



PAPUA NEW GUINEA

Urgent CHRISTIAN LITERATURE NEEDED

Christians in Papua New Guinea need literature, says Mimosa Graf of the Evangelical Brotherhood Church (EBC) Publications Department.

With just over 4.5 million people, Papua New Guinea (PNG) has more than 850 vernacular languages. Education in state schools is in English, but Melanesian Pidgin (also known as Tok Pisin or neo-Melanesian) is widely used.

Despite the obstacles language presents, the gospel of Jesus Christ has spread throughout PNG. A majority of the population is Christian. Most do not have the Bible available in the vernacular, and only 43 percent of the population is literate. However, the country enjoys freedom of religion and there is ample opportunity for Christian literature work.

Christian Publishers

There are several Christian publishing organizations working in PNG. Many depend on missionaries as there is a shortage of qualified national personnel. The Bible Society of PNG and Wycliffe Bible Translators/SIL translation teams are working on literacy, translation and distribution of Scripture into the vernacular languages. Christian Books Melanesia (affiliated with the Brethren church in PNG) publishes Bible studies and books teaching of Christian principles. Others include Kristen Press (Lutheran) and Victory Books (Nazarene). The Christian Leaders' Training College publishes material for Theological Education by Extension (TEE). The Catholic Church and other denominations have their own publishing and printing facilities. A number of secular printshops are operating in PNG and publishing efforts are going on at different levels.

Evangelical Brotherhood Church

The Swiss Evangelical Brotherhood Mission first sent missionaries to PNG in 1954. In 1974 the Church was registered under the name of Evangelical Brotherhood Church Inc. (EBC). It established a Publications Department shortly thereafter. It aims to spread God's word and Christian literature in PNG at prices people can afford.

Staff. Although EBC is directed by Kolin Wuiabi, a PNG national. The Publications Department is headed by a Swiss missionary, Philipp Grossenbacher. National training in all spheres of publishing, from writing to marketing, is a priority for EBC. The EBC Publications Department has 17 staff members.

Editorial. The EBC sees a great need to produce more literature in Pidgin and in easy English. EBC is producing books for Christian education in schools and story books with Christian messages suitable for children and adults. Each day, EBC receives letters from villagers and schools asking for literature. EBC provides a free Pidgin correspondence course and other items for new Christians. It also publishes a quarterly church magazine, a leaflet



EBC fulfills customer orders for items from many Christian publishers.

for children, Scripture memorization materials, and teaching aids. Though EBC publishes in some of the vernacular languages, it mostly produces Tok Pisin or easy English texts.

EBC's backlist has more than 80 books. The organization also produces music cassettes and hymnbooks. EBC expects to print five new titles this year. The



EBC's equipment produced over 340,000 tracts last year.

average print run for booklets is 3,000; for TEE courses, 2,500; for tracts, it is 15,000-20,000. A few tracts are printed in partnership with Scripture Gift International (SGM). EBC stocks SGM Tok Pisin and English titles and helps in the preparation of new titles in English and Tok Pisin suitable for PNG.

Printing. EBC also operates a printshop. Its equipment consists of an offset printing press, a digital copy printer, plate maker, cutting machine, folding machine, thermo tape binder, staplers and other machinery. Most of the tracts and some booklets published by the EBC are printed and

bound in its printshop. During 1999, EBC printed 340,600 tracts, 85,600 magazines, and many other products.

EBC is able to print literature for other churches. As time permits, EBC also does printing for secular companies or government bodies, to raise funds for new printing presses, buildings, staff accommodation, etc.

Sales. Though EBC runs bookstalls at cultural shows and in all sorts of schools throughout the nation, especially during National Book Week, the bulk of its sales come from its wholesale department. It stocks and sells its books, materials from Christian publishers in Papua New Guinea, and books from foreign Christian publishers in Australia, England, America, Hong Kong, Sri Lanka, Germany and more.

EBC distributes and sells literature to EBC church bookstalls and other church outlets, the EBC SINGAUT Bookstores and other Christian and secular retail outlets, agents,

and many individual customers.

The EBC Publications Department is mostly self-sustaining. At present, 85 percent of its revenue comes from sales of its products. The remainder comes mainly from donations, though EBC does raise some funds through commercial printing services as well.

Challenges

The worsening economical situation in PNG is making literature work increasingly difficult. There are high costs for paper and printing material. Large numbers of people have only a very limited cash income.

Alcohol abuse, drug addiction and AIDS are major problems. Young people have easy access to marijuana, which grows easily in PNG. Illegal export of this drug is quite frequent.

Armed gangs are making life difficult in many areas. Vandalism and criminal activities threaten the smooth operation of all types of businesses, including print-shops, bookstores and trade stores.

Nominalism is a major problem facing the church today. Some people still practice indigenous religions. Adherents of Islam is on the increase. The need for Christian literature is urgent. ❖

International PUBLISHING EVENTS

September 2000

Moscow International Book Fair; fax (095)973-2132.

September 2000

Business of Publishing, Eastern Europe Magazine Training Institute, Hong Kong; 101567.2064@compuserve.com.

September 6-8, 2000

Christian Booksellers Convention—Asia Region, Hong Kong; jpowell@cba-intl.org.

September 7-8, 2000

Philippines Christian Booksellers Convention; bless@skyinet.net.

September 17-28, 2000

Leading Publishing Organizations, ICPI, Colorado Springs, CO USA; www.ccmi.org.

October 3-7, 2000

CCMI Publisher Consultations, Manila, Philippines; www.ccmi.org

October 18-23, 2000

Frankfurt Book Fair, Frankfurt am Main, Germany; www.frankfurt-book-fair.com

October 23-27, 2000

Litt-World, Media Associates International, Hoddesdon, England; www.littworld.org

October 29-November 4, 2000

Nigeria Christian Booksellers Convention; ichinv.j@jos.rcl.nig.com.

November 2000

CCMI Publisher Consultations, Brazil; www.ccmi.org.

January 28-February 3, 2001

Christian Booksellers Association Expo, Louisville KY USA; www.cbaonline.org

March 4-15, 2001

Marketing, Sales & Distribution, ICPI, Colorado Springs, CO USA; www.ccmi.org.