



Papua New Guinea - 84143

## Renewing the Tok Pisin Bible - *Translation in Papua New Guinea*

### Overview

Tok Pisin is the most widely spoken of Papua New Guinea's more than 800 languages. In 1989 Bible Society published the Tok Pisin Bible in two editions, becoming the biggest seller of all Bibles in any language in the country. However, the Tok Pisin language has changed considerably in the last 30+ years and local churches are crying out

for a revised edition. This revision has been underway for several years but hit a financial roadblock last year as Bible Society of Papua New Guinea (BSPNG) was forced to regroup. Under a newly revitalised board and general secretary, BSPNG can now ensure the translation team has the necessary support structures to get this revision completed.

### The Need

PNG is close to most Australians' hearts as our closest neighbour. The Commonwealth provides significant financial and in-kind support to PNG which has been independent of Australia since 1975. Its population of 7.7 million predominantly live in remote rural areas. 80-85% of the population derive their livelihood from farming and the remaining 15-20% live in urban areas.

The PNG mainland and its six hundred islands have a total land area of 452,860 square kilometres. PNG has over 800 known languages. English, Tok Pisin and Hiri Motu (the lingua franca of the Papuan region) are the official languages. Most of the population now speaks Tok Pisin and many children learn it as a first language.

The Tok Pisin Bible is the core of the translation work at BSPNG. The original translation work began in the 1960s, and like all languages, Tok Pisin has evolved and modernised through those 60 years. School children would not recognise much of the language in the original Bible because of this evolution. The revision process began several years ago, and the draft is now over 80% complete. A major challenge facing the team is manpower and technical support in terms of equipment such as computers, solar and finances.

The BSPNG and the local church believes that an updated and improved modern language version will encourage people to use it more. The churches are keenly awaiting this revision.



## Strategic Goal and Impact

On the short term, project outputs would be:

- Revision of the text translated so far, followed by a community and translation consultant check.
- Revision committees working with local pastors to ensure they understand the revised Scripture better and how they apply it in their own context.

- Recruitment and training of more people for the revision team, from a wider breadth of denominations within PNG.

Longer term, the goal is that Christians across PNG will have access to a Tok Pisin Bible in contemporary language, which will breathe life, faith, hope and Christian values into their lives.

## Testimonies

"In Papua New Guinea the Bible is a huge treasure. People walk around carrying their Bible in a special bag, like a priceless gift. They do this even when the pages are worn and ragged around the edges and falling apart." - **NZ Salvation Army Commissioner Yvonne Westrupp, who spent three years serving in PNG**

"There are many young people giving their lives to the Lord who are without Bibles." - **Joel Peter, Bible Society of Papua New Guinea's (BSPNG) Translations Manager**

## Prayer Needs

- Pray that the huge and growing spiritual hunger for the Bible in PNG will be quickly met by the completion of this Tok Pisin revised Bible.
- Pray for volunteers trained in translation work, that they will have more time for translation checking, an essential part of the translation process.
- Pray that funds will be made available to provide power where there is no electricity, enabling translators and revisers to complete their work.
- Pray for ongoing support from churches, and communities.