *Tok Pisin* worship songs (although a few English songs are sometimes included). A music band made up of SIL employees accompanies the songs. After the songs there is usually a time for new people to introduce themselves to the congregation. New POC groups are expected to attend both the Pidgin *Lotu* service and the following English service to introduce themselves to both congregations. Those who are leaving are often

invited to the front and asked to say something about what they will be doing next and then different members of the congregation gather around them to pray. After this there is again a time of singing during which the monetary offering is given. The money is given to different groups each week, such as Kainantu Hospital or other missions. The Pidgin *Lotu* congregation also financially supports a number of Papua New Guinean missionaries. After this, at about nine thirty, the children leave for their various Sunday Schools. The High School students have a teen church service called Soul Purpose, which is very similar to the adults' church services with singing and a sermon, usually by an adult SIL member. At the Pidgin *Lotu* service different people each week give the sermon and these can include SIL members, SIL employees, visiting Papua New Guinean pastors or returning Papua New Guinean missionaries.

After the Pidgin *Lotu* service the English morning service starts at ten forty-five. Again this includes singing, a monetary offering and a sermon. The exact style of singing (which varies from contemporary Christian songs to traditional hymns) and format of the service differs according to who has organised and is leading the service. Different groups each week organise the service, such as the Korean 'community' and different Bible study groups. The sermon is generally given by SIL members or members of other missions. The English Sunday services are organised overall by the Spiritual Welfare Committee but the Pidgin *Lotu* does not come under their jurisdiction. The English service is considered to be a 'family service' therefore children are present throughout the service unlike the Pidgin *Lotu* service. The congregation is mainly comprised of SIL members and there are very few Papua New Guineans who attend



despite many of the SIL employees speaking fluent English. The service usually finishes around twelve o'clock or a little after.

There are also a number of SIL people who attend local churches outside of Ukarumpa such as in Ukarumpa village. Many employees from the nearby area attend these churches also. The local churches are often in *Tok Pisin* and have Papua New Guinean pastors. Some members also attend the morning service at the Aiyura National High School, which is near Aviation and the Aiyura International Primary School. SIL members are often encouraged to attend local churches in order to forge closer links with local Christians.

On Sunday evenings another service is held which also varies from week to week. From six o'clock to six thirty there is a time of singing 'worship' songs and many people come only for the singing and leave afterwards. From six thirty to around seven thirty the main service is held. The evening service can include 'testimonies' given by new POC graduates and other new people, where they tell the congregation how they became Christians and what 'led' them to join SIL and come to Papua New Guinea. Some evening services are an opportunity for translation and literacy teams from different regions report back on how their work is progressing. Other services have visiting missionaries from other missions speaking about their work. The High School students also lead a 'Youth service' every so often. Usually during the evening service High School students go to youth groups run by various adults in the community, which can consist of Bible studies, discussions on issues or debates or a social occasion. Mainly SIL members rather than SIL employees attend the evening service and the attendance is considerably less than at the morning services.

During the week various 'Bible study' groups are held which many people go to. Most Bible study groups are a mixture of people from different age groups although there are a few Bible study groups that are only for women or only for men. However, there is not much mixing between SIL members and SIL employees as the employees have their own 'national' Bible study group. During a Bible study the group generally meets in someone's house and it is often in a different house each week. The people who are hosting the study usually provide some kind of refreshment. Groups will either be studying a particular book in the Bible or have a devotional book, which looks at different themes. Bible studies are generally led by one person in particular who asks questions to start the discussion although there are groups where no one specifically 'leads' the study. Bible studies also have a 'prayer time' where they pray for different members in the group. Some groups do not study the Bible at all but are just 'prayer' groups.

The Branch also organises a 'Half-Day of Prayer' each month where members of the community gather together and pray for different issues, both within the community and worldwide. Most departments, except for the schools, are closed for the morning and usually SIL employees attend the Half-Day of Prayer. However, the Half-Day of Prayer is not as well attended as the Sunday morning church services.

One group where SIL members and SIL employees mix is the National Ladies Fellowship, which meets on Friday nights. The Fellowship is mainly comprised of Papua New Guinean women but a number of SIL women go also. The Fellowship is usually conducted in *Tok Pisin*. During the evening they usually sing *Tok*

*Pisin* worship songs and then have someone speaking on various topics or have a Bible quiz. The Ladies Fellowship is also very involved in charity work such as taking clothes, food and water to Kainantu Hospital and visiting the patients there.

### **Social Events**

Aside from church services and Bible studies there are numerous social activities for members of the community to get involved in, which both SIL members and SIL employees attend. Many social events revolve around the schools, particularly the High School. Students put on band and choir concerts once a term (four times a year) and usually a play or a musical once a year. A marching band was organised for a few years and the students put on a show for the community and also went on to perform at the Goroka Show and the Pacific Commonwealth Games in Lae. Musical recitals are sometimes organised where children perform for their parents and others. Adult members of the community also organise concerts such as the Classical concert and the Jazz concert. The High School also organises a 'Carnival' once a year that is similar to a small fairground with various stalls and even a small Ferris wheel and a Flying Fox ride. The annual Sports Day competition between the two school sports teams also attracts both parents and other members of the community. There are also other sports competitions held with other schools around Papua New Guinea including both National high schools and other mission schools such as the New Tribes high school, Numonohi Christian Academy. Each year the parents of the eleventh and twelfth grade students organise a 'Banquet' for them that is very reminiscent of American high school proms. The Teen Centre is decorated according to a theme, which is a well-kept secret

each year, and the parents organise a meal and entertainment including a play. Many members of the community gather before the event to watch the teenagers walk in. The day after the official Banquet the Teen Centre is open for others to come and see the decorations and watch the entertainment. Friday 'hamburger' night at the Teen Centre is also a big weekly social event. This is run and catered by the High School students with help from adults in the community. There is usually a long queue at the Teen Centre on Friday nights of people waiting to put in their orders and the Teen Centre itself is full of people. The Teen Centre is often open on Saturday nights as well as a place for the teenagers to socialise under the chaperone of adult volunteers.

Other social events are organised around meals. Groups such as the Dutch, the Koreans, the Germans, the British and so on, often organise various potluck meals or barbeques. Various groups, in particular, the high school students, put on meals to fund raise for events such as 'retreats'. For instance, a meal might be advertised for Valentine's Day at the High School or the Teen Centre, where members of the community buy tickets to attend. Others run small catering businesses for profit. For example, one Korean family took take-away orders at the weekends. A high school student did rotisserie chickens on Friday nights, in competition with the Teen Centre hamburger night. Another couple who ran a Children's Home organised café evenings where they would have tables set out with board games, candles, music playing and hot chocolate, coffee, tea and home-baking for sale, which was advertised as a chance for people to relax and socialise. The SIL employees organised a *mumu* for the whole Ukarumpa community to show their appreciation for

the school fees fund. People returning after being away from Ukarumpa for a lengthy period of time and new members are often given a 'meal list', which is a posted in the Post Office bulletin board for people to sign up to have them over for a meal. Much socialising is done through people inviting each other to their houses for meals.

Other events include an annual craft fair where both SIL members and employees sell handcrafted items. One year a mother and daughter fashion show was organised where various mothers and daughters showed off their handmade clothes. The Primary School sometimes organises a book parade, where the children dress up as various characters in books and parade around the Ukarumpa centre. Horse riding is also a popular activity and at one point there was a thriving Pony Club. BMX riding was also a big event in the past and members of the community would go watch races at the BMX track. Motorcycles are also popular, especially among young teenage boys, and again races would take place. There are also various sporting activities, such as football (soccer) on the High School oval, tennis and volleyball. One family who were keen rock climbers built a climbing wall outside their house, which was open to members of the community on Saturday mornings. People also go on hikes on the hills outside of Ukarumpa. During my fieldwork a paragliding course was run, which was held on the hills outside Ukarumpa. Another popular activity is *gummying*, which involves going down the river on inner tubes. Children in particular, enjoy swimming in the river. Swing dancing was the new craze among the High School students during my fieldwork and there were a few swing dancing evenings organised for the whole community.

One of the biggest events each year is the dedication of completed New Testaments. These are usually held in the language group that has received the New Testament. Depending on where the dedication is held there is sometimes limited space. For instance, if it is in an allocation that is accessible by helicopter or small plane, the helicopter and planes spend the day transporting people back and forth to the dedication. Other dedications accessible by car have a large number of SIL members attending. For instance, while assisting at the Pacific Orientation Course there was a dedication held in a language group in Madang Province that all the POC teachers and participants went along to.

As shown above, the community provides much of its own entertainment and there are always events going on throughout the year. Some of these events are attended by mainly SIL members but others involve Papua New Guinean SIL employees as well, particularly those whose children attend the SIL schools.

### **Conclusion**

To conclude, this chapter has looked at the history of SIL in Papua New Guinea and particularly the SIL mission station, Ukarumpa. Ukarumpa is often called 'the centre' by the residents and for many SIL members it is central to their life in Papua New Guinea as a place to arrive and depart from. Ukarumpa is also a centre for the work that SIL does, including training Papua New Guineans in the work of literacy and Bible translation. For many language workers especially, Ukarumpa is also a place to return to people of their own 'culture'.



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## *Chapter Two*

### *History of the Land Dispute and Fence*

This chapter looks at the history of the land dispute over the land that Ukarumpa is sited and the events leading to the building of the fence surrounding Ukarumpa. I discuss the debates over the building of the fence and the ways in which the fence is perceived both by SIL members and also Papua New Guinean employees of SIL. The ways in which the fence is discussed identifies the ways in which SIL members relate to local people and the ideals of 'being a missionary'. Although the fence is a very real physical boundary, in many ways it can be seen as more of a symbolic boundary than an effective physical one. It also highlights the imagined boundaries between SIL members and their relationships with local people.

#### **Land Dispute**

The area of land on which Ukarumpa is situated was purchased by the Australian government in the 1950s and was apparently unoccupied at the time. However, it was an area of land considered to be a boundary area between the Tairora and the Gadsup people and according to one informant (Gerald), a former *kia*p (Melanesian Pidgin for patrol officer) and District Officer Lands in the Chimbu Province (now Simbu Province), traditionally boundary areas were uninhabited because they acted as a buffer zone between two enemy tribes and therefore the people did not build houses or occupy the land as they would be more vulnerable on the area at the edge of their territory.



But here, the group nearest to here, are the Tairora, and the group nearest here, to Ukarumpa, from the Gadsup, they were traditional enemies and this had been a fighting ground.

(Lily)

Well, actually in Papua New Guinea people can say neutral land, after all there are people coming up and they are claiming this is mine so there's no, I would say people can say that this is neutral, no one owns but then after a few years if there is development going on then people start coming and then saying this is mine, my grandfather used to be here and he used to plant on this soil, it's just the same that, you know, yeah, it used to be a sort of middle land where people come and fight and just move in and, but then when there was any developments on there, you know, they start come claiming.

(Silas)

Therefore, although the land on which SIL settled was not necessarily occupied in the sense of having houses and gardens on it, it was used as the fighting ground between the Tairoras and the Gadsups, and in some ways, can still be seen to be used as a 'fighting ground'.

According to another informant (Alice), who began work with SIL in 1963, since Independence in 1975 there have been an increase in land disputes across Papua New Guinea and the land which SIL rents from the government has been no exception.

The whole thing started, you see, when we came here the reason why we were able to have this area, we went to the government and we asked if we could find a place, and the reason they gave it was that this was originally fight land between Gadsups and Tairoras and that's why no one was here, because it was, so to speak, neutral ground, and when they wanted to have a battle that's where they came and had it. So when the government took it over here it was vacant so to speak, so we were able to get the lease of it. And the early people in the villages knew that and they came and were

employed here and what not. Then as the country developed, especially around Independence, that's when all the land claims started and the people whose, on whose land Lae was built they claimed two million kina and people elsewhere claimed a hundred million and the road coming through.

'Gerald', a former *kiap* (Australian patrol officer), would say that many of the disputes over land are not necessarily about possession of the land itself but rather are claims for payment for the land.

Yes, there's been a rash of disputes over land. Not so much disputes over land, it's more claims for payment. Because the next generation, they say, we did not get paid for the land. And we, the government will say or the *kiaps* used to say, we know that, your fathers got paid, but the people would say, yes but we didn't get paid and our fathers were tricked into accepting a very low price, because with inflation that price that they got fifty years ago seems very low, and the people tend to look at the improvements that are on the land and they don't take into account that it was the occupier, the lessee, in this case SIL, that spent millions of kina developing the land, and putting roads and houses and electricity, and the new generation kind of thinks, well we weren't paid for all these improvements.

This is reflected in the way that many of these claims are described in Papua New Guinea as 'compensation claims', where the people are compensated in some way for selling their land. 'Compensation claims' in Papua New Guinea are also often used to make amends and resolve disagreements or issues between various parties (cf. Gewertz and Errington 1991).

The land on which Ukarumpa is located was the subject of a land claim dating back to the 1970s between some of the Gadsup speaking people living near Ukarumpa and the government. This did not include all the Gadsups, as the Gadsups are a large language group (in terms of Melanesian languages) of around thirteen thousand people, extending almost to Yonki (see map 1), but rather were

mainly people from Ukarumpa Village, the adjoining village next to the SIL Centre and also some from Anamanampa and Asirangka, the villages near the hills on the other side of the SIL airstrip (see map 1), who were most likely relatives of the Ukarumpa Village people. Other Gadsup villages such as Onamuna, over the mountain from the Coffee Research Institute (CRI - see map 1), did not participate in the compensation claims or in any of the other incidents surrounding the land dispute including the blockade of the SIL Centre.

The claim being made by the Gadsups was that the land around the perimeter of Ukarumpa had not been paid for in the original purchase and that the road around the perimeter of Ukarumpa was the boundary of the lease rather than the Ba'e River and the Ram Creek. According to two informants (Glenys and Lily) who were among the early arrivals in 1957 when SIL first settled in the Aiyura Valley, and 'Alice', who arrived in 1963, the local people at the time of SIL's settlement were happy with the original arrangements and the dispute was instigated mainly by the younger generation.

Twelve years when, ten years or something when the Ukarumpa people really came in. In the beginning we sat down with the heads of the villages, we knew them all personally, I mean I didn't, the women, but the men did and they were all agreed we come and there were all proper agreements and the place was marked around. Well then the younger generation have grown up and grown up with stories that the land, well the story was this road was the boundary. This road here was the boundary and the road down the bottom near the river was the boundary and therefore everything from the road down to the creek here was theirs and this type of thing. And it took a long while before they could finally, finally read the lease because the government had changed hands from the Australian government to PNG and they barricaded this all off and we were going to be taken over and all the rest of it, which was a very nasty time. But you see the, when it

was finally, documents found, the creek was the boundary. The river is the boundary.

(Glenys)

Oh yes, there wasn't that feeling of, you know the greed, that has really come in the last, maybe ten, but I'd say great change in five years. Where young people are growing up where people are starting to think, oh yeah, that land is ours, but whereas initially there was no problem. I mean, Gadsup and Tairora, you know, have always been in this area. Not all the Gadsup and all the Tairora, you know, those who live next to each other or traditional enemies and that goes within the Tairora too, that's true. The traditional enemies are those right next to you, say fifteen minutes away, from where we live out at Suwaira. So that's the traditional enemy right there, the next-door neighbour. But here, the group nearest to here, are the Tairora, and the group nearest here, to Ukarumpa, from the Gadsup, they were traditional enemies and this had been a fighting ground.

(Lily)

And what it is now is that a generation has grown up, most of the old people who were here in the '50s have died off, you see the leaders who were thirty/forty, important men, they're all dead. And the men of influence who are now fifties, well they were only little kids when this started, so they wouldn't know too much about what it was like beforehand.

(Alice)

'Glenys' also believes that the population of Ukarumpa Village has grown during her time in Papua New Guinea and when she arrived in 1957 it consisted of only four or five houses and was known as the 'little pig village', implying that it was not of much consequence in relation to the other Gadsup villages.

Oh, outside people coming in, lots of them. People come in to work here and then intermarried in with the Gadsups and a lot of the other Gadsup people have moved into this village because this village was not a main Ukarumpa village at all. When we first came it was, there were very little population around the place.

Several informants say that one of the reasons for the growth of the local population is the presence of SIL in the Aiyura Valley, which has attracted more people looking for employment and the other attractions of living near to big expatriate community.

It's the effect of having a big expat community like this. It's detrimental to the villages round about.

(Alice)

SIL provides services to the local people usually available in towns, such as selling petrol and kerosene and offering medical care as well as providing paid employment.

Although the land dispute had been going on for many years it was only in the 1990s that events became more serious. Previously, when local people came to SIL to ask for compensation for the land, the Directors' policy was to tell the people to go to the government, as SIL only leased the land and for many years the people accepted this and did not persist with asking SIL for compensation. In later years the Gadsup people began to ask SIL for help in making their claims to the government and SIL obliged by assisting them with phone calls, faxes and flights to Port Moresby to make their claims. However, the Gadsups' claims did not meet with success and in the 1990s they began to make threats to block off parts of the SIL Centre if the government did not pay them compensation, in an attempt to put pressure on the government. Threats were also made to forcibly remove SIL members from the Centre. During the dispute events came to a head on March 29, 1995 when the Gadsups began a blockade of Ukarumpa that lasted for about two weeks. SIL then arranged for the Minister of Lands to come and speak to the people on April 11, 1995 and he promised them one hundred thousand kina

and a block of land in Kainantu in compensation payment. Shortly after this meeting the blockade was lifted on April 13, 1995. The Director of SIL at the time of the dispute told me:

I was never privy to when they received their payment, but it did come in one lump sum. I believe it came within a month after they lifted the blockade because we heard about conflicts on how to divide up the money. They also received title to a block of land because later in the year they asked if we would help them develop it. We said we would help them by providing consultant help for any building they wanted to do and we would sell them any materials they needed at SIL rates. Nothing ever came of this, and I'm not totally sure why. One reason might have been that the money simply went to too many people and they all spent it. So, the total was diluted very quickly. Another reason might have been that they never could agree on what to do with the land, what to build on it.

Nevertheless, since receiving payment for their claim the Gadsup people have no longer been disputing the land. According to a local Papua New Guinean man who works for the ICW (Inter-Cultural Work) Department (Silas), the Gadsups were satisfied with their payment.

**So the Gadsups aren't making any claims anymore?**

No they aren't, they've already got their share.

**And they're happy with that share?**

They're happy, oh yeah they're happy, hundred thousand is quite a lot of money, yeah.

However, during my fieldwork, another dispute regarding the land that SIL is leasing was underway between the Tairora people and the government. Similar to the Gadsups the Tairoras have been making sporadic claims for compensation for many years but it has only been since the Gadsups received their claim that they have become more

organised about approaching the government with the Tairoras' claim.

The Tairora are asking for 1,000,000 Kina for the whole centre. The reasons are that they are the real landowners and because the Gadsup got 100,000 for the bit they had dispute over the whole centre must be worth a million. I think if the Tairora get that sort of compensation the Gadsup will start another claim. There is also a dispute over the airstrip, CRI, Primary School too.

(Brian Hodgkin, ADLA)

Yes. Well it was only the Gadsups that were making the trouble. So then when all that happened then the Tairoras started making their fuss at the other end. Of course, originally, at least according to the records, this was Gadsup and Tairora fight land so therefore Gadsups always said it was theirs, Tairoras always said it was theirs. And then the government had already taken it over and it was government land. Before SIL ever came in.

(Glenys)

Like the Gadsups the Tairoras are also a large language group of around thirteen thousand three hundred people and again it is not all the Tairoras involved in the land claim but only those living near Ukarumpa.

**So is it just a small group of the Tairoras and the Gadsups who are involved in the land dispute or is it all of them?**

No, those just around.

**Just close by?**

Close by. It doesn't go out, you see we live out at Suwaira, twenty miles away, they don't even know what's going on. But it's here and just those who are related up on the hill, up above here, this relationship.

(Lily', who worked with the Gadsups and Tairoras)

Again as in the dispute with the Gadsups, SIL have been assisting the Tairoras in obtaining legal representation for their claims but at the time of my fieldwork this dispute with the Tairoras had not yet

been resolved and like the Gadsups the Tairoras were also threatening to close the Centre unless they were paid one million kina in compensation.

Although the disputes over the land leased to SIL are officially between the people making the claim and the Papua New Guinea government, since SIL are the people actually physically present on the disputed land, Ukarumpa has often been the target for various threats and security problems at the height of these disputes, as shown above. It was during the land dispute between the Gadsups and the government that increasing security problems in Ukarumpa gave rise to the building of a number of chain-link fences around several SIL properties, concluding with the construction of a perimeter fence around Ukarumpa and the BTA Training Centre. During this time the fencing of individual properties, particularly for those living on disputed land, were also considered but recommendations by the Executive Committee (EC) at the time were to postpone such fence-building until the land issue was settled, in case the fencing of these properties caused offence to the local landowners and could therefore potentially lead to more hostility. However, fences were later built around some individual properties within the larger perimeter fence that had particular problems with security, for instance some of the properties on Pittman Point, close to Ukarumpa Village.

Threats connected to the land dispute certainly gave SIL members the incentive to begin building the various fences, however, several informants would argue that it was not the land dispute in itself that precipitated the construction of the fences but rather increasing criminal activity in general and even without the land dispute they



would have eventually needed to build the perimeter fence. In fact proposals to build the perimeter fence were made before the blockade of the SIL Centre related to the land dispute. They believe there has been an increase in crime in Papua New Guinea overall during their time in the country.

I think the fence was built because of the increased criminal activity. The land compensation claims may have had a peripheral effect, but mainly because the young people were angry that they weren't getting any compensation, so they took it out on us by increasing criminal activity. But I think the main impetus for building both the High School fence and the Center Fence was the increased criminal activity, including several incidents of people with guns on the center. (former Director of SIL-PNG)

Claims about land, I don't think are related to the fence. Land claims and people staking their areas and saying this was or wasn't in a certain era in the past. I don't think that has anything to do with the fence. But we were here when the whole idea, when the people were canvassed and it certainly was a distinct issue at the time and separated, you know, not separated people, but there were definitely people on either end of the decision.

**About putting the fence up?**

Yes. But it was at a time when crime was coming to such a peak that I think, well for ourselves, even though we had been against it, we could be, went the way of the fence, and were quite happy with it.

(Mary)

That the fence, one thing was about the security reasons, because at this point the security was increasing, it happens everywhere but it's just safe in the fence because we are, I mean the criminal activity has increased in the last four or five years compared to the past in the early '80s you know, this criminal activity has been increasing so that is the main reason they having troubles and putting the fence up.

(Silas)

Well, the thing was, before and afterwards, what it, what it finally came down to was, we have this situation of constant petty theft and raskals

moving around and we had armed hold ups and all sorts of things. This is going to continue, it's not going to get better, it's going to get worse, we need to do something about it. Putting up a fence may not be a good thing to do, it may be misinterpreted. On the other hand we have to do something, this is a developing pattern throughout the country, everyone's finding they have to do it and so we just, we may not like to do it but it's one of the things that you have to, you just have to.

(Alice)

This is a view supported by a number of authors who have commented on the increasing levels of criminal activity in Papua New Guinea, particularly in towns. For instance, Gewertz and Errington discuss the experience of crime for the Chambri, as both perpetrators and victims.

Life in Wewak and in other towns was more than hard; it was, at times, dangerous. There was a widespread perception that crime, particularly in the towns, was rampant. The Chambri experience of crime, as perpetrators and victims, was probably roughly typical. During the six months of our research in 1987, in Wewak alone, three Chambri were arrested for two separate thefts, one robbery at knife point, the other burglary, and three Chambri suffered attack: one rape, one stabbing, and one death as a result of beating.

(Gewertz and Errington 1991: 106)

Those Chambri remaining in Wewak recognized, too, that one would be safer from criminal attack in the home villages than in Wewak. And this was so even though at Chambri there were occasional acts of vandalism and confrontations between youths of different villages.

(Ibid: 106)

These perceptions, we will argue, were partially responsible for what was being experienced as a serious problem with law and order. During our most recent research there was a distressing increase in crime in Papua New Guinea as individuals (including, as we have seen, Chambri youths) relied

on their own kin or village networks for protection when they attacked those with better access to resources than they.

(Ibid: 190)

Public opinion ... is that crime has been increasing and that particular types of offenses, crimes of violence and rape, have been increasing faster than others. All over the country, people in different walks of life feel that there is a law and order problem that has worsened during the years of independence. Rural and urban people alike see towns as the worst places for crime and see crime spreading into the countryside along the roads and under the influence of urban models.

(Morauta 1986: 7).

Crime is usually attributed to what is known as '*raskol* gangs'. *Raskol* is the Tok Pisin word for 'criminal' and can be used in reference to any criminal from petty thieves to gang rapists and murderers.

The perpetrators of the crime wave that began in the mid-1970s and has since spread throughout the country are known in PNG as *raskols*, a Tok-Pisin term meaning "criminal." As Harris [1988] notes in his examination of raskolism in the country's capital, Port Moresby, the term *raskol* first emerged in the mid-1960s to describe young male migrants to urban centers who were given to spontaneous, high-spirited acts of petty crime. Though the term's English overtones of youthful scamper are still applicable to some modern raskols, nowadays it captures a more unfortunate reality, referring to a member of a predatory gang given to organized thieving, rape, and murder [Morauta 1986; Hart Nibbrig and Hart Nibbrig 1991].

(Roscoe 2004: 60)

While steal men at Bomana may wish to represent themselves as cowboys, they are more popularly described, among the public of Papua New Guinea, as '*raskals*'. The term derives from the English word '*rascal*', which suggests a paternal attitude to their offending behaviour or naughtiness (the word took hold after a colonial judge in the 1960s labelled the man he sentenced as a rascal). It implies male youthfulness and incorrigibility, but perhaps also a certain fondness or reluctant attraction. The rascal is a national discursive

figure, constantly represented in newspapers and media and appropriated by many interests. 'He' is the ultimate image of illicit movement.

(Reed 2003: 71)

In Papua New Guinea in recent years, the reticulating migration of educated youth between countryside and town has contributed what is popularly known as the youth or 'school leaver' problem. These youths move in loosely constructed groups and make themselves known as raskols by their acts of violence, theft and gluttony. Their behavior not only transgresses moral and legal rules but also exceeds the limits of conventional forms of violation: stores are broken into in order to steal frozen chicken, the bodies of murder victims are cut into pieces, the recriminations of old men are dismissed with a curse and the theft of their clothing, a series of rapes of pregnant women occur over several months, robberies and hold-ups are executed with theatrical flourishes, paychecks are used wholly for the purchase of alcohol, food is devoured and then regurgitated in mockery of the activities of ceremonial feasts.<sup>2</sup> These excessive actions are summarily judged as evidence that *ol raskols nogat sem* - that they have no shame.

(Sykes 1999: 157)

*Raskols* are generally associated with young men, although Kulick mentions a few stories about rascal women known as *ol raskol-meri* (Kulick 1993: 13-14). However, he comments 'In yet another example of the way in which the symbolism surrounding rascals inverts normal associations, a detail always mentioned in any story involving a *raskol-meri* is that she wears *longpela trausis*, i.e. long trousers - a symbol par excellence of maleness that no woman would normally ever wear. This gender-bending dimension of the *raskol-meri* is regarded by the villagers as excessively deviant and extreme, and it seems to inhibit female identification with these women' (Ibid: 13-14). Therefore, *raskol-meris* are seen as acting in a way that is unusual for women to behave.

SIL members and Papua New Guinean employees of SIL were not unique in discussing *raskol* activity. As Kulick and Roscoe point out, *raskol* activity is topic of discussion throughout Papua New Guinea.

Anyone who has lived in or visited Papua New Guinea knows that a prominent issue under continual discussion there is that of violent crimes committed by gangs of young men known as 'rascals'. Rascals are portrayed in everyday talk, mass media debates and government funded reports as a threat to the people, economy and political stability of the country.

(Kulick 1993: 9)

Today, *raskols* constitute a major topic of gossip among national and expatriate populations alike. The country's two daily newspapers are seldom without a graphic account of their latest atrocities, and beyond the nation's shores, sensational accounts on the international wires have conspired to present a picture of black savagery run amok.

(Roscoe 2004: 60)

Although the land dispute is a separate issue to *raskol* activity, the people involved in the land dispute, particularly those who have harassed or made threats to SIL members (for instance going around to their houses and threatening to force them out of their houses) are seen as being like *raskols*. The land dispute is seen as giving an excuse for *raskols* to commit crimes.

This perception of rising levels of crime in general being the main reason behind the need for a perimeter fence is reflected in the fact that, although the land dispute between the Gadsups and the government has been resolved, many of the fence cuts, break-ins and petty theft since then have still involved Gadsup people, particularly young men and boys from Ukarumpa Village. This also would indicate that the land dispute itself is not the reason behind *raskol* activity in Ukarumpa and against SIL members and Papua New Guinean employees. During my fieldwork there was one serious

incident in particular involving people from Ukarumpa Village and several of the Guard Dog security guards where one of the guards was badly injured. Similarly, there has been an increase in armed hold ups of cars and PMVs (Public Motor Vehicles) across the country and other compounds have also been subject to armed robbery and rapes including the nurses' quarters at Kainantu Hospital. Therefore, although the security problems were related to some degree to the land dispute, it was not the only factor in the increasing safety concerns in Ukarumpa.

### **High School Fence**

The first SIL fence to be built was at the Aiyura International Primary School, which was built a number of years before the other fences. It was an eight feet chain link fence with barbed wire at the top and the top part leaning out. In November 1993 it was proposed to build a similar fence around the Ukarumpa International High School in response to security problems including petty theft, vandalism of school property and harassment of female high school students by local village boys and young men including touching, pinching and verbal insults, such as during the girls' PE classes. There were also a number of confrontations between High School teachers and local men armed with bush knives (machetes) and sticks. The Executive Committee (EC) put forward three proposals for the High School fence in March 1994. The first was to fence the entire school, including the High School sports oval, which many other community members and local people used on a regular basis. In conjunction with this it was also proposed at an earlier meeting to build a second sports facility for the use of the wider community to help with public relations. The second proposal was to have a U-

shaped fence with the opening located behind the post office and the third proposal was to have a combination of partial fencing and gates attached to the existing buildings. (Confidential Minutes of the PNG Branch EC, February/March 1994: 20) There were several arguments against the partial fencing the main one being that the gate system would not prevent break-and-entry and vandalism of the building, especially at nighttime. The majority were in favour of the full fencing and as a result, the Ukarumpa International High School fence was completed in 1994 and was an eight feet chain link full perimeter fence around the entire school including the High School sports oval with the main entrance located behind the Post Office. The gates were left open during the day from 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. during term time and also opened on Saturdays for various sports and other events with security guards nearby watching the gates.

There were various arguments both for and against the building of the High School fence. One argument for the fence was that most other schools in the country were fenced, including the nearby Aiyura National High School, Professor Schindler's School and Kainantu High School. During my fieldwork I spent two weeks at an Alphabet Development Workshop at Laloki High School near Port Moresby, which was also surrounded by a chain-link fence with another fence within the perimeter fence, surrounding the girls' dormitories. As Gewertz and Errington and Roscoe report, attacks on schools were not uncommon.

Chambri were very upset, for example, when their children at two provincial high schools were sent home in the middle of the semester as the result of criminal youth operating from the safety of their local villages and under the protection of their own wantok. In one case, the entire faculty composed of both indigenous and expatriate teachers left after a night of

systematic robbery in which each of their houses was raided and their belongings stolen at knife point; in the other, all of the school equipment had been stolen. Rape and other forms of assault upon teachers, their families and students at such schools were commonly reported occurrences. As these cases suggest, it was especially when they were without the company of kin or others of their network that prosperous Papua New Guineans as well as Western residents and visitors were vulnerable to locally based banditry and assault.

(Gewertz and Errington 1991: 190-191)

In August 1998, eighteen female students at Okapa High School in the Eastern Highlands were raped by about thirteen masked men who had broken into their dormitory armed with a rifle and knives (*Post-Courier* 1998).

(Roscoe 2004: 60)

Before the building of the High School fence many local people and SIL members walked through the High School on a regular basis and one reason given for the fence was to limit this travel through the campus and the potential for verbal and physical abuse of students. Those arguing against the fence felt that it represented a 'ghetto mentality', which was a mindset they thought Ukarumpa should avoid. The effects of having a fence around the High School were seen as having a significant psychological impact on the Ukarumpa community, mainly of a negative nature. The reasons given for this were that since the High School was located within Ukarumpa, unlike the fence at the Primary School, which was more isolated, the High School fence would be viewed in a more negative way, presumably because it would be more visible and within Ukarumpa itself. However, although the physical presence of the fence was not seen in a positive light, it did have the effect of making teachers and



students feel more secure within the school and also giving parents reassurance regarding their children's safety whilst at school.

The effects on the neighbouring communities around Ukarumpa were also considered especially in terms of what image the Ukarumpa community would be portraying to them with the building of a fence. Some members felt that the building of a fence around the High School would portray a negative image to the local community. The proposed building of the fence was therefore discussed with local community members as to how they would view a fence around the High School. According to reports to the EC the local people were not against SIL having a fence around the High School buildings, but a fence around the High School sports oval was not approved of. (Confidential Minutes of the PNG Branch EC, February/March 1994: 1) Before the construction of the fence, the oval was available for the use of local people, especially for weekend sports, but the construction of the fence meant that use of the oval was restricted. However, after the High School fence was built there were apparently no major complaints about it from people in the valley.

One reason given for building the fence was to protect High School property from vandalism and petty theft, however some members argued that if the main reason for constructing the fence was a property security issue then in allowing a fence to be built around the High School but not around individual properties, then the security of High School property was considered to be more important than the security of individual members' properties. However, for the teachers and students at the High School and parents of the students, the fence was not merely to protect the High

School property but also to protect the students and teachers. I would argue that what prompted the building of the fence around the High School was not so much the petty theft and vandalism, which was just as much in evidence among other department buildings and individuals' houses, but the perceived threat to the safety of the students, particularly the female students. As Gewertz and Errington attest, rape and other forms of assault were common occurrences (1991: 191) and the separate fence around the girls' dormitories at Laloki High School shows that the safety of female students was seen as requiring greater protection than that of male students.

The importance SIL members place on the safety of their children can also be seen in the more recent plans to build a new Primary School within the security of the perimeter fence. For many years the Primary School has been located outside Ukarumpa next to Aviation (see map 1) and primary age children and Primary School teachers have a school bus that runs between the Centre and the school. However, with the increase in hold ups on the roads around Papua New Guinea, especially the road between Ukarumpa and Kainantu, parents have begun to worry about the safety of their children travelling to school and within the school. Therefore, a new Primary School enclosed by an eight feet chain link fence with a solid eight foot sheet metal fence where it meets the perimeter fence is being built inside Ukarumpa on the edge of the fence in the place where the Townsend and Baptist Children's Homes were located previously (see map 1). Again this created some controversy, as some SIL members believed it is an unnecessary expense, especially considering that the present Primary School already has good

facilities, whereas others do not feel their children are safe until the new school is built. However, as a result of an increase in security incidents there was less disagreement regarding the move. The present Primary School is being sold to a businessman who plans to either develop it or keep it as a school. The safety of children was also an issue in the construction of the perimeter fence as at the time of the proposed fence, since several members said they would leave Papua New Guinea if a fence was not built, as they felt their families were no longer safe without a fence.

### **Perimeter Fence**

From the beginning of 1995 security problems began to get progressively worse and included break-ins, armed robberies and assaults on SIL members and employees, including a number of rapes<sup>13</sup>. According to visitors to Ukarumpa from SIL International in September 1995, over the two years leading up to 1995 the PNG Branch had apparently had more serious incidents than any other SIL Branch in the world during those two years with eighty-one serious incidents in 1994 and eighty-two in the first eight months of 1995. (Confidential Minutes of the Extraordinary SIL PNG EC 11<sup>th</sup> September, 1995:13, 15) Comparisons were made with the Columbia and Peru Branches although as one member pointed out, the

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<sup>13</sup> During my fieldwork a 9 year-old daughter of a Papua New Guinean SIL employee was abducted while playing near her house and molested. One of the Members Forum email threads mentions that several SIL children have also been the victims of sexual assault either in Ukarumpa or in the village. A high school female student was raped during a school retreat in Mt Hagen while I was on fieldwork. There were also reports of some Papua New Guinean women getting raped including a woman from Ukarumpa Village and the daughter of a nurse at Kainantu Hospital. On a more personal level, my classmate from high school was gang raped while riding horses with her male friend on the Ridge, just outside of Ukarumpa. Another classmate's mother was also raped while out walking her dog in Madang.

difference between the PNG Branch and the Columbia Branch in particular, was that Ukarumpa was experiencing criminal activity whereas Columbia was experiencing terrorist activity. A number of the security incidents were seen by some SIL members as deliberate attempts by the villagers to provoke a confrontation with SIL members. Some these security problems were related to the land dispute and others were also in relation to employment issues. For instance, employment issues triggered incidents such as a 'riot' at the Post Office in 1995. At the time, the Ukarumpa villagers had been coming to SIL with demands that SIL give them more employment opportunities, however, because some of the villagers were involved in the various break-ins, robberies and assaults, SIL were reluctant to employ them. Some members felt that by employing the villagers they would be seen to be rewarding the *raskols* by giving in to their demands for employment and also that by refusing to employ them it would put pressure on them to stop the break-ins and robberies. However, other members thought that the local people would not understand the connection between the crimes committed by the villagers and SIL's hesitance to employ them and therefore they would not understand why SIL was refusing to give them employment. Local men were actually employed by SIL as security guards but SIL members were beginning to question the efficacy of having only local men on the security staff because of their kin relationships to the villagers. In later years, when outside security firms were hired, such as Guard Dog Security, the men hired were all from other areas in the country, and only spent two weeks at a time in Ukarumpa before another group came to relieve them, to prevent them developing relationships with the local people.

As anxieties regarding security became a primary concern of many members, SIL began to address the security issues in several ways. More security men were hired to patrol the Pittman Point Road/Groves Avenue junction area (see map 1), the area closest to Ukarumpa Village, on a twenty-four hour basis. These men were still local men but employed from villages other than Ukarumpa Village. An eleven p.m. to five a.m. curfew was enforced, which meant that no one was supposed to be on foot outside his or her home between those hours. Women and girls were required to have an adult male escort for protection or be in a vehicle when travelling after dark. It was also proposed to expand the neighbourhood watch programme, which involved SIL men patrolling the Centre at night. However, some members expressed concern over the neighbourhood watch programme as it was felt that men on night patrol would be ineffective and in fact be in danger if confronted by armed *raskols*. 'Casual wanderers', those who were on the Centre for no apparent reason, unlike employees, language helpers, yard men, *haus meris* and so on, were also increasingly viewed with suspicion and considered to be 'trespassers' and potential *raskols*. Controlling 'casual wanderers' and restricting access to the Centre became one of the major concerns. It was during this period that building a fence around the Centre was suggested, similar to those that had been built around SIL centres in Columbia and Peru.

When the construction of a perimeter fence was first proposed there was a mixed response among the Ukarumpa community. Results from a survey on the fence proposal in September 1995 were as follows:

1<sup>st</sup> option - no fence (27 votes)

## HISTORY OF THE LAND DISPUTE AND FENCE

2<sup>nd</sup> option – perimeter fence (some variations to the path of this fence are possible) (57 votes)

3<sup>rd</sup> option – partial perimeter fence starting at the Construction Department, going all the way round and stopping at the Printshop. Several letters of protest were received from residents that would have been left outside of such a fence. (23 votes)

4<sup>th</sup> option – interior fencing to prevent criminals slipping through yards. (11 votes)

5<sup>th</sup> option – neighbourhood fencing (4 votes)

6<sup>th</sup> option – individual home-owner fencing (which could be required by the Branch) (15 votes)

(Confidential Minutes of the Extraordinary SIL PNG EC, 11<sup>th</sup> September, 1995)

As seen in this survey the majority of people who responded were in favour of a full perimeter fence. Employees of SIL also held a meeting to discuss the fence and the Security Manager, a Papua New Guinean man, said that the Security Department needed a fence in order to be able to do their job effectively. In fact employees living on the Pittman Point road, near Ukarumpa Village, were also experiencing problems such as break-ins, petty theft and destruction of their gardens perhaps even more so than other SIL members due to their proximity to Ukarumpa Village.

Yes, employees' houses have, some have been, well mostly for those who have chickens, have been broken into and their chickens taken and their gardens have been yeah, yeah they have stolen from their gardens, which was not good. And clothes have been taken were taken off their clotheslines as well. I don't think when they come in they are only coming in for you know, *waitskins*, I think they are coming in for everybody.

(Anna, SIL employee)

Some of the employees living in Ukarumpa were from the Aiyura Valley whilst others were from other areas in Papua New Guinea.

Employees living on Centre were those who worked in the various SIL departments rather than casual workers such as yardmen and *haus meris* who were all from the nearby villages. At one point during the construction of the fence employees were under the impression that the employee housing would be located outside the fence and they were anxious that their housing also be included within the fence, which they eventually were.

The type of fence to be built was also a topic of debate. Some felt that a fence would not keep people out but having a barbed wire fence, similar to the one around Aviation, would at least help to delineate SIL's property and mark the boundary. Most of the people who responded to the survey were in favour of a chain link fence however others thought that if a fence was to be built, it should be a solid metal sheet fence rather than a chain link one as some members thought that a chain link fence would not be effective in keeping 'hardened criminals' out. They cited the example of the fence around the Mission Aviation Fellowship (MAF) in Mount Hagen who changed from having a chain link fence to solid metal sheeting instead. In later years when the fence around the BTA Training Centre was built a solid metal sheet fence was built at the outer end, near the river, and the fence around the new Primary School will also be a solid metal sheet one. On the original fence the top part of the fence was facing outward with barbed wire attached to make it difficult for *raskols* to climb over the fence. However, *raskols* have still been able to cut through the fence using wire cutters and since the construction of the fence, there has still been a large amount of fence cuts and break-ins, which have led some members to question the effectiveness of the chain link fence. As 'Lily' stated,

Yeah, the fence has, it has helped, you know. And I wish it were a little more secure you know. A little electricity in it or something else.

More recently, angle irons facing inward with barbed wire attached are being added in an attempt to prevent *raskols* from escaping from the security guards once they have entered the Centre both to be able to retrieve the stolen items and apprehend the *raskols*. For those members who were concerned about insulating themselves from the local community a solid metal fence would have been a more physical reminder of this than a chain link fence.

The cost of the fence was also an important factor in the type of fence to be constructed and in the decision to go ahead with the construction. For instance, a solid sheet metal fence would have been much more expensive than a chain-link fence. The eventual project proposal for funding also did not include such 'extra' options as guard towers and security lights. The means by which the fence was to be paid for was also a major topic of debate. Several different options were considered by the membership. The first was to raise the Centre Services Fees, which all members living on the Centre paid each month, however, some people objected and said the fees should be used to pay for general security items but not for the construction of the fence. The second option was to pass extraordinary legislation and the third was to openly charge a levy or tax. SIL-PNG also looked into applying for a loan from SIL International and paying it back through these various means. In the end, what eventually happened was that SIL-PNG put together a project proposal applying to SIL International for project funding to pay for the fence and through a project sponsored by a group of



Wycliffe Associates<sup>14</sup> in the United States the bulk of the money, around US\$250,000, was raised in about three months. The initial cost of constructing the perimeter fence was in the end between US\$250,000 to US\$300,000. In the proposal it was made clear that a fence was necessary for the continuation of the work of Bible translation in Papua New Guinea, which was an important factor in gaining funding from Wycliffe USA. Some of the members of SIL-PNG also contributed their own money towards paying for the construction and one Short Term Assistant (STA), who turned out to be very rich, promised to match all the gifts that members donated up to US\$50,000, and that goal was reached to raise US\$100,000. Since the initial construction of the perimeter fence more has been added, for instance, the fence has now extended to enclose the BTA Training Centre, which was not included in the original fence, and some areas of the fence now have solid metal sheeting and angle irons with barbed wire facing into the Centre are now being added to the original fence line.

When constructing the fence, one of the issues considered was the amount of community involvement with the security system as it was felt to be important that SIL members feel a sense of ownership for the security system. Some of those who were initially against the building of the fence later changed their minds and in fact helped to pay for the cost of construction and since its construction have been happy to have it there. After contributing their own money to pay for the fence, it gave them more of an investment in the fence, unlike

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<sup>14</sup> Wycliffe Associates are another organisation related to Wycliffe International. Again these are volunteers who work from their home countries or go on short-term mission trips of a few weeks to a few months. During my fieldwork, volunteer teams of Wycliffe Associates were coming to Papua New Guinea for two or three weeks to help with the construction of the Primary School.

others, who saw the fence as something others had decided on and therefore not something they were a part of.

Among the Directorate, the Director at the time felt that other security measures needed to be tried first, as his view was that the fence would deal with the problem of petty theft, such as stealing clothes from the clothesline or shoes left outside the door, but would not be effective against mobs, riots or 'hardened criminals', such as armed robbers, who would not find the fence a challenge to break through. He also saw the cost of constructing and also maintaining the fence in terms of upkeep and surveillance as being an important consideration. He suggested that a number of other security measures be put in place first before resorting to a fence, such as using guard dogs to help security men on patrols, fencing the Store and the Preschool/Kindergarten, moving the Public Motor Vehicle (PMV) stop outside of the SIL leasehold to prevent large crowds gathering near the Construction area, increasing the level of training for security staff, increasing public relations with valley people, especially those from Ukarumpa Village and implementing a job training scheme to help them get jobs elsewhere. (Confidential Minutes of the Extraordinary SIL PNG EC 11<sup>th</sup> September, 1995: 16-17) Like the Director, others also thought that a perimeter fence would not be effective in keeping 'hardened criminals' out and therefore was not a practical option especially considering the cost of construction such a fence. They were concerned that after the large amount of money spent on it, the serious criminal element would still not be deterred. They argued instead that an improved security system would be more effective and a better 'barrier' than an actual fence. They suggested such alternatives as placing gates and guards

at the main entrance bridge and the Ukarumpa Village bridge and enforcing rules about who can and cannot 'wander' through the Centre. Rather than seeing the fence as providing protection from *raskols*, some believed the fence would actually give a false sense of security and did not see the fence as a 'solution' to the security problems.

Although agreeing with the security procedures that the Director suggested and also accepting that security in general needed to be improved, others in the Directorate and the EC viewed the fence as the first and most important security act to implement, especially as they saw the presence of 'casual wanderers', who they also viewed as the main culprits of petty theft, as being the primary concern of many SIL members. Again several members pointed out that many other organisations already had fences such as the Aiyura National High School, the Power Station at Yonki and the New Tribes Centre near Goroka. There was also seen to be a differentiation between language and support personnel, with language workers having different emotions and perspectives regarding the fence than support workers. Unlike support workers, who reside in Ukarumpa on a permanent basis, language workers come in and out of Ukarumpa regularly and therefore some felt that language workers did not understand what it was like to live with the security problems on a constant, everyday basis and consequently saw less of a need for a fence than support workers. In connection with this, some saw the fence as not necessarily a solution to security problems but rather a means to help people feel more secure about living in Ukarumpa and boost their morale. There were a variety of emotions regarding the security incidents but many members felt angry about the incidents

and the lack of success in preventing them and some blamed the Directorate for showing a perceived lack of concern and not 'solving' the problem of security. Several members, especially those with children said that they would no longer be able to live and work in Ukarumpa without the presence of a fence. Therefore, many of those who were reluctant to build a fence felt however, that a fence was needed in order to support those members who felt a strong need for a fence to be able to live in Ukarumpa.

Another concern during the construction of the fence was that the security system would still allow SIL to maintain an open and friendly relationship with local people and visitors. As 'Karen' points out, the fence does not affect relationships with the majority of people in Papua New Guinea, just those in the nearby area.

After travelling around the country a bit and talking with nationals along the way, I've realised that maybe 80% of national people I've spoken to have heard of SIL. Maybe 70% of them have had SIL working in their language group, or in neighbouring languages. Most of them are very thankful for SIL's work in PNG and are very positive about SIL. [- - -] I think the most trouble SIL has had with PNG'ians is in the Aiyura valley itself, with the people from surrounding villages. This is not an image problem, but rather a socio-economic problem, people who don't have see people who have, and they want it. This has led to criminal activity in the area.

(Karen)

However, some believed that the fence would not allow SIL to maintain a good relationship with local people and were therefore against the fence altogether as they felt it would have the effect of insulating SIL from the people they 'had come to serve' and they felt that there were already 'barriers' between SIL and their neighbours. Some thought that by excluding local traffic from passing through

major parts of the Centre would be another way of cutting themselves off from the local people. Instead they emphasised the need to be 'building relationships' with the local people. The notion of 'building relationships' was not only held among those who were against the fence but also included those in favour of the fence, and communicating 'friendliness and love' to valley neighbours was very much stressed among the Ukarumpa community. Part of building good relationships with people in the Valley included starting to attend monthly valley leaders meetings with other Aiyura Valley groups. Some felt that there had been a rise in fear and suspicion held among SIL members towards local people. However, others pointed out that relationships were two-way and that it was not only SIL's responsibility to build relationships but also the villagers as well. Some thought that building a fence would have the effect that SIL members would view the Papua New Guineans within the fence as their invited guests and friends and therefore have better relationships with the Papua New Guineans within the fence.

Alongside this idea of 'building relationships' was the notion among some that it was 'un-Christian' to build a fence for a number of reasons including that it was going against what SIL was in Papua New Guinea to do, namely to work amongst and with the people of Papua New Guinea and also that it showed a lack of trust in God's ability to protect them. As SB, a local Aiyura Valley man working for the Inter-Cultural Work Department comments, there was a concern that putting the fence up was not a Christian action to take and would be viewed as un-Christian by the local people.

We're not Christians to put the fence up? Some say that. [- - -] You know, it doesn't mean that we work and we are Christians and then we let things happen to us because we just let them do something.

[ - - ]

We have different kinds of people, some agree, some don't agree, they say why are they putting the fence up if they are here doing translation work. They say that by putting the fence up you're encouraging people to come and try to break in. But others say, well it's up to them because it's their premises, they own the land, because the land has been paid for so if they want to put a fence up, it's up to them. But we have two different groups in here, so one group supports it, another group says, no it's not right. It doesn't mean that because we are Christians that we don't do anything, we just have to do something.

(Silas)

As 'Silas' comments, he does not believe that being good Christians means that members cannot protect themselves and therefore does not agree that building the fence is an un-Christian action to take. 'Lily' thinks that members have in fact been too soft with *raskal* activity over the years and as a result have actually encouraged *raskal* activity by not taking a stand on various incidents. She also believes that protecting themselves from *raskals* is not an issue about whether it is a Christian action to do.

But, the point is, I don't think it has to do with Christian and non-Christian, it has to do with what is right and what is wrong, and if you read the Old Testament and even the New Testament, you find that there are definite things you follow with any group of people and that they understand. And I think we have confused them. Individuals have confused them and at one point our administration confused them. But they realised we're looking for ways and they found a way and Christians can only do their very best. Nobody knows just everything. But I think that, according to the people, both groups would mete out much stronger punishment than we do. I mean, what we do is, really it's a token. Because people still work here, like that village especially, if you're talking about that. And they got to know that we were soft. We were soft. And it wasn't until the firming up at the start I tend to think that.

(Lily)

In response to the concern that putting up a fence is an un-Christian action, there were several people who emphasised that God does not condemn SIL for building a fence and that God did not blame them for being fearful but rather for not believing that He is with them. In conjunction with this, although practical, material attempts were made to deal with the security problems, there was also an emphasis on prayer for the situation and members were encouraged to put 'their trust in the Lord'. In fact some saw the spiritual and emotional aspects of the situation as being more important than the material ones.

In relation to SIL members' concern about the kind of image they would be projecting by having a fence, SIL also asked local valley residents what they thought about SIL building a fence and, like SIL members themselves, there were mixed reactions among the local people. Many perceived SIL as being very rich and some believed that they were in the valley in order to make money from them by running businesses. Therefore, some did view the fence in a negative light and saw SIL as isolating themselves from the local people. Many people were also angry about being stopped and questioned by security guards. Others thought that SIL had a right to build a fence, particularly as some viewed Ukarumpa as a township, many of which had fences already. For instance, one of the results of the perception of increasing levels of crime in Papua New Guinea are the number of fences and guard dog security seen particularly around homes and businesses in Papua New Guinean towns.

Let me just say this. If you go down to Lae or Moresby or Madang and you walk up to, well several facilities, not really all in Madang, but Lae/Moresby

especially, you see the same, you know, there's this one restaurant we went to, I think it was in Lae and they had the, what do you call it, razor wire around it and it's like, it looks terrible, but if Papua New Guinea businesses are doing that, run by Papua New Guineans, in Papua New Guinea, I don't think it's out of character for SIL to do the same.

*I agree, you know, I know that it's highly criticised. I mean, we heard about that in Dallas and people were very critical. People who didn't live here and didn't know the situation. And a person in anthropology, the SIL branch was highly criticised anyway as I said in the last EC [Executive Committee].*

(Ben and Bonnie)

For instance, we would often see our neighbors leave their home, which was secured by guard dogs and an electric-gated fence, to drive to the club in their air-conditioned Toyota 4Runner for a weekend game.

(Gewertz and Errington 1999: 66)

Certainly, in the many years we have been visiting Papua New Guinea, we never before were so frequently frightened as when we lived in our rented house, behind our padlocked gates, surrounded by the accoutrements of middle-class success.

(Ibid: 104)

Employees from the Aiyura Valley were generally positive about the fence but said that people in the valley had different reactions.

**So how do people in Aiyura Valley view the fence?**

People, you know we have different kinds of people, some agree, some doesn't agree, why if they are here doing translation work why are they putting the fence up. By putting the fence up you're encouraging people to come in and try to break in. But others say that, well it's up to them because it's their premises, they own the land, because the land has been paid for so if they want to put a fence up, it's up to them but we have two different groups in here so one group supports, one group says no.

(Silas)



It's not, it's a normal thing to put a boundary, like when we make fences, in the village areas, we make fences in the garden to protect the pigs as well as the human beings getting in there and stealing things.

*And so it doesn't seem, so it's not a new thing but it was because it's been open for such a long, long time and people come and go freely and so when they started putting up this fence a lot of people, many people were not happy about it.*

**And were they not happy about it because they can't just come and go?**

*I think, I think putting up a fence is good because time changes and we have to change and people have to learn to change. So they, I don't think it's a bad idea. Because so many different ideas coming in too, like this valley here, it's not just people from here that live here, it's from different, people from different places, so they come in with different thoughts and ideas. I think different, whatever you want to call it. So it's a good idea to put the fence up.*

**So do you think that it harms SIL's relationship with people in the valley, having the fence up?**

No I don't think it harms, it's just that they have to, people have to get used to the new ways and they have to understand that, like Rose says, things are changing and there's more *raskol* activities going around than used to be in the past and they have, you know, they can't just, SIL cannot just sit back and watch helplessly when people just roam around any way and do whatever they want. So they have to protect it and people have to understand that, that's the reason, you know, a lot of the reason why they have to protect themselves.

**And do you think people are starting to understand that?**

I think people are understanding now. But in the beginning when they started they kind of felt offended because they were used to just coming and going and without any ...

*Fence.*

Any fence and no security guard going around and asking where are going, what are you doing, you know. And when things came up they, it was new to them and they were at first angry about why they were being asked. I mean, people who didn't mean to come and steal or things, they're just innocent people, they just want to come and visit the area, you know, and they were asked like really differently and so that kind of made them angry. But I think when, as time goes by they're beginning to understand.

(Aveline and Rose)

Of course, although not all employees of SIL live within the fence, those who did live within the fenced area would also be protected from *raskol* activity.

In response to worries about how the fence would be viewed by local people, some members pointed out that there had been no complaints from the Aiyura Valley communities about the High School fence. During the construction of the fence it was recommended by a security consultant that the fence should not be built on the portion of land under dispute until the government made the land compensation payment. Since the building of the fence, some SIL members argue that those against the fence are those who stand the most to lose by it, such as *raskols*, whereas the majority of valley people, i.e. the 'good' people do not have any difficulties with it. Some also felt that the Directorate's response to security incidents was too much influenced by its impact on valley relationships. There was an emphasis made on being friendly yet firm and several people argued for taking a stronger stance with the 'criminals' and also argued that it was in line with the Highlands cultural setting to hold the whole or a section of a village accountable for the actions of a few individuals when the offenders themselves could not be apprehended, such as by restricting employment opportunities. Some members justified the fence and actions such as closing down the Centre in response to serious incidents as being 'culturally appropriate' to Papua New Guinean, particularly Highlands culture, where respect is shown to those who are the strongest.

It's one of those things where you need to apply PNG culture, and this is where the strong arm, strong man tactic is the right thing to do.

[- - -]

Justice has to be done and has to be seen to be done. That should be in any community. Justice has to be there. Mercy can mitigate the justice, but the justice has to be there first so that you appreciate the mercy. And in PNG strength is might, is right. And their whole culture, the strong man is the one who can stand up to opposition and impose his will on the others. But he's got to be strong man and able to do it.

(Alice)

That's when we saw change as far as the relationship to Ukarumpa, SIL. When a certain director realised that they were through with trying to be nice to people. That didn't work and that that wasn't how they viewed it. That they had to know that what you said you meant and they had to know that you took a stand. Because the Tairora were known to be very aggressive when the government first came into the Highlands, into the Tairora area, quite a number were killed because of their aggressiveness.

(Lily)

The effectiveness of this policy was seen during my fieldwork, when the SIL Departments were shut down for a day after the Guard Dog incident where a guard was seriously injured, with the result that the villagers turned in the individuals responsible for the incident.

The original fence was finished in 1996 and shortly after it was completed it was also decided to extend the fence to encompass the BTA Training Centre. As well as the fence, added security measures included hiring an outside security firm, Aus Dog at the beginning of 1997 to be the head of security in Ukarumpa. In 1999 it was proposed to hire Guard Dog Security Service (GDSS). This was due to several factors, including the lack of facilities to train security men in Ukarumpa. However, as a result of hiring Guard Dog, some of the

local men lost their jobs as security guards, as they did not have the Grade 10 educational requirement to be kept on with Guard Dog. In 2000 security was turned over entirely to Guard Dog Security Service although a few local residents were hired so assist in recognising local people. (Confidential Minutes of the PNG EC, 6<sup>th</sup> - 16<sup>th</sup> June 2000: 7) Therefore, as well as the fence, security guards and dogs were continually patrolling the Centre both day and night particularly the perimeter of the fence.

### **Perceptions of the Fence**

Although the fence had been in place for about five years at the time of my fieldwork, it was still an often discussed and debated topic raising different emotions and opinions of both a positive and negative nature. Most people would agree that they dislike the presence of the fence, however, where some people view it as an unpleasant necessity, others find it difficult to reconcile themselves to its presence and do not see the benefits as clearly as others.

Despite the presence of the fence, security problems have not been eliminated entirely and *raskols* are still able to cut through the fence without much difficulty, consequently, there are still a high number of petty thefts and break-ins. Each week the Directors Office puts out a Branch Information Sheet (BIS) and included in this is a section entitled *Centre Awareness* in which security incidents both on the SIL Centre and off-Centre, mainly in the Aiyura Valley, are reported. As well as reports of incidents, *Tok Save's* (Melanesian Pidgin for information) are also given which range from reminding people of which security number to call for an emergency, what to do when a *raskol* enters your house, what to do in a hold up and when there is likely to be more security incidents, such as in the coffee season.

Although there were periods of relative quiet, throughout the duration of my fieldwork security incidents reported either on the SIL Centre or off the Centre seemed to occur on an almost weekly basis. From April 5, 2001 to March 7, 2002, there were over twenty-five fence cuts reported, some in conjunction with break and enters, of which there were around thirty-four reported, and about twenty-three incidents of petty theft, such as stealing clothes off the clothesline or stealing from gardens. More minor incidents included various local 'conmen/women' who 'trick' members into giving them money by claiming to be a *wantok* (Melanesian Pidgin for kin/friend) of the member's *haus meri* or yardman and asking money for sick relatives. There were also a number of 'walk-ins' where uninvited strangers walked into houses that had been left unlocked although the occupants were still present inside.

- Numerous unwanted entrances by strangers reported. Do not leave your house unlocked, even when running over to the neighbors for sugar, or out back tending your garden. When inside your house, please keep main doors locked or at least the screen door latched, if possible to prevent a casual entrance by someone at your door.

(Centre Awareness 31 December to 7 January 2002, *Branch Information Sheet*, 10 January 2002)

Most of these incidents were at various houses or storage sheds near the fence line and the majority of these were either near the main entrance bridge or on the Pittman Point Road and Groves Avenue Road, both of which are near Ukarumpa Village. There were also about seven reported occasions of verbal and physical harassment of the security guards, mainly by local youths, such as throwing stones, including one serious incident mentioned previously, where Ukarumpa villagers attacked guards with bush knives and stones as

they attempted to catch some *raskols*. As a result of this the SIL Centre closed for a day as a *sori* (Melanesian Pidgin for apology) to the Guard Dog security guards injured in the fight. A couple of weeks after the incident Ukarumpa Village leaders captured the *raskols* involved and handed them over to the police. They also put on a *mumu* (Melanesian Pidgin for feast) for the security guards and killed two pigs and also gave money in compensation to the guards. Security guards are sometimes wary of chasing *raskols* who have guns or bows and arrows in case they are shot and a guard was in fact shot in the leg by an arrow during a chase.

Most of the security incidents during my fieldwork period were mainly break-ins and petty theft but there was also a more serious incident where a local man abducted and molested the nine-year-old daughter of one of the employees. An account of the incident is outlined in the Branch Information Sheet:

**CENTRE AWARENESS 21 TO 28 JANUARY 2002**

**- On SIL Centre**

- Wednesday, Jan 23, Between 10am and 11am a 9 year old girl, the daughter of one of our employees was molested at the garden estate. Several witnesses saw the man with the girl and identified him. The matter was reported to the Directors and the girl was seen at the clinic. The matter was reported to the local police who were urged to take action.

- Thursday, Jan 24, 5 am: A group of about 30 members and employees with some Guard Dog personnel and police drove to a village past CRI and apprehended a male in connection with yesterday's assault on the little girl. The man was interviewed by the Ukarumpa police who released him without laying charges "so that the father of the girl could seek compensation."

- Friday, Jan 25: Several people have expressed their anger and disappointment over how the police handled their investigation into the incident with the little girl. The police have said that they will try to apprehend the man that they released and then proceed according to PNG law with the laying of charges.

*(Branch Information Sheet, 31 January, 2002)*

In another incident it is reported that 'A girl was raped at Ukarumpa village during the week. The matter was reported to the local police but nothing has been done' (Branch Information Sheet, Centre Awareness 12-21 January 2002). As shown above, many SIL members were extremely upset over the way the police handled this incident and there was much debate on the SIL members forum email. SIL members would often comment on the ineffectual nature of the local police. As shown below, this is not unique to the Kainantu police force.

Moreover, the Papua New Guinea state, based as it continued to be on kin and ethnic ties, was not only relatively partial but, as we have seen, relatively ineffectual, at least with respect to law enforcement. Under the circumstances we have described in which each group negotiated with the state on its own behalf, the police did not have sufficient power, certainly compared to that retained by kin groups and villages, to discourage such criminal attacks. Thus, the wantok system was providing double impetus for the crime that Papua New Guineans found so distressing: when determining access to the public resources of the state, this system was fueling much of the anger that seemed to motivate many criminal activities; when determining relations of primary allegiance, it was precluding effective law enforcement.

*(Gewertz and Errington 1991: 191)*

Our first but not our last personal involvement in law and order had been shortly before the call, when early one morning the padlocks on our gate were cut. Five youths were involved. They came armed with a bolt cutter

and bush knives. Their intent was to steal our car. We were not wholly surprised at this predawn intrusion, having talked about criminal activity in Wewak with many middle-class crime victims, both national and expat. However, we were somewhat surprised and certainly disconcerted when no one answered the police emergency line when we called to report the theft-in-progress. (The break-in fortunately was terminated with the smashing of our car window when the youths discovered that not only we, but a security guard, were home.) The friend who phoned us and many other of our middle-class friends wryly told us that if a policeman had answered, he probably would have said that no car was available in which to respond. Or he might have said that the police station could not be left unattended and, hence, itself open to robbery.

(Gewertz and Errington 1999: 104)

In order for this kind of experience to have any lasting effect on the way Gapuners think about rascalism, however, the local police force would have to have handled the case efficiently and competently. Regrettably, this does not appear to have happened. Not only did the police, as far as I am aware, not capture most of the men who attacked the village, but the 'squad' sent to find the criminals apparently bashed and humiliated totally innocent people in the lower Sepik villages from which the rascals reportedly came.

(Kulick 1993: 13)

Indeed, Kulick comments that in the eyes of the Gapun villagers, there does not seem to be that much difference between the police and rascals and some young men believe that by becoming rascals they can realise their dream of being a policeman or a serviceman. (Kulick 1993: 12-13)

Off centre incidents reported included a total of eighteen armed hold ups of vehicles of which seven of these were with non-SIL people and a couple of these involved SIL employees. Most of these were in the nearby area, either near Kainantu or on the Highlands Highway, although one incident was in Nobanob, Madang Province.



On March 31, 2001 Kainantu police were involved in a shoot out with *raskols* and one policeman and a *raskol* was killed. The police later killed two of the *raskols* in retaliation. On July 28, 2001 people from Batinabura village near Norikori, Tairora, killed a policeman while they were in pursuit of a criminal and the police's response was to later burn the village. After both incidents there was a period of quiet in the Valley with a decrease in *raskol* activity. A well-known *raskol* was reported to have visited Ukarumpa Village on July 10, 2001 and assaulted the wife of one of the villagers and the village chased off the man. A girl in Ukarumpa Village was also raped in January 2002. The staff house at Kainantu Hospital was broken into on December 8, 2001 by armed *raskols* and the daughter of one of the workers was raped. The Salvation Army Centre in Kainantu had four break-ins, the last by thirteen armed *raskols* on February 19, 2002. As shown in these off-centre incidents, *raskol* activity in the area was not confined solely to SIL members.

Although many of the break-ins and theft are committed by *raskols* who have cut through the fence, it is not difficult for local people to enter Ukarumpa in a more legitimate way, unless they are known by the security guards to be *raskols* and escorted off the Centre. For instance, the Ukarumpa Welcome Booklet states:

The feelings of being "on centre" may deceive you into believing that we are a closed community. The fact is, however, the centre is a public area. Many people pass through here on their way to surrounding areas.

(Ukarumpa General Information Booklet, Revised June 2000: 15)

Ukarumpa attracts a large amount of local people who come to work as 'casual workers', such as yardmen and *haus meris*, many people come to buy petrol or kerosene at the Autoshop, or come into

Ukarumpa to go to the clinic for medical care, to buy goods at the Store and to sell produce at the market. The market used to be located opposite the Store and therefore near the residential buildings. During my fieldwork the market was moved to be opposite the Printshop in an attempt to move it away from the main residential buildings and control the number of people who used to congregate at the market opposite the Store. This also meant that there were less people walking through the main residential areas to get to the market. Suggestions have also been made to move the market off-centre altogether although many members objected. Again for security reasons, suggestions made in the past to have an all-day, everyday market were quashed due to the potential problems with having a large number of people coming in and out of the Centre. Therefore, although the fence does control 'casual wanderers' to a certain extent, it does not remove them entirely as shown in the number of 'walk-ins' and petty theft that still occur.

Members have different theories for why they believe there has been an increase in criminal activity in the Valley and in Papua New Guinea in general. Many believe the main reason is that there has been a break down of relationships and authority structures where young men do not respect the older, village leaders any longer and are not held accountable for their actions. This is somewhat similar to Sykes' account of the reasons given for *raskol* activity in New Ireland.

It is commonly said in New Ireland that *raskol* youth have no shame, which is to say they have lost those feelings of shame which monitor their relations of respect. Those who exist without money and are separated from their kin describe their situation as in the words of the Toali rock song sung in Tok Pisin, '*Nogat moni, Nogat pren*' (no money, no friends). In an extreme

response to his feelings of want and loneliness, a youth may 'act-out' offensively, take more than is offered to him or act with excessive emotion.

(Sykes 1999: 164-165)

There is also a lack of respect for police authority with the result that the police are taking extreme measures to enforce their authority, such as burning villages.

Yes, because the state is weak. The police are ineffective. There are no *kiaps* that would keep law and order. I mean the police here don't, are not effective. The people in Kainantu, the road is so rough they don't want to come out here. They don't have any fuel to drive out here. So there's nothing to stop the people doing what they like.

(Gerald)

In a report on the Public Forum in Law, the 'Big Issues Forum' held in Lae, 6 December 2001, the writer states:

The Forum was organised as a response to the recent outbreaks of serious crime in and around Lae during the past month. Two instances of pack rape, the victims being national women, and the murder of a well-known expatriate Catholic priest during an armed hold up precipitated the cry for action. There appears to have been an increase in serious criminal activity in and around Lae over the past year. Other centres are just as bad. In fact there are few places left in Papua New Guinea where there is no problem with law and order.

(G. Laphorne, Report on 'Big Issues Forum', 8 December 2001)

There is also seen to be an increasingly volatile political atmosphere in Papua New Guinea. Some members believe that security problems in Papua New Guinea are likely to get worse rather than better and SIL members need to be ready to evacuate if the political situation gets worse. The example of the Solomon Islands Branch, which was evacuated due to the political and civil unrest there, has made the PNG Branch more aware of the possibility that SIL may have to leave

Papua New Guinea in the near future.<sup>15</sup> Others believe that Ukarumpa is inviting *raskol* activity due to the amount of wealth that SIL members have in comparison to local people. They would argue that if the standard of living were lower then there would be less enticement for *raskols* to steal. According to these authors, it would seem that the relative wealth of Ukarumpa in comparison to surrounding villages made it a prime target for *raskol* activity.

We conducted numerous discussions with Chambri about why criminal attack, especially by young men, took place. Perhaps the most thoughtful responses were that violent crime such as armed robbery, assault and rape took place in order to “pull others down.” Anyone, we were told with a really good fortnightly salary, one of K200-K300, was an automatic target. Similarly, these youths would attack those who had good clothes, a car, a nice house, as they might attack women who dressed well and appeared disdainful. For many youths, precluded as they must have felt by wantok favoritism from becoming players in what was no longer entirely a system of commensurate differences, violent crime appeared as one way to establish themselves as potential equals.

(Gewertz and Errington 1991: 191)

The discussions included passing recognition that crime had both underlying and persisting causes, such as alienation, hunger and unemployment in a lagging economy, and had deleterious long-term implications for investment and tourism.

(Gewertz and Errington 1999: 105)

Others, who do not believe it is the wealth of Ukarumpa that is a target, point out that as well as more expensive objects, *raskols* often take such things as blankets, mattresses and clothing, which are not necessarily luxury items. However, for some rural villagers, blankets, mattresses and clothing are still items that need money to acquire.

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<sup>15</sup> SIL members have since returned to the Solomon Islands now that the situation has calmed down.

Some SIL employees argue that it is displaced people or laziness that leads to *raskol* activity.

**Why do you think that there are more *raskols* now than there were in the past? Do you have any ideas?**

I guess it's from the top ah, I mean.

*I guess, you know there's a lot of people leaving in the villages and they're moving to places and they don't have any means of supporting themselves so they have to try to do something to get something to live or I don't know what. I don't know what is wrong. I can tell you what their motives are, you know, being a raskol and all that.*

People have different views about that. It's mainly when people are going into town because of the money, that's the currency coming in, they cannot afford to live in town so they have to go around stealing. In the village areas I think those people who are being lazy, who don't want to work in the garden, they go around stealing things.

*The main factor that's contributing to this raskol activities is displaced people from tribal fights. And coastal people from the village because they don't have any more land. And laziness, I think those are the three things, those are what I think are causing them to become raskols.*

(Aveline and Rose)

Others argue that it is the whole education system and lack of employment which leads to crime. For instance, 'Silas', a Papua New Guinean employee spoke at length about this.

Well, I mean a lot of traditional one is good. And also the Western the good part is getting into education and the young people, you know, the education system, you know, the people are expecting after graduating, they want everything. That is one of the areas that I am you know, facing a problem because they don't want, because they think that because they are educated they are not fitting back into the society, that's where the problem is. That's the hardest thing that, you know. If the education system don't put some sort of you know, some changes in, you know to try and educate the

people to go back into the village and try to do something, you know, say develop land. I mean they should be doing something there because you know, the expectation for the people there in the villages, that once they send their children in, they want their kids to get a job. Then after a while and then also the kids are there, you know, whilst they're in school they don't go back and try to learn, you know, plant something in the garden, try to build a house, you know, they just come to school, go back and then back and forth and then after you know Grade 10, 12, once they're enough, they don't go any further, they go back and they don't fit in with the rest they come back again and then they try to. Where you see you create a problem in these sort of people in here, because they don't fit back into society, they're not, have a job and they're right in the middle and then these are the people that cause problems so. I don't see that with the traditional, not that with the Western, but it's the way that you get people from the education system.

Yeah so the problem is that people want jobs, that's the way you know that they're left out so they start coming back and if they're not fitting back properly in the society so once they go back you know, it's boring for them because they haven't practised cutting, picking ground, cutting posts, they don't get used to it so once they're there you know, they feel lonely, out of place, so they come back where you know they've been enjoying themselves with movies, you know, what sort of entertainment they actually, you know, so you know, this is where we have this problem. That's my personal, you know, personally seeing what has happened.

**So you think that the educational system should teach them to go back to their villages and do things in the village to help them develop the village rather than looking for a job?**

Yeah. That's my personal thinking behind the education system should change some you know, education syllabus or something you know, that teaches them to go back and then after finishing we have a you know, very form system, everybody has to finish from Grade 8. So they have to, you know, do something in-between so that when they're going back home after Grade 8 what they could go back and do something in the village, you

know, start planting coffee, start planting you know vegetables, selling them in the market because I mean these are the things that you know, keeps interest going so you don't have people rushing into the towns, looking for jobs and then ...

**Becoming *raskals*.**

Yes. They are self-employed or self-supporting, people start living in the village. So the only thing is if the education system can change something. You know, it can help but it's going to take a lot of years and a lot of time, it takes a lot of time to change things because we have come up from the stage where people are looking for jobs everywhere and then they now have a expectation of you know, getting into school and getting a job and that's it.

(Silas)

Kulick argues that 'there is an overall lack of fit between the classroom and life in the village that appears to be a widespread characteristic of schooling throughout the country. Many observers of schooling in Papua New Guinea have noted that what is taught to village children in rural schools has little or no relevance to their own lives, except to make them dissatisfied with them' (Kulick 1992: 178).

The significant amount of *raskol* activity that still occurs has led some members to question the efficacy of the chain link fence and the security guards. Many feel frustrated that despite the presence of the fence and the security guards, these incidents are still occurring, and that in many cases, the security guards fail to apprehend the *raskols* or when they are handed into police custody, the police let them go. Therefore, for some people there is still not a sense of complete safety and security within the fence. However, despite the perceived ineffectiveness of the chain link fence people are still reluctant to have a solid metal sheet fence. Aside from issues such as the cost of constructing such a fence, for those who feel enclosed and confined by the chain link fence, a solid metal sheet fence would create an

even greater sense of confinement and barricading themselves off from the outside world.

For some these frustrations extend outside the fence also, with the number of armed hold ups that occur, particularly on the road between Ukarumpa and Kainantu with the result that some members are reluctant to travel by road in Papua New Guinea and prefer to fly. Many members feel they are taking a risk in travelling outside the fence and for them the fence does provide protection against the outside world to a certain extent.

**How much did you know about the fence and the security situation before you arrived? Did you have any opinions on the fence before you arrived and have they changed since you've been in Papua New Guinea and if so, in what way?**

I heard about the fence at POC, by the directors of POC who had some very strong opinions that the fence should not have been put up (the Bs have been in PNG for donkey's years and they have very close relationships with the national people. They believed that the fence creates a physical and social barrier between the expats and local people). This influenced my opinions about the fence before coming to Uka. After arriving here however, I'm actually quite glad that the fence is there. I don't think it stops locals with good intentions from entering Uka (as the main strip is a public road anyway, and there's always people lingering around). I wasn't here when the fence wasn't erected and I've heard there was a lot more break-ins before. There are still break-ins so if the rascals really want to get in they will. But the fence reduces that chance. I think it's a good reminder that while we're inside the fence line we are relatively safe and can move around without too much caution. Once we step out of the fence then we have to be more careful. It's nice to have this sort of 'sanctuary', where we can get help if we need it. I can't imagine what it would be like to have to be so careful in Ukarumpa, as you do in Lae or Moresby. That would not be restful.

(Karen)



The thing is that they, they don't realise that it's not the fence that's preventing them going for walks and so on, it's the situation that existed and which the fence protects them from. They can go walking within the fence, you know in daylight, in complete freedom, knowing that they won't be molested in any way. But if the fence weren't there, if they tried to go around the back, you know along the back of the river there, they'd be asking for trouble.

(Alice)

Although as shown above, the presence of the fence has not 'solved' the problem of break-ins and petty theft altogether, for others the fence does provide a sense of safety and security. Within the fence women are able to walk around freely during the day (although a strict curfew from 11:00 p.m. to 6:00a.m. is enforced) whereas on visits to nearby villages, they are advised to either have a male escort or a friend from the village escorting them. Children also have the freedom of being able to move about the Centre without their parents. Activities outside the Centre, such as hiking or swimming in the river have to be done in large groups, which include some adult males, and have to be reported to the Director's Assistant for Security before embarking on such an activity, to check that it is safe. Many believe that without the fence, break-ins and petty theft would be much worse and that in addition more serious crimes would be occurring.

Very much for it. It's made our lives just so much easier. And the fence didn't go up until fences like this went up throughout the country and a lot of other places had it. We did wait until most, even a lot of Papua New Guineans were putting them up. People were just walking through, continually through the yard and picking up anything, there was absolutely no privacy at all, particularly being on the edge like we are here. And, of course the fence is, we were broken into about, oh I don't know, over the years it must have been six times and we haven't been broken into at all

since. So I'm absolutely all for it and I think it's the only way in which we can have families stay here. Families particularly were about to go home with their children because of, they didn't feel it was safe.

(Glenys)

Although they still occur, the fence, alongside security guards and signs discouraging 'loitering', have also reduced the number of 'casual wanderers' around Ukarumpa, which many SIL members found intimidating and intrusive.

Some of the differences in opinion between members are related to the role they have in SIL-PNG. When speaking to two language workers they both said that they do not feel that the fence restricts them.

The fence doesn't bother me in the slightest in the sense of restricting my freedom. It is a security.

(Alice)

**Do you feel the fence limits you in any way? Do you feel the security situation in general limits you in any way?**

I feel the security situation does limit me, the rules about walking after dark, about women walking with men, etc.... But that's reality. The fence itself is not a limiting factor for me because I know that if I want to go outside the fence then I can. It is a good reminder that when I do go outside then I have to take more precautions than inside (like notifying people that I'll be walking on the ridge, taking 'rascal money' on car trips, making sure the vehicle is road worthy, not carrying things that you don't want stolen, etc....).

(Karen)

However, for some support workers the large amount of security incidents in Ukarumpa have led them to view Papua New Guineans, particularly local Aiyura Valley people, with suspicion.<sup>16</sup>

Some local valley people have expressed a desire to see SIL members become more involved in the village communities. Ukarumpa Village Leaders said they had seen a decrease in SIL participation in local churches over the past several years and they would like to see more SIL members become involved with the people at Ukarumpa Village. (Confidential Minutes of the PNG Branch EC, 23<sup>rd</sup> November – 9<sup>th</sup> December 1998: 28) A small number of members do attend local village churches in an attempt to build relationships with Ukarumpa's neighbours.

### **Conclusion**

To some extent, Ukarumpa can still be seen as a 'fighting ground'. Although the Gadsups and Tairoras are no longer physically fighting each other on the ground for the land, they have been 'fighting' the government and SIL for payment for the land. SIL have also established their claim to the land by putting up a fence, which as well as keeping unwanted people out, also marks the boundary of the property. The fence has provoked mixed reactions from SIL members, SIL employees and the local Aiyura Valley people. Many people from both the Ukarumpa community and the local community would prefer for there not to be a fence, however, whereas some people view it as necessary with the security situation in the area, others believe it harms relationships with local people, and perhaps exacerbates the problems between SIL and those who

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<sup>16</sup> The difference between support and language workers with regards to the fence is discussed in more detail in Chapter Three, 'Communicating the Gospel'.

come are involved in the break ins and petty theft. The presence of the fence will continue to cause debates and disagreements, however for the majority of the SIL members, whether they agree that the fence harms relationships or not, it is still a necessary security measure for the time being.



Translation team's village house

### *Chapter Three*

## *Communicating the Gospel*

Religious beliefs may be associated with more deeply personal attitudes. For example, commitment to missionary work is sometimes rooted in attitudes about expiation and even escapism and romanticism. Missionaries may hold ambiguous views, combining sublimated feelings of guilt and unworthiness with notions of moral superiority stemming from their sense of self-sacrifice. This is related to ideas about the comparative virtues of receiving and giving: while the missionary may feel pleasantly altruistic abroad, his position vis-a-vis his home is, uncomfortably, one of receiving charitable support. He sometimes experiences anxiety and guilt, especially if he is enmeshed in a tradition of rigorous self-inspection. This sometimes leads to increased tensions within the mission station.

(Beidelman 1982: 15)

As shown in the previous chapter, one of the main debates regarding the building of the fences was how they would affect relationships with local people and how local people and outsiders would view SIL once the fences were built. Discussions regarding relationships with Papua New Guineans still remain a central topic of conversation among SIL members. These discussions are centred around who in particular they should have relationships with, what form should these relationships take and how they should go about creating these relationships. Relationships with Papua New Guineans are particularly important in order to 'be a missionary'. This chapter will look at the way in which relationships with Papua New Guineans are considered to be so important to SIL members, what they believe are the barriers to these relationships and how they attempt to bridge these barriers. This chapter also looks at what is considered to be appropriate behaviour for missionaries and how this affects relationships with each other and Papua New Guineans.

### **Witnessing**

Mission is then seen as an active effort (the “witnessing of believers”) as Christians spread their faith and gospel to non-Christians.

(Velho n.d., *Missionaries*: 1)

Although active witnessing is the basis for mission, it is supposed to depend above all on the power of the Holy Spirit; in other words, mission belongs to the Church, and individual missionaries (or their family groups in the case of Protestants) are only its instrument.

(Velho n.d., *Missionaries*: 2)

Unlike other missions SIL is not involved in overt evangelistic practices such as church planting and preaching. Nevertheless, all members of SIL are Protestant Christians and as such believe in the importance of spreading the Gospel and communicating the ‘Good News’ in accordance with God’s command in the Bible to ‘go and make disciples of all nations’ (Matthew 28:18-20, New International Version). They believe that the main way in which they as an organisation are obeying and responding to this Biblical command is through translating the ‘Word of God’ into the languages that people in Papua New Guinea understand best in order to communicate the ‘Good News’ in a way that people can comprehend. However, despite believing in the importance of translating the Scripture into vernacular languages, they also consider there to be many other responsibilities and responses to this command just as vital to effective conversion.

One of the central responses to God’s command of sharing the Gospel that SIL members believe is important for all Christians, whether they are missionaries or not, is being a ‘witness’ for Christ. For instance, Harding discusses the importance of ‘witnessing’ among fundamental Baptists. ‘Among orthodox Protestants, and

especially among fundamentalists, it is the Word, the gospel of Jesus Christ, written, spoken, heard, and read, that converts the unbeliever' (1987: 168). For the fundamental Baptists 'Witnessing is more informal and often occurs in the course of what appears to be no more than a conversation between the witness, who is saved, and an unsaved listener.' Harding discussing witnessing sessions, where the Baptists try to convert an un-believer. However, witnessing has a more general definition amongst SIL members. Like the fundamental Baptists Harding worked with, it is believed that by being good witnesses, non-believers will see Christ in the lives of Christians and be encouraged to convert.

'Witnessing' can then include both active evangelism and also how a person acts and behaves in everyday life so that others can see that they are living in a Christ-like way. Witnessing is not only important for converting non-believers but also for setting an example for other Christians, particularly new Christians. Therefore, witnessing is an important part of SIL members' lives as missionaries, including those who are not involved directly in Bible translation<sup>17</sup>, and is a way in which they also can also be involved in leading non-believers to Christ.

All members would agree that being a witness is an important part of being a Christian and even more so, of being an effective missionary. Nevertheless, acting as a witness and responding in the way they believe Christ would in particular situations can mean different things to each person as they interpret the Bible in various ways. Their ideals of how a good witness should act also do not

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<sup>17</sup> See Chapter Five, 'Translation' for more on the relationships between Bible translators and other SIL members.



always match the reality of their life in Papua New Guinea and many members admit that they do not always succeed at being a good witness. Nonetheless, it is something that they try to take into consideration regarding their actions and behaviour, both personally and regarding the actions of the Ukarumpa community as a whole and therefore, many discussions revolve around the ways in which members are witnessing to those around them and consequently, the nature of the different relationships they have with the people they interact with.

The main way in which it is believed that Christians can be witnesses to non-believers is through their relationships with them. Through these relationships, Christians are able to evangelise and witness directly to non-believers. Accordingly, in order to be an effective witness and communicate the Gospel successfully, it is important for members to have interaction with Papua New Guineans and form relationships, ideally close and friendly ones. For many members, their ideals of mission work before coming to Papua New Guinea included living and working closely with Papua New Guineans and having a greater level of interaction with Papua New Guineans rather than with other SIL members. For instance, 'Carla', a short-term language member, anticipated having deeper and more 'meaningful' relationships with Papua New Guineans.

I didn't have too many things that I was disappointed about except I thought that every missionary should have experiences with nationals that are meaningful and that their everyday life should be filled with encounters with them and they shouldn't be in so much of their own culture or their own language as well. I find myself speaking English so much that I wonder sometimes why I'm here. Because I'm leaving soon I don't want to learn any more languages anyway but the next field I go to I want to be able to spend

weeks without speaking English if possible. So that was something that I was kind of disappointed in, in terms of just wanting to train myself to think, dream in other languages.

As 'Carla' observes, these expectations of forming close relationships with Papua New Guineans have not been fulfilled for all members, and this is true particularly for some of those doing support work. Unlike language workers, support workers do not have the same level of contact with Papua New Guineans as language workers since they are not immersed in local villages and towns in the same way, and therefore do not have the same opportunities for forming friendships with Papua New Guineans. Although support workers main role is to provide resources for language workers in order to help with the work of Bible translation, they too anticipated being involved with Papua New Guineans on a deeper level.<sup>18</sup> For some members the relationships they have are mainly with other SIL members rather than Papua New Guineans and they find this is disappointing, as they see their purpose in Papua New Guinea as 'ministering' to Papua New Guineans and feel they are in some way failing as missionaries by only interacting with other SIL members. Although some members attribute their lack of success in creating relationships with Papua New Guineans to their own lack of effort in actively seeking those relationships, others believe there are barriers within the SIL Centre and Ukarumpa community to creating these relationships and they give a number of different explanations as to why they believe these barriers exist and therefore to being good witnesses to the local people.

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<sup>18</sup> This is discussed further in Chapter Five, 'Translation'.

### **Barriers to relationships**

As discussed in the previous chapter, many members believe that the perimeter fence is one of the main barriers to forming relationships with local people.

When I first arrived at Ukarumpa, I felt that it was a pity that a fence separated us from the rest of the Aiyura Valley residents. It seemed to reinforce a fortress mentality or a sense of "us" expats vs. "them" nationals. It seemed like a psychological barrier to forming relationships with nationals, which is essential to ministry with them.

(Matt)

As 'Matt' comments it may be perceived as harming SIL members' 'ministry' with local people.

Despite concerns regarding relationships and how they will be affected by the fence, they have not necessarily been negatively affected in the way that people anticipated when the fence was initially proposed. 'Anna', an SIL employee from the Aiyura Valley, believes that initially local people did not like the new security measures, particularly being questioned by the security guards. However, she believes that people are beginning to come to terms with it.

**Do you think that having the fence up harms SIL's relationship with people in the valley?**

No I don't think it harms, it's just that people have to get used to the new ways and they have to understand that, like SH says, things are changing and there's more *raskol* activities going around than used to be in the past and SIL cannot just sit back and watch helplessly when people just roam around any way and do whatever they want. So they have to protect it and people have to understand that, that's the reason, you know, a lot of the reason why they have to protect themselves.

**And do you think people are starting to understand that?**

I think people are understanding now. But in the beginning when they started they kind of felt offended because they were used to just coming and going and without any fence and no security guards going around and asking where are you going, what are you doing. And when things came up it was new to them and they were at first angry about why they were being asked. I mean, people who didn't mean to come and steal or things, they're just innocent people, they just want to come and visit the area and they were asked like really differently and so that kind of made them angry. But I think when, as time goes by they're beginning to understand.

(Anna)

Like 'Anna', 'Silas' believes that since the construction of the fence the majority of local people do support the fence, as they understand SIL's concern with safety. He in fact believes that SIL's relationship with Aiyura Valley people has improved in the past few years despite the building of the fence.

This valley relationship with SIL it's very good now, it's coming up good. It's good because we have this valley leaders meeting. We normally have a meeting at the end of every month. We have valley leaders coming in and institution reps from the other meetings so through that we have established this good relationship. [ - - ] I'm seeing that we've improved quite a lot. [ - - ] The government is not giving enough service to the people so SIL is doing work the government should be doing so the people, especially in the valley, they do support SIL.

**So do they like SIL being here?**

Yes. They see that SIL is doing a lot for the community. There are a few people, just for personal interest, they are people who go round back, talking, backbiting doing that, but the majority, what I've heard from the people is that they are happy now, the feedback is positive with SIL now.

(Silas)

He attributes this improvement in relationships as the result of SIL helping the local community, such as helping to pay for school fees.

As several members commented, the fence did not affect relationships with the 'good' people who already liked SIL, but rather those who would be against SIL whether a fence existed or not.

**How do you think the fence has affected relationships with local people in the Aiyura Valley? Do you think it has had a negative affect?**

I don't think it makes a difference for those folk 'who like' SIL, many said it was about time we did something to protect ourselves. Those who don't are always going to be against anything we do.

(Brian Hodgkin, ADLA)

'Glenys' and I were sharing with someone recently, and this person brought up something about the fence so 'Glenys' did tell them the other side of it. They had heard differently at POC about how it was ruining relationships. Well see the good people don't think it ruins relationships. If you go up here, around here, there are people who have fences around their place and what is the reason? Because of the *raskols*. It wasn't to keep the good people out and the good people know that. I mean we haven't ever had anybody come and say to us about that.

(Lily)

**Do you think the fence has harmed relationships with people in the valley?**

I don't think so. I mean a lot of people say they feel cut off and that, but I have never heard that and actually I asked some of our employees and they said thank goodness it went up. For those who work here, because they were having a far worse time than we were. I think they have amazing access, I mean the gates are open, it's not like some areas where you just can't go in the gate at all. They do have access in and out. And really there's no reason why they should be here unless they're working and all workers are allowed to come.

(Glenys)

Well, I've talked to some nationals around here, and they just don't really see a problem with having a fence. To them it made all the sense in the

world to have it, knowing the problems that we were having and they thought that was the thing to do, that's exactly what you should do. It doesn't seem unreasonable to them and when people say it builds up a wall, I'm not all convinced that it does that. I don't think it's done that, I think it's serving its purpose.

(Bonnie)

**Do you feel that the fence is isolating SIL from people in the Valley?**

Yes and no. I have to say yes, because it's a barrier and so physically there is a division there. I'll say no in that the isolation that it's providing is isolation from the guys that come in and steal things at night so you know, our relationship with our yard man and the people that we've found jobs for here and our yard *meri* has not changed a bit because of the fence. So conceptually it doesn't seem to have made a difference to them or to us, so for that reason I'll say no.

(Marisa)

However, some point out that it is the *raskals*, the main reason why the fence was built, who are most in need of 'witnessing' and 'ministry'. There was an ambiguity between protecting themselves from *raskals* by separating themselves from the *raskals*, yet at the same time maintaining harmonious relationships with local people in order to have a 'ministry' with them.

In discussions regarding the fence creating a barrier to forming relationships, it can be seen whom SIL members want to have relationships with and whom they believe it is important to develop friendships with. Many members were concerned with how relationships with the 'good' people would be affected rather than relationships with those involved in *raskal* activity. The fence was meant to cut off relationships with the *raskals* rather than the other village people.

The simple factor is we are not wanting to be one with the entire valley culture. We want to exclude the *raskal*/thief culture from that. We want to say, yeah, we respect you, we want to partner with you, we want to work with you but we don't want to include the criminals in that. And that should be the message.

(Brian Hodgkin, ADLA)

As 'Matt', a survey worker, observes, the fence does not necessarily create a barrier to relationships with all Papua New Guineans, as there are many Papua New Guineans who live and work in Ukarumpa.

However, it's not just expats who live inside the fence. There are plenty of nationals who live on the centre, and I haven't got what I would consider a close relationship with any of them either. So, I don't really think that the fence keeps us from developing relationships. Perhaps it forces us to be more intentional about developing them.

(Matt)

'James' points out that most support people do work with Papua New Guineans in Ukarumpa and many support people create close relationships with the people they work with.

Well, I think we all work with Papua New Guineans. When I was at the High School there were two or three people in the office who were Papua New Guinean. There were three Papua New Guinean ladies. Things haven't proved a barrier for us in that way. We used to go Ukarumpa village and pray, say in an afternoon, with a family. And that was after the fence was built. I think the fence, if it's a barrier, it's more of a psychological barrier. When people say it's a outsider, I don't know. Although, it's interesting, you go to the Professor Schindler fence, School, it's got a fence. And the Owumpa School down here, it's got a great big fence exactly the same as this fence outside. I think the fence is marking a boundary rather than cutting off barriers.

(James)

Like many others, he believes that the fence is mainly a psychological barrier and as 'Matt' remarks the fence does not prevent relationships with Papua New Guineans from occurring. It could be argued that the same difficulties in creating relationships with Papua New Guineans outside of Ukarumpa would have occurred before the existence of the fence as well, as the fence does not necessarily prevent SIL members from leaving Ukarumpa or local people from entering Ukarumpa.

Nevertheless, for some it is not enough to have good relationships with the Papua New Guineans who work in Ukarumpa, they want to have relationships with 'village people'. Unlike language workers, support workers do not have the same opportunities to develop relationships with Papua New Guineans in a village setting, which some members consider to be more 'real' relationships than those with employees. As 'Alice' and 'Ben' comment, their closest relationships are with people in the village and many support workers also wish for similar relationships. Support workers are serving translators through providing resources for them but are not necessarily 'serving' Papua New Guineans directly.

The people who were here as support workers, in those days, came with a much more of an attitude of being a missionary and wanted to be involved in ministry to nationals. So that a lot of those early people, who were support folk here, they would run Bible studies and people who were employed here, they would deliberately try to involve them, to disciple them, to encourage them in their Christian growth.

(Alice)

It's very difficult to be a support person. Because when you're in the village, you find out after all that there really, even though you've been there years, true friendship, it's very difficult to really say it's a true friend in our sense of the word. But I feel for the support people and I feel for what they're told



and I gather now possibly that at POC it was a little different emphasis and than maybe some of us would like to see.

(Lily)

As 'Alice' comments, there is a notion that support people should be involved in 'ministry' with local people near Ukarumpa, whilst language people are working with other Papua New Guineans around the country.

However, as 'Matt' comments, in order for SIL members to have friendships with local people, they need to make an effort to go beyond the fence to interact with these people in a village setting. Although 'James' believes the fence is mainly a psychological barrier, for some it is a very real barrier, especially in affecting their viewpoint of local people. 'Alice' and 'Glenys' believe that the lack of interaction support people in particular have with Papua New Guineans and the presence of the fence affects the perception they have of Papua New Guineans.

Especially support people because they don't have the opportunity to develop relationships with ordinary PNG folk. See out in the village, you know that sure, there's the odd one in the village who's a pain, but the bulk of folk are people you can relate to and they're just ordinary people like you. The translators know that so that when we come in here and hear about the *raskals* we're not so traumatised by it, so worried by it. Because you know they're just a minority. But if you're here and you don't interact with any, except largely whites, or the few employees, and you may not interact with too many because of your work, you only hear about the *raskals*, your only experience, sometimes, is with the *raskals* and so you get a distorted view and can become quite fearful of being here.

(Alice)

The trouble is that a lot of the people who form relationships, form them with the people from across the river here which is a squatters village, which

I wouldn't recommend people on the whole, now I can't say that whole heartedly, but fifty percent of them are only here because they're wanting to get something out of you and they should be home in their villages. And it's very hard for support people to make worthwhile relationships with people who are scoundrels to begin with. If they can get into the real village situations, out of this squatter settlement, and then there is opportunity to know real village people. Obviously it's not, a lot of the people around Ukarumpa at the moment are not typical Papua New Guinean village people.

(Glenys)

As 'Alice' comments, the presence of the fence may give the impression that there are more *raskals* than there actually are. Although 'Alice' believes there has been an increasing lack of involvement of support workers with local Papua New Guineans, there is still seemed to be a desire among many support workers I spoke with to form close relationships with local people. For many members it is more important to have a 'ministry' with people who live outside the fence than the Papua New Guinean employees who live within the fence. This is perhaps because most of the Papua New Guinean employees who live within the fence are Christians already and are actually involved in their own forms of evangelism with local people and therefore do not need the same 'witnessing' and 'ministry' that those living outside the fence do.

Yes, often I see an employee and obviously they're Papua New Guinean but I tend to think of building relationships as with people in the Valley because when you're in the village you build relationships with people who live near you so the people who live near here are the people, but I don't ignore the employees because sometimes I don't consciously think of the difference between a yard *meri* and someone who works in computers but it's simply because the yard *meris* or whatever are the people that I come in contact with here and so I always ask them where they live and they say, oh, so

many hours away and so I think, well, you know, if I were to visit Ukarumpa village I might meet some of them but my particular ones that I've experienced lived so far away up the mountain that you just content yourself with being able to talk to them in your house which again is the employee, they're my employee rather than the Centre's employee.

(Carla)

As this quote from 'Carla' implies, some of the SIL employees are almost seen as not being Papua New Guinean in the same way that a Papua New Guinean living in a rural context is. Interaction with SIL employees, who are well-educated and have a similar standard of living as SIL members may not fit in with some SIL members' ideals of 'being a missionary'.

There does not seem to be the same incentive amongst language workers to form close relationships with local people as their main friendships with Papua New Guineans are formed out in the villages they work in.

We tend to want and take initiative in the village to try to build relationships. When we're up here, some of the things that I see support people doing we don't do, like get out to village churches here in the valley and go show the Jesus film at local villages around and I think that's ok. We put most of our energy out into the village and then when we're here we're, well one is resting but we're also gearing up again, preparing for what the next phase is out there. And it seems to go well, that kind of transition model because when you're not there the whole time, the people in the village actually get the idea oh I've got to get something done before they come back or while they're gone or you know, those kind of things.

[- - -]

I mean if I was a support worker I would make efforts to try to get out into the villages here or to show Jesus film or something that would try to connect me to national Christians and non-Christians. So in one sense that problem is solved for me because I'm taken out to the village all the time

and so I just meet people like that, literally in a cult movement, and I'm like, oh man, how am I going to share Jesus with this guy and you know, wrestling with that, whereas if I was here I'd have to make some effort.

(Ben)

Language teams do not often develop deep relationships with PNGians at Ukarumpa. I think this is due to the fact that they see Ukarumpa as a 'rest' place. Deep relationships are developed in the village so when language teams get back here they need to relax and be part of "their own" culture (Not that it is really their culture but it is nearer than village culture.) When in the village relating to PNGians can be almost 24 hours a day 7 days a week.

(Brian Hodgkin, ADLA)

Many language people maintain relationships with people in the village by bringing their translation/language helpers from the village to Ukarumpa for workshops and consultant checking. Support workers, on the other hand, may need to find other ways to create relationships with Papua New Guineans beyond the fence.

### **The Jesus Film**

Although SIL members believe that there are various barriers to forming relationships with those who live outside the fence and therefore to communicating the Gospel, there are a number of different ways in which different members, particularly support workers, attempt to bridge these barriers. These include attending the local churches, visiting their yardmen/*haus meris* in their villages and attending funerals of relatives of their yardmen/*haus meris*. For instance, during my fieldwork there was encouragement in the weekly bulletin for members to attend more local churches and offers for accompaniment especially for single women who might feel uneasy walking to local churches on their own. One of the main ways in which support workers try to go beyond the boundary of the

fence and form relationships and have a 'ministry' with local people is through communicating the Gospel through the media of film. These include the Genesis, Luke and Jesus films and the *Kam Yumi Pul* (Come, Let's Pull Together) produced by the PNG Bible Translation Association (BTA). The showing of these films allows support workers in particular, an opportunity to go outside of Ukarumpa and interact with local people.

The films are all an attempt to communicate the Gospel in a visual way, unlike Bible translation, which attempts to communicate the Gospel through the written word (cf. Coleman 1996). The Genesis film is based on the Book of Genesis in the Bible and the both the Luke and Jesus films are based on the Gospel of Luke. The Luke film is the entire Gospel of Luke broken up into different chapters and follows the action verse by verse with a narrator reading from the Bible. The entire film is four hours although it is usually cut down to three hours with the SIL translators editing out some of the chapters when they record it. The Jesus film uses footage from the Luke film, however only the better-known sections and is just over two hours long. The *Kam Yumi Pul* film, produced by BTA, is in *Tok Pisin* and the actors are all Papua New Guinean. This film, rather than communicating the Gospel, is attempting to persuade Papua New Guineans to get involved in Bible translation, and therefore is targeted towards those who are already Christians. The other films have been dubbed into a number of different languages with native speakers providing the narration. This is done through the Non-Print Media Department. They use a DVD that has three tracks: video, music and sound, and dialogue. In the past they used a digital video with two tracks: audio and video. If a translator wishes to have a

copy in the language that they are working on they first choose which video they wish to do. Each video has a complete transcript that the translator works from, translating the text so that the audio fits in with the video. They sometimes use a sub-committee of the translation team to help with the translation. They then use native speakers to read the text for the video. After practicing the script for a few months with the narrators, they either schedule a time to tape it at Ukarumpa, which involves bringing the narrators to Ukarumpa, or a recording team goes out to the village. The script is digitally recorded several times over one section at a time until a clear smooth recording is made that fits into the time restraint. Non-Print Media then takes the digital voice recordings and synchronizes them to the video and background tracks. Once it has all been synchronized a master CD is burned and a master digital tape is recorded. Any further copies that are required can be made from these masters.

The equipment used to show the videos includes a generator, projector, tripod, VCR, speaker and a white sheet to use as a screen. A few years ago someone donated five sets of equipment for the sole purpose of showing videos and a special fund takes care of any repair and replacement costs. There include two systems that fit into a pair of backpacks each for showings that require hiking and there three systems in heavier footlocker type boxes for showings that can be accessed by road. For translators wishing to use these systems there is no rental fee for using the equipment although they have to pay for shipping and fuel to run the generator. For local showings near Ukarumpa a special fund pays for the fuel and whoever shows the video pays for vehicle rental only. Many translators will purchase

a set of equipment and donate it to the language group for future showings.

It is usually the various translators who have arranged to have the video dubbed into the language group they work with that shows the video in the villages. However, they may also ask another member to come and show it or if another member is visiting them they may take them out to show the video as a way of showing them around the language group. The showing of these films also gives an opportunity for support workers to have a 'ministry' with Papua New Guineans, particularly in the local area. There are several members who do local showings in the Gadsup and Kamano languages on a regular basis, however, if someone else is interested in going to show the videos, arrangements are made for them to go out. Those who wish to go and show a video need to make arrangements with the SIL member in charge of organising these showings approximately two weeks in advance so that they can set up with their contacts in the neighbouring areas which village they will go to and let the villagers know that the SIL people are coming. For local showings there is usually at least one SIL member and one Christian Papua New Guinean man from the area who speaks the local dialect. However, the numbers can vary from just two people (which is the minimum needed to set up the equipment) to larger groups of perhaps five or six people with perhaps two Papua New Guinean men helping to show the video. If women wish to go they have to have another woman in the group and women cannot go alone because of safety concerns. However, this is different for women translators who do show the videos on their own, although usually accompanied by people in the language group they work in.

Many of the single men help to show the videos as they do not have family obligations and can be away for longer periods of time. The Papua New Guinean men who help to show these videos see this as part of their 'ministry' to their people although they are also paid by SIL for their PMV (Public Motor Vehicle) fares, petrol and their time. They help to make the arrangements with the local people to show the video and also direct the group to the village where the video is to be shown. They are also responsible for arranging with the local village leaders where the equipment is to be set up for the showing, which can range from inside a church to outside on the side of wall. However, it is encouraged to show it outside in the village rather than inside a church as more people are likely to come and watch it and there is also more space for people who do come. Nevertheless, it is stressed that groups should let the villagers discuss and decide as they know best the weather and how many will come to the showing.

Many of the showings are in the evening and those in the group will often stay overnight at the village with the local man making the arrangements for where they are to stay. Groups of two or more SIL people are asked to provide the food such as a kilo of rice, instant coffee in a bag or a mug, a tin/can of meat (although they are reminded not to bring ham as Seventh Day Adventists do not eat ham). Groups of five or more are asked to bring ten kilos of rice, coffee, sugar and milk powder to help pay for accommodation. However, other than leaving extra food with the hosts, groups are asked not to pay with money. Before the video is started the local man who has accompanied the SIL members speaks in the local language to tell the people that the person in the video is not actually



Jesus but is just doing what Jesus did and speaking the words that Jesus spoke. After the video he again speaks to the people, inviting them to speak to the SIL members, himself or their pastor if they have questions about the Christian life.

The showing of the video is not only an opportunity to share the Gospel through a media representation but also for SIL members to spend time with local villagers, sitting and talking, eating together and so on, and therefore for support workers particularly to gain an experience of village life and interacting with villagers on a more equal level than within Ukarumpa. This is another way in which it is felt that SIL members can build up relationships with local people as well as communicating the Gospel. Many SIL members come back with positive stories of the impact the films had on villagers and they feel that in this way they are helping to evangelise and minister to local people.

### **Servanthood**

SIL-PNG gives one of its guiding principles to be that of 'servanthood' and SIL members view their purpose in Papua New Guinea as being one of serving both God and the people of Papua New Guinea. They view themselves as being both guests of and co-workers with Papua New Guineans. Within this concept of servanthood are notions of sacrifice, putting others before oneself and helping others. However, in a number of ways this idea of being a 'servant' is challenged particularly in the Ukarumpa Centre where how far this idea of servanthood and sacrifice should be stretched is questioned. The notion of servanthood is challenged particularly in looking at the relationships between SIL members and the Papua New Guineans who work for them. There are a large number of

Papua New Guineans, including local people, who come to work for SIL members in Ukarumpa. For support workers in particular, these are the main Papua New Guineans with whom they have the opportunity to form relationships. However, although on the one hand, this gives them the opportunity to form relationships, in other ways these employer/employee relationships are actually a barrier to the type of relationship that members wish to have. There is an ambiguity between creating friendships and yet having a relationship that is itself unequal.

*Employment and 'askims'*

SIL members believe they are in Papua New Guinea to 'serve' the people of Papua New Guinea and they believe this is done in a number of different ways, particularly through Bible translation and literacy. They believe they are 'serving' the local people in the Aiyura Valley especially through providing services and employment. For instance, this informant comments on the services that SIL provides beyond Bible translation.

Whereas most people I've heard speak about the government of PNG have been very negative, because they see that the government benefits don't reach down to the grass roots level (except if a *wantok* is in power). Many government services in PNG is based on the *wantok* system. SIL however reaches across the board, especially in the villages where government services fail to reach. Our services come free of charge, we seek to bring positive change through the Bible, we seek to give rather than take. In almost all SIL allocations, the local people have requested we come, some have pleaded for many years. Not only does SIL translate the Bible into the various languages, they also start vernacular literacy programs (which is actually the way the education system is going with government reforms), produce materials in the vernacular (not just Biblical but also health, maths, and other useful information like agricultural, mechanics, etc...), provide

health services, provide transportation (planes, helicopters, boat), and are involved in community development projects like saw mills, road improvements, and improving communication between villages and government offices. The centre in Ukarumpa provides employment to the local people (and to people from other provinces) in way of office jobs, manual labour, security, and providing opportunity for local people to sell garden produce and handicrafts, among other things.

(Karen)

She compares SIL services to government services, arguing that SIL works at the grass-roots level unlike the government, which is hampered by the *wantok* system. She believes that any changes made through the Bible are positive changes and argues that SIL seeks to 'give rather than take'. Rather than SIL imposing themselves on local people, she maintains that local people have requested SIL to come and translate the Bible for them. In her view, therefore, SIL are serving the people of Papua New Guinea in more ways than simply translating the Bible.

However, one of the ways in which this notion of servanthood is challenged is in the area of employment. Since the beginning of the settlement of SIL in the Aiyura Valley local people have come to work for SIL members in a variety of occupations. These range from relatively unskilled jobs such as yardmen/women (gardeners) and *haus meris* (cleaners) to working in the different departments such as the Store, Finance and so on. There does seem to be a distinction however, between 'employees' who work in the SIL departments, and the more menial jobs such as yardmen/women and *haus meris*. The more menial jobs in particular, such as that of yardmen and *haus meris* can be viewed in some respects as being similar to that of 'servants' in contrast to 'employees' who are viewed as colleagues

and co-workers. 'Alice' compares *haus meris* especially to the maids that many middle class families had when she was growing up.

Well, it was still the colonial era so there was still the attitude of the master and the mistress, that type of thing. And people were employees and servants and I'd known from previous experience where I'd lived, and we'd had servants. Most people of my generation and my socio-economic thing at home, we didn't have servants. But before the Second World War, even people who weren't really well off would have a 'girl'. Practically everyone left school at fourteen and the boys would go into trades and the girls would often go into service. And even my mother, in the '30s, I was born in '31, so I can remember this when I was five, six, seven. My mother and father, he was a teacher, they weren't wealthy, they would probably be considered reasonably well off by other people. But there was no pension, and he was supporting his parents as well as his own family on his teacher's salary. But even so my mother had a 'girl', who would come in every morning and she would help with the housework and help with the washing and do the vegetables, like a *haus meri*, and do the washing, wash up the dishes, and look after the kids.

(Alice)

However after the war, by the time those of 'Alice's' generation were adults, people no longer had someone come in to do housework and many members felt uncomfortable with having someone work in this capacity which was so reminiscent of the concept of having a 'servant' particularly as this did not fit in with their ideals of mission work. They wanted to be 'brothers and sisters in Christ' with local people rather than having local people working for them as gardeners and cleaners. They wished to be friends with the people they employed rather than the more distanced relationship of employer and employee. As 'Carla' comments, it is difficult to form a friendship with someone who is working for you. Here she is commenting specifically on yardmen/*haus meris*.

**What about friendships with employees?**

Well that's kind of a different kind of relationship altogether for me. [- - -]  
But because you've got that relationship as an employer, first of all you need to make sure they do their work, so you can't stand around talking to them too much and the relationship is for me not ideal, it's not equal for me. If I were working with them on something that would be much better.

(Carla)

In 'Alice's' eyes, this desire to be 'brothers and sisters in Christ' caused problems and she viewed the relationship between SIL members and yardmen/*haus meris* as unequal and therefore different than relationships with 'employees' who she regards as co-workers.

Well after the war, that no longer existed, the war had changed things entirely, so that people weren't accustomed to having servants and when they came up here and they had house help, they tried to treat them as friends. Now they came here as missionaries and they were going to brothers and so on. And they didn't realise that there's a different relationship that's appropriate for certain categories. And a servant is not a friend in the sense of being on an equal footing. They can develop into a friend, and one lass I had for a number of years, she did, but you didn't start off on an equal footing. [- - -] So we had folk who ran into trouble where they didn't maintain the distance that you need to between employer and employee. It's the same in any job you have. You're an employee and you're not on an equal footing with the boss. We had that difficulty in those days but that was a misconception of a missionary attitude that people had. But largely people were servants, they were *haus meris*, they were yardmen. You treated them courteously and well, but, now this might be just me, but they weren't equals, they weren't co-workers, that sort of thing. Most of them didn't have the education for that. It's not like the sort of relationship that you now have with JK and O and folk like that, who really are co-workers because they have the education, the experience, the Christian maturity, they're truly brothers in the Lord and you are just equal. Well, in those days, the people you employed weren't on that footing, I don't think. Out in the

village you developed relationships all right and you got very close with some folk, you know what it's like in the village.

(Alice)

As this quote from 'Alice' shows, this view of 'employees' as being co-workers, unlike yardmen/*haus meris* is due in part to their education and their 'Christian maturity'.

However, despite this differentiation between yardmen/*haus meris* and 'employees' both 'Alice' and 'Lily' believe that friendships can also develop with their *haus meris* and yardmen but it involves more time and effort being put into the relationship.

Now the woman who helps me, we have a longstanding friendship from my going many times a week, maybe several or more times a week when she was in the hospital with a malnutrition child and building it that way.

(Lily)

Nevertheless, for many their close relationships are with 'employees' who are on more of an equal level as far as education and income are concerned. For 'James' and 'Mary', two support workers, their closest relationships with Papua New Guineans are with the Papua New Guineans they work with in their different departments and although these began as employer/employee relationships they later developed into friendships.

All the people that I have close relationships with are living on Centre, or a fairly close relationship with people who live at the National High School.

(Mary)

Most of our relationships started off as employer/employee type thing and then developed from there.

(James)

Well my work relationships get stronger all the time because I'm virtually the supervisor for two [Papua New Guinean] ladies. I've found it very hard to

grow into that situation and but I can now feel quite comfortable in saying anything that needs to be said. [- - -] In fact there were times in the early days that if I made the slightest hint at of a correction then I'd just get cold treatment for days on end. But now because there's the strength of relationship, I can say whatever I want to say.

(Mary)

For 'Karen', a short-term literacy worker, she has relationships with both SIL employees and the Papua New Guineans she works with at the Bible Translation Association (BTA) and again those who she has the closest relationships with are the ones with whom she feels on a more equal level.

**Do you think that the fence has affected your relationships with Papua New Guineans?**

No, not at all. I have very good friends on centre (employees) and in BTA. With the STEP program I am surrounded by nationals all day. These are the nationals I've befriended because our relationship is based on mutual work/learning, or fellowship (as with the Friday night ladies group). However, I haven't had good experiences with the locals (who live in the villages outside the fence) because they come on centre seeking work (money) so their motivation is different than the others. Not that I treat them any differently but they treat me differently, they see me as a gains to money or things, and can be manipulative in getting it. Still, the fence does not stop these people from coming on centre, and if any of them did genuinely want a relationship with me then I would be open to that. But it would have to be a relationship not based on work/money.

(Karen)

As 'Karen' comments, she is more wary of forming relationships with the locals due to her perception of their motivation in wanting that relationship.

From the above comments, it can be seen that there is an ambiguous relationship with local people, particularly surrounding

relationships between SIL members and *haus meris*/yard men. Employees working in SIL departments are seen as being co-workers and therefore as being on an equal footing, both in education and their Christian life. However, there seems to be more difficulty in developing friendships with *haus meris* and yardmen. Some members also feel uneasy with the ideal of serving local people and yet having them work for them in tasks that some feel that they could easily do themselves. For instance, some of the single women I knew did not employ *haus meris* as they said they could clean their house, do their own laundry etc themselves. Some also feel that employing locals to clean their houses and look after their gardens has a paternalistic, colonial feel to it. Others however, believe that by providing work for local people and employing them as *haus meris* and yardmen they are in fact serving them by giving them paid employment in an area where there are few jobs available and in fact feel that they are responsible for providing employment for local people. Local people do in fact come seeking employment. For instance, during fieldwork I lived in several different houses where I 'inherited' *haus meris* and yardmen who worked for the owners or previous residents of the house.

In one of the houses I lived in I shared with two other single women, 'Karen' and 'April', and although they would have preferred to not have a yard *meri* at all, they kept on the lady who had worked for the previous residents. One day she came to ask 'Karen' if she could come and work for us regularly as 'Karen' usually only had her come once a month to help with the garden and did the housework herself. The lady wanted to do housework as well and in order to show that she was capable told 'Karen' that she knew



how to do ironing. Another lady came to the house looking for work one day holding what appeared to be a reference from a previous employer.

One of the issues discussed with those who chose not to have *haus meris* was how much they could trust the people working in their house. Some had had problems in the past with *haus meris* and yardmen stealing from them and felt that if they employed a *haus meri* it would create work for them rather than helping them with the housework, as they would have to supervise and be in the house at the same time. Others had very good relationships with their *haus meris* and trusted them with more responsibility, including helping to look after their children. For example, most of the Children's Homes had *haus meris* who helped the 'hostel parents' with the housework, including cooking and laundry.

There were also issues with the relationships between yardmen and single women SIL members. For instance, both myself and other single women that I spoke to encountered difficulties with local men hassling them about giving them work or payment for work. In my first few months of fieldwork I had a local man ask if I needed the lawn mowing as he had noticed the grass was very high. After cutting the grass he asked for what seemed to be a very large amount of money after having already asked for money to go and buy petrol for the lawn mower. However, I was not sure what the going rates for cutting grass were so paid him what I had on me and he said he would come back for the rest. Later I spoke to my next-door neighbour, a Papua New Guinean employee, who said that I had been seriously overcharged. She strongly advised that if he came back for payment I should ask someone from the Security

Department to come and speak to him, which I did. They told me that he was a known conman and always tried to get money out of new members.

At another house I had several different local men come and ask if they could cut the grass (for payment) and when I told them that I already had someone else to do it, they said they had a contract with the house and it was not good for me to get someone else to cut the grass, even though I had been living there for several weeks before these men turned up. I also had difficulties with the yardman I inherited from the owners, whose requests got more elaborate each week. At first he only wanted to be employed more often but then he was asking me to give him things, for instance, he wanted me to buy him a new pair of shoes and another week wanted medicine for his cold and another week, money for a funeral. He would turn up almost on a daily basis asking for different items, to the point that I would try to avoid being in so as to evade his many requests. I also had complete strangers knocking on my door and asking for items such as matches. This was during a time when there were warnings in the bulletin not to let strangers into your house as there were apparently some *raskals* going around checking out people's homes for potential robberies.

- Do not encourage people who come knocking on your door asking for money (To pay for a funeral or to take their sick mother/baby/uncle/wan tok etc. to hospital) They could be just casing your place. Make a note of their description: appearance and clothing etc. Call security on #4120 to have them removed.

(Centre Awareness 5-12 November, 2001, *Branch Information Sheet*, 15 November 2001)

When I told the SIL member in charge of security about these incidents he said that it is hard as Christians not to give in to *askims* (people asking for things) but at the same time local people see that and manipulate and use it for their own advantage. He said that it is not really culturally appropriate for these men to be coming and hassling me as a single female, but at the same time that is part of why I was getting hassled, because being a woman made me an easy target. He argued that they are doing things that are not really appropriate in their culture, but because they are dealing with *waitskins* (white skins) the rules change. But at the same time they use what they want to, for example men do not really listen to women in PNG culture and it is better for a single woman to have female yard help as they are more likely to take instructions and make less *askims*.

Another SIL member said that was one of the reasons he did not want to come back to PNG because the only perspective he had of 'nationals' (Papua New Guineans) was of the '*askim*' type, but luckily that perspective had changed since he did village living at POC (he had previously been a short-term support worker). Several different people recommended that if I had difficulties dealing with men who came to the door that I should get a male neighbour to come and talk to them as it was more appropriate for a male to give *tok save* (a talk) to them and it was also culturally appropriate to have a third party dealing with the situation.

However, being male does not prevent SIL men from being manipulated also. One single male SIL member, 'Jonathan', commented that he wanted to form 'real' relationships with local people and thought he had developed such a friendship with a local

man. However, he had become frustrated with this friendship as he had come to believe his friend had been lying to him. This man had asked for materials to make *bulims* (string bags) for 'Jonathan' and his friends but they had never appeared. He had also asked for a large amount of money for several deaths in the village but when 'Jonathan' asked to go to the funeral he had been fobbed off. He had thought that there had been a 'real' relationship as this local man had reciprocated with vegetables from his garden and 'Jonathan' had also been to visit his relatives in their village. However, he said that although he had no firm evidence he felt that he was being used.

This experience of *askims* was so prevalent that new members were warned against it in several of the weekly Branch Information Sheets.

- Saturday. Morning, a girl called on a member and said that she had been sent by the member's house girl. She said that the house girl's son had cut his leg and needed to be taken to hospital in Goroka. They needed K30 for fare. The member gave her the money. On Monday when the house girl came to work she knew nothing about an injured son or a trip to Goroka.

(Centre Awareness 3 December - 10 December 2001, *Branch Information Sheet*, 13 December 2001)

- Remember under no circumstances buy or give "anything" to people who come knocking on your door. This only encourages the practice and gives people an excuse to be in the housing area, planning theft. If anyone comes to your door with askims or selling, ask them to wait, close and lock your door and ring Security on #4120 to come and get them.

(*Branch Information Sheet*, 7 February 2002)

### Tok Save

- Did you know that SIL people are considered "easy targets" for money? There are many reports of nationals who are going around on centre and "tricking" people into giving them money. These

people (male and female adults) go around on the center, knock on people's doors, claiming to be a wantok of the tenants' hausmeri or yardman. Often they tell a story of sick children or other sick family members who urgently need to be brought to a hospital. Because of a HIGH SUCCESS rate, this sort of thing is on the increase. It would be fine for you to photograph such people for identification later, if possible. Offering to take the individual to the hospital yourself, or visiting the funeral can often test the validity of the situation – but strangers should not be at your door.

- SIL law prohibits the purchasing of goods by door to door salesmen. New members are often targets by con-men and they know who you are. Single women are encouraged to not answer doors to strangers and may call GDSS x4120 for an escort off Centre.

(Centre Awareness 18-25 February 2002, *Branch Information Sheet*, 28 February 2002)

Even creating relationships is advised as being approached with caution by the weekly Branch Information Sheet.

When you give money for any reason, you are establishing a relationship with that person based on a system of debts. Choose carefully who you want to be lifelong friends with by this act of kindness on your part. Do not merely give money as an “easy way” of sending someone away who is inconveniencing you at the moment. If you do, you will be sure to see this person again since you are now in their circle of debt relationships.

(Brian Chapaitis, Director's Assistant for Security, Centre Awareness Week 25 June- 02 July 01, *Branch Information Sheet*, 5 July 2001)

The experience of *askims* and the relative wealth of SIL members compared to local people created much ambivalence for some SIL members who felt responsible for helping local people yet also felt manipulated by certain individuals.

*'Encounters with men'*

All new members and visitors to Ukarumpa receive a *Welcome to Ukarumpa* booklet which includes several sections giving advice on relationships with Papua New Guineans, for instance recommendations for women and young girls in encounters with Papua New Guinean men. As this shows, not only do SIL members have to consider their relationships in general with Papua New Guineans, they also have to think about the correct behaviour between women and men in order to be good witnesses.

**ENCOUNTERS WITH MEN**

We are not living in an isolated context. We need to consider what our host country considers "normal." What level of friendliness is appropriate for women and young girls conversing with PNG men and boys.

The feelings of being "on centre" may deceive you into believing that we are a closed community. The fact is, however, the centre is a public area. Many people pass through here on their way to surrounding areas.

(Ukarumpa General Information Booklet, Revised June 2000: 15)

Presumably similar advice applies for SIL men in conversing with Papua New Guinean women, although this section appears to focus on SIL women acting appropriately. It could be argued that this attitude towards the safety of women is related to the colonial administration where Papua New Guinean men could be hung for a sexual encounter with a white woman (consensual or not) but a white man with a Papua New Guinean woman was hidden and tolerated.

The prevailing wisdom held that remote areas were "no place for a woman" and the presence of wives of administration officers (though not missionaries) in the primitive hinterland was for a long time discouraged. Part of the reason for this was that, for white men, their wives and families

symbolized the domestic security and the establishment of European-style civilization that they aspired to create. In times of social malaise, their insecurity became translated into fear for the safety (especially the sexual safety) of their women, and Papuans, who represented (in white imagination) the wild and ungovernable forces against which civilization had to struggle, were perceived as a particular underlying danger. It was partly because of this that white men didn't like the idea of white women entering "uncivilized areas," and passed extremely severe legislation against any Papua men who might have sexual relations with them.

(Schieffelin and Crittenden 1991: 16)

However, the warnings for young girls and women to watch their behaviour are not simply due to ideas regarding sexual relations between Papua New Guinean men and white women. For instance, there was at least one married couple living in Ukarumpa where the wife was white/Australian and the husband was Papua New Guinean and amongst the High School teenagers there were certainly a few couples involving Papua New Guinean boys and SIL girls. Rather, the focus on SIL women's behaviour rather than SIL men may have been the growing number of rapes on and off Centre of both expatriate and Papua New Guinean women, with the notion being that SIL women should not incite sexual assaults by acting in a manner that could be misconstrued. Clothing is a particularly highlighted, for instance the POC manual that new members receives advises women not to wear any tight-fitting clothing. Several different people also told me a story illustrating the importance of women wearing 'culturally appropriate' clothing, although some say this story is simply an urban myth. In this story a translation team had some language helpers visiting from a very rural area. The language helpers were shocked to see SIL women wearing tight trousers and asked if all SIL women were prostitutes. This

emphasises how 'cultural differences' such as clothing can be misinterpreted. The need to act appropriately in encounters with Papua New Guinean men was particularly important for those women who work in translation teams made up of single, unmarried women as it was seen by SIL members to be improper in Papua New Guinean 'culture' for unmarried men and women to be alone together.<sup>19</sup>

And all of this built up the fact that although we were women somehow we got their respect. But it's never easy for them I don't think, and we thought that all along, we've got a disadvantage. Working with men, the men we worked with fortunately, we have to work with the men because the women were very busy in the gardens and busy with their children and when we got them teaching it was the men who came to the first classes so they got our first degree. They were very careful to always be two men together or if we had one man he always brought his child in so you know, if you just be careful of watching relationships.

(Glenys)

As this extract shows, it was not only SIL women who were being careful about their relationship with Papua New Guinean men but the men were also careful to come in twos or have their children with them.

SIL men may also be inappropriately 'friendly' with a Papua New Guinean woman, however there seemed to be perceived to be less danger of any kind of sexual assault from either party. Nevertheless, this is not to say that there was no advice whatsoever on correct behaviour for SIL men. During the Pacific Orientation Course (POC) the participants attended a men's orientation group and women's

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<sup>19</sup> It was also frowned upon for unmarried SIL men and women to spend time alone together, especially in the evenings without a chaperone. It was unclear whether this was due to respecting what was perceived as Papua New Guinean 'culture' or whether this was seen as inappropriate Christian behaviour.



orientation group where each group was told about appropriate behaviour towards the opposite sex in a Papua New Guinean context.

**Why do you think there was advice on how SIL women and young girls should behave around PNG men but not how SIL men and young boys should act around PNG women?**

Maybe because there are less single guys on the field than girls, and the married guys should know better. I think there should be both since men and women can both get into trouble. I remember [---] telling me stories about being chased around the village by women. Same as above, women can be overpowered, men could get away from women. But, in the situation where an ex-pat man did behave badly with a PNG'ian woman, would have enormous effects to his ministry, and to Wycliffe/SIL, and even to the guy's life if her wantoks reacted, or wanted compensation.

At POC men and women get equal advice on how they should act with each other and with the opposite sex. Not just with nationals but also within the team. I remember being cautioned when I had been seen walking around POC with an ex-pat guy, not because we were doing anything wrong, but because it might give PNG'ians the wrong impression. I guess women are extra cautioned about how we relate to PNG men simply because we are the weaker sex (physically) and if anything should happen we would more likely be molested than get away. It is for our safety. Also, in PNG culture, women have more opportunities to be offensive. Let's face it, guys could do nearly anything and get away with it, that's what the culture is like. But women, there are so many taboos, dress, food, washing, speech, igo igo.... so I think there are more cultural rules for us women than men.

(‘Karen’ 2004: personal communication)

As the above extract shows, the issue of sexuality was not confined to sexual relations between Papua New Guineans and SIL members but also between SIL members. For instance, during the Pacific Orientation Course (POC) a video is shown entitled ‘The Pursuit of

Sexual Purity' which gives advice to both men and women in general and to couples specifically.

**What do you think were the reasons behind showing this video?**

Kind of as a spiritual in-service, for Wycliffe members, as we are all working in such close situations, where sexual misconduct isn't the norm, but certainly could happen if people were not careful. It was to help people think about how they relate to each other, how to look for warning signs in other people or in ourselves. As I said, this talk was given at KG, so for people working at the home base. But it has obviously been thought to be of use overseas and used at POC (maybe as a result of the Baileys and Leaches since they are Aussies). [Leaders of POC]

('Karen' 2004: personal communication)

Here it can be seen that acting inappropriately was not only a physical danger but also a spiritual danger. For SIL men in particular, acting in an improper way with Papua New Guinean women not only put them at risk from the relatives of the woman concerned but also reflected badly on their spiritual ministry. Similarly, SIL women were expected to act in an appropriate way in their relationships with Papua New Guinean men in order not only to protect themselves against sexual assault but also to be good 'witnesses' (i.e. not to be seen as 'prostitutes' or sexually available). Nevertheless, it is worth noting that although both men and women were given advice on sexual misconduct during their SIL training the Welcome Booklet is mainly concerned with how women should protect themselves from sexual assault.

*Little America*

SIL members are aware that in monetary terms they are far better off than many Papua New Guineans, particularly rural villagers. However, in comparison to many of their 'supporters' back in their

home countries, they are not very well off and often have made sacrifices to be missionaries. Therefore they have to deal with the ambivalence of having made sacrifices to become missionaries and yet still have divisions created by wealth between themselves and local people. This next section looks at the way in which the notion of 'servanthood' and sacrifice is also challenged in the standards of living of the SIL members in Ukarumpa. One of the major issues surrounding the building of the fences was how local people would perceive them and how they would affect the image of SIL in the eyes of the local people and other outsiders. This concern with SIL's image is directly connected to the notion of 'witnessing' as members were concerned that by building a fence and cutting themselves off from local people that they would be representing a bad witness to local people. It was felt by some that Ukarumpa was already separate from the local population in terms of the Western lifestyle of those living in Ukarumpa. Some were concerned that by building a fence it would make SIL even more of an enclave separate from the rest of Papua New Guinea. Others believed that it was the high standard of living itself in comparison to local people that caused some of the problems with petty theft and break-ins and therefore resulted in requiring a fence. Therefore, for some members the Westernised setting of Ukarumpa is a major factor in creating barriers between SIL members and local people.

Both outsiders and SIL members have described Ukarumpa as a 'Little America' and for many it was the predominant image they had of Ukarumpa before arriving in Papua New Guinea.

I heard it was a 'little America' and that you could get just about anything you wanted (in terms of material goods). Yes it is a little America, but I've

realised it's because there's mostly American people here (and therefore their culture influences how things are run and done).

(Karen)

Others would dispute that description, saying that it is a mixture of nationalities and influences.

**What is your opinion on the comment that Ukarumpa is a 'little America'?**

**Do you think that is a true reflection of the nature of the community here?**

I don't think it is a good comparison. Ukarumpa is different to anywhere else in the world. It's Ukarumpa. Just like the Ukarumpa accent is. It's a mixture!

(Brian Hodgkin, ADLA)

Nevertheless, Ukarumpa is very Westernised particularly in the style of buildings and the lifestyle of community members. As many point out, there is a great deal of difference between the style of houses for the missionaries and those of local people.

Not because people naturally wanted it that way but the lifestyle between the way that a Papua New Guinean would live, like material culture, to the way we would live and feel comfortable, is so different.

(Carla)

It's very difficult because by Western standards we're normal, we're not wealthy. I mean, some members are very well off. They've got good cars, they've got every appliance in their house. From some countries where the giving isn't as generous, some members who'd be living next door are very marginal. But compared with Papua New Guineans they're both extremely wealthy. So, it's very difficult for us to tone down, because what we regard as essential is quite wealthy or affluent compared with a Papua New Guinean.

(Glenys)

For many members the Westernised setting of Ukarumpa did not fit with the image they had of mission work.

It's a lot nicer than I expected, the houses and facilities, the High School has a very good standard, the kids have a lot of things going for them. At first I was disappointed because I was wanting a much simpler life.

[- -]

I expected it to be tougher, in standard of living. I know that not everywhere is as nice as Ukarumpa, but I expected that we would be living as close as possible as how the PNG'ians live (housing, travel, food, etc...).

(Karen)

As 'Karen' comments, the standard of living at Ukarumpa was something she struggled with when she first arrived due to her expectations of mission work. Her expectations included living in a similar style to local people. This struggle between the image of mission work and the reality of Ukarumpa is something that is often discussed and debated within the community.

The main concern regarding the standards of living is the image that SIL are giving to local people through the high standard of living and its effect on the local villages.

So our being here has had this affect on the local villages and centres. They see we've got so much [- -].

(Alice)

As 'Alice' observes, local people see how much the missionaries have in terms of material wealth, and this is perhaps one of the reasons why there has been so much *raskal* activity resulting in the fence. However, these concerns regarding the image of SIL are not new but have been brought up many times in discussions over the years from the earliest days of SIL's presence in Papua New Guinea.

Over and over again there are concepts that people have as a group here about how we should live, what our role is here in this country, the role of this Centre and you get some of the same things being discussed year after

year after year, each new group of people that comes in and they get brought up again as if it were a new thing. The issue of what is acceptable in the way of housing, the issue of what image are we communicating to the nationals around us and are the things we're doing appropriate or are they, some people, each time the discussions comes up about housing there are people who say, no, this is too much, there's too much of a discrepancy between what we, the way we're living and the way nationals are living and there's others who for various reasons say, no, it's alright. And so that's one big change I've seen is each time this discussion comes up it's still the same questions, the same issues but the level of building is more Western.

(Marisa)

This was a bone of contention for years. I remember the discussion in the conferences twenty, thirty years ago about the standard of living. [- -]

And our house was so primitive we had SIL members way back in those days who refused to live in it because it had a wood stove and it was unlined.

(Alice)

This concern with the image that SIL was presenting to local people through the way they lived was directly connected to the witness it would give to local people. The size and style of the houses do not fit in with notions of 'sacrifice' and 'servanthood'. Many find it difficult to reconcile themselves to the fact that they are living a better life than the people they have come to 'serve'.

**Do you think that the image that SIL gives to local people is important and if so, why?**

That's another one I struggled with at first. I think people who are new to PNG or who stay in Ukarumpa most the time don't really appreciate the huge impact SIL has made in the nation. It's easy to see the situation at a surface level and make quick value judgements. I am certainly guilty of that.

(Karen)

Therefore, for some members the high standard of living is another barrier to forming relationships with Papua New Guineans.

## COMMUNICATING THE GOSPEL

When you entertain Papua New Guineans you have that, you should either sit in the lounge room or sit outside of your house to make them feel comfortable because it's just so different, it's like another climate.

(Carla)

For these members they feel that they are not fitting in with Papua New Guinean culture by living in a Westernised setting and that by not fitting in with the way that Papua New Guineans live they are creating boundaries between them.

Others however do not believe that the style of housing of the missionaries in comparison to village people has caused barriers.

I haven't felt any barrier that there's actually been caused because of the different styles of housing.

(Mary)

Rather than being a barrier, some point out that many Papua New Guineans have the same standard of living, including some who live in the Aiyura Valley. SIL employees themselves do not view Papua New Guineans as being 'poor' in the same way that some members do.

It depends on the people and if they can save up, well they can do something about it. [- - -] In Papua New Guinea we are not poor, we are rich, we have a lot of ways of earning money. There are people who start building good houses in the village.

(Silas)

We can speak from our own family's point of view. As far as I'm concerned my family is content in what they have and the piece of land they have, you know it produces enough for them to live and get a little bit of money at the coffee season. That's enough.

(Rose)

They're not very poor. In the village areas they have enough food to live on, clothes to wear. If they want to go to the market and sell something and buy

something from the store they have enough money to do that. They have coffee trees to have enough money, cash.

(Anna)

Very few of them want to sleep in a European type house. One because it's cold, two that's not the way of doing it, they all live and sleep together in the one room, and over and over they would spend a lot of money on a white man's type house in the village and then have a little thatch house at the back to sit around the fire and talk and visit. Because that's community life, that's the way they live.

(Glenys)

Although having a European style house gives prestige, 'Glenys' believes that the majority of people in the Highlands especially, prefer to live and sleep in their own houses and want a European style house for the image it gives rather than its comfort level unlike the missionaries, who feel more comfortable in a European style house. Nevertheless, by giving prestige European style houses are seen as a sign of wealth and influence.

This debate regarding the standard of living has also caused division amongst the missionaries themselves. Many believe that it is the American culture in particular that has influenced the size of houses.

Again you see there was a difference in home standards, England, Australia, New Zealand versus America. And American churches, when someone was coming out the ladies would have a morning for the prospective missionary and load her up with linens and house gifts and you have no idea, new curtains and when Americans came back from furlough, they'd bring all this stuff and they'd completely redo their house, throw their curtains out, get rid of all their linen, have new stuff, what have you. It absolutely appalled the rest of us! [- - -] It never dawned on the Americans that they could have a lower standard [- - -]. But they were living at a low standard compared to what they'd come from. So this was always a problem and when we built



the Alotau Centre, even amongst Australians who were there we had we strong tensions because we said we need to keep it as low key as we possibly can and make it as little different from the village. [- -] But always when you've got people you're going to have this tension. One of the things they're doing is raising the standard of employee housing, these solar hot waters, which is a good thing, fridges for people, which is also another thing. That all helps.

(Alice)

Well, everybody has different values and different ideas of what is extravagant. We just value things differently. Like us Americans, we like more space in our houses whereas a Brit, that to them might be even extravagant but if you have a friend that's from Brazil they think our American houses are too small. So it's just different.

(Bonnie)

But in terms of how big the houses are they don't need to be quite so big. I think that a lot of people in Australia don't live in houses as nice. It's just having somewhere to retreat to, but it doesn't have to be quite so spectacular.

(Carla)

As 'Carla' points out some members are actually raising their own standard of living by becoming missionaries, which does not sit well with the idea that being a missionary involves self-sacrifice, particularly in things of a material nature. For many years there was a restriction on the size of houses that could be built at Ukarumpa. However, 'Bonnie' believes that because of the differences in nationalities in Ukarumpa, it is unwise to have a set standard for style of houses in Ukarumpa.

I think that having a across the board standard of living for a centre like Ukarumpa is not a good idea. Not only because quotas are different from different countries and home churches have different expectations but also, just if you look at missions in general or even through the Western world,

sometimes you're going to get, every once in a while, you're going to get missionaries who aren't poor, that they maybe don't have anyone supporting them because they've already become independently wealthy and they want to come over and serve. And if they want to build a nice house that's probably ok in my mind. You know, they're going to end up using the local infrastructure to do that, the same that they would do down in Madang and that provides for local businesses too. So in our village too, although it doesn't show, like we westerners sometimes look at things, like size up house, we have the same breakout, some people are more wealthy in our village, nationals, and some aren't.

Brian Hodkin (ADLA)

As he points out, there are these same divisions of wealth within the Papua New Guinean villages that SIL members are working in.

Nevertheless, there is a notion of responsibility for the money that supporters are giving them and supporters have a certain degree of control in how SIL members use their money.

I don't see a problem, just if you take it out of the context of Ukarumpa. I don't have a theoretical problem with being richer than my neighbours, in fact I am in the village. And I'm content with that. But it does come with some responsibility, but the responsibility isn't that I help everyone. That's not my responsibility. My responsibility is to steward the wealth as God would have me, which means to be open to things as God brings them my way.

(Ben)

As 'Ben' comments, he feels a responsibility to use the money he is given in a Christian manner. For some this means living as simply as possible, whereas for others this is not as important and they believe they need to use their money in other ways. For many members there is a concern about fitting in with the culture they are working in yet at the same time maintaining a level of comfort that they feel they require in order to carry out their work.

There's a balance between efficiency and fitting into your environment. You're in the village to work and you don't want to live under such conditions that you spend all your time just living. Not having a tank so that you've got to carry your water from the stream, do all your washing in the stream, go down and bathe in the stream. We've done that when the tanks were very low, there was a drought, so you trotted down and we did our washing there. You did it, but it took time, and it meant that you didn't have time then to do the work that you were there for. We leaned very strongly to keeping it as low key as possible and as much like the village as possible.

But we kept our house as basic as possible and we found that well-to-do villagers, people who were teachers and so on, they would build this sort of house in the village themselves so it was no different from some of theirs.

(Alice)

For many years we kept our standards very, very low. I mean you look at this house you can see this will do because we've never felt we should pour a lot of money into a house. Essentially we do have to have more. For us to work we had to have a car to go to the village. Nowadays you have to have a computer therefore you have to have electricity. But, it seems very hard for people to live simply these days because they come from backgrounds very different to what I came from, I guess, and I don't know what the answer to that is. Seems to be the bigger the better, it's going to that point where, but on the other hand I don't know that that degree of what I feel is essential and what they feel is essential is so much different if you compare it to the very little the village person has. But on the other hand the village person manages very well on a very lower scale of living because that's all they want. They don't really want money for living, they're happy and it's more practical for them to have their village houses and their gardens and things. They certainly, they would like some nice extras like we all do when we see other people with extras.

(Glenys)

Well, personally I think that Papua New Guinean villages are very, very difficult to live in. They're very basic, there's not a lot of things that Western people are used to and so if you're a language team working in a village it's

very nice to come somewhere where you can turn on the tap, flush the toilet, you know you can just do all these things and you don't have to think about it, you can relax, you know it's less stressful to have those things and I think it's important to have that. In other mission fields you might be able to live in cities with those things all the time. So for that reason I think the convenience of having the water, the power and things is fine. [- - -] So there's a balance, you've got to get a balance between having comforts to really give you longevity in your work and also realising that you can be just as comfortable in smaller surroundings.

(Carla)

We could build a house that's pretty much comparable to some of the higher end houses that are already there and we'd be happy with that.

(Ben)

It's very difficult because by Western standards we're normal, we're not wealthy. I mean, some members are very well off. They've got good cars, they've got every appliance in their house. From some countries where the giving isn't as generous, some members who'd be living next door are very marginal. But compared with Papua New Guineans they're both extremely wealthy. So, it's very difficult for us to tone down, because what we regard as essential is quite wealthy or affluent compared with a Papua New Guinean.

(Glenys)

**Do you think the relative wealth of Ukarumpa in comparison to local people is an issue for SIL? How does this affect views on what 'mission' work should be like?**

It is bound to be an issue especially when local people see the size of houses etc. I think we need to be careful but folk also need to feel reasonably comfortable if they are going to have a long term involvement in mission. SIL because of the translation work does need people who will stick at the job.

(Brian Hodgkin, ADLA)

As 'Glenys' points out, no matter how simply SIL members try to live they will always be wealthier than the local people and more importantly, will always be perceived as being wealthier than the local people just by the fact that they are foreigners. Nevertheless, for some members their relative wealth and comfort in comparison to some of the people that they work with, sits uncomfortably with the ideal of being a self-sacrificing missionary.

Others see the purpose of Ukarumpa as providing a rest place for the missionaries rather than trying to fit in with Papua New Guinean culture and lifestyle.

I think when one is interacting with people from another culture, there is a necessity to connect with the people, in order for anything you want to share with them, help them with, teach them, or learn from them, first there's got to be a connection. You can't come in as a stranger. In the case of missionaries, if what you're trying to teach or communicate requires a certain standard of living, then you should live that way. If it's not necessary then you don't have to bother with it. It very much depends what culture, what place, what the past situation of those people are and it's true not only for missionaries but you know, any interactions with new people, you've got to make a connection first. And if that means, living, you know, with the same kind of housing as they have, ok. It's not necessarily the case. Personally with this centre here, we aren't here in this centre to communicate something to the people that are also in this Valley I think. They have translations, they have churches, they know everything that we have been, we are here in the country to communicate. So I don't see this place as even really counting in how are we supposed to be adapted to the local culture, because this is separate. This is just like our ...

**Enclave?**

Yeah, in a way, this is supposed to be the place that's like home in order to give us. Sorry I'm talking, I mean I'm not a translator but the people here, in order to give the, shall I say strength, the ability to do the culture adaptation

that's necessary in some of the more isolated village areas. Because no one can live unconnected in a foreign culture all the time.

(Maureen)

But now I'm glad to have this sort of community, especially after being in the village for a long time. I like the diversity of cultures, and the richness there is in all the people on centre, both nationals and expats.

(Karen)

At first I had a hard time with it, but now, after being here for 2 years I come to appreciate the good aspects of living in Ukarumpa. It's not that I've become any softer, but I've realised that Ukarumpa is primarily a support-centre for those people who work out in the village (and not just a group of people doing their own thing and pleasing themselves). In order for people who work out in the village to get the support they need, Ukarumpa must function in the way that it does (and have the standard of living/facilities/technology as it does).

(Karen)

Some argue that without Ukarumpa members would burnout sooner and not be able to spend such long periods of time in Papua New Guinea. This is especially the case for those with children, who need the support of the schools at Ukarumpa in order to do mission work. Some members also feel a sense of guilt in taking time off for holidays, especially if they stay in one of the resorts in Papua New Guinea or go to Australia for a break. Some believe that this is not a wise use of the money that has been entrusted to them by supporters whilst others argue that even missionaries need a holiday sometimes in order to refresh themselves and be able to return to their work rejuvenated and enthusiastic. As they point out, although their furloughs are a break from working in Papua New Guinea, they are not a holiday from 'being missionaries' as they still often have to do a lot of travelling visiting their supporters and speaking at different

churches in order to build up awareness of SIL and financial support for themselves. Therefore, for some the modernity and Westernised setting of Ukarumpa is something they struggle with in terms of their expectations of mission work, whereas for others it is something they appreciate and feel they need in order to be able to work long-term in Papua New Guinea.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, SIL members see their main purpose of being in Papua New Guinea to communicate the Gospel. They believe that the main way in which all members can help to communicate the Gospel is through witnessing which is done through forming good relationships with those that they are witnessing to. However, there are debates regarding the witness that SIL members are giving to Papua New Guineans, particularly in the lifestyle of members and the types of relationships they have with local people. For some, these are issues that they struggle with continually and find it difficult to reconcile ideals of 'servanthood' and sacrifice with the reality of life in Ukarumpa. Others believe that this is a simplistic way of looking at the realities of mission life and believe that they are fulfilling their mission to 'serve' the people of Papua New Guinea and communicate the Gospel.



Bible dedication ceremony



## *Chapter Four*

### *Translation*

'TATA JESUS IS BÄNGALA!' declares the Reverend every Sunday at the end of his sermon. More and more, mistrusting his interpreters, he tries to speak in Kikongo. He throws back his head and shouts these words to the sky, while his lambs sit scratching themselves in wonder. *Bangala* means something precious and dear. But the way he pronounces it, it means the poisonwood tree. Praise the Lord, hallelujah, my friends! for Jesus will make you itch like nobody's business. [Adah speaking]  
(Kingsolver 1998: 312)

It is a special kind of person who will draw together a congregation, stand up before them with a proud, clear voice, and say words wrong, week after week. *Bandika*, for example: to kill someone. If you spit it out too quickly, as the Reverend does, it means to pinch back a plant or deflower a virgin. What a surprise it must be to the Congolese to hear that brave David, who intended to smite the mighty Goliath, was actually jumping around pinching back plants, or worse. [Adah speaking]  
(Kingsolver 1998: 243)

In Kingsolver's novel, *The Poisonwood Bible*, the character of Nathan Price, Baptist missionary to the Congo, is intent on converting the people of the village Kilanga to his own particular brand of Christianity. Our image of Reverend Price is filtered through the viewpoints of his wife and four daughters. Adah, one of his middle daughters, particularly has a sceptical view of her father as shown in the above quotes. As she points out, his attempts at conversion are distinctly hampered by both his lack of proficiency in the language of his target audience and also his complete inability and, more importantly, unwillingness to understand and learn from the culture of the people he is trying to convert. As result, there is confusion and misunderstanding on both sides. Not only does

Reverend Price show a lack of understanding of the culture of the people of Kilanga, but he also displays a lack of knowledge of the Bible and reflexivity about his own beliefs, as shown in a conversation with Brother Fowles, the previous missionary in Kilanga, who comments, 'During my years here in the Congo I've heard so many errors of translation, even quite comical ones' (Kingsolver 1998: 283). Reverend Price responds with, 'Sir, I offer you my condolences. Personally I've never been troubled by any such difficulties with interpreting God's word' (Kingsolver 1998: 283). Reverend Price displays many of the worst characteristics associated with missionaries in the popular imagination, such as being convinced of his own rightness and righteousness with a lack of tolerance and flexibility, and imposing his own views on others with no attempt to learn about or understand viewpoints other than his own. The character of Reverend Price reinforces a particular stereotype of the narrow-minded, inflexible, 'Bible-bashing' missionary. Ironically, it is precisely because of Reverend Price's lack of knowledge of both the language and culture of the people of Kilanga that he fails at his evangelistic task and is generally viewed as a tragic-comic figure.

*The Poisonwood Bible* exemplifies the difficulties of translation, cultural as well as linguistic, and in interpreting the Bible and the problems that occur as a result. Unlike Reverend Price, SIL missionaries are well aware of these difficulties and take the task of translation seriously. As shown in the training they undertake before beginning translation work they believe in the importance of studying in-depth both the language and the culture of the people they are trying to evangelise for the purposes of good translation.

Again, unlike Reverend Price they are also more reflexive about their work and their Christian faith. As a result they often feel an ambivalence about their task that Reverend Price, in contrast, is seemingly not burdened with. Nevertheless, although in many ways SIL members can be contrasted with Reverend Price, they have similar goals, that of conversion. Even though SIL members attempt a better understanding of the language and culture of the people they are evangelising it is for the purpose of a more effective and long-lasting conversion. 'As missionaries have always realized, it is precisely the problem of translation that is the heart of conversion. Translations of the Bible and of religious doctrine are among missionaries' first tasks, only preceded by the description in grammar and lexicon of the language of those who are to be converted' (Van der Veer 1996: 15). Jolly and McIntyre also comment,

It is abundantly clear from the writings of Pacific missionaries from the early nineteenth century onwards that learning languages was seen as essential to spreading the word of God. Attaining oral fluency, committing unwritten languages to writing and eventually printing texts of the gospels were seen as crucial steps in the process of conversion and the consolidation of mission power  
(1989: 6-7)

However, misunderstanding and different interpretations than what is intended can still occur despite the translators' best efforts.

This chapter looks at the importance SIL members place on language and translation, both linguistic and cultural translation as well as Bible translation. It examines in more detail the process that SIL translators and others are involved in translating the Bible and how some of these processes have changed with new ideas regarding the role of SIL in Papua New Guinea and the growing emergence of

Papua New Guinean Bible translators. As outlined above, translation is no easy task and this chapter is particularly concerned with the problems of translation and the ambiguities and ambivalences that SIL missionaries encounter as a result.

### **The Importance of Translation**

#### **Linguistic Creed**

We believe that language is one of God's most important gifts to man, and of all human characteristics, language is the most distinctly human and the most basic. Without language, culture and civilization would be impossible.

We also believe that any language is capable of being a vehicle for complicated human interaction and complex thought, and can be the basis for a complex culture and civilization.

Therefore, all languages deserve respect and careful study.

As the most uniquely human characteristic a person has, a person's language is associated with his self-image. Interest in and appreciation of a person's language is tantamount to interest in and appreciation of the person himself.

All languages are worthy of preservation in written form by means of grammars, dictionaries, and written texts. This should be done as part of the heritage of the human race.

Every language group deserves to see its language in print and to have some literature written in it.

Minority language groups within a larger nation deserve the opportunity of learning to speak, read, and write the national language.

(Benjamin F. Elson, September 1987,

<http://www.sil.org/sil/linguistic%5Fcreed.htm>, 2003)

As shown by the *Linguistic Creed* taken from the SIL International website, SIL members place a high value on language, particularly the study and preservation of languages in written form. In this, they place an emphasis on not only spoken language, but also on literacy and literature, including teaching minority language groups to be

literate in the national language group of their nation state and perhaps also encouraging a more active part in the larger nation state. Although SIL produce other written material in indigenous languages, the main way in which SIL members consider that they are helping to study and preserve languages around the world is through Bible translation.

1. What kind of organization is SIL?

SIL International is a non-profit, scientific educational organization of Christian volunteers that specializes in serving the lesser-known language communities of the world. Its members live among the people of these communities while seeking to understand their cultures and learn their languages. SIL specializes in the application of linguistic research to the literacy and translation needs of the minority language community. In partnership with these communities, SIL helps to develop in them the skills and capacity to preserve their cultures and languages in a way that serves the people best.

(Frequently Asked Questions, <http://www.sil.org/sil/faq.htm>, 2005)

Birgit Meyer comments 'Although anthropologists have dealt with Protestant missions' linguistic work [see for example, Clifford 1982: 74-91;] Comaroff and Comaroff 1991: 198-251; Ranger 1989: 125-34], the motives of these missions in translating the Bible have not yet received much attention' (1999: 57). SIL members in Papua New Guinea claim that by not only translating the Bible but also other materials into Papua New Guinean languages, they are helping to save and encourage the active use of these languages, many of which are dying out with the increased use of *Tok Pisin* and English, 'Throughout the country, there are a growing number of reports that indigenous vernaculars are entering phases of obsolescence. [----] And even among adults, Tok Pisin is increasingly replacing the vernacular in everyday interaction' (Kulick 1992: 5). Rather than

encouraging the use of English and *Tok Pisin* in education and literacy, SIL members believe there is an important link between culture and language and argue that with the dying out of many Papua New Guinean languages, Papua New Guinean people will lose a vital part of their 'culture'.<sup>20</sup>

Nevertheless, although studying and preserving indigenous vernaculars is considered important, SIL is not simply a linguistic organisation interested in analysing these languages. Rather, linguistics and literacy are used as a means towards their main goal of translating the Bible into indigenous vernaculars as shown in the SIL-PNG statement of purpose.

#### **SIL-PNG Statement of Purpose**

The Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL) is a scientific, research organisation serving the people of Papua New Guinea through linguistics, literacy, translation and the training of Papua New Guineans in these areas. The primary motivation of individual members in Papua New Guinea is the translation of scripture into vernacular languages.

(Confidential Minutes of the SIL-PNG EC, 24<sup>th</sup> April-10<sup>th</sup> May, 1996: 108)

As the SIL-PNG statement of purpose shows, translation is at the heart of SIL's work in Papua New Guinea, particularly the translation of the Bible into the vernacular languages of Papua New Guinea. Even those members who are not directly involved in translating the Bible themselves see their role as providing support for the translation of the Bible into the languages of Papua New Guinea. Therefore translation is the central goal around which everything else is motivated and this can be seen in the way that the mission station, Ukarumpa, is oriented around providing for

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<sup>20</sup> See Nagai and Lister 2003 for a discussion by an SIL member of the connection between language and culture.

translation teams and ensuring that they are able to remain in Papua New Guinea for long periods of time in order to complete their translations.

The perceived importance of Bible translation reflects the significance that SIL members, as Protestant Christians, place on the Bible, the Word of God, as the centre of their Christian faith.

The task of the true translator is one of identification. As a Christian servant he must identify with Christ; as a translator he must identify himself with the Word; as a missionary he must identify himself with the people.

(Nida 1952: 117 quoted in Venuti 1995: 23)

In order to win converts and maintain the faith or commitment of those raised within its churches, Christianity relies to a very great extent on the power of the Word.

(Whitehouse 2000: 35)

Translation of the Bible was also a distinctive concern of the Protestant missions and usually involved the introduction of literacy to native populations, thus contributing in a particularly salient manner to the identifying, documenting, and codifying of indigenous languages.

(Velho n.d., *Missionaries*: 4)

Translation of the Bible into vernacular languages is considered to be vitally important, because as Protestant Christians, SIL members see the Bible as being the basis of their belief and faith in God, as the Bible tells them about the message of salvation and teaches them about the character of God and God's will for their lives. They believe that without a Bible, Christians are unable to fully understand 'God's love and God's ways'. They emphasise individual daily reading and studying of the Bible in order to learn about God's character and God's 'will for their lives', including testing that what other people say about God is true. The importance that SIL

members place on the Bible as the written Word of God also emphasises the importance they place on literacy and the ability to be able to read God's message, not simply have it passed on in an oral form. This belief can be seen most clearly in the website of Wycliffe Bible Translators UK, part of Wycliffe Bible Translators International, the sister organisation of SIL who provide the funding for SIL members<sup>21</sup>. 'Everyone needs to have access to God's Word in a form they can clearly understand' (<http://www.wycliffe.org.uk/html/indexaboutus.htm>, 2005).

Like other Protestant Christians, they believe that the Bible is inspired by God and gives the final authority on their faith. 'The Bible is God's message for people everywhere. The message of the Bible is evangelistic and is the basis for church planting and church growth. The most effective means of communication is the mother tongue. For a church to be truly indigenous, it must have the Bible in its mother tongue' (Wycliffe Bible Translators UK website, 2003). SIL members believe that Christianity itself transcends all cultures and that therefore the 'truths' found in Christianity are applicable to any culture and consequently it is possible to create truly indigenous churches that retain their own culture and yet also follow the fundamental 'truths' of Christianity. As Hefner comments, 'Contrary to essentialist characterizations of its meaning, Christianity has demonstrated a remarkable ability to take on different cultural shadings in local settings' (1993: 5). They believe that an important way in which to create indigenous churches, that are able to have

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<sup>21</sup>The relationship between Wycliffe Bible Translators and SIL is more fully outlined in Chapter Two, 'Ukarumpa'. All SIL members need to become members of Wycliffe Bible Translators before becoming members of SIL. SIL is seen as the 'field' organisation whilst Wycliffe is the 'home' or funding organisation.



their own Christianity rather than Western forms of Christianity, is through giving people the Scriptures in their own language.

**Why is Bible translation so important?**

Because the Scriptures are essential for evangelism, discipleship, and church growth. Jesus told His followers to take the Gospel to all the world, but there are still hundreds of language groups which don't have God's Word in their mother tongue-the language they understand the best. History shows that there has never been a strong indigenous church without the translated written Scriptures used by indigenous leaders. Missionaries from every mission and denomination depend on Scriptures in the language of the people with whom they work to make a lasting impact.

(<http://www.wycliffe.org.uk/html/indexaboutus.htm>, 2005)

With the importance that SIL members place on language as a vehicle for culture, they believe that individuals cannot gain a complete understanding of the Bible unless they are able to read it in their own language. Some, however, do argue that vernacular translations are not necessary as many people in Papua New Guinea speak English and/or *Tok Pisin* and there are both English and *Tok Pisin* Bibles readily available. Often pastors of local churches are from another language group than their congregation and use the *Tok Pisin* Bible and preach in *Tok Pisin* rather than the vernacular language of the congregation. A few SIL members contend that rather than vernacular translations, SIL should concentrate on teaching rural people how to speak English, particularly since more people are speaking *Tok Pisin* or English as their first language, with the vernacular as a second language. As one translator commented on one of the email forum groups, he would not be disappointed if the people he is working with learned English as their first language and put him out of a job but he would be disappointed if he did not

see them studying the Bible and following Christ. (Members Forum Email, *Our Goal is not Bible Translation*, 18/03/01) He questions whether the vernacular communicates better than *Tok Pisin* since *Tok Pisin* has become their first tongue and the vernacular their second tongue. (Members Forum Email, *Why don't you just teach them English?*, 25/3/01) However, there are others who do not agree with this viewpoint and because of the high value that they place on language they believe that people need the Bible in their own language in order to fully understand the whole meaning of the Bible, particularly for rural and less well-educated villagers.

*Why not English?*

*And another tale*

**Why Translation?**

Wycliffe translators are sometimes challenged with the question, "Why work so hard to give a few peasants the Bible in a limited language? Why not teach them English -- or Spanish?" (Or French, or Portuguese, or any other **important** language?)

Perhaps these queries can be honestly answered by spontaneous reactions from tribespeople themselves.

An Apache woman -- who also spoke English -- said recently upon hearing the Gospel in her own tongue, "It goes into my **head** in English, but it goes down into my **heart** in my own language."

In Peru, an Aguaruna Indian teacher who speaks Spanish ("white man's words") said of God's Word in his own language: "His Word is good. We did not know it, but beginning now, I want to take His Word. When I was a child I did not hear. **I very much wanted to know His Word but after all, it was not our words. It was white men's words.** How might I learn? I said. For me it might be easy. I could learn the white men's words. But my relatives don't know, my family, my brothers, the children now being born. I very much desire to know how to tell this Word, this true road, because the

## TRANSLATION

old ones don't know. They are lost, not knowing."  
*Translation magazine, Wycliffe Bible Translators, Summer 1962*

(<http://www.wycliffe.org/translation/whynotenglish.htm>, 2005)

### **Understanding**

*The mother tongue touches hearts (or throats, as the case may be)*

One day I was talking with a Guarani member of our translation team.

"Roberto," he said, "some people say our Guarani Scriptures are hard to read. They say the Portuguese is easier."

This wasn't too surprising. Not all Guarani are fluent in the language.

He continued, "That's what I think too. The Guarani is really hard."

That got my attention. Here was a man who was not only experienced in translation, but had taken the Scriptures to other locations as a missionary-teacher. I didn't know whether I really wanted to hear this.

"The reason why our Guarani Bible is hard is because when you read it you know just what God wants you to do. The Portuguese is prettier to hear and easier too, because you can enjoy it without understanding it."

I heaved a great sigh of relief. My 15 years of work in the language were being validated.

*Bob & Kathy Dooley, Brazil*

(<http://www.wycliffe.org/translation/understand.htm>, 2005)

In the sharing time, a man from West New Britain Province who has been here doing the final checking of a New Testament before it goes to the printer, shared of his experiences that week as he read through the story of Christ's crucifixion. We had been chatting with him the previous day. He's a very educated man who has travelled widely. In the service he shared how as he read the part where Christ called out, "My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?" He couldn't go on checking. He said he has read the Scriptures for 50 years, first in the mission language Tolai, then in English and in Tok Pisin. This was the first time he had read it in his mother-tongue, and it really spoke to him. "Tears trickled down my face and my liver broke." (The liver is the seat of emotions for many language groups in PNG.)

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It was amazing to think that this educated man who had studied at the Bible College of Victoria was so affected by reading this familiar story in his mother-tongue. What an encouragement he was to those of us involved in the long, hard slog of translation.

*Bruce & Glenys Waters, Papua New Guinea*

(<http://www.wycliffe.org/translation/understand.htm>, 2005)

These extracts from Bible translators with SIL, taken from the Wycliffe Bible Translators, USA website, illustrate SIL members' belief that having the Bible in their own language speaks to them in a way that having it in another language, even one that they are fluent in, does not. Again, these extracts also demonstrate SIL members' belief that language and culture are connected so they talk about 'white men's words' and even for those who speak English and have access to the English Bible it does not go 'into their hearts' except in their own language.

SIL members see Bible translation as serving two purposes: providing the Bible for Papua New Guinean Christians to read in their own language and as shown above, therefore helping them to gain a deeper and more meaningful understanding of God and the Bible; and giving non-Christians the opportunity to be able to read the Bible in their own language, and through reading the Bible, convert to Christianity. Therefore, although the translation of a vernacular Bible is considered important, reading and putting into practice the teachings of the Bible is considered to be just as essential, if not more so. Consequently, as well as translation, literacy education is also emphasised in order to teach people how to read the newly translated scriptures in their own language.

Many SIL members lament the fact that after twenty or so years spent in producing a vernacular translation of the Bible, these Bibles

remain in people's houses unread and unused. As one translator commented, he has run across more than one Bible translation that just sits on the shelf. He argues that SIL needs to think about what their goals really are as it has been assumed that if they translate the Bible others such as the local church, a mission, the local leaders or teachers will make sure it is used, however he contends that experience has shown otherwise. (Members Forum Email, *Our Goal is Not Bible Translation*, 18/03/01) This concern has led to Scripture-In-Use workshops as well as other workshops being run in order to encourage people to use their newly translated Bibles. Many translators stay on to do further literacy work within a language group after the completion of a New Testament or a literacy team is assigned to that group. Therefore, as this demonstrates, Bible translation is not merely to preserve languages but is used as a tool for conversion, and the translation process does not necessarily end with the completion of the New Testament translation. As Rafael observes, 'Translation is designated as a passage to conversion; conversion, in turn, underwrites the indefinite running on of translations' (1993: 35). Here Rafael comments that through conversion, the need for translations of the Bible to be written and republished in the Philippines continued until the last decades of Spanish rule (Ibid: 35).

### **Translation Process**

As shown above, the main purpose of SIL's work in Papua New Guinea is Bible translation and literacy and this is reflected in the greater ratio of Language Specialists to Support Workers (see Figure 1.1). Language workers, who include translators, literacy workers and survey workers, are usually linked to a Support person/family

who make regular radio 'skeds' (schedules) with them and are there to organise things such as sending out supplies to the village. They are also seen to give spiritual support by praying for the translation team and the translation project. Translation teams are usually husband and wife teams although there are a number of single, unmarried women teaming up together and a few single women doing translations on their own, although this is quite unusual and not usually recommended by the Directorate for various reasons, mainly because of the high criminal activity, particularly towards women, in Papua New Guinea<sup>22</sup>. There are also a few translation and literacy teams consisting of three unmarried, single women. Single women often find their translation co-worker in the 'field' rather than before leaving for the 'field' and for some it is a few years before they find someone to work with them, which means that they have to find other roles to fill until they can begin a translation program. For instance, one single woman that had come out with the intention of being a translator ended up assisting with another translation project rather than starting her own as she had not found someone suitable to team up with. Although there were other single women who had come out with the intention of being translators also, the close working relationship of members of the translation team meant that people did not team up with those they thought they would not get on well with. She therefore also got involved in other projects such as some Alphabet Development Workshops and the STEP course. She eventually met and married a literacy worker after he had left SIL and they now live in Australia. There are also cases where one woman in the team gets married or has to leave for other

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<sup>22</sup> See Chapter Three, 'History of the Land Dispute and Fence' for more details on *raskols* and crime in Papua New Guinea.

reasons and the other woman is left to carry on the work on her own or find a new translation partner.

The nature of language work meant that translation and literacy teams made up of one or two single women would be both working and living together, especially in the village allocation. For example, they would often share a house in the village, some of which consisted of only two or three rooms and some also shared houses in Ukarumpa, although others commented that they needed space from each other after being in the village together and would opt to live on their own or share with other people. For instance, two informants doing literacy work together told me about the difficulties they had with their very different personalities and the resulting conflicts from being in the company of each other on a constant basis.

For example, after having difficulties with my working partner I was ready to change if I had the chance. However, after sticking it out I'm glad that we work together, not because it is any easier now than it was before, but because I know God is using her to sharpen/mould me, and vice-versa.

(Karen)

Although 'Karen' sees the difficulties within her working partnership as sharpening and moulding her, nevertheless both also commented that they appreciate being able to have their own living space and a break from each other's company whilst in Ukarumpa. Another single woman translator spoke about some of the difficulties of being unmarried women and working mainly with village men on the translation, who might not be willing to accept women teaching them.

We had to be in charge of the men when they built the house, in those days there wasn't anyone from here to come and do it and we were in charge of

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these men to build our second house, which was very difficult for the village men but they coped with it.

(Glenys)

I think it was hard for us when we first, hard for them when we first went out but in those days all white women, all white people were respected. And so of course we only went to the village by the men from here, SIL men taking us out and talking to the chief and telling him what we were there for and was he prepared to be in charge of us, look after us, which he said he was.

(Glenys)

Our village people were very good at accepting us. I think we, it's an advantage to have a husband, wife and family because there's the family unit, which is the one thing you do have in common, a single person isn't a family unit. But they were very good to us really. Of course the man has the advantage, he can go off with the bush hunting with the men and that's very good language practice. But we used to go out with the women in the garden, garden making and that sort of thing. That's a woman's job so in that way a woman can do that more than a man can.

(Glenys)

In discussion with several single women translators, many of them said that in the village setting they were considered to be different to the other women in the village as they took on many male roles, yet at the same time were not viewed as being men and were therefore somewhere in-between. However, other translation teams thought that even in a husband/wife team it was still difficult for the wife of the team to form relationships, not only with village men, but also with village women.

*But out in the village it seems easier for you to build relationships with the men than for me.*

Yeah.

**Is that specific to your place or do you think that's something in general?**



## TRANSLATION

It seems common with people we've talked to. That the women, the wives of the team that go to the village, wives have a slower time, or often can talk to the men first before they can relate to the women in the village. So women in the village seem to be a bit more closed sometimes or ...

*Yeah, they're, yeah it's just harder to make relationships. I mean they're busy doing their usual everyday things and you just sort of hang out and that but I don't know, it's not the same as here. And I've talked to other translators and they've said the same thing so I felt like, oh, it's not just me, you know, everybody else has had this similar experience with the women. They're just hard to build relationships with.*

(Ben & Bonnie)

For some husband and wife translation teams the work is divided so that the husband may do more the translation work while the wife works on literacy or vice versa. For instance, at the Anthropology workshop that I attended one of the husband and wife teams said that the wife was more interested in the translation aspect of the language program whereas the husband was more interested in the anthropology and literacy side. For other teams, the husband may do the majority of the language work whilst the wife may be involved in other things, such as home-schooling the children. As the above examples show, the make-up of the translation team as well as the village allocation can each present its own challenges.

Although there are a number of translation teams where the husband of the team may do more of the translation work than the wife, single, unmarried men teaming up to do translation and literacy work is more unusual. At the time of my fieldwork there was only one unmarried man working on translation and another working in literacy although there were a few working in the Survey Office, where people team up for different survey trips. There were more single men working in support departments, particularly those coming on a short-term basis. When I enquired about the lack of

single male language workers and single men in general (there was a much greater number of unmarried female missionaries than unmarried male missionaries), various opinions were offered. One single man working in the Survey department said that he thought men found it difficult to work together on a team project like that as they liked to have control over their work rather than share it with someone else. He also thought it would be difficult for men to live and work in such close quarters with each other. Another single man working as a short-term teacher at the High School said that he would only come back as a career member if he got married first as he found it too hard to be a missionary on his own. He found the experience of being an unmarried, single missionary a rather lonely experience.

Some of the single women were of the opinion that men needed someone to look after them whereas they could cope on their own. Others also contended that women were more independent than men. Some members commented that there were more single men in general in Ukarumpa than there had been in previous years. One single lady noted that although there were different generations of single women, ranging from women in their twenties to those in their sixties and seventies, there were not many single men of the older generation and they recalled a time when there was only one unmarried man. Apparently he was much sought after by the single ladies of the time but remained unmarried. Some of the 'singles' in the younger generation commented on the match-making efforts of the other, married SIL members so there still seemed to be an ideal of getting married, despite some single women working in partnership with each other for twenty-five years or more. In conversation with

two of the older single women, who had worked together on a translation for twenty-five years, one of them commented that she appreciates the fact that she comes into contact with Christian men and can have male Christian friends and colleagues, which she thinks she probably would not have done if she had stayed in her 'home' country. (Fieldnotes: 45)

The educational requirements for entry into SIL training at the SIL schools vary depending on the school. For example, the advice on becoming a literacy worker on the Wycliffe Bible Translators UK website advises that applicants would normally have a degree or similar level qualification. However, these do not seem to be strict requirements as there are people who have been accepted for training who do not have a degree and some of the training that the SIL schools do themselves is to a degree level. Much of the training for translation and literacy work is done at the SIL schools themselves. People applying to do language work usually attend five months initially at a SIL school<sup>23</sup> which includes courses in phonetics, phonology, grammar, language learning, linguistic field methods, cultural anthropology, socio-linguistics, literacy, translation, and language program planning. Those SIL members involved in translation work are also expected to have training in exegesis, New Testament Greek, Old Testament Hebrew and Bible background. Once in Papua New Guinea they are expected to attend the five-month Pacific Orientation Course<sup>24</sup> in order to learn *Tok Pisin* and more about Papua New Guinean culture and history. New translation teams also have to attend more courses and workshops at

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<sup>23</sup> There are SIL schools around the world, in Africa, Asia, Europe, North America, the Pacific and South America.

<sup>24</sup> The Pacific Orientation Course is outlined in Chapter Two, 'Ukarumpa'.

Ukarumpa such as the Getting Started Workshop, Beginning Translation Workshop, Literacy materials, Programme Planning and One Book workshops. Translation teams are also required to produce several papers over the course of their translation program such as an Anthropology Background Study, Grammar Sketch, Grammar Essentials, Organised Phonology Paper, Dialogue Survey and a Phonology Paper although during my fieldwork the Technical Services Department (TSD) were re-evaluating some of the requirements. During furloughs/leaves they often attend more training courses or teach at courses themselves. In fact, they are recommended to attend certain courses only after their initial period in the mission field. There are also a few members who take time out from their translation program to do Masters or PhDs in linguistics for instance.

The translation process begins with Survey teams from the Survey Office in the TSD Department who compile linguistic and socio-linguistic reports on the various languages in Papua New Guinea for translation teams to look through. Due to the large number of languages (SIL believe there are over eight hundred languages) in Papua New Guinea not all languages have been surveyed yet and the Survey Office are involved in regular survey trips and report writing. There are two major aspects to language survey: firstly determining how different one dialect is from another and whether it is a separate language; and secondly discovering if the people of one language group can or will make use of a translation in another neighbouring, trade or national language. Survey work involves travelling throughout a language area comparing word lists and using stories on tape to test how well people in various towns and

villages understand one another. The surveyor also looks at comprehension in another second language and attitudes towards its use. (<http://www.wycliffe.org.uk/html/indexaboutus.htm>)

Although there is an emphasis on people having the Bible in their own mother-tongue, Survey teams determine whether a group can already understand a translation in a related or neighbouring language as it is then put low on the list of 'needed' translations. Survey teams also look at how much people are actually speaking and using their language and whether children are growing up speaking *Tok Pisin* or English as their mother-tongue rather than the vernacular language of their parents as in these cases, by the time a translation is finished, there may not be many people left who actively speak the language anymore. Survey reports also include whether there is interest from the people in having a translation done in their language. If there is no consensus agreement among the people in having a New Testament, SIL teams in Papua New Guinea do not as a rule begin a translation among them and in fact, translation programs have been abandoned due to an increasing lack of interest among the language group they are working in. One husband and wife translation team in particular, left their language program due to escalating difficulties with the people they were working with, including having their village house robbed and ransacked on a number of occasions. They are now working more as translation consultants to Papua New Guinean translators in another language group.

New translation teams are given a priority list of languages with translation needs and are normally expected to choose one of the languages on the list. However, if they do not find a suitable

allocation on the priority list the team usually talks to the Regional Area Directors (RADs) about possible allocations. Once a translation team has decided on a language group they have a pre-allocation visit with the group to see if it is suitable before allocating there. In their first four years especially, SIL teams try to spend as much time in the village allocation in order to begin language learning, gathering language data and setting up a 'translation committee'.

One of the first things they need to do once allocating, is to decide where they will live when they are staying with the language group. A team will often build their own house in the village or live in a house provided by the villagers. This can be a complex decision, due to a number of reasons. As shown in Chapter Two, 'The Fence', land ownership and usage can be the subject of heated disputes. Some teams have run into trouble by building their house on land that has later been the subject of disputes or the person or family who provided the land has decided they no longer want them there. Many village people who want the Bible translated in their language view having a SIL team staying in their village as adding prestige (rather like having a Western style 'copper' house, which is seen as prestigious even if no one in the village actually stays in it) and therefore there may be disputes between internal political factions within the language group who each want the SIL team to live in their village or on their land. By building on one person or family's land in particular, SIL members are also entering into particular relationships with that person or family, with all the obligations and duties entailed in such a relationship. Similarly, living in one village in particular within a language group means that closer relationships

will be forged with members of that village rather than neighbouring ones.

Sometimes the village an SIL team settles in has an impact on their decision on which dialect of the language (if there are different dialects) they will translate the Bible into which again may have the result of giving speakers of that dialect more prestige than speakers of another. One new translation team, 'Ben' and 'Bonnie' decided to live in a house provided by the villagers for their first 'term' (usually about four years) before building a house of their own in order to try and avoid some of the problems that other translation teams have encountered. They are letting the village community come to a consensus agreement as to where they should build their house although as they comment, this could take some time.

We will be there this first term, this first four years with the intent that we'll build our own house. Where we build it and all that is going to depend on what the community decides. And we're trying to avoid some of the problems that other missionaries have run into with land issues and this kind of thing so I think they're going to need this whole four years just to make that decision. Decision making here takes a long time because it's not just our personal decision.

(Bonnie)

There are also debates as to what kind of house the team should build.<sup>25</sup> Some SIL members believe that the SIL team's house should be the same style as the houses that the villagers themselves have, others think that they will not be able to work as efficiently without a more 'comfortable' (often synonymous with a Western style) house and yet others try to have a compromise between the two. As one SIL member observed, SIL members' main purpose is not necessarily to

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<sup>25</sup> This is examined in more detail in Chapter Four, 'Communicating the Gospel'.

live like rural villagers but rather to translate the Bible. Nevertheless, in order to achieve a good translation by immersing themselves in the culture and language, they need to try and fit in with the villagers as much as possible, which includes the style of house they choose to build. As more villages are starting to have modern style housing mixed in with traditional houses this has become less of an issue for SIL teams. The building of a house, often one of the first activities that a new translation team undertakes, is therefore an important issue in terms of translation, both linguistically and culturally. It has an effect on the degree to which it sets the SIL team apart from the village and how much they are integrated into village life. It also situates the SIL team both geographically and relationally within the village. For instance, the land on which the SIL team build their house is important as it ties them in a relationship with whoever owns the land, whether it is an individual or a group, such as land belonging to the local church. Once the SIL team has finished or sometimes had to leave the translation project whoever owns the land will have control over who lives in their house once they have left. Again, a family or individual may gain prestige through ownership of the SIL team's house.

Translation teams are often described as 'language workers' and similarly, the translation process is described as being a 'language program'. Like many other SIL branches, the PNG Branch has several different types of language program. The type of translation program that takes place depends on different factors, such as who makes up the translation team, for instance, translators, facilitators, consultants, back-translators, committees, reviewers, etc.



## TRANSLATION

In most Bible translation projects in minority languages these days, educated mother-tongue speakers of the language are involved, and the actual transfer into the receptor language is made by a mother-tongue speaker. For this reason, in the discussion below, the term "translator" is used to refer to the mother-tongue translators or co-translators. The "translation facilitator", sometimes called the "**linguist-exegete coordinator**", "**advisor**", or "**project advisor**", is typically a member of SIL or of a National Bible Translation Organization (NBTO), or of some other missionary or Bible translation organization. He or she is a full time member of the team, someone who has knowledge and skills in linguistics and biblical exegesis to offer, and who will also have a role in training co-workers and often also in coordinating the work. A "translation consultant", on the other hand, is an experienced person who visits the translation project from time to time, to encourage and help the team, to guide and train them, and to help in checking the translation. Another term that may need explaining is "reviewer": in areas where there are churches, and where there are educated speakers of the languages, representatives are often appointed to assist in checking and giving feedback on the translation. Often they may represent different denominations, or different dialect areas, or other sections of the language community. (<http://www.sil.org/translation/stages.htm>, 2005)

Some translations are starting from scratch while others are more advanced with SIL members becoming involved at a later stage. For instance, there may be translation projects that were begun by one SIL team and later abandoned and then taken up by another team. The type of translation program also depends on the area where the language is spoken, for example whether there is an active Christian church present and whether the translation team includes 'educated mother-tongue speakers' of the receptor language. For example, if there are 'educated mother-tongue speakers' of the receptor language, they may do the main translation with the SIL member(s) acting as facilitators. Therefore, the type of translation program can range from the more traditional kind where the SIL team is in charge

and do much of the translation themselves, to a program where the SIL member functions as a consultant to a Papua New Guinean translation team.

Translation procedures have changed in the last few years, meaning that the traditional language program where the SIL team are the main translators is not always the case. For instance, one translation team in Papua New Guinea are acting as consultants to a number of different Papua New Guinean translators who are translating into different dialects in the one language. These different program types appeal to different SIL members and require different skills and abilities on the part of the SIL personnel and this also affects how new teams are allocated. The translation process takes several different stages and depends on the type of translation program that the SIL team is involved in.

In a traditional language program (which is the most common although this is changing), the SIL team begins by establishing a translation committee and a translation team in the language group and then gives the different members of the team the training they need, often by sending them to Ukarumpa to attend workshops or by running workshops in the villages. For instance, after establishing a translation committee made up of a number of different villagers, 'Ben' and 'Bonnie' held several workshops in the village in order to begin training the members of the translation committee in translation techniques. One of these was a Writers Workshop, which was an opportunity for the villagers to try out the alphabet, to explore different aspects of writing, and to write some stories of their choice. After the Writers Workshop 'Ben' and 'Bonnie' typed the stories into the computer to make a storybook. They also held a

workshop in the village led by another SIL team on a translation method called Look Learn Do Check, the goal of which was to equip the villagers in First Draft, Second Draft, and Village Check stages of translation using the book of Jonah for the training. They later intended to use the texts produced by the different members of the translation committee to complete the translation of the book of Jonah.

As Nida describes it, the message in the receptor language should match as closely as possible the different elements of the source language; constant comparison of the two is necessary to determine accuracy and correspondence. Phillips' method of back translation in which equivalencies are constantly checked is one way to achieve as exact a correspondence as possible. One must reproduce as literally and meaningfully the form and content of the original, and make as close an approximation as possible. One should identify with the person in the source language, understand his or her customs, manner of thought, and means of expression. A good translation should fulfil the same purpose in the new language as the original did in the source language. It should have the feel of the original.

(Rubel and Rosman: 8)

As shown above, the aim of SIL translators is to provide a translation which fulfils the four basic requirements of '(1) making sense, (2) conveying the spirit and manner of the original, (3) having a natural and easy form of expression, and (4) producing a similar response' (Nida in Venuti 2000: 134). Nida developed his science of translation with the aim of it being used by missionaries for Bible translation (Rubel and Rosman: 9, Venuti 1995: 22). The first stage of the translation process is to produce a first draft translation, which is usually done by a native speaker. SIL teams do this first drafting in different ways. Some work one-on-one with a native speaker or a group of native speakers to produce a first draft together. Often these

are native speakers who also have some knowledge of English. Some have native speakers work by themselves to produce a first draft. Some SIL teams do the first draft themselves although this is not recommended. The first draft then has to be checked for exegetical accuracy and for naturalness and comprehensibility in the target language. The SIL member of the translation team usually does the exegetical check and the naturalness and comprehension check by the native speakers. From this a second draft is produced which is then worked through with older speakers of the language, especially those who have not done the first draft. More adjustments are made and a third draft is produced which is then given out to others not on the translation team/committee to read and make comments on. Part of the function of the translation committee is to decide on how to translate key Biblical terms such as Holy Spirit, God, Son of Man and so on. From this a fourth draft is produced.

The next stage of the process is preparing for an exegetical and comprehension check by an SIL translation consultant from the Technical Services Department (TSD) by making a literal back translation into English, which is either done by a native speaker who is also fluent in English, or the SIL translator. Consultant checking is usually done in Ukarumpa alongside the SIL translator and Papua New Guinean members of the translation committee. From the back translation and the check by the SIL consultant a fifth and sixth draft of the New Testament is produced. After this, further consistency checking is done, and footnotes and book introductions are added to get the New Testament ready for publication.

Once a New Testament is completed a 'dedication' ceremony is usually held in the language group. A dedication ceremony will

often include a traditional *sing-sing* (dance/celebration) and a *mumu* (feast) put on by people from the language group. There are also speeches by SIL members such as the Directors and the translation team and also speeches from local church pastors and others who have helped in the translation process. During the dedication ceremony the completed New Testaments are distributed. Many other SIL members attend the dedication and large numbers of people are transported from Ukarumpa to wherever the dedication is taking place.

### **Cultural Differences**

Unlike Reverend Price of *The Poisonwood Bible*, who immediately begins preaching to the villagers of Kilanga as if they were members of his own congregation in Bethlehem, Georgia, SIL missionaries are very aware of the cultural differences between themselves and Papua New Guineans from the beginning and are encouraged to learn about and understand customs that are different to their own without necessarily judging them as wrong because they are different to their own practices. In the SIL-PNG Statement of Purpose, respect towards other people's cultures, languages, social relationships and institutions is emphasised.

#### **2. Respect**

As guests of and co-workers with the people of PNG, we recognise the importance of demonstrating respect for their existing cultures, languages, social relationships and institutions, even when we might disagree with certain aspects of them. We maintain a non-judgemental approach in our relationships with both Christians and non-Christians, letting our attitude be that of Christ-like love.

#### **3. Awareness/Participation**

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As SIL members coming from outside of Papua New Guinea, we recognise the importance of becoming familiar with the religious, cultural, social and political backgrounds of the people of this country. Mutual understanding and acceptance is necessary if we wish to communicate and work together effectively. An important part of this process is our participation in each others' daily lives and activities.

(Confidential Minutes of the SIL-PNG EC, 24<sup>th</sup> April-10<sup>th</sup> May, 1996: 108-109)

The five-month orientation course for new members, that they all have to complete before starting their projects, emphasises learning about other people's customs and acting in a culturally acceptable way when relating to Papua New Guineans.

The purposes of this orientation course are many, but basically it is designed to aid you in making the necessary adjustments to this new life-style, with a heavy emphasis on learning Tok Pisin and relating to the people of this country.

(PNG Branch Orientation Course, January 2002)

Their orientation course includes lectures on Papua New Guinea history and geography and anthropology as well as a 5-week stay in a rural village, where they are expected to live as closely as possible to the way the people of the village live. Nevertheless, although there is an emphasis on relating to Papua New Guineans on their level and learning from their 'culture', the aim is to create a connection in order to be better able to translate ideas from Christianity in a way that Papua New Guineans can understand most clearly and effectively. Therefore, although they wish to learn about and from other people's 'culture', at the same time they are coming with the intent of teaching about Christianity and therefore changing people's beliefs and consequently their 'culture'. Although there is an ideal of respecting other people's cultures, this is not always easy for all SIL members to follow as they encounter customs and ideas that are very

different to their own. It is especially difficult for SIL members to accept practices that they believe go against what is taught in the Bible. Many point out that their own cultures have customs that are not 'Christian' that they wish to change in their 'home' countries, and therefore they do not see a problem with discouraging people from following practices that are not in accordance with Christian teaching. Nonetheless, because of their belief that Christianity is transcendent over all cultures they still believe that people are able to become Christians and yet still retain their own culture.

The nature of the translation process means that translators must immerse themselves in the language and culture of the people they are translating the Bible for in order to understand enough to be able to translate between different languages. Like Nida they believe that,

that which unites mankind is greater than that which divides, hence even in cases of very disparate languages and cultures there is a basis for communication"

(Nida 1964: 2 quoted in Venuti 1995: 22)

When the cultures are related but the languages are quite different, the translator is called upon to make a good many formal shifts in the translation. However, the cultural similarities in such instances usually provide a series of parallelisms of content that make the translation proportionately much less difficult than when both languages and cultures are disparate. In fact, differences between cultures cause many more severe complications for the translator than do differences in language structure.

(Nida in Venuti 2000: 130)

The first four years of their translation project are usually spent learning the language and studying the culture through spending as much time as possible in the village where they have allocated. New translation teams especially, can spend up to six months at a time in the village before returning to Ukarumpa for workshops and a rest

from the intensity of being surrounded by an unfamiliar language and culture. As one member commented,

[--] they [language teams] see Ukarumpa as a 'rest' place. Deep relationships are developed in the village so when language teams get back here they need to relax and be part of "their own" culture (Not that it is really their culture but it is nearer than village culture.) When in the village relating to PNGians can be almost 24 hours a day 7 days a week.

(Brian Hodgkin, ADLA)

In many ways this can be compared to the participant observation that anthropologists conduct, although unlike anthropologists, SIL missionaries are not interested in learning about a culture for its own sake, but in order to complete their ultimate goal of Bible translation. This is exemplified in Barnwell's handbook where she advises,

Also keep alert to find ideas, customs and terms that could serve as a bridge to help people understand biblical truths. For example, there may be something in the culture that reflects truths about forgiveness, cancelling of sin, or redemption. Use what people already know and believe to help them understand the full truth revealed in the Bible.

(Barnwell 1986: 79)

However, although SIL language teams are studying the language and culture in order to introduce Christianity through Bible translation, they nevertheless have to first be willing to learn from the people they are living amongst and retain an open and enquiring mind regarding various customs and beliefs. For instance, in many translations, words to do with the supernatural/spiritual world have often been translated incorrectly due to a lack of knowledge of people's beliefs. Barnwell gives the example of the translation of the term 'evil spirit'.

Too often in the past, **evil spirit** has been translated by an expression that means something like "bad temper". This gives a wrong meaning, hiding



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the fact that in the biblical world, evil spirits are independent spiritual beings that can take possession of a person.

(Barnwell 1986: 79)

In particular, the word for 'God', which is crucial to translation of the Bible, is a very difficult term to translate without giving an unintended meaning through incorrect substitution of a word for a spirit that exists in a culture.

### Translation

What is translation? Translation is re-telling, as exactly as possible, the meaning of the original message in a way that is natural in the language into which the translation is being made.

(Barnwell 1986: 8)

The Bible is the Word of God, inspired by the Holy Spirit. The translator has a very serious responsibility not to change the meaning in any way. He must be careful not to add anything to the meaning, or to leave any part of the meaning untranslated.

The Bible is a meaningful book. It is a book with a message that is meant to be understood. When it was first written, it was written in the everyday language that people of that time spoke.

All languages are different. Each language has its own grammar, its own words and expressions. In order to express the meaning of the message he is translating, the translator often has to use grammatical forms and words that are different from those of the language he is translating from. That does not matter. The important thing is that the meaning of the message is unchanged.

The task of a translator is to translate the meaning of the message, rather than the words.

(Barnwell 1986: 12)

SIL members take translation of the Bible very seriously and it is a long and involved process with many checks resulting in several drafts to make sure that the complete and correct meaning is being

translated. They are given intensive training in both linguistics and translation techniques in order to make clear and accurate translations. SIL members emphasise meaning-based translations of the Bible rather than literal translations. In Barnwell's handbook for mother tongue Bible translators, who are translating the Bible into their own language, a literal translation is described as 'one that follows as closely as possible the form of the language which is used in the original message' while a meaning-based translation is 'one that aims to express the exact meaning of the original message in a way that is natural in the new language' (Barnwell 1986: 13). SIL members believe that a good translation translates the meaning of the original message rather than simply words. They are attempting to translate concepts from one language and culture to another using the vehicle of language although sometimes these concepts do not exist in the target language and may need to be created for the purposes of translation. For instance, in an example from a Papua New Guinean language, Amele, the term 'father' is an inalienably possessed term. This means that the term 'father' is always expressed in terms of whose father it is, such as 'my father', 'your father', 'his/her father', 'our father', 'their father' and so on, which means that there is no way of saying 'the father'. Here, the Amele language reflects the fact that Amele people kin relationships are very important. (John Roberts, SIL: personal communication) However, this means that some passages in the Bible are difficult to translate using this term, such as in the book of John.

Jn 4.21 "Believe me, woman, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem."

Since a meaning-based translation involves translating the meaning of words and concepts, some of which have many layers of connotations and meanings, it suggests that a meaning-based translation is a far longer and complex process than a literal translation that follows the form of the original language and translates words literally. A meaning-based translation requires that the translators not only learn the language of the people they are translating for, but in order to truly understand the complexities of the language they also need to study and learn about their culture.

He [Jakobson] recognized, as did Boas before him, that the grammatical pattern of a language determines those aspects of experience which must be expressed and that translations often require supplementary information since languages are different in what they must convey, and in what they may convey [Jakobson 1959 in Venuti 2000:114]. He cites an excellent example of the kind of supplementary information, which must be provided, in his discussion of inanimate nouns which are personified by gender. In Russian, the word death is feminine, represented as a woman, while in German, the word is masculine and therefore represented as a man [Jakobson 1959 in Venuti 2000:117]. Clearly, distinctions of this sort are significant when one does any type of translation. The cultural context of the translation must always be presented.

(Rubel and Rosman: 8)

An extract from a biography of an SIL missionary also shows this.

From the beginning, David knew exactly what he wanted to do and how he wanted to do it – translate the New Testament into vital, idiomatic MUYUW, teach the people how to read it and bring them to faith. At first he had no intention of starting translation till the following year, but after only two months he felt pushed into translating the story of the huge haul of fish Peter obtained at Christ's command. There was almost a compulsion about the way he got hooked into translation. MUYUW was so rich in fishing culture he was rarely at a loss when translating biblical nautical terms. He

was intrigued that the idiom to express Peter's astonishment at seeing so many fish was 'his stomach flew'. Shades of a stomach's behaviour in rough seas!

(Oates 1997: 61)

This is also shown in another example from Amele, translating of the notions of spirit, soul, mind and heart. The New Testament was written in Koine or Common Greek and so Greek words were used to express these notions. However, the Amele people have different ideas of how a human personality is made up from the Ancient Greeks. For example, *καρδια* (*kardia*) 'heart' is the primary seat of emotions in Greek whereas in Amele it is *waug* 'stomach', therefore translating this literally using the Amele word *cul* 'heart' would not be appropriate in this instance. (John Roberts, SIL: personal communication) In another example from Nigeria, the translator translated the term 'Christ', which means literally 'an anointed person', using a similar expression in that language for 'someone who has been anointed'. However, after studying the culture further he discovered that 'the anointed one' referred to a new bride on whom oil had been poured before marriage making this expression unsuitable for translating 'Christ'. (Barnwell 1986: 78) Discovering these deeper meanings can be the result of intense study of the language and culture but is also the result of chance. For instance, a SIL family with a young baby discovered a particular belief in spirits when after leaving their baby alone in the house for a short period of time, the villagers remonstrated with them, saying that spirits would come and replace the child with a changeling and insisted on always leaving a young girl to sit with the baby and protect it from evil spirits. They argue that if they did not have a young child they would not have discovered this belief as soon or perhaps not at all.

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In an ideal translation program, the translator translates directly from the source languages of the Bible, Greek and Hebrew, rather than through an intermediary language such as English or Tok Pisin, as translating from these languages means that they will overlay their own linguistic/cultural concepts onto those of the original languages. If a translator is using English translations, they are expected to compare a variety of translations as advised in Barnwell's handbook.

Never **translate from one English version only**. A translator should always use at least two versions.

**The study of different versions will help you to understand the meaning of the original text more accurately and fully.**

Translators should use at least two versions of the Bible for constant reference when translating. One should be a fairly literal version, such as the Revised Standard Version or the New International Version. The other should be a more meaning-based version, such as the Good News Bible.

(Barnwell 1986: 18)

A meaning-based translation requires interpreting difficult concepts and translating them into another language, many of which do not have these concepts already. Meaning-based translations are sometimes also called 'idiomatic translations'. As Barnwell points out, idioms cannot usually be translated directly into another language.

An IDIOM is an expression where the words taken together mean something different from the individual meaning of the words. Idioms are often special to a particular language.

Thus an 'idiomatic expression' is a phrase that is natural and meaningful in a particular language, although not necessarily in other languages.

(Barnwell 1986: 19)

Translating idioms directly can cause problems in translation as an idiomatic phrase in one language may mean something completely different in another language as shown by the following example.

Luke 2:51 ...his mother kept all these things in her heart.

In the Kilba language of Nigeria, "to keep something in your heart" means "to bear a grudge about something". In translating this verse into Kilba, therefore, the translator had to express the true meaning directly: "his mother went on thinking about these things."

Isaiah 13:18 ...they will have no mercy on the fruit of the womb (RSV)

...(they) have no pity on little children (NEB)

RSV follows the original Hebrew idiom. The meaning may not be clear to the modern English reader. NEB translates the real meaning directly.

(Barnwell 1986: 19)

In order to fully understand all the concepts and layers of meaning in the Bible it is also considered equally important for translators to understand the culture of the language that they are translating from. As Needham points out, missionary translators not only need to understand indigenous concepts but also their own belief systems.

For the purposes of biblical translation, which are especially revealing, minute qualifications may have to be made in the employment of vernacular terms, and sometimes new phrases may actually have to be concocted in order to express the particular religious sense that is intended. Nevertheless, even missionary translators (by far the most aware), while discriminating in their apprehension of indigenous concepts, either do not pay comparably explicit attention to what it is that they have to convey when they translate belief-statements (see Koper 1956), or else, it seems, they rely on the dogmatic conceptions of their faiths and on their own personal conviction of the reality and central inspiration of belief.

(Needham 1972: 38)

As Rafael shows for the Tagalog of the Philippines, the introduction of new words, particularly those related to Christianity, had a significant impact on the local languages.

The translation of the Christian doctrine into the native vernaculars did not, however, leave the local languages unchanged. Such highly charged terms as *Dios*, *Espíritu Santo*, and *Jesucristo*, for which the Spaniards found no adequate equivalents in the local languages, were retained in their untranslated forms to punctuate the flow of Christian discourse in the vernacular. In the interest of conversion, translation prescribed just as it proscribed the language with which the natives were to receive and return God's Word.

(Rafael 1993: 20-21)

Meyer also observes for the Peki Ewe in Ghana,

Through translation, Christian key terms thus acquire a new quality which becomes an inalienable feature of these terms. This holds true despite the fact that missionaries would not have been willing to acknowledge this and instead preferred and objectivist perspective to translation.

(1999: 82)

In an example from Matthew 3:8, the difficulties of translating religious technical terms is shown.

GRK: ποιήσατε οὖν καρπὸν ἄξιον τῆς μετανοίας  
 poiesate oun karpon aksiontes metanoias

lit: produce therefore fruit worthythe of-repentance

In this verse there are three items that need to be translated. Firstly the phrase, ποιήσατε καρπὸν 'produce fruit' which is a figurative or idiomatic expression that does not exist in modern English. The second term is μετανοίας 'repentance', which is a religious technical term. μετανοίας is a noun derived from the verb μετανοέω which literally means 'to turn around'. It also had an everyday, figurative

meaning 'to change one's mind'. It also developed a meaning particular to a religious or ethical context, 'to feel remorse over one's shortcomings and errors and as a consequence change one's life and attitude.' The New Testament writers used the word to mean 'to turn away from deliberately sinning against God'. The final term that needs translation is ἄξιον 'worthy of' which is an adjectival expression. In this context it means 'that demonstrates' or 'that shows'. Therefore this verse could be translated both literally and more idiomatically. For example, the RSV Bible translates it as 'Bear fruit that befits repentance' while *The Message*, a very idiomatic translation, translates it as 'It's your life that must change, not your skin!' As this shows, the translation of religious technical terms may include the introduction of new concepts that are not present in a particular culture and as a result, are also introducing a particular Christian world-view.

We have also to consider who translates, who learns, and what knowledge is gained through literacy. When missionaries translated and transcribed local languages, they did so in a way that was partial. Certain words were elided, and some concepts, especially those pertaining to ancestral religion, were translated in ways that suppressed some connotations while amplifying others, thus distorting the indigenous meanings circulating in conversation. The codification of oral tradition as text often impoverished indigenous genres and privileged the creativity of the author over the audience. It rendered the written word more canonical (witness the respect given to versions of myths early recorded in mission texts). And in "writing down" local languages, particular languages or dialects were situated above others, as *lingua franca*.

(Jolly 1996: 235)

Translation is, of course, a rewriting of an original text. All rewritings, whatever their intention reflect a certain ideology and a poetics and as such manipulate literature to function in a society in a given way. Rewriting is



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manipulation, undertaken in the service of power and in its positive aspect can help in the evolution of a literature and a society.

(Basnett in Venuti 1995: vii)

The values of the culture of the source language may be different from those of the target language and this difference must be dealt with in any kind of translation. It is clear that the translations done by anthropologists cannot help but have ideological implications. How does one preserve the cultural values of the source language in the translation into the target language, which is usually the aim of the translation. The values of the local culture are a central aspect of most of the cultural phenomena which anthropologists try to describe, and these may differ from and be in conflict with the values of the target culture.

(Rubel and Rosman: 6)

Although many Bible translators may be familiar with the Bible, they are interpreting it through their own language and often through their own cultural biases. The language and culture in which the Bible was written is often one that is just as unfamiliar to translators as the culture that they are translating for. Not only was the Bible written in a different culture but there are also differences of geography and time. The audience that the Bible was written for is often very different to the audiences that translators are trying to connect with. For instance, the significance of the custom of washing the feet of visitors may be lost in translation to another language and culture. Such a custom may need to be explained in footnotes in the translation or within the translation itself. Translators are therefore expected to have studied Biblical culture in-depth in order to understand the different customs and ideas in the Bible and be able to translate these into another language. Nevertheless, the 'meanings' that one translator may take from the Bible may differ from another translator's interpretation. As Nida notes:

Since no two languages are identical, either in the meanings given to corresponding symbols or in the ways in which such symbols are arranged in phrases and sentences, it stands to reason that there can be no absolute correspondence between languages. Hence there can be no fully exact translations. The total impact of a translation may be reasonably close to the original, but there can be no identity in detail.

(Nida 1964 in Venuti 2000: 126).

A translation of dynamic equivalence aims at complete naturalness of expression, and tries to relate the receptor to modes of behavior relevant within the context of his own culture.

(Nida 1964 in Venuti 1995: 21).

Venuti argues that Nida's theory of dynamic equivalence imposes 'the English-language valorization of transparent discourse on every foreign culture, masking a basic disjunction between the source- and target-language texts which puts into question the possibility of eliciting a "similar" response' (Venuti 1995: 21). Although SIL members may see translation of the Bible as a means of preserving language and 'culture' Venuti states, 'Nida's concept of dynamic equivalence in Bible translation goes hand in hand with an evangelical zeal that seeks impose on English-language readers a specific dialect of English as well as a distinctly Christian understanding of the Bible' (Ibid: 23).

The meaning that local people take from translation may also differ from the translators. For instance, Meyer comments,

In the case of the transmission of missionary Pietism to the Ewe, translation for the Ewe was a matter of comparing religion. Translation, then, can be understood as interpreting and transforming the original statement, thereby creating something of a new quality. This comparative practice is what actually occurs in the process of vernacularisation, although the translators

themselves might not be prepared to recognise this, and thereby neglect the creative potential of translation.

(1999: 82)

Although ideally SIL members aim to translate the entire Bible, in actual fact most translation teams only translate the New Testament and these translations can take from around ten to twenty-five years to complete. There are a few teams that also translate some books of the Old Testament, such as Genesis, and others that go on to translate the entire Old Testament as well. There are also a number of teams that have done several New Testament translations in different languages, often related or neighbouring languages, although this is quite unusual, particularly since it takes some teams up to twenty-five years to complete one New Testament translation. Some teams also go on to make revisions to their original translation and produce revised translations later on after the first translation of the New Testament has been in use for a few years. In a discussion with two literacy workers, one of them commented that some members have criticised those who have finished their translations in a shorter amount of time, saying that these translations were not very good and, since people have been using them, they have found mistakes in the translation. However, in the SIL Anthropology workshop I attended, other SIL members were arguing that SIL should perhaps encourage looser first translations and then once people have been using and discussing them they can do a revision of the original translation. Others continue to contend that the first translation should still be as good quality as possible, even if it takes more years to accomplish. Nevertheless, no matter how high-quality the first translation is, many still believe revisions are necessary over time, especially as the language changes and a younger generation

begin using the texts. This has a precedent in English translations of the Bible, as new revised versions are continually being published, such as *The Message*, a more colloquial American English translation. Even if SIL teams cannot complete these revisions themselves, many have trained people within the local communities to make the revisions instead. As these debates show, although a translation of the New Testament or entire Bible may be completed, it does not necessarily mean the end of the translation process and it also brings into question the notion of a 'perfect' translation. Here I quote at length from the debate regarding Vision 2025, SIL's aim to have started a Bible translation in every language in the world by the year 2025, and 'academic excellence'.

#### **8.2.2 Excellence in All We Do**

Jerry asked John W. about academic excellence as one of the core values that has been proposed. John reiterated the way in which the statement of core values published in Intercom was reached. He said these values were not set in concrete but an open window for discussion. The issue of academic excellence comes from the tradition and history of the organisation and that he personally is a believer in good academic research to facilitate the translation of God's word in the heart language and it should not be ignored.

A member asked if striving toward excellence would achieve the goal of Vision 2025 and if working with others of less training would compromise excellence and quality. John W. responded by asking who determines quality. We must ask what is appropriate in the situation and determine whether quality is an end point or a continuum. John said he sees it as a continuum. Do we produce a product that is fixed forever or do we develop ongoing projects or programs that will see change and improvements down the line? The Spirit of God will use whatever we produce. Our productions are not perfect. We must strive for quality not only in the text we produce but, in the relationships we have with people. We need the ability to

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improve on what we have done before—not afraid to acknowledge our product’s limitations and improve on it as we are able.

John W. continued saying that most students in our courses want to do the best they can. We can help them realize that objective by working together on producing increasingly quality work. The first efforts may not be very good but we can improve the quality by working together with people.

If we produce perfect quality work first then our national brothers may feel they could never aspire or achieve that quality on their own. Quality is a Community Development issue as well as a scripture use and relationship issue. It was suggested that allowing people to fail can be helpful. John W. agreed that we should allow for experimentation and failure.

A member asked if John Watters was saying that the tension of academic excellence will always be there. John Watters said yes. He said we want to encourage our members in their strengths and if academic excellence is their gift then they should sharpen it for the good of the group. Others should be allowed to use their gifts as well. Watters encouraged us to encourage more members in the attainment of higher degrees.

According to cultures and home countries, a member said, the word “excellence” means different things and the desire to strive toward it is different. We must be truthful about our level of excellence. John W. agreed and said maybe excellence is the wrong word. Maybe approach is better. A member said that the use of the term excellence doesn’t fit the context where it was used in the core value statement. Our personal drive and ownership of the program enters into our view of excellence.

A member added that there is a danger in accepting a lower quality product, as what is produced may no longer qualify as “the Word of God.” Unless we convey to those being trained that the Bible is an inspired book and is meant to be translated accurately, we may end up with much less than we anticipate. There will always be a tension between consultants who believe the Bible to be an inspired book and translator trainees who may not have this perspective, unless the proper values surrounding the scriptures are continually presented as well.

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7<sup>th</sup> June, 2000

(Confidential Minutes of the PNG EC, 6<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> June, 2000: 21-22)

Most SIL teams want to complete a translation that is as close to 'perfect' as possible but because of the nature of both language and culture, both of which are dynamic and changing, a translation that may be relevant to one generation may have less meaning to another. A meaning-based translation necessarily requires a certain amount of interpretation as the translator decides what is meant in the original text and in the language into which it is being translated. Although there is an emphasis on individuals being able to read the Bible themselves and make their own interpretations, there is the sense that some interpretations are more correct than others and as a result, translators wish to do a translation where individuals come up with the 'correct' interpretation.

The translation process and the role of the SIL translator have also become more ambiguous with the goal of Vision 2025.

Vision 2025 states that we want to see a translation project started in every language that needs it by 2025. Although many of us in administration in the branch see this as positive and a challenge there are quite a number of folk who think of it as impossible and as a challenge to the ways they have been working in the past.

The administration believe that it is impossible as far as we are concerned, we know that humanly speaking we can't do it! But the Lord can. Perhaps the important thing is to rely more on him than our own abilities to get this done.

We look at V2025 as permission to experiment and do things in different ways. Which we were already beginning to do before V2025 was put into words.

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But we have folk in the organisation who don't like to give up control! Many don't believe PNGians are capable of doing the job. "we tried to involve nationals in the 60's and it didn't work so it won't work now", "what about quality", are comments often made.

(Brian Hodgkin, ADLA)

### 11.2 VISION 2025

31<sup>st</sup> August 1999 – Acting ADSA, Michael Harrar present. Also, Dennis Shutte was present by invitation of the Chairman and was given voice.

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There was discussion on the terms "standards" and "requirements." Is there just one standard we are aiming at for our translations? It was suggested that someone might do an A+ translation and in the meantime an entire generation may die while it is being produced. Neville said that there may need to be some reduction in quality. If it is the choice of one language group getting an A+ New Testament instead of three groups getting B+ New Testaments, perhaps the choice needs to be the latter.

#### 11.2.2 Items listed on the board for consideration

*(NOTE: The following were listed in a "greenlighting/brainstorming" session and are not to be considered as any kind of definitive statement by the EC.)*

#### CURRENT STRATEGIES

- "Traditional" approach, one translator to one language group. NTC, STEP courses
- Partnership with other church groups like the Evangelical Church of Papua (ECP)
- Observe core values
- Carver Model of Governance
- BTA staffing
- Work in urban environment with a multi-language workshop approach (e.g. Craig Throop's plan)
- The Foundation for Indigenous Languages (FIL – Mike Trainum)
- Literacy and Materials Production (LAMP) Centres
- Teaching at Government Courses such as Elementary Trainers Course (ETC)

#### POSSIBLE STRATEGIES

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- Develop other partners beyond BTA by having them come to our board meetings (MAF, SGM or others). Find the areas that we agree in so that resources might be shared.
- Develop further the approach of working in an urban environment as in the multi-language workshop the Throops are doing.
- Reduce the TSD requirements
- Non-print media
- Give tasks to “spin-off” organisations
- Provide staff for government courses/university through secondment
- Recruit PNG Academics
- Form partnerships with the nation’s churches for Scripture in Use, financial support of national translators, and prayer support
- Promote partnership between local churches and local language programs
- Customise TSD requirements (“requirements” change to “standards”?)
- TSD would still stay what is the best way to do it. Appropriateness in each case would be decided by RADs in association with area teams.

### ATTITUDES AND PERSPECTIVES

- Work at making an environment that will encourage creation of new ideas
- Redefine who we are as an organisation if necessary
- Explore ways to get people to the field without becoming SIL members
- Start fresh with new organisation with new name and reputation, since SIL is so visible and our intentions known. Reduce bureaucratic control
- Work at reducing self-centeredness, slothfulness, and greed
- Embrace diversity
- Put control into the hands of the translator. Have accountability but without rigorous structures
- Develop the attitude that we leave not only a New Testament at the end of our involvement, but trained translators as well

#### 11.2.3 What is it that makes Vision 2025 a challenge in PNG?

- ◆ The ruggedness of the terrain in PNG that hinders mobility in the regions
- ◆ Low percentage of nationals educated beyond high school level
- ◆ Insufficient infrastructure in the country
- ◆ Negative image problem – inability to tap into available resources
- ◆ Lack of complete survey data on the languages
- ◆ Fluctuations and instability of the government
- ◆ A national culture that is highly fractured and tribal in nature
- ◆ Break down of law and order and the resulting security concerns
- ◆ No history of written languages and resulting high rates of illiteracy
- ◆ The rise in the use of Melanesian Pidgin

(Confidential Minutes of the PNG EC, 24<sup>th</sup> August-8<sup>th</sup> September 1999: 34-35)



As shown above, the goal of Vision 2025 entails changes in both the structure of SIL and the organisation's aims. It has also led to debates regarding SIL's 'core values' and the difficulties of doing translations in Papua New Guinea.

#### **8.4 Building Trust in the Organisation**

EC asked how do we build trust and stability in the organization when our commonly held core values are so few, and so much is open to adaptation and change.

John Watters said that trust and stability are spiritual values. We can't brow beat people into going along with the vision. We must use those who want to go with the vision and allow the others to lag behind. Let those on the fringes join as they catch the vision.

In numbers 4 and 5 in the list of core values, the scope or continuum will be very great. It must be allowed to be large to accommodate all the types of people. It can accommodate the narrow-focused as well as people with a wiser vision.

A member asked where the entire organisation of WBT is in embracing Vision 2025. John responded that some entities were already on the road before the vision was introduced. Others are not there yet. Some even say were doing this 25 years ago. Things may slow down worldwide as we try to retool and restructure to achieve Vision 2025. He said he is pleased that we are grappling with the many issues and implications.

A member asked about the place of a traditional program in Vision 2025. Watters responded that for people like the group that Henry Whitney works with, they need a traditional program and will not be reached without one. We must affirm and encourage Henry and others in his circumstances that they are also doing what the vision calls for.

(Confidential Minutes of the PNG EC, 6<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> June, 2000: 22-23)

For instance, some argue that SIL's core value is academic excellence whereas others argue that it is completing a translation, whether it is perfect or not.

Alongside the goal of starting a translation in every language there is more of an emphasis on encouraging local Christians to do the translations themselves, which means that this has changed the nature of the translation program. Although the traditional language program, with the SIL team as the main translators are still the most common, there are a growing number of translation projects where Papua New Guineans are doing the translation themselves with the SIL team acting as consultants to the translators. One instance is a translation project in Sandaun Province where the SIL team are acting as consultants to several Papua New Guinean translators who are translating Bibles into the different dialects of their language. Sometimes when an SIL team have completed one translation, the people themselves will go on to make a revised edition or sometimes begin translations in related languages. The Papua New Guinea Bible Translation Association (BTA) is a sister organisation of SIL involved in producing Bible translations themselves.

### **11.3 BTA HISTORY**

28<sup>th</sup> November 1999

Steven Thomas summarised a brief history of BTA in PNG. It began in 1980 and, by 1987, there were 36 members. Numbers went down when some of the members left (e.g. several from Manus Island.) There are currently 26 active programs. Eight have completed New Testaments. Another 3 or 4 will have completed their first draft in the next year or so. After a New Testament dedication, the program remains active for at least two years. Several have decided to begin work on the Old Testament. Currently, there are about 84 members, including staff. There is an increased interest in literacy due to the STEP program.

There is a current emphasis on developing the home side of the organisation. Stephen understands that they really cannot recruit more staff members at this point. There needs to be better integration of the home

organisation and field side. Cholai added that local support is only about 2%. The overwhelming percentage of support comes from outside the country.

(Confidential Minutes of the PNG EC, 26<sup>th</sup> November -9<sup>th</sup> December 1999: 25-27)

One of SIL's long-term goals is that eventually Papua New Guineans will take over the task of Bible translation themselves.

### **7. Training**

We recognise the importance of training Papua New Guineans, especially in linguistics, translation and literacy. We will equip ourselves as necessary in order to be effective teachers and trainers. A commitment to training may require more money, time and effort than would be needed if we did the work ourselves. We recognise, however, that our organisational goals (especially Goals 2, 3, 4 and 5 below) will be more appropriately met as Papua New Guineans are able to take responsibility for each aspect of the work.

(Confidential Minutes of the SIL-PNG EC, 24<sup>th</sup> April-10<sup>th</sup> May, 1996: 109)

As shown above, this is beginning to take place but there is still a perceived need for SIL members if not as translators themselves, then as trainers and consultants to Papua New Guinean translators.

### **8.3 The Translator of the Future**

EC members asked who the 'translator' of the future is projected to be and what training she/he will need.

John Watters replied that many kinds of people and backgrounds are needed in the future, in particular Community/Development people, Literacy specialists and Managers. In the past, the analytical linguist approach has not been totally successful even though these people are still needed to assure academic excellence.

(Confidential Minutes of the PNG EC, 6<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> June, 2000:)

Therefore, despite the ideal that Papua New Guineans will no longer need foreign missionaries to do Bible translations, which has been in

existence since the early days of SIL's presence in Papua New Guinea, in reality SIL members still see themselves as having a role in the lives of Papua New Guineans. As one BTA member commented, the overwhelming majority of financial support comes from outside the country and although there may be Papua New Guineans who have the ability and are keen to do Bible translations, without outside funding it would not necessarily be sustainable once SIL left the country.

### **Case Study**

Through looking at one new translation team in particular, a husband and wife team ('Ben' and 'Bonnie') with two primary-school-age boys, the difficulties of the translation process and the ambiguity between the ideals and the realities of missionary work are brought out. I met 'Ben' and 'Bonnie' through a single girl I shared a house with who had done the Pacific Orientation Course with them. They had been in Papua New Guinea for about two years when I met them. They were also friends of another support couple I had got to know well, who were their support team. They were also members of the Bible study group I had joined. I interviewed them in their home (they were staying in one of the translation lodges at the time) while they were in Ukarumpa attending some workshops. Like many other new translation teams they had the ideal of spending the majority of their time in the village setting, rather than at Ukarumpa, in order to immerse themselves in the language and culture. One of the villagers gave them the use of a house, one of the more modernised ones with louvered windows, a tin roof and a timber floor, although they intend to build their own eventually. Deciding where to build their house was a highly political decision and

therefore they were trying to avoid some of the land issues and other problems by letting the village community decide where they should build. However, even living in the house provided for them caused some difficulties to begin with.

There was a problem when I first got there. We had a good pre-allocation visit, and they were very welcoming, but when we went there the people were reserved and some of them were distant that had been friendly, but we later found out that when we had sent out the water tank and some other goods, what I think was going on was that there was a perception that we were benefiting the family that hosts us in this house. There was a perceived benefit that we were bringing wealth into their system. Not our own but to help one part, one *lain*, one family. When that was cleared up it seemed like a lot of that went away.

(Bonnie)

As shown above, just choosing to live in one individual's house meant that they were already disrupting the established political system by bringing wealth to one family in particular and this affected their relationships with other families in the village who became more reserved because of this.

The majority of their first six months in the village was spent settling into the community, and language learning through joining in with village activities and recording material for later analysis. Although both want to be involved directly in the translation work, because of the demands of family life, 'Bonnie', the wife in the team, has found that she has less time than 'Ben' to be as directly involved and like many translation teams, they have decided to divide their roles.

I left Dallas knowing that I would be doing less than Ben directly in translation work. Knowing that a big chunk of my responsibilities lies with managing the family, the household, you know getting our clothes cleaned

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and feeding everybody and then whatever's left then I can work on that. And there's not always a whole lot of time left. And so I knew that leaving Dallas but then coming here it's even less time than I had thought that I would have. But I've had to come up with different ways of doing language learning and it's not ideal but that's what I'm doing. I mean, it's less and it's not the same methods that I thought I would be using but the big question is how much of the translation I'm going to be doing. I don't know. I do have an interest in helping people get Bible studies and Scriptures in different mediums, maybe I'll focus more on that, I'm not sure. Things are going to change as time goes on too, you know, as your kids are in different stages in their life too.

(Bonnie)

The responsibilities of looking after their two sons had a considerable effect on the time she had available for language learning, which is the main basis for starting translation work. In later village visits 'Ben' tried to help by taking on some of these responsibilities such as the home-schooling, however, she still found language learning a problem, as forming relationships with the women in the village seemed quite difficult and they were not as good language learning helpers as the men.

I've tried to do a few things in the village to free Bonnie up for language learning but because the ladies haven't been conducive, they're not as good language learning helpers as the guys are. So when I home school the kids, I did that for a little while, not too long, and then she was able to roam around, it didn't help much. Because it's not good for her to go sit down with a guy but if I'm there then we can both sit down with some guy.

(Ben)

Although 'Ben' took on some of the household responsibilities in order to give her more time for language learning difficulties in forming relationships with women and the perceived inappropriateness of her learning from the men without her husband

present meant that language learning was a much slower process for her than her husband. They believed that this was not a specific problem to their village but seemed to be a common problem for other wives in translation teams that they had spoken to. As shown earlier, the problems that 'Bonnie' faced with language learning is one that is especially significant for translation teams made up of women only.

'Ben' and 'Bonnie's' original plan was to spend as much time in the village as possible with the minimum of time spent in Ukarumpa, in order to immerse themselves in the culture and language. Again, this plan changed with the reality of village life particularly with the home-schooling situation. Like many other translation teams with primary school age children, they taught their children themselves in the village, although once the children were in High School they would probably stay in Children's Homes in Ukarumpa while their parents were in the village.<sup>26</sup>

There is that conflict because we want to be out in the village a longer period of time but because of the schooling thing it's been harder than we had anticipated so now we have to change our whole idea. Originally we thought we'd stay out in the village for a long period of time but we're finding that it's not very easy.

(Bonnie)

They later were able to have one of the teachers from the Primary School come and teach their children in the village, which meant that they could stay there for longer periods of time. As 'Bonnie' pointed out earlier, their situation would change over the years as their children entered different stages of their schooling, with their parents able to leave them in the Children's Home in Ukarumpa rather than

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<sup>26</sup> Details of Children's Homes can be found in Chapter Two, 'Ukarumpa'.

teaching them in the village. However, it was not only the schooling situation that affected their time in the village. 'Bonnie' became quite seriously ill and it took her a long time to recover. As well as affecting how long they spent in the village, with 'Ben' spending more time on his own while she stayed in Ukarumpa with the children, they also decided to take an early furlough in order for her to fully recover. During their time on furlough they still continued their work, compiling the data they had recorded and beginning work on the book of Jonah, which members of the village translation committee had begun translating in a Writers Workshop.

As exemplified by this new translation team, the ideals of the translation process, including learning the language and culture, are not always easy to put into practice with the intrusion of the realities of missionary life, indeed life in general. For instance, they had to cope with such mundane problems as the difficulties of home schooling their two sons, who were more interested in playing with the village children than being taught at home. Like many others, they also had to deal with the problem of illnesses and the strain of travelling back and forth between Ukarumpa and the village setting, a trip which involved travelling by plane, car and boat. 'Bonnie' particularly, found language learning much more difficult than she anticipated, due to cultural differences. Therefore, many of their expectations and ideals before embarking on the translation process had to be re-evaluated after beginning the translation work.

### **Conclusion**

The immense creativity in colonial encounters, both on the part of the colonizers and the colonized, is often done little justice in accounts that rather stress failure than innovative practice. The colonial era makes new



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imaginings of community possible, and it is especially in the religious domain that these new imaginings take shape. In that sense, conversion to another faith is part of a set of much larger transformations affecting both the converts, nonconverts, and the missionaries themselves. Conversion is an innovative practice that partakes in the transformation of the social without being a mechanical result of it. And again, this is true for both the colonizer and the colonized, the missionary and the convert.

(Van der Veer 1996: 7)

Thus, this is an excellent time to consider a series of issues arising from the fact that for anthropology, translation is and must be a central concern. Is translation from one culture to another possible and if so under what conditions? Can an anthropological researcher control another language adequately enough to carry out a translation? How should a researcher deal with the presence of class dialects, multilingualism and special-outsider language use? What constitutes an acceptable translation, one which contains more of the original or source language or one which focuses on the target language and the reader's understanding? What is the relationship between translation and the conceptual framework of anthropology?

(Rubel and Rosman 2003: 4)

As shown above translators need to have a deep understanding of several different languages and cultures, including their own biases, Biblical language and culture and the language and culture that they are translating into. Unlike Reverend Price they do need to have a certain amount of self-reflexivity, although the degree to which they are reflexive about their work and motivations will differ between individual members. Nevertheless, many SIL members emphasise that they are there to learn from the people they are translating the Bible for as much as teaching them about Christianity. For instance, several members commented that they have a greater awareness of the 'spirit world' through learning about Papua New Guinean views about spirits. Although SIL members believe that they are helping to

preserve indigenous languages partly through Bible translation, the translation process itself brings change to these languages as new concepts and ideas are introduced.

Although there is an emphasis on understanding and respecting a language and culture the aim of the translation process is to help translate the beliefs and ideals of Christianity for the purposes of conversion. Therefore the translation process itself is not as objective as it appears on the surface. The process of translation requires an interpretation of the original text and meanings in the language they are translating into. Despite the work that goes into translating the Bibles, they still may not have the effect that the translators were hoping for, with misunderstandings regarding the meanings they are trying to get across or just a lack of interest in reading the completed translations.

As a result, the translation process does not end with the completed New Testament or Bible, but continues with SIL members holding workshops such as Scripture-In-Use, encouraging people to use the Bibles. As one literacy worker commented, he believes that it is not enough to have a translated Bible, what is important to him is to have more evangelism. However, SIL's emphasis is on translating the Bible and many argue that the more evangelistic side of conversion to Christianity should be left to other missions, whose emphasis is on evangelism and church building.



Participants showing spelling rules booklet

## *Chapter Five*

### *Literacy*

As shown in the previous chapter, translation of the Bible into indigenous languages is considered essential both for conversion and for local Christians to create their own indigenous Christianity. Although SIL members believe that translation of the Bible is one means of preserving indigenous languages it can be seen that the process of translation can actually be a way of changing both language and culture through the introduction of new concepts and sometimes even new phrases or words. The introduction of written texts to oral cultures is itself a major transformation. As shown previously, despite the importance placed on the translation of the Bible, these translated Bibles have little impact unless people are also able to read them. As Kulick shows for the Gapun villagers, literacy and Christianity are closely linked. 'Historically, literacy in Gapun, like virtually everywhere else in the Pacific region, was introduced in Christian contexts' (Kulick and Stroud 1990: 290). 'This link between literacy and the Church was further reinforced by the total absence from the village of any literature except booklets and pamphlets addressing Catholic beliefs and liturgy. When villagers learned to read, they did so in order to be able to read Christian literature' (Ibid: 290). Kulick and Stroud go on to suggest that the concept of 'Book' is an essentially Christian concept: 'This book, even though it has no label, is immediately understood by every villager to be the Bible, in a manner which suggests that 'Book' itself is a Christian concept' (Ibid: 291-292). This close link between Christianity and literacy means that for SIL members, literacy work is also viewed as being essential and is often conducted alongside translation of the Bible.

This chapter looks at the relationship between translation and literacy work, in particular the perceived higher value of translation work in comparison to literacy. I argue that literacy is viewed as more 'practical' and less 'spiritual' than translation work. I will also examine how the literacy work of SIL has a role in their relationship with the Papua New Guinean government and with education and 'development'.

The principles for allocating literacy personnel are generally similar to how translation teams are allocated, according to 'need' and personal preference. Literacy workers generally work in partnerships or in teams with other literacy workers or translators. Literacy 'teams' can consist of husband and wife teams, unmarried women partnering each other, individuals working on their own or a group of people working together. For instance, the Alphabet Development Workshop that I assisted at had a team of seven individuals including myself. As stated in the previous chapter, in many translation teams work is split with one partner concentrating mainly on translation and the other on literacy. For example, one team of three single women have two of the women working on translation and one on literacy. Some literacy teams allocate with single languages (sometimes after a translated New Testament has been completed) but since there are usually fewer literacy teams arriving more are asked to be peripatetic or work in regions. For instance, one husband and wife team were the literacy workers for the Madang region and worked alongside a number of different translation teams in that region. Literacy personnel are often involved in running different workshops around the country such as Alphabet Development Workshops and Writer's Workshops. These

workshops are often run by a team of SIL personnel, which usually includes literacy workers, translators and sometimes Support personnel who are interested in going on a workshop and also SIL employees who are interested in becoming involved in workshops. Literacy personnel are also involved in running courses such as STEP (Supervisors Tokples Education Program) at the BTA Training Centre.

### **Literacy courses and workshops**

The literacy work that SIL members carry out can involve a range of different activities. For instance, it can include teaching people to read and write in their own language. Some local people may be illiterate, others may be able to read and write in Tok Pisin and/or English, however, the shift to reading and writing in their vernacular language, with new alphabets and orthographies, can sometimes be difficult at first. Literacy workers also help people to develop alphabets and orthographies for their languages and run workshops where they get people to write stories, creating books in their own language. Although literacy work developed in order for people to read the translated Scriptures, some literacy work seems to bear little relation to translation work. For example, some of the Alphabet Development Workshops, which help people to develop their own alphabet, may not run concurrently with a translation being done in the same language. Literacy workshops also seem to have a less evangelistic purpose than translation.

SIL-PNG run a number of different courses and workshops, some of which are held at Ukarumpa or the BTA Training Centre, others at SIL Regional Centres and others at villages, towns, schools and government stations around Papua New Guinea. These literacy

workshops are intended to 'train' Papua New Guinean participants in literacy skills. Part of the Papua New Guinea Government's approval of SIL's presence in Papua New Guinea depends on SIL showing that they are training Papua New Guineans in various skills which includes these workshops and also training provided by the different departments in Ukarumpa.

Aside from ADWs and STEP, the language teams fund these workshops and they are often instrumental in getting a workshop started in the language area they are working in. They can sometimes also get funding for materials through the SIL funding office. Sometimes the participants pay a fee to attend the workshops, which helps to pay for the cost of food and supplies, however, this is not a usual practice.

*Supervisors' Tokples Education Program (STEP)*

The STEP (Supervisors' Tokples Education Program) course is also designed 'to train PNG national literacy teachers to be effective and independent trainers and supervisors in both adult and children's vernacular literacy programs' (Wroge 1998: 7). The STEP course runs over two years with five one-month modules. In between modules participants are given village assignments to do. Participants are usually Papua New Guinean men and women who have already had some teaching experience. The course is meant to expand their literacy programs and supervise other teachers in their language groups. During the course they learn basic literacy principles, reading theory, teaching principles, management skills, book keeping skills and how to make literacy materials including Big Books, charts, games, other teaching aids. The STEP course is not part of the formal education system with the government, but rather

is geared towards people in non-formal literacy programs. The course is usually held at the BTA Training Centre although SIL are trying to run more courses in the various regions of Papua New Guinea and a STEP course was being held in the Sepik for the first time. STEP is funded by various agencies, which can include AusAid or SIL's literacy fund. Some participants have their own funding through churches, other missions or local businesses such as Chevron and the OK Tedi mine. However, often the business funding is not guaranteed.

#### *Writer's Workshops*

Writer's Workshops are run to help people in a community produce more literacy materials in their own language. They are often held in order to produce more reading materials for local schools. They are usually one to two weeks long and are held in the villages or in a town, government station or school if the villages are close by. Anyone within the community who is interested can attend, including non-literates as they often tell their stories to those who can write them down. Topics covered in a Writer's Workshop include, what makes a good story, spelling, grammar, punctuation and different types of stories. At the end of the workshop the participants' stories are put into books, often using silkscreening methods, which they can then take away.

#### *Materials Production Workshops*

Materials Production Workshops can also be run alongside Writer's Workshops. The aim of these workshops are again to produce literacy materials, however the focus in these workshops is learning the skills to make the materials so they can do it in the future on their own. During the workshop people in the community



come together to write stories and make books and also charts, songbooks, calendars and alphabet charts. Again, these courses are run in villages, local towns, government stations or schools and are generally one to two weeks long.

*Teacher Training Workshops*

Teacher Training Workshops are held for people in village communities who are interested in becoming teachers for either children or adults either in prep schools, transfer classes or even Sunday Schools. These workshops focus on teaching people basic teaching skills and, in some areas, the preferred method of literacy for their classes. These courses are one to two weeks long and are also run in villages, local towns, government stations or schools.

*Alphabet Development Workshop*

An example of the way in which SIL has been involved in literacy work in Papua New Guinea, and not necessarily in conjunction with a particular translation project is through Alphabet Development Workshops. Alphabet Development Workshops (ADWs) are run by SIL to help language groups develop orthographies (a written alphabet and spelling guide) for their languages. SIL is working in conjunction with AusAid, the Australian Government's overseas aid agency who provide most of the funding for the ADWs. These ADWs are part of a scheme to develop vernacular education within Papua New Guinea. Previously, English was the language of instruction in the formal school system. 'For a variety of social, historical and political reasons, English is the language of instruction in Papua New Guinea, and it is used in classrooms from the very first day of school. Gapun children thus acquire literacy skills in a language they almost never hear or use outside the classroom.

Despite the fact that the children learn very little during the first two or three years of school, due in large measure to their inability to cope with instruction in English, most of them leave school having acquired some literacy skills' (Kulick and Stroud 1990: 287). In 1979 and 1980 people in Bougainville, North Solomons Province, instituted a two-year village preschool program taught in the vernacular languages, called *Viles Tokples Pri Skul* (Village Language Pre School). In 1991 the PNG Education Reform encouraged the first three elementary years of school to be taught in the language children speak and know and in the third year of schooling oral English to be introduced leading to English being the medium of instruction by the fourth year of education but with a vernacular language maintenance component included (Wroge 1998: 3).

Many of the participants at ADWs are elementary teachers who are teaching children in their villages in the vernacular. However, other members of the local communities can also participate in the workshops. ADWs are run either with one language group participating or with a number of different language groups attending. Most ADWs are held around the country with the SIL team going to the area where the participants are from rather than the participants coming to Ukarumpa. They are often held in rural villages around Papua New Guinea but they can also be held at other venues such as schools. AusAid money helps to pay for the cost of food and transport for the SIL team. The SIL team usually consists of a number of literacy workers, especially those who have training and experience in running ADWs, and can also include translators, SIL employees and Support workers who are interested in finding out more about language work. When a workshop is held with a number

of different language groups attending, there is usually a larger SIL team to run it with different members of the team assigned to help with each language group. Workshops among one language group often will have a SIL team of only two people. *Tok Pisin* or English is usually used to teach the workshop depending on which area of the country they are held in and which language the participants are more comfortable with, rather than the vernacular language of the participants.

The aim of the workshops is to create a spelling guide book for each language group by the end of the course, which includes an alphabet list, consonant and vowel examples, spelling rules and one short story with an English or *Tok Pisin* translation depending on which language the workshop is held in. The language groups start by drawing maps of their language area then writing stories in their language and reading them to each other to see how well the story flowed. From their written stories they decide what letters they have in their alphabet, including combined vowel and consonant sounds such as *ae, ei, th, ch* etc. After they have agreed on the letters in their alphabet they begin to make directed word lists, for example all the words that began with *a*, had *a* in the middle and ended with *a*. Once they have finished their word lists they start making their books using stencils and silkscreen printing. The silkscreens and the materials such as the stencils, pens and ink are all paid for by AusAid money and at the workshop I attended the participants were able to keep the silkscreens after the workshop was finished.

During my fieldwork I participated in an Alphabet Development Workshop held for two weeks at Laloki High School, half an hour's drive outside of Port Moresby in Central Province, just past Bomano

Prison, a fairly notorious place where about sixty prisoners had escaped not long before we held the workshop. AUSAid paid for the entire workshop, including food and rental of the buildings.

The SIL team was quite a mixture of people, representing several of the different nationalities involved in mission work with SIL. The workshop was led by 'Jackie' (American), who is in charge of literacy at TSD (Technical Studies Department). Also on the SIL team were 'Roger' (American) a translator, 'Paul' (Australian) a literacy specialist, 'Sandra' (Chinese from Taiwan) another literacy specialist, 'Raymond' (Papua New Guinean, from Central Province) the radio operator at Ukarumpa and also working for TSD and 'Michael' (Papua New Guinean, from Eastern Highlands Province. His father was a SIL employee and 'Michael' was born in the old clinic where TSD is now) a computer technician working for SIL. 'Raymond' came along to this workshop as he was getting more involved in working at TSD and had already been to two orthotech workshops and another ADW in Milne Bay. 'Michael' came along to the ADW because 'Raymond' had invited him as he was trying to encourage more Papua New Guinean employees to get involved in these workshops.

The presence of 'Raymond' and 'Michael' at the workshop showed a growing interest among the Papua New Guinean employees to get involved directly in SIL's work. This also reflected a goal of SIL's to start 'nationalising' translation and literacy work. The Store Manager at the time told me that one of his employees went along to one of the orthotech workshops, not necessarily to get involved in literacy work, but to get a better idea of what SIL people are doing. The variety of people involved in the workshop also

represented the different nature of literacy work to translation work. Although there were a few trained literacy workers on the team there were also others, like myself, who had no experience of literacy work. Literacy work therefore seemed to require less intensive training than translation. Literacy workers also seemed to be more involved in workshops of this kind rather than a long-term project such as translators.

During the workshop we stayed in one of the high school teacher's houses as the teacher was away attending a course in Goroka at the time. The school itself was surrounded by a barbed wire fence and also had security guards at the entrance. Like many other high schools around Papua New Guinea the high school students all boarded at the high school and the area where the girls slept was surrounded by another barbed wire fence within the larger fenced compound. As shown in 'The Fence' these barbed wire fences are common sight all over Papua New Guinea.

We had all our meals in the central dining room with the other participants of the workshop. Mealtimes became a source of discomfort for the SIL team, particularly the Papua New Guinean members of the team, for a number of reasons. The pupils and teachers of Laloki High School also used this dining room, although they had their meals just before the workshop participants. The same cooks who prepared meals for the students also cooked for the workshop participants. What was immediately obvious was that the workshop participants were getting much better food than the students and teachers of the school. The students and teachers seemed to be mainly fed rice, perhaps with some vegetables added, whilst the workshop participants had different kinds of meat, rice,

yams and vegetables each night. This was mainly because AusAID was paying for the food for the workshop and the money the cooks were given by AusAID for food was much more than they were given to feed the students and teachers.

On the first evening that the SIL team and workshop participants ate together the cooks had put a tablecloth and food on one table and indicated that that was where the SIL team where to sit. In contrast the workshop participants were expected to queue for their food and sit wherever they liked and from the beginning they avoided sitting at the same table as the SIL team. To begin with the cooks were also giving the SIL team different food to the participants as 'Raymond' heard them complaining about it. 'Jackie' told the cooks that the SIL team preferred to eat with the participants but they kept insisting on giving the team preferential treatment, although they did start serving everyone the same food.

As the team leader, 'Jackie' was unsure of how to deal with this situation as she risked offending the cooks who were showing respect to the SIL team as special guests, or to continue to have this distinct separation from the participants. 'Raymond' said it was very different to the Milne Bay workshop that he attended, where they all sat on the ground and ate together, and he in particular was very uncomfortable with this division between the participants and the SIL group. He attempted to bridge this gap by spending time with the participants in the evening, which was helped by the fact that he spoke Motu, which most of the participants spoke. After the workshop 'Jackie' said that in retrospect the SIL team should probably have made more of an attempt to mix with the participants and in a similar situation she would have risked offending the cooks

in favour of forging a better relationship with the participants. As this shows, as in many other instances, SIL members were very aware of the need to form good relationships with people, however, the right way to act was not always clear. More mundane factors may have also affected decisions, such as the heat and tiredness of the SIL team and participants.

At the workshop we had about six language groups, mainly elementary teachers (teaching children from Grades 1-4 in the vernacular rather than English, which was the old system), a few elementary trainers (in charge of the teachers) and three national translators in the Keapara language. Although these teachers and translators have already started reading and writing in their languages, the SIL literacy team were there to help them create a standardised alphabet for their languages. During the workshop it became clear that the participants felt very strongly about their languages. For instance, there was an argument between the three dialects of the North Mekeo language on how to write a particular sound resulting in one of the groups leaving for a day. There were also a number of disagreements between the two dialects of the Koitabu language on how to say and write particular words correctly with each dialect arguing that theirs was the correct way and the others had it wrong. The result of this standardisation of the alphabet was that the participants were encouraged to check in their villages with the elders as to whether they had the right meaning and spelling of particular words. They planned on meeting together again at a later date once they had got feedback from their students and the elders and other community members in their villages.

The workshop's main focus was on literacy rather than evangelism. It was concerned with showing these language groups how to create their own alphabets in order to help them in teaching their students how to read and write in the vernacular. The only overt sign of Christianity at the workshop was the morning devotions, consisting of some singing, a Bible reading and a short message, but these seemed to be instigated as much by the participants as the SIL team and it was the participants who led the devotions. The reason for this lack of overt evangelism could be perhaps because so many of the participants considered themselves to be 'Christian' already. This was not unusual in a country where many people identify themselves as belonging to some religious affiliation. 'PNG's constitution declares that it is a Christian country' (Lipscomb, McKinnon and Murray 1998: 37). 'One of the first questions a foreigner is asked in evangelised PNG is: *Wanem lotu bilong yu?* ('What is your religion?')' (Brutti 1999: 48).

It must also be recognised that it is almost impossible, in rural PNG, to declare oneself to be an atheist. This concept makes no sense to most of the local people, who simply do not have a semantic category for atheism. Translations of terms such as 'atheist', 'non-believer', or even 'heretic', represent a problem in both the Oksapmin language and in Tok Pisin. Hence, while it is possible to make distinctions regarding religious affiliation between different Christian churches, or between the options of being evangelised and following the religion of the ancestors, it is not possible to distinguish between faith in any religion and faith in none.

(Brutti 1999: 49-50)

It seemed to be assumed that all participants of the workshop were a Christian of some sort although 'Jackie' did make a comment to 'Sandra' that she liked the fact that all these different denominations could work together and also that we did not know which



denominations people belonged to or even if they were Christians or not. Rather than there being a question over whether the participants being Christians or not there was more surprise that different denominations could work together without too much conflict. This denominational conflict was exemplified at a service I attended at a Baptist church in Lae where the preacher denounced all other denominations aside from Baptists as not being true 'Christians'. Many of the SIL members would mention hostilities between different denominations in their language groups as being a major source of worry.

In the closing ceremony the man in charge of all the elementary teachers and trainers in Central Province gave a speech where he told them that they should make good use of the books as they have been paid for by Australian taxpayers. He told them that when he was in Australia he saw many homeless people on the streets and reminded them of how much better off they are in Papua New Guinea. He talked about how generous the Australians were to give money to Papua New Guineans when they have their own people who need help. The message that came across was that Australians are the poor and needy ones whereas Papua New Guineans have land and are therefore rich. This struck some members of the SIL team as being quite paradoxical, that the Papua New Guineans, often seen as poor both in monetary wealth and education in comparison to Westerners, were portrayed as the ones who are better off than people in other countries.

During my fieldwork there were a large number of these ADWs and orthography workshops running. However, as some members pointed out, once the AUSAid money stopped being available from

2004, these workshops would probably come to an end. As a result, SIL members were trying to run as many of these workshops as possible before the money ran out. Although SIL members run many workshops on their own funds, the availability of AUSAid money meant that they were able to run more workshops outside of specific translation projects.

### **Literacy and translation work**

Literacy workers do not necessarily learn the vernacular languages that they work with in the same depth that translation workers do. Although some literacy workers do work with a particular group of people for an extensive length of time, learning the language thoroughly, others may spend only up to a week or two weeks with a group, especially when running workshops. An example of the different attitudes between literacy and translation workers is shown through an observation made by a literacy team who have moved from literacy work to translation. They had been participating in a 'Getting Started' workshop for new translators and it had been recommended to them to avoid using *Tok Pisin* when language learning. However, they disagreed with this, as they said that avoiding using *Tok Pisin* meant that there was no way to communicate with the people. They pointed out that as literacy workers they were not able to learn every language they worked in and by using *Tok Pisin* they were able to teach more people than just one particular language group. They believed that there were new styles of language learning possible than had been used by previous generations of translators. As this shows, there is less of an emphasis on literacy workers learning the language themselves. Often they are working alongside a translator who may take an active part in

literacy work and who does have an in-depth knowledge of the language.

Literacy work has developed alongside translation work, with translation as the main aim and literacy as a secondary task. Although literacy work is necessary to make the translated Bibles effective, there does seem to be an unacknowledged hierarchy with translation seen as a somewhat superior task to literacy work. This can be seen particularly in an interview with the Assistant Director for Language Affairs (ADLA).

**Is the ADLA usually a language worker or could a support worker become ADLA?**

Yes. In theory it is possible but not likely. In feedback allowed for during the nomination of associate directors the one negative point mentioned about me taking up the job was that I wasn't a translator, just a humble literacy person. So I think it very unlikely that a support person would get the job. Although personally I think that is very short sighted. Translators generally do not make good administrators they have the wrong personalities.

(Brian Hodgkin, ADLA)

As he comments, there were doubts regarding his appointment as the Assistant Director for Language Affairs because despite the fact that he did have experience in language work he was considered to be less qualified as his experience was in literacy rather than translation. Many of the jobs in the Directors' office, including that of the Directors themselves, are mainly administrative, however, the Director is usually male and a former translator. Translators and literacy workers are also perceived differently in terms of the typical personality associated with either translation or literacy. For instance, one literacy worker told me a story of how in his training people were asked to do a role-play exercise as either translators or

literacy workers. The group of 'literacy workers' apparently were laughing, joking and having fun with the exercise whilst the 'translators' were all very quiet and serious. The stereotypical image of literacy and translation workers is that literacy workers are often seen as more extroverted and people-orientated whereas translators are seen as introverted and more serious. Although not all literacy workers and translators fit this stereotype this perception of literacy and translation work reflects to a certain degree the expectations of the work and the people who do it. Translation is seen as the more serious task, involving more training and perhaps greater intellectual capabilities, whereas literacy work, although important, requires less training and takes less time.

Nevertheless, literacy work is still a significant part of SIL's work in Papua New Guinea and cannot be so neatly separated from translation work as shown in the way that many translation teams also engage in literacy work. Although literacy work has the aim of enabling people to read the Bible in their own language, SIL's contract with the Papua New Guinea government regarding literacy means that they also want people to be able to read in general and read more than just the Bible. As a result, literacy teams get people to write down their own stories and write their own books as well. Therefore, although translation of the Bible is one means of 'preserving' languages, literacy workers can also be seen to be 'preserving' languages and cultures, perhaps more so than a translator by encouraging people to write down their own stories and myths rather than try and find a way of translating Biblical stories into their language. As well as being part of the objective of literacy, they also believe that in this way they are helping to record

people's traditions and stories so that later generations can read them. Consequently, it can be seen that although literacy work has developed alongside translation in order to allow people to be able to read the translated Bible, literacy is also viewed as a goal in itself. As shown in part of the SIL Linguistic Creed, literacy and education are viewed as essential for all language groups, particularly in order for 'development'.

All languages are worthy of preservation in written form by means of grammars, dictionaries, and written texts. This should be done as part of the heritage of the human race.

Every language group deserves to see its language in print and to have some literature written in it.

Minority language groups within a larger nation deserve the opportunity of learning to speak, read, and write the national language.

(Benjamin F. Elson, September 1987, SIL International website 2003)

The ability to read is not an isolated intellectual skill, but the key to development at the personal, local and national levels. In keeping with its emphasis on the people who use lesser-known languages, the literacy work of SIL focuses on grass roots, community-based programs for smaller language communities. SIL is committed to a goal of enabling local people to assume responsibility for sustainable programs in their own communities and languages.

(SIL International website 2003)

This reflects a particular notion that education and literacy is the key to both the personal development of individuals and the development of the country. For instance, Goody comments:

If we take recent moves to expand the economies of countries of the Third World, a certain rate of literacy is often seen as necessary to radical change, partly from the limited standpoint of being able to read the instructions on the seed packet, partly because of the increased autonomy (even with regard to the seed packet) of the autodidact.

(Goody 1986:46)

This is a notion held not only by SIL members but also by a growing number of Papua New Guineans, particularly the Papua New Guinea government.

Many of the Western representations concerning development were conveyed to those at Chambri in newspapers, magazines, and religious literature. They were compelling, in part, because they appeared in written form. As such, these representations could be readily consulted and discussed. Moreover, they were imbued with appreciable intrinsic authority because writing was *itself* the mark and the means of development. The ability to read and write, at least in Pidgin English if not in English, and in fact became for the Chambri (and for many other Papua New Guineans) a fundamental component of development.

(Gewertz & Errington 1991: 147)

This can be seen in a story that two SIL employees told me during the Alphabet Development Workshop, where a '*bush kanaka*' (rural person) went down to the river and read a sign there which said 'Beware, crocodiles are here'. Unfortunately, because of his lack of English literacy he read it with the Pidgin pronunciation and was eaten by crocodiles. They told this story both to make fun of the '*bush kanaka*' but also to emphasise the importance of being able to read and write in not only in Pidgin, but also in English.

Although much of the education in Papua New Guinea has been in English the importance that SIL place on language as a vehicle for culture is seen in their endorsement of vernacular education rather than English education in schools in Papua New Guinea. For many years SIL has been promoting vernacular education in the elementary (primary) schools of Papua New Guinea (Wroge 1998). They argue that education in the vernacular will make it more

culturally relevant for students, many of who return to their village areas after they leave school (Wroge: 1). SIL members believe that education in the vernacular will have several advantages, including encouraging an appreciation of their own language and culture among students and helping to make the transfer to education in English easier, as they have already learned how to read and write in their own language and it is more of a gradual transition. They believe they are encouraging the use of people's indigenous languages by emphasising the value of reading and writing in their own languages rather than *Tok Pisin* or English and therefore helping to preserve indigenous languages. The STEP (Supervisors *Tokples* Education Program) Course run by SIL is aimed at training Papua New Guineans in teaching literacy in the vernacular to people in their villages. It can be seen from this that SIL not only place a high importance not only on the *speaking* of indigenous languages but also on writing these languages down. Kulick and Stroud comment regarding SIL, 'There is an oft-unstated assumption in all that they write about their work that vernacular literacy a priori strengthens the position of the vernacular' (1993: 30). However, as Street comments, 'literacy practices are aspects not only of "culture" but also of power structures' (1993: 7).

SIL members hold a particular Protestant view of orality and literacy, based on the importance they place on the Word of God. 'The missionaries, who believe in the power of the Word to 'transform' people into Christians [see, for example, Townsend 1963: 8; Renck 1990], consider that literacy, the ability to read the Word, is unquestionably positive' (Kulick & Stroud 1993: 30). Literacy is

therefore given a higher standing than orality as people are able to refer back to the written Word of God.

SIL members hold a particular view of the importance and use of literacy which may not be held by the people they are working with. For instance, Kulick and Stroud comment for the Gapun villagers,

Noticeably absent from Gapun are those types of reading and writing which are stressed in western societies and educational systems. Gapuners do not read to gain information about people they do not know or about events which do not directly concern them. Nobody in the village considers that one can become better informed or more competent in any way by reading (although there is a belief that the intensive reading of a text might cause one to understand its hidden message – we return to this below). Consequently, there is no notion in the village that everyone should read. The act of reading in itself has no value apart from accomplishing some immediate goal such as confirming the words to a hymn, preparing to recite a prayer, reading a note one has been given, or discovering a heretofore concealed truth.

(1990: 288)

For the Chambri, Gewertz and Errington state that, 'Much of the Chambri interest in literacy, however, focused on their internal political relationships. Individuals frequently brought hand-written (in Pidgin) family histories for us to type: they wished us to give their version of the past the appearance and status of a printed document' (Gewertz and Errington 1991: 149). 'From the perspective of the Chambri, literacy was valued, in major part, because it provided the opportunity, as did development more generally, to pursue with greater effect their largely traditional interests: for instance, they valued written accounts – documents – because these enhanced the authority of particularistic claims and perspectives within their existing system of commensurate differences' (Ibid: 148).



As Kulick and Stroud also point out, many of the villagers have little opportunity in the course of normal village life to read or write (1990: 288). As these examples show, the ways in which local people perceive and use literacy may not be the same as the ways in which SIL members teach literacy. For SIL members, literacy is essential for being able to read the Bible and to be able to learn from it. However, Kulick and Stroud comment for the Gapuners, 'Nobody reads the Bible, for example, but school children, or an adult and several school children, sometimes flick through it together and comment to each other about the abstract line drawings of figures they find there. This flicking through printed matter and explaining to one another about the pictures there is how villagers most often 'read' such material' (1990: 291). SIL members stress literacy as not only a means of being able to read the Bible and learn from it but also as a way of preserving vernacular languages. However, for people like the Gapuners and the Chambri literacy is used for other purposes, such as obtaining Cargo for the Gapuners (Ibid: 300-301) and retaining power amongst the Chambri (Gewertz and Errington 1991: 162). Therefore, translations into the vernacular may not have the same impact that SIL members were hoping for.

Nevertheless, SIL's work in literacy has also helped in their relationship with the Papua New Guinean government as the government has emphasised both literacy and education as shown in *Twisted histories, altered contexts*.

Indeed, literacy was a national priority, one of the central objectives of the nationally determined school system, for it was regarded as essential to the development of a united and effective Papua New Guinea State. Only if Papua New Guineans were generally literate, it was thought, could they develop a common national culture that would unify them.

(Gewertz & Errington 1991: 147)

Because written representations were generally recognized as powerful, literacy came to have a central role in advancing quite different political perspectives. In particular, there were significant differences between national policy and local opinion about the sort of development that literacy might implement. This was so especially concerning the distribution of power. From the perspective of the Papua New Guinea state, literacy was valued, as mentioned, because it provided the state with the opportunity to develop authority sufficient to subsume its peoples in order to represent them as citizens. Significantly, literacy was, in this regard, a means of implementing a system of incommensurate differences, based in part on differential access to and control of state authority.

(Ibid: 148)

SIL have a contract with the Papua New Guinea government regarding literacy and have put much of their own money into training Papua New Guinea literacy teachers and also running literacy classes themselves. Therefore, although translation is the main goal of SIL in Papua New Guinea, it could be argued that it is their promotion of vernacular education and the help they have given the government in literacy and vernacular education that allows them to stay in Papua New Guinea.

### **Conclusion**

Although literacy work runs parallel to translation as a secondary task, in order for people to read translated Bibles, it has become work on its own, not necessarily related to either translation or conversion. It could be argued that what is important to SIL members, the translated Bible, is not necessarily what is important to the people of Papua New Guinea, especially the government. Rather it is literacy and the promotion of vernacular education that is central to SIL's relationship with the Papua New Guinea government. Although

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translation may be viewed as more 'spiritual' work it is the 'practical' work of literacy that is just as important to translation, particularly if SIL members wish the teachings of the Bible to be put into practice. However, like interpretations of the Bible, perceptions of and the use of literacy may be interpreted differently than SIL members' view of the importance of literacy. 'Rather than literacy 'taking hold' of Gapun, Gapuners have taken hold of those dimensions of literacy for which they consider they have the most use' (Kulick and Stroud 1990: 301).



Asian potluck '*bung*'

## *Chapter Six*

### *Citizens of Heaven: Missionary journeys between 'homes'*

Many studies of missionary activity have looked at the interaction between indigenous people and the missionaries. As shown in previous chapters, missionaries have to be aware of cultural differences between themselves and local people, particularly for the purposes of good translation and effective missionisation. However, SIL members themselves represent a diversity of countries and cultural backgrounds and as a result, SIL members need not only to negotiate differences between themselves and Papua New Guineans but also with each other. The process of translation is therefore present not only between the missionaries and Papua New Guineans but within the SIL community as well. These interactions between different national and cultural groups within the mission community affect ideas and ideals of 'being a missionary' as different members bring varying notions of what 'being a missionary' entails. For SIL members, notions of 'home' and 'belonging' are directly related to notions of 'culture'. However, these are also related to ideas about Christianity. This chapter intends to look at the way in which these different groups define themselves in relation to others, how ideals about 'being a missionary' are affected by individuals' cultural and national backgrounds and through interactions with each other, how the 'multi-culturalism' of the community is both emphasised and seen as less important than their identity as 'Christians', and how a sense of 'belonging' and 'home' is created, particularly for the children of missionaries. This chapter will show the complexity of SIL members' notions of personhood, through looking at ideas of the individual, the 'home' and Christianity.

## Ukarumpa Welcome

*Countries Represented SIL-PNG 31 January 2002*

*(Adult members only)*

<i>Australia</i>	<i>Austria</i>	<i>Canada</i>	<i>Finland</i>	<i>Germany</i>	<i>Hungary</i>	<i>Japan</i>
62	3	31	21	10	1	10
<i>Korea</i>	<i>Malaysia</i>	<i>Netherlands</i>	<i>Norway</i>	<i>New Zealand</i>	<i>Poland</i>	<i>Singapore</i>
16	2	18	1	7	1	3
<i>South Africa</i>	<i>Sweden</i>	<i>Switzerland</i>	<i>Taiwan</i>	<i>Thailand</i>	<i>United Kingdom</i>	<i>United States</i>
2	9	6	1	1	13	378

Figure 1.2

As shown in the above Figure 1.2, the overwhelming majority of SIL members in January 2002 were from the United States with a total of 218 non-US members and 378 US members. As can be seen in the graph above, some members were the sole representatives from their country. Due to the large number of Americans present in Ukarumpa, it has often been described as a 'Little America'.

Ukarumpa is the biggest mission station in the world with over 100 houses, mostly owned by the members. It has an overwhelming American flavour, with about half its members having come from the USA. Particularly noticeable is the well stocked Super Market, with much of the merchandise being imported from America.

(Briggs: 28)

Adjoining a village of the same name, Ukarumpa is the PNG headquarters of the American-founded Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL). It is in the Aiyura Valley about half an hour by PMV from Kainantu and is well worth a visit to see 'little America' in the midst of PNG.

(Lipscomb, McKinnon and Murray 1998: 228)

I heard it was a 'little America' and that you could get just about anything you wanted (in terms of material goods). Yes it is a little America, but I've realised it's because there's mostly American people here (and therefore their culture influences how things are run and done).

(Karen)

However, not all would agree with this view of Ukarumpa as an American town in the middle of Papua New Guinea.

**What is your opinion on the comment that Ukarumpa is a 'little America'?**

**Do you think that is a true reflection of the nature of the community here?**

I don't think it is a good comparison. Ukarumpa is different to anywhere else in the world. It's Ukarumpa. Just like the Ukarumpa accent is. It's a mixture!

(Brian Hodgkin, ADLA)

As Brian Hodgkin observes, despite the majority of Americans there, the presence of other cultural influences (and accents) means that Ukarumpa is more than just a 'Little America'. Even the SIL Store, which initially may come across as having mainly American imports on closer inspection reveals products from Papua New Guinea, Australia, Korea and Japan as well as the United States. Therefore, Ukarumpa may seem on the surface to be a 'Little America' but as some American members have commented, it is very different to the America they have experienced. Rather, with twenty-one different countries represented in January 2002, Ukarumpa is a multi-cultural community, with their identities as Protestant Christians and SIL members being the main element they all have in common.

All new members and visitors to Ukarumpa receive a *Welcome to Ukarumpa* booklet. This booklet covers a range of information including details about the different departments, such as the Clinic

and the Finance office as well as information on 'Activities and Facilities' such as Sunday Services and the Teen Center. It also gives practical advice such as 'Food Hints', which includes advice on cooking at high altitudes as well as translating between British/Australian and American English:

Foods have different names which often do not cross international borders.

The following list may be helpful to you.

Cooking salt.....Very fine table salt

Cornflour..... Cornstarch

Milo..... Chocolate drink powder (Ovaltine)

Mince..... Hamburger

Muesli..... Granola

(Ukarumpa General Information Booklet, Revised June 2000: 12)

The translation between American English and British/Australian English highlights the difficulties of translating, even between people who supposedly speak the same language.

Behaviour in different situations is also highlighted. Quite an extensive section is devoted to the correct behaviour when buying food and/or artefacts at the Ukarumpa Market. I have quoted at length here as an example of the way in which the importance of respecting Papua New Guinean 'culture' is emphasised.

#### MARKET

Mon., Wed., Fri. 7:00-8:00 a.m., located across from Store.

Please don't bargain, squeeze or step over food

May bargain for artefacts

(Ukarumpa General Information Booklet, Revised June 2000: 10)



### MARKET ETIQUETTE

The market at the Ukarumpa Centre is one of the main places of contact between Westerners and village people in the area. We approach this experience from two distinctive cultural perspectives. In the Western culture, the purchase of food is a business transaction. The focus is on the quality and price of the item. The opposite is true here. Trade and food exchange are a part of developing and maintaining relationships, a way of making peace and getting to know others. The market can be more than a quick purchase of food prior to rushing home to get the children off to school. We can use this opportunity whether brief or longer to show respect to their produce and meet a few new people.

Competitive or unfriendly attitudes can lead to suspicion. Squeezing food or checking the bottom berries in a dish is offensive in this relationship oriented social experience. It is not polite to question the size or content of the piles of food, or to bargain for a reduced price. Does that seem to be a one-sided relationship? Not at all, you can say "mi no inap" and ask the price of a similar pile. The seller can then lower the price without feeling criticism or humiliation.

In PNG, food is considered contaminated if someone steps over it, especially a woman. A skirt waving over food is very offensive. Stepping over legs is also offensive. Places of food preparation or placement should be touched only with the hands; other body parts cause contamination (ie. walking or sitting on market tables is offensive). Let's respect our PNG neighbours and try to view things through their eyes. This could be the beginning of a whole new understanding of how others think.

The privilege of living in another culture gives us a broader understanding of who God is and helps us to see more of the big picture.

(Ukarumpa General Information Booklet, Revised June 2000: 14)

This section clearly shows the ambiguity between SIL members' main goal of Bible translation and conversion, which fundamentally involves changing people's beliefs and customs, and their ideal of respecting Papua New Guineans' 'culture'. Although a distinction is

made between Western and Papua New Guinea 'culture' in both cases generalisations are made about what is meant by Western and Papua New Guinean 'culture'. For instance, customs about not squeezing the food or stepping over food show a particularly Eastern Highlands' perspective. Although these actions may not be seen as 'polite' behaviour in other parts of Papua New Guinea there is not necessarily the same level of offensiveness as in the Eastern Highlands. The Ukarumpa market itself exists specifically for the benefit of SIL members and employees. This can be seen particularly in the buying and selling of artefacts (cf. Cannibal Tours), which in other markets around the country are mainly for the benefit of tourists. Unlike other markets, which are open all day, the Ukarumpa Market is open only on certain days during specified times.

This section also shows particular ideas among SIL members of what constitutes 'culture'. Although there is a sense of respecting their 'culture' and learning from others, there is also the notion that Christianity transcends 'culture' and that SIL members will have a better understanding of God through living in another 'culture'. 'Culture' seems to be equated with 'customs' and 'practices' that can be separated from Christianity. It is through this notion that Christianity, rather than being another 'culture' is in fact transcendent over 'cultures', that SIL members are able to reconcile the ambiguity of introducing Christian ideas but respecting others' 'culture'. For instance, this quote from the Branch Information Sheet argues that 'Kingdom' (the Kingdom of Heaven) values are different from local cultural values and the values of the missionaries' home countries. Interestingly though, 'Kingdom' values are described as

'cultural' values despite the notion that Christianity should supersede people's national cultures.

Continue to pray for SIL leadership as we attempt to resolve "hevis" in a cross-culturally sensitive manner. Please remember that Kingdom cultural values are always different than local cultural values, and the values of our home countries. In addition, members should realize that Ukarumpa village culture does not always behave "normally" in terms of standard Highland's practices.

(Summer Institute of Linguistics, PNG Branch, *Branch Information Sheet*, 9 August 2001)

Well there's nothing wrong with changing the culture because it's always going to change whether you want to or not. Just look at the older generation who complain about things changing too fast. I guess the Biblical culture too is something that a lot of people try to impose in terms of seeing that as the best culture and Biblical culture is about writing and books and it's really Eastern culture, Near-East and Middle-East rather than Biblical so I guess it depends on what you replace it with, you know, you can't leave a vacuum. So I think that like Western people haven't taken on every single part of Biblical culture so that they look like a Middle-Eastern culture so why should the Papua New Guineans take on Western culture as a middleman in-between the Near-Eastern and themselves, it's out of the picture, in that sense yes. But in the sense of if something in your culture breaks God's law which Western culture is guilty of in all sorts of areas then it should be taken care of by the Christians, sometimes can make that happen, sometimes they can't, they just have to live with it.

(Carla)

This notion that Christianity overarches people's local cultural values is outlined in *In the Way: A study of Christian missionary endeavours*, where Burrige argues that Christianity is a metaculture, formally devoid of cultural content and is therefore multi- or transcultural.

Despite the emphasis on community, Christianity is not a socio-religious system even though in a variety of phases and places in history it has often

seemed so. A faith, a set of beliefs, a leaven that affects sociocultural orders, in no way does it predicate a particular kind of culture or social order. It cannot. The variety of sociocultural orders recognized as Christian attest to the fact.

(Burridge 1991: 49)

He also argues that in principle, Christianity as a metaculture is independent of sociocultural conditions. For example, in 1659 the Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith issued a general instruction to missionaries: 'Do not regard it as your task, and do not bring any pressure to bear on the peoples, to change their manners, customs, and uses, unless they are evidently contrary to religion and sound morals' (Burridge 1991: 180). Nevertheless, interpretations of what is 'contrary to religion and sound morals' often differ among missionaries, including SIL members.

From early in the seventeenth century to the present day, however, most missionaries seem to have sought convergences and attempted to impose their own cultural forms on others. Largely because, one supposes, not only are familiar usages easier to handle and control but also because the several versions of the faith had become attached to particular cultural representations.

(Burridge 1991: 97)

Christianity is framed in universal terms which ideally should override ethnicity, nationality, class, and income. Theoretically, missionary activities might be expected to reflect similarities regardless of these variables. Yet missions, even within the same religious order or denomination, act in terms not defined entirely by formal religious beliefs and organization. Notions of comfort, style, security, self-esteem, honor, privacy, sexuality, age, and status vary with national culture and class, education and income. Yet most studies of missionaries ignore these features and tend to consider all missionaries essentially the same.

(Beidelman 1982: 9)

The idea that Christianity is 'a faith independent of culture and might be communicated to any culture, and so adapted to inform the indigenous relations' (Burrige 1991: 181) can perhaps be seen as an ideal that is much more difficult to put in practice. For instance, although SIL members may be happy to respect customs regarding trade and market food, other beliefs and practices may not be viewed with such equanimity, particularly if it is seen to not fit in with perceived 'Christian' practices. Even within a Christian community there can be debates over what are acceptable Christian practices. For instance, in a conversation with an informant, 'Leah', she commented on the broad spectrum of beliefs in Ukarumpa. She gave the examples of videos and what is considered appropriate to show children. Members of her church in her home country do not regulate what videos/films they allow their children to watch, although she personally is stricter with her own son in what she allows him to watch. However, she is still more relaxed than other parents in Ukarumpa, of whom there are some who believe that even some films intended for children, such as 'A Bug's Life' is not suitable. Some members seemed to think that only Christian film productions were appropriate for their children to watch, and although a film such as 'A Bug's Life' would to others seem inoffensive, they did not want their children watching 'secular' films.

'Leah' was also part of a group that did 'interpretive' dances, a type of dance in which the performers tried to interpret the lyrics of the songs through their movements which would often involve using mime and sign language gestures mainly through arm and hand movements and sometimes also using tambourines and ribbons. She had asked another German missionary lady if she wanted to join the

group as this lady was involved in aerobics and so she thought she would also be interested in joining the dance group. This particular lady said she did not want to be involved because she believed the dancing was wrong. According to my informant, she said that she felt very uncomfortable whenever these ladies did their interpretive dancing during church services because she was always wondering if watching them was arousing her husband (Fieldnotes: 26). She came from the background that believed that any sort of dancing, even dancing that was not overtly sexual, was inappropriate as any kind of dancing had a sexual nature in her view. My informant then asked her own husband if he found the 'interpretative' dancing arousing and he assured her in no uncertain terms that he in no way found it at all arousing!

During my fieldwork there were also different debates going on either in conversations or on the Member's Forum email messageboard. For instance, some of the high school students put on a concert after their Encounter weekend away. Encounter is a weekend that is put on each year where the high school students go away (this year to a Christian camp at Mt Hagen) on a 'spiritual retreat' where they have a visiting speaker and workshops on different issues. The Encounter band put on a concert, playing contemporary Christian pop music. One member in particular had serious difficulties with this conference and posted a message arguing against the evils of 'rock' music, no matter whether it had Christian lyrics or not. This set off a heated debate where people argued the merits of listening to pop music. There were also debates regarding the Harry Potter books as whilst some members were big fans of the book others thought they would encourage children to

dabble in the occult. There were also debates over drinking alcohol with a divide between those who thought it was fine in moderation and others who believed it was wrong altogether.

Nevertheless, despite these examples of people's different beliefs regarding appropriate Christian practices, my informant said she thinks that Ukarumpa has become more tolerant of people's convictions and beliefs in past few years. For instance, she remembers a time in the past when the EC had a special meeting to discuss whether people could raise their hands during 'worship' (usually synonymous with the singing and praying part of the church service) or not, because some people felt they could not 'worship' properly when others raised their hands (Fieldnotes: 27). There have also been changes in policy, for instance, previously divorced couples were not accepted for membership whereas there were a few people who had been divorced and remarried or divorced and come as single people and been accepted for membership. I noticed that there were quite a few incidences where this idea of accepting other people's beliefs within the Christian community was emphasised, particularly at the Branch Conference where the speakers often emphasised the point of not trying to change other people's convictions and being more tolerant of others. The idea of unity within the Christian community was often highlighted, particularly in relation to Papua New Guinea villages where there was discord between different Christian denominations. Nevertheless, these different debates regarding what people think are 'Kingdom' values and what beliefs go against these values show that Christianity is not simply a 'metaculture' but rather that people

bring their own cultural and personal beliefs to their interpretation of acceptable Christian behaviour.

*'Cultural Diversity'*

It is essential to consider any missionary group in terms of the ethnicity, class, and economic background of its members. The cultural background of missionaries influences their behavior in ways not necessarily determined by their Christian beliefs and work, and it also relates to the broader colonial milieu in which these missionaries function.

(Beidelman 1982: 9)

The missionaries who sought converts from the western Pacific islands were primarily inspired, as are Christian missionaries everywhere, by the message of salvation embodied in the New Testament teachings and example of Jesus and Christ and by Saint Paul's injunction to take that message to all the world. But the process of conversion has never been straightforward or entirely predictable (Burrige 1978). The missionaries interpreted the Christian message through the filters of their own cultural backgrounds, their languages, the theological orientations of their home churches, and their personalities.

(Barker 2004: 442)

Although there were many debates over different issues, there was still very much an emphasis on accepting and accommodating others' differences particularly cultural differences. In other words, SIL members stressed the importance of tolerating other people's customs and practices even if they personally found them unusual, strange or even sometimes difficult to understand or cope with. For instance, sometimes people would complain about the bluntness of some 'cultural' groups or the seemingly superficial 'friendliness' of other groups but then put these down to 'cultural' differences that needed to be understood rather than take offence. This emphasis on cultural diversity amongst SIL members is highlighted in the latter



section of the Welcome Booklet. Here it can be seen that SIL members not only have to deal with the different cultural perspectives between themselves and Papua New Guineans but also amongst themselves. In fact, half of the Welcome Booklet is devoted to summarising various contrasts between the different nationalities represented among the membership.

#### **CULTURAL DIFFERENCES DISCLAIMER**

We in WBT-SIL come from different cultures with various unwritten national values. An individual is influenced by his or her national values whether or not he or she understands them or has conformed to them. Because of this, we can appreciate a person's individual characteristics better when we see him in terms of his own cultural background rather than our own cultural expectations.

The enclosed summary of contrasts can only be used productively if one remembers that no individual from any one national background will necessarily share all the same values. Some may have individual values more like a country other than their own. Some values are held more highly than others within a sub-culture. Because of this, the goal of this summary is not to predict what any one person will value or how he or she will act. The summary is intended to aid us in showing loving understanding and respect for each other in a more creative way, to avoid inner conflicts as well as conflicts with others, to help decrease culture stress as we work and make decisions together and live each other's decisions, and to help us fit back into our home culture after adapting to each other's values.

Therefore, do NOT use this summary to:

Make assumptions about people of a certain cultural background, try and predict what any person will do, or say, or value.

DO use this summary to:

Try and understand the seemingly mysterious (and perhaps exasperating) behaviour of a person with a cultural background other than your own, evaluate your own behaviour on the basis of how a person from another culture might interpret it.

## CULTURAL DIFFERENCES

### Getting Acquainted

*American:* Casual, informal, innovative, friendly. Tend toward "instant intimacy". Unaware of class differences or stages of intimacy. Occupational roles affect social interaction.

*Australian:* Affable, expressing individuality and simplicity. Rural men casual and use colloquial speech, complimented by more reserved women liking more established forms of interaction.

*Canadian:* More reserved than U.S. More selective in friendships.

*Finnish:* West - reserved. East - more open. Not class distinguishing. State church.

*German:* Direct, friendly, formal. Language barrier hinders natural ease. In German, subtle grammatical cues indicate relative position and stages of intimacy.

*Japanese:* Formal. Class difference or stages of intimacy important. Group oriented. Whatever group you belong to you are almost obligated to attend the social meetings with pressure.

*Korean:* Reserved, formal. Slow in making friendships, deep commitment. Class differences as in Japanese.

*New Zealand:* Casual, informal. Much social interaction related to leisure and sports. Slow to trust others. "Be yourself - don't put up a front."

*Swedish:* "Take care of yourself and leave others alone."

*PNG:* Interaction structured by relationships, relatives or wontoks, outsiders or enemies. Sharing betel nut, tobacco or food important to show acceptance. Group unity important.

(Ukarumpa General Information Booklet, Revised June 2000: 16 - 17)

Under the various headings under 'Cultural Differences' are included: Expression of Reality, Expression of Humility, Expression of Self-Esteem, Expression of Politeness, Production Values, Leadership, Followers, Measure of a Person, The Best Way to do

Things, Negative Stereotypes, Serving Food for Family, Focus of Etiquette During Meals and Sweet Foods (See Appendix C for details).

Whereas previous sections in the Welcome Booklet dealt with cultural differences between 'Westerners' and 'Papua New Guineans' and appropriate behaviour in different situations, this section deals with the different cultural backgrounds amongst SIL members themselves and what these different nationalities consider to be important values and/or appropriate behaviour. Although these summaries are meant to help individuals understand others from different cultural backgrounds, the simplistic nature of many of the definitions can actually be seen to reinforce stereotypes about certain nationalities. For instance, under the heading of 'Leadership' the qualities British people are supposed to value are:

'Must have traditional qualifications for office, come from right social order with the proper social graces. (Changing-less important).'

(Ukarumpa General Information Booklet, Revised June 2000: 21)

Americans on the other hand see leadership as:

'Elected on basis of personal qualities, abilities, convictions and ability to inspire confidence. Given special benefits and privileges.'

(Ukarumpa General Information Booklet, Revised June 2000: 21)

These definitions of these different nationalities show a certain amount of cultural determinism – that it is people's 'cultures' that define who they are rather than them making 'culture'. As with the section on market behaviour, cultural values are generalised to people from a particular country. For example, although SIL members work with very different groups of people all over Papua New Guinea, the booklet makes broad generalisations regarding

how 'Papua New Guineans' would act in different situations, and similar generalisations are made about 'Americans' or 'British'. Although this section supposedly emphasises diversity and differences, it actually does not distinguish between individuals. However, while these summaries can be seen to reinforce certain stereotypes about various nationalities, as the disclaimer at the beginning states, it is not meant to be used to make assumptions about people but rather to try and understand people from different backgrounds. Despite the detailed definitions of each nationality, the disclaimer also points to the importance of the individual, and in fact almost seems to nullify the purpose of the definitions following it. The purpose of these definitions seem to arise from a consciousness that these differences can result in conflicts, both inner conflicts and conflicts with others. For example as well as trying to understand people from another culture, it is also meant to help SIL members fit back into their own 'cultures' when they return to their 'home' country.

*We at Ukarumpa attempt to do something that history tells us cannot be done. People from many different cultures living and working in close harmony. And our purpose is to put God's Word in the hands and the hearts of Papua New Guineans.*  
(Ukarumpa General Information Booklet, Revised June 2000: 25)

As the quote above, taken from the end of the booklet shows, there is an emphasis on people from different cultures being able to live and work in harmony because of their shared goal of putting 'God's Word in the hands and hearts of Papua New Guineans.' Again there is the idea that Christianity itself is transcendent over 'cultures' and that the shared belief God is what unites the community despite their cultural differences.

I have used the Welcome Booklet here as a means to analyse the way in which SIL members look at 'culture' and the contradictory nature of some of their views. 'Culture' is often discussed, however SIL members are not necessarily bound by culture or their definitions of different 'cultural' groups. Although this booklet may be referred to when first arriving in Ukarumpa, many SIL members that I spoke to said that either they did not really agree with the definitions of the different nationalities or they did not refer to the booklet much once they knew their way around Ukarumpa.

I looked at it in the first week, then got it filed somewhere. I think it is highlighted at orientation to Ukarumpa and people talk about the cultural differences within SIL quite a bit afterwards, but the booklet itself is not referred to.

('Karen', email communication 2004)

Although the booklet attempts to help with translating across cultures, the simplistic nature of the definitions mean that they do not encompass the complexities of the real relationships between SIL members. Nevertheless, the booklet gives an insight into some of the ways in which SIL members categorise each other and the way in which they emphasise translation and understanding between people of different cultural backgrounds. As 'Karen' points out, the topic of 'cultural differences' is one that is discussed regularly amongst SIL members and is therefore something that is important to SIL members although ideally they aim to overcome these differences.

### **'Cultural' events**

Despite the emphasis on different nationalities being able to live together in 'close harmony' there were many ways in which different

national groups still defined themselves against others, particularly the overwhelming American majority. This was manifested in conversations, debates on the Members Forum email newsgroup and *bungs* (Tok Pisin for get-togethers/parties) involving members from a particular nationality. One event that was seen as particularly 'American' and which provoked heated debate regarding the appropriateness of such an event in a missionary context was the annual High School Banquet as outlined below.

### *Banquet*

Each year in June parents of the Ukarumpa High School students (and other members of the community who wish to participate) put on an event called 'Banquet' for the eleventh and twelfth grade students. The Banquet committee, made up of the parents of the twelfth grade (final year) students, pick a theme, such as 'Arabian Nights' or 'Showboat', which is kept secret from their children, and spend months planning entertainment and making sets for transforming the Teen Center, where the Banquet is held. On the night of the Banquet the students arrive dressed in ball gowns and tuxedos and the parents of the twelfth graders act as waiters and waitresses for the meal before the entertainment. The night after Banquet the evening is reprised for members of the community, which usually includes SIL members and Papua New Guinean employees (employees' children are often also students at the Primary and High Schools) who can buy tickets and enjoy the entertainment. Banquet is one of the big events of the year and many people, including local villagers, go to the Teen Center to stand outside and watch the students as they arrive and comment on who's come with whom and what they are wearing. Although local

villagers often come to watch the parade, few of them would buy tickets to attend the entertainment the night after. After the Banquet the year I was doing fieldwork, there were some comments posted on the Branch Bulletin Board regarding the 'American extravaganza'. One was entitled 'I'm Australian':

I am amazed at all the fuss! Is this an American cultural thing? Or is it an over-the-top Ukarumpa exaggeration of the "poor MK's (*missionary kids*) who miss out on their cultural heritage?" Is it not time to pull this extravaganza back into the realm of real life?

In reaction to this comment there were a number of emails including this one, from another Australian member:

When I completed year 12, many years ago, we finished our exams and we just left. No goodbyes, no parties, no banquet, nothing! What a contrast to U.I.S (*Ukarumpa International High School*)!

It has been a wonderful privilege to have our three children attend U.I.S. I think Banquet is an expression of love and concern for our year 11 and 12 students that they will never forget.

Friday night it was my delight to be a waiter on a table with six terrific young adults, one of whom was my daughter. It was great! I looked around and saw a lot of people making our students feel real special. Now if that's "American Ra-Ra", then I'm all for it. Thanks to everyone who made Friday night such a great time.

The original critic then replied to those who had reacted negatively to her comments:

It was not my intention to offend anyone. And I am not an over serious kill-joy. Australian humour is different to American, and on the whole we take life a lot less seriously. The idea was simply a "lighten up" comment, the whole deal is just hilarious to the rest of the world!

Here it is interesting to note that although the original critic argues that Australians take life less seriously than Americans, it was in fact another Australian who reacted negatively to the first critique.

Like many others I went down to watch the students arrive at Banquet and happened to be standing with a number of young single American men. As we were watching, some of them observed that in many ways Banquet was nothing like their high school prom night, which is what Banquet has been compared to. For instance, they did not have to parade in front of a large group of people all watching and commentating. This year in particular, there was an MC introducing each couple or group to the audience, mentioning various attributes or achievements such as 'He's a loyal friend', 'A strong Christian', 'a good athlete', which apparently was a new addition to the parade event. Most of the people I was standing with, who included a number of Americans, said they found this slightly embarrassing. So although some perceived it as being a particularly American event, there were a number of Americans who did not identify with this occasion. Rather, in many ways it could be seen as a distinctively Ukarumpa event, especially with the way the majority of the community became involved, even those who were not parents or teachers of the high school students, either directly or as critics of the event.

*British Barbeque and Asian Potluck*

SIL members group themselves in different ways and individuals can fall into many different categories. People are defined according to different characteristics such as what role they have, whether they are Language or Support workers, short-term or long-term members, married or unmarried, whether they have children or not, which



region in Papua New Guinea they work in, whether they live up on the hill in Ukarumpa or down near the employees' houses and what nationality they are. For example, while I was on fieldwork I was part of the 'singles' (unmarried members) group, a member of the Campbells Bible study group, part of the Madang regional team (through my parents' association with them), one of the British members and also one of the Asian members. In other ways, I fell outside some of the major groupings, having an undefined role as an anthropologist studying the missionary community, but also being the child of former SIL-PNG members. One quite visible way in which people could be seen to distinguish themselves from others and reinforce their national/ 'cultural' identity was through *bungs* (get-togethers) such as the British barbeque and the Asian potluck. Different reasons are given for holding these *bungs* such as simply to meet as a group who have their nationality in common, and in some instances have an opportunity to speak in their own language, or to celebrate special holidays or celebrations particular to their country, for instance Chinese New Year or Thanksgiving. As the daughter of a British father and a Singaporean mother, during my fieldwork I was invited to both the British barbeque and an Asian potluck.

The British barbeque took place shortly after I first arrived in Ukarumpa and coincided with the American picnic that happened on the same day. Usually the British barbeque was both organised and held at the 'Robertson' family's house. They are a British couple with four children, Mr 'Robertson' working in the Radio department and Mrs 'Robertson' working in literacy. Their garden was quite unusual in that rather than having the usual native Papua New Guinean grass they had planted grass seeds from Britain and were

careful not to let the native grass encroach on their smooth lawn. British barbeques in the past were often characterised by games of croquet being played on the lawn.

However, this year the 'Robertsons' were back in Britain on furlough and the British barbeque was instead held in the *haus wynd* (a small open hut with a grass roof) at Dorelo Children's Home, hosted by 'Joanne', a British teacher at the High School, who happened to be living in Dorelo at the time. Much discussion seemed to revolve around how different the British were to the Americans. Some people commented on how more patriotic they felt towards Britain now that they were in the minority. During the barbeque we had a group photograph and there was a bit of a discussion as to who should take the photograph as they wanted everyone to be included. It was decided that 'Jan', who was Finnish and married to 'Rachel' who was Scottish, and 'Jacob', who was American and married to 'Nancy' who was English should take the photo as they were 'outsiders' even though 'Jacob' was actually a member of Wycliffe UK rather than Wycliffe US.<sup>27</sup> I later spoke to two Americans who had attended the American picnic. They both commented that there were too many people and too much food. They both seemed to find it quite boring as well, perhaps because the purpose of their *bung* was to get all the Americans together to discuss changes to Wycliffe US, unlike the British one which was purely social. They commented that the Americans rarely got together as a group for a social event but only if there was some Wycliffe USA business to attend to.

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<sup>27</sup> Wycliffe Bible Translators is the supporting organisation that sends SIL missionaries into the 'field'.

I was also invited along to an Asian potluck along with 'April', a Thai woman I was sharing a house with at the time. This time my invitation was because of my Singaporean connections. Apparently this was the first time they had had an Asian potluck in a while, as the separate groups, such as the Koreans, had been having *bungs* on their own rather than as a large group. The Asian potluck was quite different to the British barbeque. For a start, it had more structure and organisation about it. For instance, each family was instructed on whether to bring along a main course or dessert typical of their country. At the *bung*, each person began greeting each other in whatever the other person's native language was. We then sang some songs in Tok Pisin before settling down to eat. There was a greater variety of food than at the British barbeque, which had mainly consisted of hamburgers and sausages, bread and salads. After eating we sang a song called 'Seek Ye First' in English, Mandarin, Thai, Japanese and Korean. The different language groups taught the others and then various individuals were picked on to see how well they had learnt the other language. As the only half English representative I was startled to find myself nominated to lead the English version of the song. 'April', as the sole Thai representative, also had to teach the Thai version on her own. After that the different groups put on performances, mainly singing, although the Koreans did some dancing as well. Everyone was then asked to introduce themselves and when I introduced myself I was asked to perform a recent song or dance from Britain.

During the *bung* there did appear to be a few differences between the different groups. For example, the Koreans in particular seemed to be much more outgoing and joking than the Japanese individuals.

During the *bung* I had a conversation with a Japanese lady who is working with a Finnish and a Swedish lady on a translation and literacy project. After having listened to various people talk about cultural differences and the problems they can cause I had asked her if she and her colleagues had had many difficulties due to cultural differences. She commented that their conflicts were more personality based than cultural and they had been working together for ten years relatively harmoniously.

There seemed to be an assumption that people with the same cultural values and similar backgrounds would automatically get on whereas those from different nationalities would have to negotiate cultural differences. However, at the British Barbeque one person made the comment that there were other British people who they would not necessarily have been friends with if they had met back in Britain but because they were both British and amongst people from other countries they had forged a bond that otherwise would not have existed. During another conversation with a Dutch member they said that another Dutch member was not typical of the group and the rest of them were a little bit embarrassed by being associated with this member at times.

Although people's nationality or the country they come from is perhaps not as important as it at first seems I have used these two events as an example of the way in which different groups would get together and the way in which people were categorised. It was common practice for SIL members to talk about smaller communities within the wider Ukarumpa community, such as the Korean community or the Dutch community. For instance, the Coordinator in one of the Aiyura Valley Information Sheets was 'Finnish

Community Members' (Summer Institute of Linguistics, PNG Branch, Aiyura Valley Information Sheet, 13 September, 2001).

### **Being a missionary: ideals of mission work**

Ideals of 'being a missionary' are as much influenced by individuals' national and cultural backgrounds as their training to be SIL members. These can range from differences of opinions on standards of living for missionaries, difficulties on raising financial support and how their work is viewed by their (financial and 'spiritual') supporters. More recently, there have been debates regarding whether the papers that translation teams produce should be done in English when there has been a large influx of members from non-English speaking countries. This section looks at some of the ideals of 'being a missionary' and whether these ideals are contested or work out in practice.

As shown previously in Chapter Four, 'Communicating the Gospel', during my fieldwork I often heard discussions regarding the correct standard of living for missionaries. Some argued that they should live as much like 'Papua New Guineans' (although this seemed to be a particular type of Papua New Guinean i.e. a rural villager) as possible, for instance, living in bush houses, eating typical 'Papua New Guinean' food, and having little material comfort. Some of the debates were about the size of the houses that different people owned or wanted to build. There had been legislation from the Directors Office regarding the size of the houses that could be built but that had changed over the years.

Steve Clark introduced the revised Building Code document currently being considered by EC. He said that one of the proposed changes is that the 1,400-square-foot (130 square metres) maximum limit placed on Ukarumpa

house size will include internal floor space, but will not include any out-building squarage.

(Confidential Minutes of the PNG Branch EC, February/March 1994: 42)

**August 1961** All homes must be owned by 2 people.

(Confidential Minutes of the PNG EC, 16th February-3rd March 1999: 7)

**April 1976** There was discussion that SIL homes ought to fit in more with the style of homes built by PNG nationals and not be too "luxurious." It was moved that the cost evaluation would be based on K5 per square foot. Depreciation would be based on the year 1990 as the final year, saying that "25 years is the maximum we could possibly expect to be in the country."

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**August 1976 BRANCH CONFERENCE MOTIONS - "Housing Price"**

**Motion:** MOVED that each homeowner set the price of their house... When members want help in evaluating houses, the Building Department could advise on this."

The motion was defeated.

**Housing Priority Motion:** "MOVED that if a member applies to purchase a house during the 6 week period, they have priority over the group..." The motion was carried. There was a quote from the same Branch Conference discussion about the Building Site Lease where someone said that "legally, all houses belong to SIL and not individual members." (The accuracy of this statement was not verified.)

**House Size Motion:** "Moved that all home owners have the same squarage allowance and that there be an upper limit of 1,400 square feet total squarage excluding staff housing for a family with four children or less, with an additional 100 square feet per additional child." The motion carried.

(Confidential Minutes of the PNG EC, 16th February-3rd March 1999: 8)

**1996**            **BRANCH CONFERENCE** – There was much discussion on how to stimulate more building on the Ukarumpa centre.

**March 1997** The 1400 square foot maximum house size limitation was increased for families with more than 4 children (This was apparently done without awareness of the 1976 Branch Conference motion.)

**1998**            The B & D committee recommended to the Administration to cease using the 1400 square foot limit on house size. Both the Administration and EC concurred. Action is needed on this because of the 1976 Conference Motion on house size. (See Section 10.3 for further discussion.)

3.2 Some basic issues for consideration under this topic:

- 1) Who legally owns the houses?
- 2) Houses of Expatriates vs. PNG Nationals (Luxury)
- 3) Profit motive in selling houses, or perceived "greed".  
Equity to buy a home back in the home country. (Are houses here an "investment"?)

(Confidential Minutes of the PNG EC, 16th February-3rd March 1999: 11)

Some of these debates regarding living standards were centred on the way in which different nationalities had different standards. Several members commented that they thought some of the American members' penchant for very large houses was too extravagant. Others argued that they also should not be too extravagant in the way that they decorated said houses.

Well, again, this was a bone of contention for years. I remember the discussion in the conferences 20/30 years ago about the standard of living. Again you see there was a difference in home standards, England, Australia, New Zealand versus America. And American churches, when someone was coming out the ladies would have a morning for the prospective missionary and load her up with linens and house gifts and you have no idea, new curtains and when Americans came back from furlough, they'd bring all this stuff and they'd completely redo their house, throw their curtains out, get

rid of all their linen, have new stuff, what have you. It absolutely appalled the rest of us! And I remember in conference someone saying, well what do you do if someone gives you a thousand dollars for your house. Now this was way back. And someone, I think it might have been an Australian, got up and said, well you could always provide two houses. I mean it never dawned on the Americans that they could have a lower standard and if they had all this excess money they could give to someone else who didn't, didn't have enough to buy a house. But they were living at a low standard compared to what they'd come from. So this was always a problem and down at, when we built the Alotau Centre, even amongst Australians who were there we had we strong tensions because we said we need to keep it as low key as we possibly can and make it as little different from the village. We had iron roofs and wood floors and sawn timber frame but just ordinary local walling. We didn't have hot water, all that sort of stuff. We had an outdoor toilet. But other people wouldn't accept those standards and when we started to have Americans coming into the province and using the centre they just couldn't use things as they were. They had to have indoor toilet, they had to have hot showers and my own son! He won't have cold shower if he can get a hot one so he used to go next door and use their hot water rather than stay with us and have a cold shower! But always when you've got people you're going to have this tension.

(Alice)

One British member told me that if she and her husband decided to buy a house in Ukarumpa they would buy a small house where their sons would share a room as they would not be able to afford a big house back in Britain and would not want their sons to get used to living in a large house. She argued that many of the houses in Ukarumpa were much nicer than houses that she was used to back in Britain. However, other American members argued that the houses in Ukarumpa were much smaller than the ones they were used to living in back in America. Therefore, people's attitudes regarding the correct size of the house was very much determined by influences



from their own upbringing, for instance, some people thought they were living a simpler life, appropriate to 'being a missionary' whereas others saw those same people and thought they were bringing too much of their 'Western' lifestyle to the mission field.

Attitudes towards housing also affected which houses were rented out. All members who owned houses and were away for longer than three months (either in the village or on furlough) were expected to rent out their houses. Translation teams who did not own their own house would often rent while in Ukarumpa and they usually had a choice between staying in someone else's house or renting one of the translator lodges that were specifically for translation teams. One of my informants, the Directors Assistant for Personnel, said that she had noticed that many of the Japanese language teams in particular, preferred to stay in translation lodges rather than rented homes. She thought it was because they preferred the simplicity of the translation lodges and also felt uncomfortable using other people's possessions.

Discussions regarding housing were not just about the type of houses in Ukarumpa, but also the type of village houses that people built. Some argued that they were still fitting in with the houses of local people, as more local people had houses with tin roofs, glass windows, planked rather than *limbum* (bark) floors etc. But others still thought that to be a 'real' missionary, you needed to live more like the local people in order to fit in, whereas others argued that if you lived just like the local people you would not get the work done that you had come to do.

Debates on standards of living did not just cover the type of housing that people should live in but were also about the types of

food people should eat and the clothing they should wear. The Store in Ukarumpa imported a large amount of American food and some thought it should be more like the supermarkets in the rest of Papua New Guinea, which mainly imported from Australia. However, the Store Manager pointed out to me that they also tried to get food that the Japanese and Korean members requested and that sometimes it was actually cheaper to import from America rather than Australia. Near the end of my fieldwork, there were negotiations taking place regarding the takeover of the store by a Papua New Guinean company, ELHACO. Part of the deal included ELHACO keeping on special grocery orders for people wanting dietary foods or Korean foods. Again it was felt by some that to 'be a missionary' one had to make a certain amount of self-sacrifice, for instance by not eating food one was necessarily used to.

One of the issues that highlighted the differences between groups of people from different nationalities was financial support. Each member has to raise their own support, usually from churches and individuals in their home country. Although each individual or family work out their quota for the month, there is also a standard quota set for the PNG branch, based on how much it is estimated to cost to live in Ukarumpa. Members have to have hundred percent of their quota before being able to leave for the 'field'. However, gaining financial support can be very difficult for some members, particularly those who come from countries where missionaries are not highly regarded. I would often hear people comment that the American members were always well supported whereas others such as the British or some of the Asian members would have more

difficulties in raising support. Many Americans would go on holiday to Australia, and some disapproved of this.

The perspectives of missionaries from supporters also differed according to people's backgrounds. Not only did it create problems in terms of financial support but also in expectations of the type of work they would do. For instance, 'Mary' said that there have been changing views of missionaries in Korea (where there is a large contingent of missionaries being sent out) where previously only language workers, such as translators, were seen to be 'real' missionaries, and Korean churches were reluctant to fund people who came to work in support departments such as the computer department. However, these views are gradually starting to change.

Much of the conversation in Ukarumpa is conducted in English and most of the missionaries are expected to have some grasp of English, even those who come from non-English speaking countries. This also extends to the papers that translation teams have to produce, such as a phonology paper or a grammar paper. Often those translators to whom English is not their first language, need help from consultants in order to complete their papers. However, due to the growing number of Korean members, some suggested that at some time in the future they may possibly split off and form a Korean branch where Korean is the main language used rather than English.

### **Citizens of heaven**

Salient among traditional conceptualizations of home was the stable physical centre of one's universe – a safe and still place to leave and return to (whether house, village, region or nation), and a principal focus of one's concern and control. Even if the potential mobility of home was attested to –

the tent of the nomad – still the focus was on the necessary controlling of space.

(Rapport and Dawson 1998: 6)

In essence, a far more mobile conception of home should come to the fore, as something 'plurilocal' [Rouse 1991], something to be taken along whenever one decamps.

(Rapport and Dawson 1998: 7)

The juxtaposition of locality and belonging immediately raises the question of whether one can belong to a group which does not also have a territorial reference point. In fact, as this volume makes clear, it is a question which suggests that anthropologists can no longer assume that the people they study see themselves as attached to a particular, bounded locality.

(Parkin 1998:ix)

SIL members are constantly moving between 'homes' – between their homes in Ukarumpa and the village and their homes in Papua New Guinea and their 'home' country. Ukarumpa itself can be seen as a place of movement and as a focal point for the missionary community. For example, the airstrip is always a busy place, especially during June when the 12<sup>th</sup> grade high school students graduate and families often leave to take their children back to their 'home' country. It is a common occurrence to see people listening for the first plane to leave each morning or mentioning that someone else is on their way somewhere. Notions of 'home' and 'belonging' are shown to be particularly problematic for the children of SIL members, many who have rarely been to the country that their parents call 'home'. Here I look at the different ways in which SIL members describe the notions of 'home' and 'belonging'.

SIL members frequently move between different physical locations that they might all call 'home'. They all leave what they usually call their 'home' country to come to Papua New Guinea,

some as long-term members and some for just a few months or one or two years. Particularly for those members who spend up to twenty-five years in Papua New Guinea, many talk about Papua New Guinea as becoming more like 'home' than their 'home' country and on returning to their 'home' country they often feel it has changed from what they remembered and become unfamiliar. Even small things, like the amount of choice in supermarkets or driving in another country, are something they have to get used to again. Nevertheless, no matter how long they spend in Papua New Guinea and the friendships and roots they put down there, there is still an awareness that Papua New Guinea is a temporary 'home' and that they will eventually return to their 'home' country when their work is finished in Papua New Guinea. For instance, one lady who has worked in Papua New Guinea since 1963, had her 70<sup>th</sup> birthday while I was on fieldwork but was going back to Australia to retire, despite still having a son, daughter-in-law and grandchildren in Papua New Guinea. People in Ukarumpa also make a distinction between going away on furlough/leave and leaving permanently. The *Tok Pisin* term '*go pinis*' meaning literally, 'go finish', is used to refer to people returning to their 'home' country without the intention of coming back to Papua New Guinea. In the phrase 'go finish' there is the sense that they have come to the end of their journey as missionaries.

Some people leave Papua New Guinea to continue working for SIL/Wycliffe Bible Translators in their 'home' country, often training other potential missionaries. Others return to a job they left or start another, secular job. Some go on to work with SIL in another branch in another country. Others only leave Papua New Guinea when they

have reached retirement age and go back to their 'home' country to retire. However, in whatever they do after leaving Papua New Guinea there is the notion that they have come to the end of their role as missionaries in Papua New Guinea. In contrast, there is not the same idea of a permanent leave-taking or departure when leaving their 'home' country to come to Papua New Guinea. Rather, when 'going finish' they are returning to the place they 'belong' or 'are from'. Therefore there is a notion that Papua New Guinea is not 'home' in the sense that they 'belong' or 'come from'. This is perhaps also due to the fact that they need to get visas and work permits in order to be able to stay in Papua New Guinea or otherwise apply for citizenship, which is extremely rare. One of my informants was the daughter of SIL missionaries in Papua New Guinea who had gone back to the US for college and had returned to help her parents with their translation program but she needed to get her own visa and work permit to do so.

It could be argued that SIL members are now between 'homes' as their 'home' country, the place where they supposedly 'belong' and are returning to, has now become unfamiliar and alien. Even when on furlough/leave, members often are travelling around on deputation meetings to raise more financial and spiritual support and also often live in different places during their furlough so do not necessarily return to a stable location.

Many SIL members also move between different locations and 'homes' within Papua New Guinea. This is particularly true for language workers. For example, translation teams may go to their village allocation for a few months, then return to Ukarumpa for another few months and then go back to the village again. Many own

houses in Ukarumpa as well as having their 'village house' in the village and will keep different possessions in the different houses – for instance, members<sup>28</sup> will talk about owning 'village clothes' which they will wear only in the village and 'Ukarumpa clothes' which they wear only in Ukarumpa. Children of language workers will have 'village friends' and 'Ukarumpa friends'. They will also speak different languages depending on where they are. Some translation teams do not own their own houses in Ukarumpa and on returning to Ukarumpa live in a new house or translation lodge<sup>29</sup> each time, perhaps making their village house a more stable location. Some members also move between different houses within Ukarumpa. Short-term members, particularly unmarried members, will frequently live in many different houses during their time in Ukarumpa. For instance, during my fieldwork in Papua New Guinea I moved to a new house every few months. In one newsletter from a short-term support member working in the finance office, a single man, he describes having three different housemates in six months. The houses rented out are usually houses belonging to other members, often translation teams, who are required to rent out their houses to other members if they are away from Ukarumpa for longer than a month. They are required to leave certain items for the use of those renting, such as sheets, towels, kitchenware, etc. but also to a greater or lesser extent frequently leave other more personal possessions such as books, hi-fis, videos etc. in the house for the use of the renters. Renters can also sometimes 'inherit' the owners' yard man/*haus meri*, even though they might want to hire someone else or

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<sup>28</sup> See Chapters Two and Three, 'Ukarumpa' and 'History of the Land Dispute and Fence' for more detail on yard men and *haus meris*.

<sup>29</sup> See Chapter Two, 'Ukarumpa' for more information on translation lodges.

no one at all. In this way, they are also taking on relationships that the owners have formed. Although some renters appreciate the use of the possessions the owners leave behind, others feel as if they are intruding on someone else's home, particularly as each house is decorated according to the owners' taste, which may not be the same as the person/people renting. Some members prefer to rent translation lodges or group houses, which are more basic. The disruptiveness of packing and moving every few months also means that people are not settled for long in one location and are in a constant state of movement. Of course, this is not true for every member – some long-term support members may own houses in Ukarumpa and only leave Ukarumpa for holidays or visits to translation teams while in Papua New Guinea.

For some members, Ukarumpa is less of a 'home' and more a point of contact with other SIL members. This applies to members who work in regional offices and members who are on staff at the Pacific Orientation Course. Although they come into contact with other SIL members on a regular basis, they are more part of the town community where they live than the Ukarumpa community. They may also have more contact with missionaries from other mission organisations. For instance, Madang town is the base for Pioneer Bible Translators (PBT) who have close links with SIL and SIL members who live in or around Madang may develop more friendships with missionaries from PBT than SIL. They may also get to know more expatriates other than those working in missionary work. Translation teams who spend the majority of their time in their village allocations may also feel more at 'home' in the village than in Ukarumpa. Some also comment that they relate more to people in



the village than the missionary community in Ukarumpa and therefore feel more relaxed and 'at home' in the village. For others, being immersed in village culture is more of a strain and returning to Ukarumpa is like returning to their 'own culture' where they can be refreshed before their next trip to the village.

Notions of 'home' and 'belonging' are particularly problematic for the children of missionaries. Some are born in Papua New Guinea, some arrive at a young age and others as teenagers. A number of children spend the majority of their childhoods in Papua New Guinea whereas others are only there for a short period of time. Although many have spent longer in Papua New Guinea than their 'home' countries they are also made aware that Papua New Guinea is not their 'real' home. They often see other children and families 'going finish' and discussions about their future are usually concerned with returning to their 'home' country, often for further education rather than staying in Papua New Guinea. This is perhaps also due to the fact that at the age of eighteen, children who wish to stay in Papua New Guinea need to get their own work permit and visa rather than being able to stay under their parents' work permit and visas. However, the notion of one 'home' country is not as clear-cut for some children as there are a number of married couples who have often met either in SIL training or in Papua New Guinea and call different countries 'home'. Language is also an issue in where they feel most comfortable and 'at home'. Most children speak English and *Tok Pisin*,<sup>30</sup> others may also speak the language of their parents and others the language their parents are translating the Bible into, especially those children who have spent their childhood

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<sup>30</sup> They are either taught *Tok Pisin* during the POC course or pick it up at school and from interactions with Papua New Guineans.

living in the village allocation. Some children from non-English speaking countries on first arrival may have difficulties interacting with other children at their school aside from those who speak the same language as them. Notions of 'home' are further complicated when children reach high school age (12 to 13 years old) where they are often sent to live in Children's Homes<sup>31</sup> while their parents are away from Ukarumpa for any length of time. There are also a number of non-SIL members' children, usually children of other missions but also children of expatriates or middle-class Papua New Guineans who also live in the Children's Homes. Some of these children only see their parents during the school holidays. Therefore, although some SIL members comment that 'home' is wherever their family is, children not only have to negotiate between 'home' as being located in different places but also with different people. For instance, the married couples in charge of the Children Homes are often referred to as 'hostel parents' standing in for their own parents. For some children the transition from living with their parents to living in a Children's Home and not being able to stay in the village for long periods of time is a difficult one. In the Bible study group I attended one of the couples mentioned that their daughter was finding it difficult to be in the Children's Home and at Ukarumpa all the time and was missing the village and her village friends. Children's sense of 'home' and 'belonging' is also affected by the friendships and the school education they get. The Primary and High Schools are taught in English and follow a mixture of an American and Australian syllabus. This means that it can be difficult for children of European and Asian parents to fit back into their 'home'

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<sup>31</sup> See Chapter Two, 'Ukarumpa' for further details on Children Homes

education system. For instance, a large number of Korean children choose to do further education/college in America rather than in Korea, so rather than returning to their 'home' country, prefer to go to another country.

During my fieldwork, shortly before the annual High School graduation, the English Sunday morning service sermon was entitled 'Where are we from'. The Bible readings were from Hebrews 11:8-16 and 2 Corinthians 5:1-10 which I have quoted in their entirety here.

<sup>7</sup>By faith Noah, when warned about things not yet seen, in holy fear built an ark to save his family. By his faith he condemned the world and because heir of righteousness that comes by faith.

<sup>8</sup>By faith Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going. <sup>9</sup>By faith he made his home in the promised land like a stranger in a foreign country; he lived in tents, as did Isaac and Jacob, who were heirs with him of the same promise. <sup>10</sup>For he was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God.

<sup>11</sup>By faith Abraham, even though he was past age—and Sarah herself was barren—was enabled to become a father because he considered him faithful who had made the promise. <sup>12</sup>And so from this one man, and he as good as dead, came descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as countless as the sand on the seashore.

<sup>13</sup>All these people were still living by faith when they died. They did not receive the things promised; they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance. And they admitted that they were aliens and strangers on earth.

<sup>14</sup>People who say such things show that they are looking for a country of their own. <sup>15</sup>If they had been thinking of the country they had left, they would have had opportunity to return. <sup>16</sup>Instead, they were longing for a better country—a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared a city for them.

(Hebrews 11:8-16, New International Version)

Now we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands. <sup>2</sup>Meanwhile we groan, longing to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling, <sup>3</sup>because when we are clothed we will not be found naked. <sup>4</sup>For while we are in this tent, we groan and are burdened, because we do not wish to be unclothed but to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life. <sup>5</sup>Now it is God who has made us for this very purpose and has given us the Spirit as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come.

<sup>6</sup>Therefore we are always confident and know that as long as we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord. <sup>7</sup>We live by faith, not by sight. <sup>8</sup>We are confident, I say, and would prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord. <sup>9</sup>So we make it our goal to please him, whether we are at home in the body or away from it. <sup>10</sup>For we must all appear before the judgement seat of Christ, that each of us may receive what is due to him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.

(2Corinthians 5:1-10, New International Version)

The speaker started by saying that the sermon was mainly aimed at the high school students who would shortly be graduating and returning to their 'home' countries although it was also relevant to the adults in the congregation. The speaker began with the questions 'Where are you from?' and 'Where is your home?' which he said were both difficult questions for MKs (Missionary Kids) to answer. He then told the story of an MK who wrote a song with the line 'My hope is in Christ alone and this world is not my home'. The point he was making was that, as Christians, they are citizens of heaven, which is where they are headed and where they really belong. He argued that in 2 Corinthians 5:1 the writer compares earthly dwellings to tents, which are neither houses nor cities and are therefore temporary. He argued that in practical terms this means that Christians should set their hearts and minds on things above,

not on earthly things. They need to guard against earthly desires, which can take different forms. However, he then said that not all things of this world are evil in themselves, but Christians need to use them in such a way as to count for eternity. They need to live as where they truly belong – citizens of heaven. As this sermon shows, SIL members believe that their identities as Christians should overarch any national or cultural identities. The speaker said that the students should not be worried about fitting in when they start college or university as they are not meant to fit in with the 'world' anyway. These verses also mention 'living by faith' and SIL members often talk about the need to live by faith and 'trusting in God' for their future. This sermon emphasizes SIL members' common identity as 'citizens of heaven' and again the idea that Christian values are something above and beyond people's cultural values.

Ukarumpa can therefore be seen as a locus of movement as people are always moving to and away from Ukarumpa and within Ukarumpa itself people are often moving to different houses. There is no idea of 'settling' as people are always planning for furlough, coming back to Papua New Guinea, going to the village or coming back to Ukarumpa or other trips around Papua New Guinea. When asked, some members say that 'home' is where their family but this depends on what constitutes 'family' and how notions of 'family' change over their lifespan. It could be argued that if 'home' is where their family are then they are not at 'home' as many of them leave family members behind when they come to Papua New Guinea and the children of SIL members (and members of other missions) are often separated from their parents when they go to live in Children's Homes. However, whatever their national, cultural or personal

differences, what SIL members seem to have in common is the idea that as well as 'belonging' to a physical place or location on earth their real 'home' and the place where they really 'belong' is a spiritual place, in heaven. Rapport and Dawson argue that it is only through being displaced that one feels an ultimate sense of belonging: 'There is also the paradox that it is perhaps only by way of transience and displacement that one achieves an ultimate sense of belonging. To be at home 'in one's own place' as Kateb [1991:135] puts it, it is necessary to become alienated and estranged to some degree, mentally or spiritually' (Rapport and Dawson 1998:9). It is perhaps through this feeling of displacement that SIL members feel a closer sense of belonging as 'citizens of heaven'.



### *Conclusion*

In this study I have looked at what it means to be a 'missionary' and how SIL members' expectations and ideals are affected by the mundane realities of life as 'missionaries' in Papua New Guinea. The focus has been on SIL members themselves and their identities as missionaries rather than the effect of their missionising on others. I have attempted to challenge some of the stereotypes of missionaries and show that there are different views of what it is to 'be a missionary' even within the missionary community itself. Life as a 'missionary' in Ukarumpa is shown to be involved in negotiating differences between their ideals of 'mission' work and the realities of living and working in Ukarumpa.

The concept of 'mission' and what constitutes a 'missionary' is itself a debatable topic and this is seen in discussions regarding the nature of SIL both by SIL members and outsiders. In many ways, SIL does not fit into the conventional image of a Christian 'mission'. For instance, unlike many traditional missions, SIL is not involved in church planting and overt evangelism. In the official website for SIL International, it promotes the view that it is a linguistic organisation involved in literacy and translation, which also includes Bible translation, although it is not given as the main goal. In these descriptions of SIL, it does not seem altogether different from other secular development agencies. Nevertheless, SIL does proclaim itself as a Christian organisation and as such, has different motives than the average NGO. This can especially be seen in SIL's sister organisation, Wycliffe Bible Translators. Unlike SIL International, Wycliffe Bible Translators do state their main goal as promoting Bible translation. The dual nature of what is essentially the same



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organisation reflects the different audiences that they are intended for. SIL International is representing itself to a wider, secular audience and therefore highlights its scientific and educational nature. Wycliffe Bible Translators is appealing to people who are either interested in joining the organisation or are interested in providing financial support and as this would mainly be a Christian audience, the emphasis is on translating the Bible. In both cases SIL and Wycliffe are 'marketing' themselves in order to gain support of various kinds. However, this separation between the home entity of Wycliffe Bible Translators and the field entity of SIL International has caused internal divisions within SIL regarding the nature of the organisation such as what its purpose should be and how it should be represented to outsiders. In this study I have looked at some of the reasons for this dual nature and what it means for SIL to call itself a 'mission' rather than a scientific organisation.

Although SIL, the field entity of Wycliffe Bible Translators, is not technically a 'mission', the members of SIL for the most part do perceive themselves as 'missionaries' and as 'missionaries' hold certain ideals and perceptions of what is correct and responsible behaviour according to that image. These ideals and perceptions of what a 'missionary' should be and how they should act are also held, and perhaps more so, by the people who give both financial and 'spiritual' (such as prayer) support to SIL members and therefore affect the way in which SIL members conduct themselves on the 'mission field' and how they represent themselves to their supporters. Within SIL there are a large number of people involved in what is known as 'support' work, which includes teachers, doctors, pilots, accountants and so on. These roles do not fit into the

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traditional image of 'missionaries' particularly as many of these jobs are not considerably different to working in their 'home' countries. As the label 'support worker' would indicate, their role is seen as supporting Bible translation and therefore, I would argue, to a certain degree is perceived as having lesser importance. This can be seen in the way that there seems to be a need to justify support workers as being as necessary to the work of Bible translation in the ultimate goal of bringing the gospel to Papua New Guineans, whereas the value of the work Bible translators do is unquestionable. This discourse about the equal importance of support work is related to the belief that 'missionaries' are not a special breed of Christian but that all Christians should be 'missionaries' wherever they are as all Christians should be 'witnesses' of Christ at all times. Although SIL is not involved in overt evangelism and church planting, this idea of 'witnessing' is central to the ways in which SIL members act towards Papua New Guineans and also with each other.

One of the frequently discussed topics of conversation among SIL members is the perimeter fence surrounding Ukarumpa. The fence can be seen to be not only a physical boundary but also a symbolic boundary for many who live in Ukarumpa, and in some respects is a greater symbolic boundary than it is an actual physical one. The fence is viewed as a boundary in several different ways. Firstly, it clearly demarcates the land that SIL rents from the government and on which Ukarumpa is built. Some SIL members would argue that if SIL had marked a clear boundary around Ukarumpa from the very beginning then some of the land dispute issues would not have occurred. Although the fence was a response to increasing problems with security, the continuing thefts and break-ins through the fence

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means that some see the fence as being ineffectual in dealing with criminal activity. Rather than giving a sense of security, for some people it in fact highlights the problems and dangers of living in Papua New Guinea and in Ukarumpa in particular, problems that they were able to ignore or disregard when the fence did not exist. The fence therefore, has become a symbol of the hazards and risks of living in Papua New Guinea and of the marked increase in crime in the past few years.

Some see the fence as a barrier to forming good relationships with local people and also as isolating SIL from the rest of the Aiyura Valley community. This view of a place isolated from the rest of the local community is contrary to the traditional image of the 'missionary' living and working amongst the 'people'. Many of the ideals of how 'missionaries' and particularly SIL members should live and behave towards local people are seen in discussions regarding the fence. These discussions also highlight various perceptions of Papua New Guineans. Like their ideals of 'missionaries', SIL members also have ideals and stereotypes about Papua New Guinean culture and lifestyle. These perceptions of Papua New Guineans and how they live are also linked to differing views regarding Ukarumpa, as described in *Communicating the Gospel*. Ukarumpa itself does not fit into the image of the traditional, and for some, proper missionary lifestyle, consequently there are ongoing debates regarding the size and relative wealth of Ukarumpa in comparison to the nearby Papua New Guinean villages. Some see the wealth of Ukarumpa and its residents as being a major factor in the security problems that have required the building of the fence and also as a barrier to constructing relationships on an equal footing

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with Papua New Guineans. The fence again highlights the boundary between the Westernised setting of Ukarumpa and those who live outside in more traditional, and poorer, Papua New Guinean villages. However, the fence is not simply a boundary between *waitskins* and Papua New Guineans as some might think, as there are a number of Papua New Guineans employed by SIL who actually live and work in Ukarumpa and who have also been subject to similar incidents of criminal activity by *raskals*. Many of these employees are from nearby language groups and so have close associations with local Aiyura Valley people. Rather than marking the differences between *waitskins* and Papua New Guineans, the fence makes a distinction between those who live within the confines of the fence and those who live outside.

The fence was built as a protection in order to keep unwanted elements of the local population out, however, rather than a protection, some view the fence as a boundary keeping them in and as a constraint on their freedom and independence. When people do participate in activities outside the fence they comment on how good it is to 'get out of the fence' and to 'escape Ukarumpa'. Although many of these limitations existed before the fence was built, such as women being unable to walk around on their own at night, the fence has become a focus for these restrictions. As 'missionaries' many expected to give up some aspects of the life they were used to before they became 'missionaries'. However, the types of things they have had to 'sacrifice' have not always been what they expected. For instance, many expected to give up the comforts of life in their 'home' countries for the hardships of life on the 'mission field' only to find that, in some cases, living standards in Ukarumpa, the

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'mission field', were better than living standards in their own countries. Several informants expected to be interacting with Papua New Guineans on a regular basis and instead find that they are mainly interacting with other missionaries which is not what they had expected or wanted. SIL members have come to 'serve' Papua New Guineans in various ways but 'support' workers in particular have found that their expectations of living and working with Papua New Guineans have not been fulfilled and many blame this lack of interaction on the existence of the fence and in order to form the relationships they hoped for, they need to 'escape' the confines of the fence.

For many SIL members their difficulties in adjusting to life in Papua New Guinea are not only connected to trying to understand Papua New Guinea culture and customs but also in relating to their fellow missionaries and their differing expectations of life as a missionary. Many of the difficulties of living in a small community are articulated through discussions about the fence. For instance, the feeling of confinement, of not being able to 'escape' and, of being isolated from the outside world are all seen in conversations about the fence. However, many of these emotions about Ukarumpa and living within the fence were felt by people before the fence was built but now the fence is a useful symbol in which to express frustrations and problems with living in Ukarumpa.

Translation is the heart of SIL's work in Papua New Guinea, in particular translation of the Bible into vernacular languages. As shown in earlier chapters, Ukarumpa itself is oriented around providing support and services for translation teams. Translation attempts to bridge the boundaries between cultures, between

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Christians and non-Christians and between missionaries and the people they are working with. Not only are SIL members translating the Bible but local people are then also translating it into their own meanings and perspectives, which may not always have the same interpretation as the SIL translators. Although on the surface translation may seem to be a straightforward task, *Translation* looked at some of the difficulties of translation, particularly the tension between understanding the beliefs and world-views of the people they are translating for in order to do a good translation, but introducing new concepts and beliefs through the translation of the Bible. The notion of preserving language and culture also seems to conflict with the aim of introducing new beliefs. Yet because SIL members believe that Christianity is transcendent over all cultures they consider that people are able to convert to Christianity and retain the uniqueness of their own culture. The task of translation may also have a transformative effect on the translators themselves, as they try to understand different ways of looking at the world and their Christian faith than their own.

Connected to translation is teaching people how to read their newly translated Bibles. In many ways this can be seen as being as important as translation, as without the ability to read the Bible, the purpose of translation is a somewhat futile one. However, despite the importance of literacy work, like other roles within Ukarumpa, it is seen as some as being secondary to the main task of Bible translation. Even so, literacy can also be seen as a practical means to stay on good terms with the Papua New Guinean government as SIL members help with literacy workshops and vernacular schools around the country. Literacy is also an important part of SIL's

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identity as a scientific, linguistic organisation, particularly as they produce materials other than just the Bible. As shown in the *Literacy* chapter, SIL members have a particular view of literacy as 'educating' people and giving people the freedom to read for themselves and learn about Christianity through reading the Bible. However, Papua New Guineans may not always see the Bible and literacy in the same terms as SIL members. As Kulick and Stroud show for the Gapun villagers, the crux of their perception of literacy is on their understanding of communication, which they see as something that the listener or recipient must make sense of (1990: 300). Therefore, they see reading as looking for the 'hidden' meanings in the words in order to obtain white skin and the Cargo (Ibid: 300-301). As this shows, despite SIL's aims to translate the Bible and teach literacy in order that Papua New Guineans have an understanding of the Bible, the results may not be the same as the missionaries' goals.

SIL members not only deal with translating between themselves and Papua New Guineans but also within their own community. As the final chapter shows, people from diverse backgrounds and personalities have differing ideas on what it means to be a missionary and also what it means to be a good Christian. This chapter also looks at notions of 'home' and belonging. It can be seen that 'home' for many of the missionaries is not in a fixed place but that they are constantly moving between different 'homes'. Although there is an emphasis in the community on celebrating diversity there is also weight put on the notion of unity amongst Christians. Despite the different national and cultural backgrounds of SIL member they argue that all Christians are citizens of heaven and not part of this

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world. In this sense, they do not need to worry about pleasing the expectations of people but instead worry about how they can please God.

Many studies have looked at the effects of missionaries on indigenous people and how indigenous people and other colonial agents perceived them. This study has instead focused on SIL members themselves and their perspectives on 'being a missionary'. Although I did interview some Papua New Guinean employees of SIL, the study did not look in any great depth at the ways in which SIL are perceived by outsiders, including other expatriates and Papua New Guineans. For instance, I do not have a great deal of data on how the literacy workshops affected local people but more on how SIL members perceived the purpose of literacy. The focus of this study was on how 'being a missionary' affected SIL members rather than the impact of their missionizing on others. However, SIL's aim is to 'nationalise' their work, with Papua New Guineans taking on the task of Bible translation and expatriate missionaries acting only as consultants. This means that SIL members' task would be to instruct and consult Papua New Guinean translators in translation and linguistic techniques and theories rather than acting as translators themselves. This is a role that some SIL members are happy to envisage whereas others do not see a place for themselves as consultants. The PNG Bible Translation Association is already carrying out this vision to some extent. The push for 'nationalisation' is also starting to take place within Ukarumpa as some departments are now being run solely by Papua New Guinean employees of SIL. Velho comments, 'Missionary activity did not depend anymore on the presence of foreign-based churches' (n.d. *Missionaries*: 5). A



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productive topic of future research would be looking more closely at the work of Papua New Guinean Bible translators and missionaries associated with SIL and what it means for them to be missionaries and translators amongst their own people.

The thesis has looked at various different aspects of the missionary community such as the debates around the land dispute and fence, witnessing to others and translation and literacy. I would have liked to have focused on some of these themes in greater depth than was possible within the scope of this study due to time and word limit constraints. For example, the rise of *raskolism* in Papua New Guinea is a significant topic in anthropological literature about Melanesia but I have only covered it in relation to SIL members' discussions regarding *raskols*. I would have also liked to look in more detail at the notion of translation, particularly the formal aspects of translation that SIL members undertake as they compare to current theories in linguistics and translation studies. This was a topic that I came to later in the writing of the thesis but I feel could be developed much further than has been feasible here. For instance, since my focus was on missionaries in the 'field' I have not looked in any detail at the linguistic and translation training that they require before arriving in Papua New Guinea. It would also be interesting to compare the missionaries' notions of 'translation' with theories of 'translation' within anthropology and translation studies, which I have only briefly covered in this chapter.

This study is unique in that it is looking at a contemporary missionary organisation in the ethnographic present rather than doing an historical study of the mission. Although historical studies of other missions and missionaries highlight particular themes

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specific to missionaries, in other regards it is difficult to compare as the nature of missionary work has changed over time and in different contexts. For instance, SIL members are working in a post-colonial situation where they are very much seen as guests of the country rather than having a right to be there. They have to prove that they are contributing something useful to the country through the report required every three years by the Papua New Guinean government in order to renew their work visas. Papua New Guinea is also a very Christianised country and therefore they do not have the same issues of opposition by local people and the Papua New Guinea government that they have had in other countries. In fact, there have been several different language groups that have invited SIL teams to do a Bible translation in their community and some who have been asking for an SIL team for a number of years.

SIL is also distinctive in comparison to other contemporary missionary organisations. Unlike other missionary organisations, SIL members highlight the linguistic and scientific aspects of the organisation and conversion is through Bible translation rather than overt 'church building'. For instance, SIL members do not seek to establish churches of specific denominations, but rather to bring the Word of God to people who do not have the Bible in their own language. It is also one of the largest mission stations in the world and has a diversity of denominations and nationalities within it. Although SIL members are all Protestants, they represent many different denominations within Protestantism. For example, there are several missionary organisations that have stemmed from a particular church denomination, for instance seeking to establish Baptist churches, Methodist churches etc. Even the New Tribes

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mission, that in some ways is quite similar to SIL, seek to establish New Tribes churches. The diversity of nationalities represented is also unique, and means that the various groups bring different notions of what it means to 'be a missionary'. For instance, there is a strong sense of individual national identities, which are highlighted in contrast to other nationalities. Other missions and even other SIL branches may not have the number of nationalities represented within one community that SIL-PNG have and therefore do not have to contend with the difficulties of negotiating between many different cultural groups. There is a strong sense of being part of an international community but with a common goal, to pass on their Christian faith through Bible translation.

The size of the mission station and its location means that it is also very self-sufficient, unlike other missions which may rely more on local towns. Ukarumpa itself is set up to provide support for Bible translators and as a result there are many members who are not doing 'missionary' work in the traditional view of missionaries. For instance, there are members whose roles do not differ that much from their secular jobs in their 'home' countries. Nevertheless, SIL is still distinct from other NGOs as it clearly states that it is a Christian organisation and despite some roles being unlike traditional images of mission work, most members would still consider themselves to be missionaries rather than development workers.

Although they share some characteristics with other expatriates SIL members are different for example, than many of the business people who come to work in Papua New Guinea for various lengths of time. For instance, like many other expatriates they come to Papua New Guinea to carry out a particular job and intend to eventually

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return to their home countries. However, many SIL members have the ideal of living like Papua New Guineans and understanding their culture in order to be more effective missionaries. In this way they could perhaps be compared to anthropologists although their purpose in language learning and culture immersion is for different ends.

For to travel implies movement between fixed positions, a site of departure, a point of arrival, the knowledge of an itinerary. It also intimates an eventual return, a potential homecoming. Migrancy, on the contrary, involves a movement in which neither the points of departure nor those of arrival are immutable or certain. It calls for a dwelling in language, in histories, in identities that are constantly subject to mutation. Always in transit, the promise of a homecoming – completing the story, domesticating the detour – becomes an impossibility.

(Chambers, I. 1994: 5)

I would argue that although there are similar discourses regarding 'home' and 'belonging' amongst SIL missionaries and other groups such as migrants and travellers SIL members are somewhere in-between both groups. Like travellers, they have a set point of departure and an eventual 'homecoming'. However, the length of time that many SIL members spend in Papua New Guinea and the ideal of creating close relationships with Papua New Guineans mean that in time many SIL members come to view Papua New Guinea as 'home' whilst being aware that they will eventually return to the place they departed from. Many members comment that their 'homes' are now unfamiliar places with people and customs that they do not recognize. Like migrants, the 'home' they departed from is not necessarily the 'home' they may eventually return to. This leads to a sense of being in limbo, of not belonging to any one particular place but having roots in different 'homes'. This is

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especially true for the children of missionaries, who may have similar experiences to the children of migrants and other expatriates who live for a length of time in another country.

Whilst writing I often keep thinking of home. It is usually assumed that a sense of place of belonging gives a person stability. But what makes a place home? Is it wherever your family is, where you have been brought up? The children of many migrants are not sure where they belong. Where is home? Is it where your parents are buried? Is home the place from where you have been displaced, or where you are now? Is home where your mother lives? And, then, we speak of 'home from home'. I am moved when I am asked the phenomenological question 'Are you at home in the world?' In certain places and at certain times, I am. I feel secure and am friendly to others. But at other times I feel that I don't know where I am.

(Sarup 1994: 94)

The questions about home that Madun Sarup asks are very similar to the questions that the children of missionaries also ask. The questions 'where is home?' and 'where are you from?' prove to be complex and difficult questions to answer.

Despite the diversity of nationalities and places that they may call 'home' there is one 'home' that they all feel that they belong to, which is 'home' in the community of Christ. As this shows, SIL members may not necessarily feel an attachment to a particular locality but rather that they are members of a world-wide community.

'Home', we suggest as a working definition, 'is where one best knows oneself' - where 'best' means 'most', even if not always 'happiest'. Here, in sum, is an ambiguous and fluid but yet ubiquitous notion, apposite for a charting of the ambiguities and fluidities, the migrancies and paradoxes, of identity in the world today.

(Rapport and Dawson 1998:7)

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It is through being missionaries in Papua New Guinea that SIL members may construct their identities as 'citizens of heaven' rather than citizens of a particular locality in a way that they may not have if they had not become part of the Ukarumpa community.

To conclude, the aim of this thesis has been to show the ambivalences and ambiguities involved in 'being a missionary' on SIL members' journeys towards becoming 'citizens of heaven'. Missionary activity has been viewed by some as being homogeneous and unified however this study shows that in actuality, the missionary community is full of variety and internal debates. Much has been written about the transformative effect of missionization on indigenous peoples, however this thesis shows that missionaries themselves also have to transform their beliefs and views in order to be successful missionaries. The life of a missionary is not a straightforward one, but filled with uncertainties as they reconcile their ideals of 'being a missionary' with the realities of living and working as a missionary in Papua New Guinea.



Saying goodbye at SIL airstrip

## *Appendix A*

### FRIENDS AND INFORMANTS

I interviewed these people in particular because they had different perspectives on some of the issues and themes I was interested in looking at. I was interested in getting their perspectives for various reasons. These ‘informants’ do not necessarily reflect the majority of people and opinions in Ukarumpa but they are the people that I had the most contact with and were also willing to sit down and be interviewed. Although these ‘informants’ only represent a small number of outlooks amongst the whole community of Ukarumpa I was also able to get a much broader perspective of people’s views on various issues aside from the specific people I interviewed, through general conversation, the members’ forum email groups and minutes from past Conferences.

*‘Anna’*<sup>32</sup>

‘Anna’ is a Papua New Guinean lady from the Sepik Province who came to work for SIL on January 4, 1980 at the age of seventeen. ‘Anna’ is someone who had known me as a child and whose eldest daughter, ‘Abigail’, had been in the same class at school as my younger sister. She was also a close friend of ‘Karen’, who I shared a house with on and off during my fieldwork and was my next-door neighbour during my first few months of fieldwork. She had also given me support and advice when I was in a difficult situation with a local *yardman*.<sup>33</sup> I wanted to interview her as we had had some interesting conversations regarding the fence and security in

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<sup>32</sup> Names have been changed to protect anonymity.

<sup>33</sup> See a fuller explanation of *haus meris* and *yardmen* in Chapters Two and Three, ‘Ukarumpa’ and ‘The History of the Land Dispute and Fence’.



Ukarumpa and I wanted to get the perspective of a Papua New Guinean employee of SIL.

'Anna' had been interviewed for the SIL job while she was at college in Madang. She first of all worked at the Printshop for two weeks while her skills were assessed and then was put in the Computer Department where she worked for a two and a half years. During that time she met and married a fellow employee. After her first child she was on maternity leave for a year and then started work at the Technical Services Department (TSD), working part-time at the TSD Library and part-time in the TSD office as a secretary. She then had her second child and went on maternity leave in 1982 and then started work with TSD again in 1983. She worked there as a secretary from 1983 to 1987 and then took over as manager of TSD from an SIL member from May 1987 to August 1996. This involved taking care of the daily operation of the department, looking after the maintenance of the building and equipment, planning the budget for the department and planning the workshops for the year. After that she then went to work for the High School as the High School secretary. All four of her children attended Aiyura International Primary School and Ukarumpa International High School. Her eldest son graduated from the High School in 1999 and is now working in the Purchasing Department at the Store and her eldest daughter graduated from the High School in 2001 and obtained a full scholarship to a university in New Zealand.

'Anna' was very much involved with the Women's Fellowship, which consisted of mainly Papua New Guinean female employees but also some SIL women. The Women's Fellowship met once a week for worship (singing), prayer, Bible study and sometimes

visiting speakers. They also had outings such as bringing food and gifts to patients at Kainantu Hospital.

During my fieldwork 'Anna' left her job at the High School for personal reasons, and returned to Madang with her two younger children to live with relatives and look for work there. 'Abigail' was also with her until she started university. When I met them in Madang, shortly before finishing fieldwork, they were finding it difficult to settle in with their relatives in Madang. 'Abigail' in particular commented that she didn't feel that she 'fitted in' with her Papua New Guinean relatives. Although she wasn't a 'missionary kid' herself, she related more to her 'missionary kid' friends that she had grown up with than her Papua New Guinean cousins. After difficulties in finding work in Madang, 'Anna' was considering returning to work in Ukarumpa in August 2002.

*'Aveline'*

'Aveline' is another Papua New Guinean lady from the language area near Ukarumpa. Her village is a two-hour walk from Ukarumpa, although she lives on-Centre. She came to work with SIL in 1981 and began by working in the Store, then worked at the Printshop as a dispatcher and then in the Computer Room, working with the completed New Testaments. After that she came to work as the receptionist at the Directors Office and after about five years working there began work as the secretary to the Directors Assistant for Personnel (DAP). Her children attend the Aiyura International Primary School. Again, 'Aveline' was someone who remembered my family and me as a child. Like Anna, she is also heavily involved in the Women's Fellowship. I got to know 'Aveline' better by working alongside her in the Directors Office for Personnel. Again I was

interested on getting her perspective on the land dispute and the fence, particularly as she not only worked for SIL but was also from a local village.

*'Rose'*

'Rose' is a Papua New Guinean lady from the Kamano language group near Ukarumpa (see map 1). Her village is about a forty-five minute drive on the road from Ukarumpa although like 'Aveline', she also lives on-centre. She started working with SIL in 1987, working at the Primary School for about ten years and then working at the Store for a year. She now also works as a secretary alongside 'Aveline' in the DAP office. Her children also attended the Aiyura International Primary School and the Ukarumpa International High School and her eldest daughter graduated from the High School in 2001. Like 'Anna' and 'Aveline', she also knew my family previously and is also involved in the Women's Fellowship. I interviewed both 'Aveline' and 'Rose' together and was able to get more details on how employees felt about the construction of the fence and *raskol* (criminal) activity.

*Brian Hodgkin (ADLA)*

Brian was the Assistant Director for Language Affairs (ADLA) during my fieldwork. He and his wife were working in a literacy program with the Menya people in Morobe Province. He and his wife are both British and they have four children, the eldest of which graduated from the Ukarumpa International High School in 2001 and who was in the same class as my younger sister at school and good friends with Alma, Anna's daughter. Brian was someone who knew my family when we were in Papua New Guinea and my parents

mixed socially with Brian and his wife. Brian and his family also were at the British barbeques that were organised.

I had known Brian as a child and also met him in his capacity as ADLA while on fieldwork. I wanted to interview him as someone who was in charge of the language work in Papua New Guinea and also someone near the top of the organisation. I was able to ask him more details about the organisational structure of SIL and details of how language work was organised. It was the previous ADLA who I had contacted in order to get permission to begin fieldwork but Brian proved very helpful in being available for meetings and open to interviews.

*'Carla'*

'Carla' is a single Australian lady who first came to Papua New Guinea for five weeks with another mission in the summer of 1998 and then came to work with SIL on January 1, 2001. I met her through the 'singles group' and we shared a house briefly before she went back to Australia. She was also on staff at one of the Pacific Orientation Courses at the same time as me. From previous conversations, she had expressed strong opinions about language work and life in Papua New Guinea so I was interested in gaining her perspective as a language worker.

She came to Papua New Guinea with GRIP (Graduate International Program), a graduate program for graduates of linguistics and other disciplines to help with a particular part of a language project. The Australian GRIP program normally takes about fifteen months, which includes six months of in-service training and nine months on the field. The training program covers linguistics, intercultural studies and language learning. There is also

a two-year option with six months training and eighteen months in the field.

'Carla' assisted a translation team in Madang Province with discourse grammar in particular. During her time in Papua New Guinea she spent two weeks being trained at POC, then went to the village that the translation team were working in twice, then she spent about one and a half months in Madang working on the language data she had gathered and spent the rest of the time in Ukarumpa. She originally was going to be in Papua New Guinea for a year to fourteen months but due to a trip home for personal reasons, had to cut short her time in Papua New Guinea, although she returned later to finish her program. She then went on to do a Masters in Linguistics in Canada.

*'Lily'*

One of the main reasons I wanted to interview 'Lily' was because she and her husband were one of the first people to work with the Papua New Guinea Branch of SIL. 'Lily' is American and came to work with SIL in Papua New Guinea in April 1957. In June 1958 she married an Australian man who came to work with SIL in November 1956. She came to do Bible translation and originally was working with another single lady until she met her husband and they then went on to do a translation program among the Tairora language group. The Tairora and the Gadsup language groups are the two groups surrounding Ukarumpa, and many Tairora and Gadsup people work in Ukarumpa as SIL employees or sell their produce at the Ukarumpa Market. Lily and her husband completed the first translation of the Tairora New Testament in 1980, which was later revised in 1994. They then went on to work with another language

group in the Eastern Highlands Province, completing that New Testament in 1995. They are presently working on translations of the Old Testament for both languages. Again, 'Lily' knew my parents and myself as a child. 'Lily' was very active and still going to the ladies aerobics classes well into her seventies. I knew 'Lily' from my childhood and several people had said that I should interview her since she had been in Papua New Guinea for such a long time.

*'Glenys'*

'Glenys' was another person who had been working in Papua New Guinea since 1957. Again several people had said that I ought to ask her some of my questions about the land dispute and the fence. She also remembered my family from our time in Papua New Guinea and she told me that my parents had stayed in her house when they were first in Ukarumpa. She is a single Australian lady and first came to work with SIL in Papua New Guinea in July 1957. She and another single lady from Canada have been working in a translation and literacy project in a language group (Kanite) in the Eastern Highlands, about a three to four hour drive away from Ukarumpa. In 1982 they started work on another language program (Inoke, dedication April 22, 1993).

*'Alice'*

'Alice' was one of my most useful informants as she had lived in Ukarumpa since the early days and had witnessed many changes in her time there. She and her husband were also quite unusual in that they had completed several translations where most people only did one translation and perhaps some revisions of their original translation. Again, 'Alice' and her husband knew my parents well and remembered me as a child. 'Alice' is very friendly and talkative

and my interview with her lasted well over four hours! She is also someone who has strong opinions on different issues.

'Alice' and her husband are both Australian. 'Alice' first came to Papua New Guinea in 1954 to work in Leprosy Hospital in Ubuya, Milne Bay Province with the Methodist Overseas Mission. She was there for three years until 1957 while her fiancé finished his medical degree and was married in June 1957. They were then in Fiji for two and a half years, from 1958 to 1960, where her husband was a doctor with the Methodist Overseas Mission. Their first two children, a daughter and son were born in Fiji. They then returned to Australia and in 1962 did the linguistics training course at the SIL School in Australia. During that time they had two more children, both sons. In May 1963 they began work with SIL in Papua New Guinea. They worked as Bible translators in the Milne Bay Province of Papua New Guinea, firstly on Woodlark Island and then on Dobu Island. During their time there they completed four translations until 'Alice's' husband's death in 1994. In 1995 Alice returned to work in Papua New Guinea and she retired in 2001 at the age of 70. One of 'Alice's' sons is also working with SIL in Papua New Guinea as a pilot.

*'Gerald'*

'Gerald' is a former patrol officer with the Australian Government in Papua New Guinea from 1964 until 1980 and then worked as a full time magistrate until 1988. I got to know him through 'Alice' as his wife was a cousin of 'Alice's' husband and he had previously visited Ukarumpa in 1971 and 1972. He and his wife had invited me to their house for dinner and 'Gerald' then agreed to be interviewed. Much of the work that he did as a patrol officer had to do with land matters and he was the District Officer Lands in the Chimbu (now Simbu)

Province until he transferred to the magisterial service. I was therefore interested in getting his perspective on the land dispute regarding Ukarumpa. After transferring to the magisterial service, he then returned to Australia with his wife and four children and worked as a probation officer with the Queen's Land Corrective Service Commission. In September 2001 he took long service leave for six months in order for him and his wife to come to Papua New Guinea to work as Guest Helpers.

*'James & Mary'*

'James' and 'Mary' are a married couple from Australia who first came to Papua New Guinea with their three children in January 1983. James began by teaching Science and Religious Studies in the High School. After that he was the Principal at the Primary School at the same time as being in charge of Security for about two years. He then worked as the Education Division Administrator (EDA) in the Directors Office and then worked as the Principal of the High School for four and a half years, after that returning to the Directors Office as the Education Division Administrator. 'Mary' taught English and Maths at the Primary School and also did some ESL work with non-native English speakers. She was also in charge of distributing school materials to SIL children in the villages with their parents and worked in the Primary School library. Since 1996 she worked in the Personnel office in the Directors Office, first as an assistant to the Directors Assistant for Personnel (DAP) and then as the DAP for three years. In 2002 they left on furlough and when they return they will work in Public Relations in Port Moresby. Again, James and 'Mary' knew me as a child and were good friends with some of the other singles, such as 'Karen' and 'April'. I worked with 'Mary' in the



Directors Office, helping to put together a document for the Papua New Guinea government, which was needed to obtain work visas for SIL members for the next three years. They were very much involved with the National High School as well, so it was useful to get the perspective of support workers who had been in Papua New Guinea for a number of years.

*'Ben & Bonnie'*

'Ben' and 'Bonnie' are a married couple from America who came to work in Papua New Guinea with SIL with their two sons in July 2000. They have started work with a translation program on an island in Manus Province. I got to know them through 'Karen' and some other people who had attended the same Pacific Orientation Course as them. They also belonged to the same Bible Study Group I had joined. They attended some of the new translation team workshops that I went along to, such as the Anthropology Workshop. 'Bonnie', in particular, had very strong opinions on what it means to 'be a missionary' and the ambivalences between the ideals and the practice of mission work.

*'Matt'*

'Matt' is a single man from America who came to work with SIL in Papua New Guinea in July 2000 although he had previously also worked with SIL in Niger. He is the head of the Survey office in the Technical Services Department (TSD). I got to know 'Matt' through the 'singles' group. 'Matt' was one of the few single men I formally interviewed. He had worked with SIL in Niger and therefore had the viewpoint of another SIL branch other than the PNG branch.

*'Marisa'*

'Marisa' is the daughter of SIL Bible translators working in Milne Bay Province, who came to Papua New Guinea on January 21, 1986 when she was eight years old. She graduated from Ukarumpa International High School in 1995 and returned to America to go to college, doing a degree in linguistics, and is now back in Papua New Guinea assisting her parents with the translation of the New Testament. 'Marisa' and I were at school together, although 'Marisa' was the year below me. Although part of the 'singles' group, her view of mission work and living in Papua New Guinea was somewhat different than some of the other young single women as she had been brought up in Papua New Guinea. She did not necessarily feel the same constraints as some of them.

*'Silas'*

'Silas' is a Papua New Guinean man from the Aiyura Valley who began working for the PNG Bible Translation Association (BTA) in 1995, operating the sawmill there. In 1996 he began work with SIL in the Inter-Cultural Work Department (ICW). He lives on-Centre with his family. I had an incident with a local man who offered to cut the grass in my garden but then not only overcharged me (which I only found out later) but kept coming back to ask for more money. 'Anna' advised me to call security the next time he bothered me and 'Silas' and the SIL head of security both came to have a word with him and he left me alone after that. 'Silas' was very helpful and willing to speak to me about his work in the Inter-Cultural Work Department, helping to develop good relationships between SIL and local people.

*'Karen'*

'Karen' is an Australian/Chinese single lady doing literacy work in the Eastern Highlands Province with the Venture 24 program, a

two-year short program with Wycliffe Australia. It involves seven weeks training in Kangaroo Grounds, Victoria, which includes training in language learning, grammar, phonetics, anthropology and literacy. 'Karen' is a student in the Supervisors' of Tokples Education Program (STEP), which means she has been assigned to a language group to work alongside two STEP participants from the language group to be an encouragement to them. She has also been involved in Scripture-Use, making literacy materials in the vernacular and supporting the two BTA Bible translators. She has been working with SIL in Papua New Guinea since July 2000. 'Karen' was one of the first people I met after arriving in Ukarumpa and as initially I was staying with old family friends and she had a spare room where she was staying, she offered to let me move in with her. I then shared a house with her off and on throughout my fieldwork, depending on whether she was out in the village or I was away on other trips. We also both shared with a Thai single woman, 'April', who had come as a translation worker. I was close friends with both of them, but 'Karen' was the one who expressed her opinion on various issues more strongly and was willing to be interviewed.

*Appendix B*

**BECOMING A MISSIONARY**

**How did you become a missionary and what made you decide to work with SIL?**

I became a missionary primarily through reading the New Testament and seeing what Paul did. I joined a ministry to the deaf and travelled for a year around my home country sharing the gospel in music and drama. I became interested in being a part of getting the Word to those who had never heard it before. My husband grew up in Peru and his parents were with SIL there. We visited there for a month and later went down there as missionaries.

**What brought you to Papua New Guinea in particular?**

When we looked for where a mechanic could serve (anywhere in the world!) with SIL.PNG had the most opportunities for his skills. It seemed to be the best place for our children as well. A place where they could make friends from a variety of cultures and get good schooling too. Since PNG is such a large mission base there would never be a lack of ministries for me to be involved in.

(Interview 1)

**How did you become a missionary and what made you decide to work with SIL?**

Four years ago, when I finally could returned to my heavenly Father, I was amazingly happy, so that I thought I want to follow Him and do something for Him. Then I started to pray for my direction and after one year of my prayer, I got a chance to join the mission trip to Nepal, which was organized by Japan Wycliffe. During that trip, I

got to know much more about the Bible translation and there are many kinds of support works and I thought maybe I could do something to help the Bible translation.

**What brought you to Papua New Guinea in particular?**

I was accepted as a home-assigned member and my vision is organising camp and the mission trip and also minister to the young people in Japan. However, we thought I need the experience to serve in the mission field before I started to serve in Japan. And I was quite open to anyplace and PNG was a second place that the director of Japan Wycliffe suggested (for the first place, the door wasn't opened).

(Interview 2)

**How did you become a missionary and what made you decide to work with SIL?**

I worked as a substitute teacher and in my heart I started to think about teaching Dutch kids overseas. Thinking, praying and looking around I was guided to the mission field. I visited 'mission organization markets'. A missionary in my church finally, by a very unusual question, pointed me to Wycliffe/SIL. I read a lot about the foundation and the start of this organization and then asked for an application.

**What brought you to Papua New Guinea in particular?**

The need for a Dutch teacher in this school.

(Interview 3)

**How did you become a missionary and what made you decide to work with SIL?**

I got interested in missions in college. As an education major the two choices were inner city and overseas. I did a summer in the city and found I was not suited for it. So I started looking for overseas jobs. I chose SIL because I was involved with Wycliffe Associates for several years.

**What brought you to Papua New Guinea in particular?**

They needed a chemistry/physics specialist teacher. Other fields wanted an all-around science teacher, and I am not strong in biology or Earth science

(Interview 4)

**How did you become a missionary and what made you decide to work with SIL?**

Even before I became a Christian I wanted to work with under-privileged people in another country. I was training in a health related field and wanted to look after people's physical needs. When I became a Christian I realised that people's spiritual needs are just as important, if not more. I had been so blessed by God and the meaning I found in life through Him, I just had to tell others about Him. Mission work appealed to my adventurous nature, love for other cultures and travel, and desire to share God with other people. I found out about Wycliffe/SIL through a short-term mission awareness trip in Australia, and eventually felt God was calling me to work in this capacity with SIL (for now anyways).

**What brought you to Papua New Guinea in particular?**

I had no intention in coming to PNG especially. But the program that interested me (2 year short-term program called Venture 24) was only run in PNG. Now I'm glad that He's brought me here, I've

experienced so much and learnt more than I expected. At this stage I've extended from 2 years to 3, but don't see me staying any longer after that.

(Interview 5)

**How did you become a missionary and what made you decide to work with SIL?**

I wanted to learn about linguistics, travel, learn another language, work on a Christian team. GRIP incorporates all of that.

**What brought you to Papua New Guinea in particular?**

Wycliffe administration-- A new survey team with an available mentor, and a goal for Latin American recruitment.

(Interview 6)

**How did you become a missionary and what made you decide to work with SIL?**

[She] made the commitment to foreign missions in a Christian college and became interested in Bible translation and WBT through a Bible School friend who had already been accepted to go with WBT. Lois was burdened for people who did not have the Word in their own language as she did.

[He] attended a Ken Pike demonstration and became interested in linguistics and translation. [His] interest in WBT was for translation but the linguistic side of it attracted him.

**What brought you to Papua New Guinea in particular?**

[She] was going to the Philippines and then the advance to PNG opened and she was asked to consider that field. Since her call was to the islands there was no problem in making the change over.

[He] already had his passport and was on his way to Norway to study Norwegian which he had started to learn (he is not Norwegian born) but then, when he heard that PNG was opening and needed help in building the base of operations he decided to come and be on the ground floor of the work. He helped with building and then went into translation work with Tairora.

(Interview 7)

**How did you become a missionary and what made you decide to work with SIL?**

In 1999 I was working for a company and said some things that shouldn't have been said to my employer, so after a couple of years of service I was fired. A few weeks later my church was sponsoring a Missions at the Airport and I went out to just try and get a job in the Helio Courier that was going to be there. That didn't happen because there was too many other people doing the same thing, but I started walking around the hanger and ran into a booth that said SIL/Wycliffe Bible Translators had positions for accountants. I always thought missionaries were pastors or whatever else, but accountants? So, I took an application and sent it in, but didn't really give it much thought because I had already got a job paying even more than the last job I had.

At the same time I was also going to school getting more accounting units so I could sit for the CPA (Certified Public Accountant) exam. While all of this was going I was surfing the internet looking for other junior colleges in California that had upper division classes for accounting because I was 25 years old and still living with my parents and really wanted to get out on my own. So about the time all the paperwork came back, I had decided I was probably going to



move up to Sacramento to a college up there and I did. At the start of the New Year, I packed all my belongings into a Jeep Cherokee and left Southern California for Northern California without a job or even a place to live. Pretty freaked out by that thought on the way up to Sacramento I was questioning why I was even doing it and started thinking that I wanted to get the CPA to put to God's glory on the mission field where ever that might be.

When I arrived into Sacramento God had provided a place to live within 2 hours of getting there and a job within a week. My aunt, who lived a few hours away, told of a church that was in Sacramento that had a really good college/career ministry for young adults. I checked it out and it became my church for the next year while I was there. At that church I became involved in a men's Bible study and one of the guys asked me to be his accountability partner because him and his wife were going on a missions trip and that was part of the requirements to go... To have a one younger and one older accountability partner. It just happened that he had used to be a missionary with Operation Mobilization, so he played a big part in where I am today. Something that also encouraged me along was at the same church I went on a 1 week missions trip to Mexicali, Mexico. The thing that really did me in was I was part of a prayer team for some teams that went all over the world in the church. When they came back, I got to hear how God answered some of those prayers. At the end of the banquet where everyone was telling what happened on their trips, the college/career pastor got up and quoted from Matthew 9:37 - "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few."

I felt pretty convicted right there and did all of the paperwork from where I had left off with Wycliffe Bible Translators pretty immediately afterwards. I sat for the CPA exam, but failed (which isn't too unlikely the first try). There were other missions organizations I was considering, but just wanted to serve God and not get stuck in a bunch of paperwork and SIL/Wycliffe was the one that was first.

**What brought you to Papua New Guinea in particular?**

I thought I would just be working in an office building in Orlando, FL where SIL/Wycliffe's headquarters are. I never dreamed I would be working out in the middle of nowhere in the jungle. When I had my interview with SIL/Wycliffe they didn't even give Orlando as an option. They told me the places they would most likely place me were Kenya, Phillipines (serving for Indonesia), or Papua New Guinea. I hardly knew where the other places were let alone Papua New Guinea. They asked me to pray about it and we would talk about it later. Later came and it just worked out that I didn't get invitations to the other places because managers were on furlough or whatever, but things were working out with Papua New Guinea, so that is where I went. It was also much easier to get a work permit/visa into the country than anywhere else.

(Interview 8)

## *Appendix C*

### **EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

#### **SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION**

##### *1.1 Definition*

The Executive Committee is defined by the Branch Constitution as being “a representative body to consider Branch business between Branch meetings” and as being “responsible to oversee the management and development of the Branch” (Article IV. Section 4. parts a. and b.2.). The “job description” of the EC is found in this manual under Section 5. EC Internal Governance.

##### *1.2 Limitations*

The EC has decided to strategically limit its oversight by focusing on the following areas of governance:<sup>34</sup>

- A. The development of policy statements which define the mission and long-term goals of the Branch. These “ends” policies will state what good will be achieved by the Branch, for whom, and at what cost. These policies are found in this manual under Section 2. Corporate Ends.
- B. The development of policy statements which delineate those practices and means which the EC would consider to be unacceptable practices and means to achieve the mission and goals of the Branch. These policies are found in this manual under section 3. Executive Limitations.
- C. The specific information required from the Director to demonstrate accountability in achieving the Branch’s ends within the limitations defined. The outline of such information is found in this manual under Section 4. Information Required from the Director.
- D. Internal governance, which includes:

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<sup>34</sup> The framework for this manual has been adapted from the book *Boards that Make a Difference* (Carver & Carver, 1990). The model defined in the book has been modified to suit our unique situation. Since the terminology is well defined in the book, we have decided to use their terminology here.

1. the specific means by which EC will carry out its duties,
2. the means by which the EC will demonstrate accountability to the Branch, and
3. the means by which EC will communicate with the Branch membership.

### *1.3 Relationship to the Administration*

The Director, with the assistance of the Associate Directors shall be responsible for the management and development of the Branch under the policies which the Corporation, Branch and EC lay down. In order to achieve the Branch ends, he or she shall be free to use whatever means are deemed appropriate within the limitations imposed by the Corporation, Branch and EC.

As representatives and trustees of the membership of SIL-PNG, the EC shall hold the Director accountable for the administration of the Branch in relation to the Executive Limitations laid out in Section 3 and the Information Required From the Director as laid out in Section 4 of this manual. The EC shall allocate sufficient time at each session to act as a confidential consultative body for the Director to discuss potential and actual strategies to achieve the organisation's ends - the mission and long-term goals of the Branch.

### *1.4 Relationship to the Membership*

The Executive Committee shall represent the membership of the Branch and shall consider Branch business between Branch meetings. The EC acts as trustees of the Branch membership, to whom the EC is accountable.

The EC shall be responsible to oversee the management and development of the Branch. In doing so, it shall formulate Branch

policy<sup>35</sup> decisions on behalf of the membership. However, the EC shall not fail to seek input from the membership for decisions that are of significance.

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<sup>35</sup> See 1.2. Limitations

*Appendix D*

**[SIL] CULTURAL DIFFERENCES DISCLAIMER**

We in WBT-SIL come from different cultures with various unwritten national values. An individual is influenced by his or her national values whether or not he or she understands them or has conformed to them. Because of this, we can appreciate a person's individual characteristics better when we see him in terms of his own cultural background rather than our own cultural expectations.

The enclosed summary of contrasts can only be used productively if one remembers that no individual from any one national background will necessarily share all the same values. Some may have individual values more like a country other than their own. Some values are held more highly than others within a sub-culture. Because of this, the goal of this summary is not to predict what any one person will value or how he or she will act. The summary is intended to aid us in showing loving understanding and respect for each other in a more creative way, to avoid inner conflicts as well as conflicts with others, to help decrease culture stress as we work and make decisions together and live each other's decisions, and to help us fit back into our home culture after adapting to each other's values.

Therefore, do NOT use this summary to:

Make assumptions about people of a certain cultural background, try and predict what any person will do, or say, or value.

DO use this summary to:

Try and understand the seemingly mysterious (and perhaps exasperating) behaviour of a person with a cultural background

other than your own, evaluate your own behaviour on the basis of how a person from another culture might interpret it.

## CULTURAL DIFFERENCES

### Getting Acquainted

*American:* Casual, informal, innovative, friendly. Tend toward “instant intimacy”. Unaware of class differences or stages of intimacy. Occupational roles affect social interaction.

*Australian:* Affable, expressing individuality and simplicity. Rural men casual and use colloquial speech, complimented by more reserved women liking more established forms of interaction.

*Canadian:* More reserved than U.S. More selective in friendships.

*Finnish:* West – reserved. East – more open. Not class distinguishing. State church.

*German:* Direct, friendly, formal. Language barrier hinders natural ease. In German, subtle grammatical cues indicate relative position and stages of intimacy.

*Japanese:* Formal. Class difference or stages of intimacy important. Group oriented. Whatever group you belong to you are almost obligated to attend the social meetings with pressure.

*Korean:* Reserved, formal. Slow in making friendships, deep commitment. Class differences as in Japanese.

*New Zealand:* Casual, informal. Much social interaction related to leisure and sports. Slow to trust others. “Be yourself – don’t put up a front.”

*Swedish:* “Take care of yourself and leave others alone.”

*PNG*: Interaction structured by relationships, relatives or wontoks, outsiders or enemies. Sharing betel nut, tobacco or food important to show acceptance. Group unity important.

### **Expression of Reality**

*American*: Overstatement, salesmanship. Inspiring and complimenting others. Competitive.

*Australian*: Understatement, often to the point of saying the opposite or “knocking.”

*British*: Understatement in reference to own work: indirect statements.

*Canadian*: Between American and British.

*Finnish*: Understatement. Not much praise.

*German*: Direct Statement, forthright, accurate.

*Japanese*: Understatement. Indirect statement. Guess. “Silence is Golden.”

*Korean*: Don’t speak about own talents. Also use understatement and indirect statements. Passive.

*New Zealand*: Understatement. Not as “knocking” as Australians, but still do it to some extent.

*Swedish*: Understatement. Expect other people to offer your talents, not to speak up about your own.

*PNG*: Use hidden symbolic talk for important statements. Group decides what is fact, and all act on that basis.



### **Expression of Humility**

*American:* By seeking advice from others, especially those with more training or authority over them.

*Australian:* By referring to self, friends and country in a deprecating manner, often with “knocking” humour.

*British:* Varies greatly. Tend to deprecate friends and country.

*Finnish:* Try to deprecate self. Difficult to accept others excelling.

*German:* Deferring to others in authority.

*Japanese:* By referring to self, and country in deprecating manner. By hiding ones knowledge or ability yet using the ability for others. Contentment is a high value. Strong national pride.

*Korean:* Two forces – humility is a high value, but so is prestige.

*New Zealand:* By referring to self and achievements in a low key, self deprecating or joking manner. Will not always volunteer information. Usually need to be asked. Compliments outwardly rejected.

*Swedish:* Expect to be asked to contribute – not offer own skills.

*PNG:* By reticence in expressing own opinions, self deprecation, not standing out from others. Give superiors last word, walk behind them.

### **Expression of Self-esteem**

*American:* Willing to talk about personal accomplishments, abilities, etc. in a fairly straightforward way.

*Australian:* Not seeking advice from others with more training or experience. Exerting independence.

*British:* Seek advice from colleague, seldom from a superior. Don't normally reveal weaknesses or need of assistance.

*Finnish:* Men especially do not talk about problems. Try themselves first – seek advice as a last resort.

*German:* Give direction to those who indicate submission to them.

*Japanese:* When he meets the crisis, he is able to decide what he is going to do or what the group should do in a quick manner.  
Leadership.

*Korean:* As for Japan. A “prestige culture” expressed indirectly.

*New Zealand:* Dislike being taken for granted, but don't freely talk about personal accomplishments or skills. Thought boastful if one does.

*Swedish:* As for Finns.

*PNG:* Willingness to do new things without prior instruction. Not ask for help.

### **Expression of Politeness**

*American:* Use please, thank-you and compliments more frequently.

*Australian:* Use abbreviated forms in rural area; more traditional forms in urban areas. Address terms to show age or position.

*British:* Please, thank-you and compliments not as necessary; social graces important. Varies in different classes.

*German:* Thank-you, hand shaking important. Most polite forms in German are lost in English.

*Japanese:* According to the speaker-hearer relationship the polite forms vary. The relation differs with gender, age, social status.

*New Zealand:* Informal. Please, thank-you etc. not always used. Compliments not given lightly. Politeness varies according to relationship.

*PNG:* Greetings and thanks only for outsiders. Not necessary when all are related and always giving and receiving.

### **Production Values**

*American:* Time and efficiency over money. Quantity over quality. Appearance important. Professional people expected to do more than required. Others not.

*Australian:* Resourcefulness and frugality over time and efficiency. Quality over quantity. Functional value important. Not expected to do more than required. Repair old things.

*British:* Frugality and tradition over efficiency. Quality over quantity and time. Not offending others important. Tradition is important.

*Canadian:* Time more important than money. Quantity is becoming more important than quality.

*Finnish:* Changing rapidly, but high quality is a definite value.

*German:* Superior quality and efficiency over money. Prefer simple elegance, genuine rather than artificial.

*Japanese:* Working hard is a value. Workers are required to dedicate themselves to the company. Quality and quantity are requested at the same time. Time is also valued. Expect to do more than required and do it willingly.

*Korean:* Urban-workaholic is a virtue, efficiency very important. Efficiency equals frugality. Hate waste of resources.

*New Zealand:* Quality over quantity. Resourcefulness and frugality very high value. Functional value important. Spend time rather than money.

*PNG:* Oriented to completing task. Timeless. Functional value important. Keeping peace and doing what brings higher status important.

### **Leadership**

*American:* Elected on basis of personal qualities, abilities, convictions and ability to inspire confidence. Given special benefits and privileges.

*Australian:* Must overcome individuality and independence of followers without demanding it. Must appear the same as everyone else.

*British:* Must have traditional qualifications for office, come from right social order with the proper social graces. (Changing-less important).

*Canadian:* Look at experience and ability. Quick to criticise leaders. Leader not necessarily most prestigious.

*Finnish:* Earn position by experience and personality (it is resented if personality is the sole factor).

*German:* Chosen on the basis of self-discipline, self-control, strong moral character, not expected to stand out above others.

*Japanese:* Elected by members consensus or vote. Relatively elderly person, experienced, open minded, who takes care of the members. Able to give direction or decision to followers.

*Korean:* Charismatic qualities rather than qualifications. Wontok system and alumni factors affect voting.

*New Zealand:* Earn position by experience and ability. A leader who is firm but doesn't lord it over subordinates is respected. Low key. Egalitarian.

*Swedish:* The highest valued and most respected positions are king, teacher and parent.

*PNG:* Generous, older, most capable of sensing the needs and desires of the group. Dream or vision helps confirm right to lead.

### **Followers**

*American:* Expect superior performance, exemplary behaviour. Expect to follow willingly or vote leader out.

*Australian:* Don't feel obligated to follow unless convinced. Expect to choose whether to "take it or leave it".

*British:* Follow rightful authority, giving full respect due the office. Expect indirect orders, "Would you like to..." Expect more trust and not close supervision.

*Finnish:* Respect strong leaders – resent bad ones.

*German:* Expect clear and explicit guidelines and will follow readily.

*Japanese:* Expect to be submissive to the leader without question.

*New Zealand:* Expect trust and not close supervision. Expected to demonstrate initiative. Not blind following of order. Think through pros and cons for self. Question if feel not a good order.

*PNG:* Expect to do what the consensus requires. Leader cannot force others. Expect leader to meet needs and inspire others to follow.

### **Measure of a Person**

*American:* Judged by material wealth, clothes, physical attractiveness, personality, leisure activities. Self-confidence important value.

*Australian:* Judged by ability to adapt to different situations, sincerity, a “knocking” sense of humour. Women by social grade, making the best of it.

*British:* Judged by status, social graces, dialect, leisure activities.

*German:* Judged by character, sincerity, achievements, fitness.

*Japanese:* Men judged by age, social status, personality, ability to relate to people. Women by submission, quietness, physical attractiveness.

*PNG:* Men judge by age, generosity, standing up for his relatives. Women by strength, productivity and fertility.

### **The Best Way to do Things**

*American:* With friends and easy efficient way.

*Australian:* Go it alone, roughing it, using what you have.

*British:* With the right people in the traditional way.

*German:* With people you know well in the very best way.

*Japanese:* Talk to the boss or the highest who relates to the things, or get the consensus on what you do from the group and do it yourself or with those elected to do it with you.

*New Zealand:* Alone or with a few close friends, rough it, use what you have. Not necessarily highly organised.

*PNG:* With relatives in the way we decide together.

### **Negative Stereotypes**

*American:* Stereotyped as braggart, untruthful, too intimate too soon, insincere, superficial, materialistic, conceited, wasteful.

*Australian:* Stereotyped as contemptuous of tradition, belittling, brusque, crude, penny pinching, pessimistic.

*British:* Stereotyped as aloof, stiff, unfriendly, insensitive, superior, proud, tradition bound, "putting on airs".

*German:* Stereotyped as abrupt, blunt, unyielding, competitive, dictatorial, egotistical, miserly, perfectionists.

*Japanese:* Stereotyped as too dependent on others.

*New Zealand:* Stereotyped as independent, of few words, do it yourselfer.

### **Serving Food for Family**

*American:* Pass bowls, serve self. Direct request for second, eg "Please pass the..." no reaching. Hostess meets individual needs.

*Australian:* All food served up on plates. Not expected to request more or interrupt others. Reaching accepted. Hostess anticipates needs.

*British:* When passing bowls, focus is on serving others from bowl one is holding. Indirect requests, "Would you like..." meaning, "I'd like to have it passed to me." Many classes differ.

*German:* Pass bowls, serve self from bowl in hand. Direct request for food, "I would like to have..." Hostess expected to offer seconds and have food left over.

*Japanese:* all food served up on plates (usually). In case food served on big plates, you pick up with your fork/chopsticks or spoon served with the big plates as far as you can reach. Do not talk much over food. Talk over tea served later.

*New Zealand:* Food is served on plates. Requests to pass something preferred but reaching with “Excuse me” acceptable. Usually wait to be offered seconds by hostess.

### **Focus of Etiquette During Meals**

*American:* Health, variety, individuality, appearance, conversation. Putting others at ease more important than manners. Meals or snack at most social occasions.

*Australian:* Availability, simplicity, equality, morning and afternoon teas important. Manners less important.

*British:* Focus on traditional foods and patterns; elegance. Table manners and etiquette very important.

*German:* Focus on hospitality, simplicity, quality, generosity. Table manners important.

*Japanese:* Traditionally no talk during the meal. Sit up straight when you eat. No leftovers on your plate, not even a grain of rice.

*New Zealand:* Similar to Australia. More formal occasions, more like the British. Want people to feel comfortable “at home”.

*PNG:* Sustenance, equality important. Man individual and group taboos regarding food. Detailed etiquette not necessary because seldom eat together.



### Sweet Foods

*American:* Sweet rolls, syrup etc. with breakfast. Sweet salads with main meals. Sweet food served on plate or special dish after meals. Permitted to take several cakes or biscuits at teas.

*Australian:* Nothing sweet for breakfast or main course. Mixture of sweets served in a bowl after main meal. Only permitted to take one cake or biscuit at teas; more only if others are served.

*British:* Nothing sweet served with breakfast or main course. Sweet foods after main meal on plate. Only one cake or biscuit at teas; more if offered.

*German:* Sweet jam with breads and rolls for breakfast. Nothing sweet with main course. Piece of cake or fruit for dessert. Only one cake or sweet roll at teas; can serve self seconds and more.

*Japanese:* Nothing sweet for breakfast. Generally Japanese food is salty. Not customary to have sweets after dinner. As you grow older, eat less sweets, especially men.

*New Zealand:* Nothing sweet with breakfast or main course. Sweets served in bowl after main meal and am/pm tea.

*PNG:* Sweets not a normal part of diet. Enjoy sweet biscuits. Often dislike sweet cold cordial. Enjoy sugar in hot drinks. Sugar cane used as a treat and for sick people.

*We at Ukarumpa attempt to do something that history tells us cannot be done. People from many different cultures living and working in close harmony. And our purpose is to put God's Word in the hands and the hearts of Papua New Guineans.*

*Glossary*

<b>ADLA</b>	Associate Director for Language Affairs
<b>ADMS</b>	Associate Director for Member Services
<b>ADO</b>	Associate Director for Operations
<b>ADSA</b>	Associate Director for Support Affairs
<b>ADW</b>	Alphabet Development Workshop
<b>BTA</b>	PNG Bible Translation Association
<b>BTL</b>	Bible Translation and Literacy
<b>CaTS</b>	Communication and Technical Services
<b>DAP</b>	Director's Assistant for Personnel
<b>DAF</b>	Director's Assistant for Finance
<b>DAPR</b>	Director's assistant for Public Relations
<b>DAS</b>	Director's Assistant for Security
<b>EC</b>	Executive Committee
<b>GILLBT</b>	Ghana Institute for Linguistics, Literacy and Bible Translation
<b>ICW</b>	Inter-Cultural Work
<b>LACA</b>	Language and Culture Acquisition
<b>NTC</b>	National Translators Course
<b>PaCT</b>	Publications and Computer Training
<b>PBT</b>	Pioneer Bible Translators
<b>PNG</b>	Papua New Guinea

## GLOSSARY

<b>POC</b>	Pacific Orientation Course
<b>QRC</b>	Qualifications Review Committee
<b>RAD</b>	Regional Area Director
<b>SIL</b>	Summer Institute of Linguistics
<b>SIL-PNG</b>	Papua New Guinea Branch of SIL
<b>SQW</b>	Support Quota Worksheet
<b>STEP</b>	Supervisors' of Tokples Education Program
<b>TSD</b>	Technical Studies Department
<b>WBT</b>	Wycliffe Bible Translators
<b>WBT International</b>	Wycliffe Bible Translators International
<b>WBT France</b>	Wycliffe Bible Translators France
<b>WBT UK</b>	Wycliffe Bible Translators United Kingdom
<b>WBT USA</b>	Wycliffe Bible Translators United States of America

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