



Lutheran Bible Translators

From the Village to the Vote

# Papua New Guinea 2024 Quarter 1

Program Assistant to PNG Michelle Gillard

There are over 800 languages in Papua New Guinea. There are 300 languages that still have no portion of Scripture translated into their language. In my most recent visit to Papua New Guinea, I saw that a translation fire has been lit, and the Spirit is fanning the flames!

A four hour boat ride on the ocean turns up the Waria River to meet the mountain where you find a number of villages. You can only access them by water and foot. It is here that a group of Christians decided they passionately wanted to translate the Bible into their own languages. They started translating on their own and felt they needed support. Being a primarily Lutheran area, they reached out to Lutheran Bible Translators to see if we could partner together. LBT caught their vision and a partnership was formed.

The three language groups, Suena, Zia and Yekora are located on the eastern side of Papua New Guinea in the Morobe Province. The Waria Multi-Language Program is now ongoing.



*The Suena team checks the translation against the Greek and Hebrew.*



*"We want to translate well for future generations to be changed by God's Word."*

How is Bible Translation done in a remote village? It starts with paper and pen, then it moves onto using computers, powered by solar panels. There is continual training for the translators as they move ahead in the program. The local community members take part in gathering together to hear the translation in progress. They gauge if it is understandable, and the translators go back and make changes accordingly.

There is hope for further expansion of work in PNG. This prompted LBT to bring me on as program assistant to help coordinate the efforts. I was recently in PNG this January to visit with our program participants, meet with other Bible Translation agencies who offer training/resources and attend the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Papua New Guinea's bi-annual synodical conference.

*Can you see Suena written on the pages of the English Bible in the photo? Someday our translator will hold a Suena language Bible in his hands.*



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*Description of above photo*

A monumental moment occurred when the conference delegates overwhelmingly affirmed the decision for Bible Translation to be an official ministry of the Evangelical Lutheran Church. God is doing something marvelous in Papua New Guinea.

***Lutherans in PNG have the best swag. Hand-made bags called bilums, clothing and necklaces adorned all the participants. I was chatting with people and walking around taking photos, when all of a sudden, strangers started coming up to me and started gifting me different bilums, a hat, and hand-made spears. It was a blast!***



*The Luther Rose made out of local flowers and seeds*

#### PRAYER REQUESTS

- For the Waria multi-language program to move forward without obstacles (Suena, Zia and Yekora languages).
- For the Evangelical Lutheran Church in PNG as they engage and expand more in Bible Translation.
- For me as I spend the next few months raising support and settling into my role as Program Assistant for PNG.

#### CONTACT

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