

7.9.9. INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK OF LANGUAGE STUDY: THE ASIA PACIFIC CHRISTIAN MISSION

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The majority of the work of the Asia Pacific Christian Mission is in tribal situations in the Western and Southern Highlands Provinces of Papua New Guinea, and in the Dani and Eastern Highlands areas of Irian Jaya. We have in each instance gone into new tribes which had only been entered by the Administration a year or so earlier, or which had not been previously entered at all, and have settled down to learn the language and reduce it to writing. We then compile a correct phonemic alphabet using the latest linguistic techniques, and from there go on to produce a dictionary and a full statement of the grammar, using a readily understandable description couched in conventional grammatical terminology. The principle on which each grammar statement is based is to start from the simplest grammatical construction in each language, and then to add new and expanded constructions one by one until the whole of the grammatical system of the language concerned is covered. It is a definite point of our policy to seek to reach the people to whom we go through means of their mother tongue, believing it to be 'the shrine of the people's soul'. Where the trade language of the Papuan side, Hiri Motu, was known quite extensively, this was used as a bridge in the initial stages to gain a knowledge of the local language more quickly. We have then gone on to proclaim the Good News of the Christian Gospel to the people in their own languages.

We compile attractive, well-illustrated primers and readers in each language, and have an extensive literacy programme in operation in each tribe to render as many as possible literate in their mother tongue. Local vernacular teachers are trained so that they can assist in the literacy programme. In our primary schools, too, we aim to have the

children to be fluent readers and writers in their own language by fourth Grade, thus helping to counteract their prevalent tendency to regard their tribal languages as 'bush' languages, and of little value in education. It is most pleasing to see the standard of the compositions which they write in their own languages, and as they write up the legends and folk lore of their tribes, so these are being preserved (see chapters 7.2.4. and 7.2.5. on vernacular literacy by Joan Rule). The aim of our literacy programme is to enable the people to read educational books, story books and the full New Testament in each of the languages in which we are working, and so a high priority of our work is vernacular translation.

In seeking to evaluate the merits of this policy after 40 years of work in the earliest tribes entered, and less in others, it can be said that it has paid tremendous dividends in the early establishment of good relations with the tribes, and in the development of strong local churches, with pastors and teachers trained in vernacular Bible Schools, and having an excellent grounding in, and understanding of, the truths of the Christian faith.

The one big disadvantage of a heavily vernacular-oriented work is that whilst the church leaders are well equipped to meet all contingencies which arise in their local language areas, they are at a loss when it comes to inter-tribal communication. They are also at a disadvantage when it comes to dealing with Government officials, business people and others who do not speak their particular language. It also poses difficulties in organising the national church, when leaders from different tribes meet together in conference. In the conferences of the Evangelical Church of Papua, Hiri Motu and English are used as the means of communication, and of the Gereja Injil Irian Jaya, Indonesian is used. We are therefore seeking to encourage the use of Pidgin, Hiri Motu and Indonesian in our respective areas, so that our members can play their full part in the development of their countries. To this end, we are conducting a Central Bible School in Hiri Motu at Lake Murray, another in combined Pidgin and vernacular at Samberigi, and in Indonesian at Sentani in Irian Jaya.

Furthermore, in each of the tribes in which we operate, we have realised the need of a long-range plan for producing leaders of the future who are fluent in the international language of the area, namely English for Papua New Guinea, and Indonesian for Irian Jaya. Accordingly, for a long time now, we have run primary schools in English and Indonesian respectively, moving on to a high school at Awaba in the Western Province, and a teachers' college at Dauli in the Southern

Highlands Province of Papua New Guinea. Numbers of our leading pastors are also being trained in full English at the Christian Leaders' Training College at Banz in the Western Highlands Province. Similar training is also envisaged at the Central Bible Institute at Sentani in Irian Jaya. We are just reaping the benefit of this side of the work as leading pastors and school teachers are assuming excellent responsibility and leadership in many of our areas.

Except in the Gogodala area of the Lower Fly River area, we have not sought to develop any single vernacular language as a lingua franca for other surrounding tribes, but have done independent work for each language. In the Gogodala area mentioned, the tribes were very small, numbering only between 100 and 200 in each, and they already had a good proportion of bilingual speakers of Gogodala, so they came to school in the Gogodala country, received instruction in that language, and then returned to their own tribes (see chapter 7.4.5.6.).

It will thus be seen that we of the Asia Pacific Christian Mission have a threefold language policy:

a) To work in the vernacular in the early stages of the work, continuing this through for all training and church work at the adult level, and also seeking to achieve full literacy for all children as well in their own vernacular.

b) To encourage the local elders and leaders of the churches to make every endeavour to become fluent in Hiri Motu, Pidgin (or in both), or in Indonesian, so that they can play their part in the nations' development.

c) To train our leaders of the future in full English and Indonesian.

The following is a list of the tribes and languages in which the Asia Pacific Christian Mission (and our U.S. counterpart, the Unevangelised Fields Mission) are working:

a) Lower Fly River Area of Papua New Guinea

GOGODALA	(Balimo, Mapoda, Awaba, Wasua)	} Both these are dialects of TIRIO
TA:ME	(Bituri Creek) (also known as MUTUM)	
DUDI	(Lewada Island in Fly River) (also known as LEWADA)	
NAMBU	(Arufe)	
SUKI	(Suki Lagoon)	

b) Upper Fly River Area

ZIMAKANI	(Pangoa, Lake Murray)	
KUNI	(Pangoa, Lake Murray)	
PA	(Debepari)	
BEDAMUNI	(Nomad River and Mogulu)	(also known as BIAMI)
AEKYOM (or AIWIN)	(Rumginæ, Kiunga)	
YONGGOM	(Atkamba)	} Members of the Ok Family
NINGERUM	(Ningerum and Trakbits)	

c) Southern Highlands Province

HULI	(Tari, Dauli, Mananda, Tani, Koroba)
FOE	(Kutubu, Orokana)
OLOGO (KALULI)	(Bosavi)
POLE	(Erave)
SAO	(Samberigi)

d) Irian Jaya

WESTERN DANI	(Bokondini, Kelila, Mulia, Ilu)	
HMANGGONA	(Nalca)	} Members of the Goliath Family
KETENGBAM	(Ok Bap)	
NGALUM	(Kiwi)	Member of the Ok Family
WALAK	(Ilugwa, Wolo)	} Dialects of Pyramid Dani
NGGEM	(Kobakma)	