# Historical Moments and Eyes Opened

## Papua New Guinea *Fall 2026*

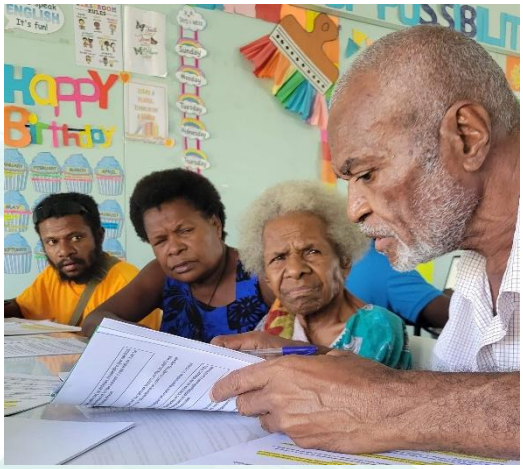
*Michelle Gillard Program Coordinator- PNG*



### Multi-Language Assessment Tool Workshop

That's swell! That's cool! That's based! These are three ways to express the same sentiment, but they were popular during different generations. Our English language shifts all of the time and it is the next generation of young people that end up choosing how the language will look. Many languages over the years have died out. No one speaks Phoenician or Etruscan. Languages get mixed and overrun by other languages. This is not a bad thing, but people aren't always aware that it is happening. This is called language shift. In PNG there are over 800 languages, but in some languages, the children are no longer using the local language. They are using English or Tok Pisin. We trained a group of participants from the Evangelical Lutheran Church to assess this shift. Sixty people completed this training in how to access the way a language is used in various contexts in the community. A special thanks to our SIL co-workers from the UK and USA who flew to PNG to conduct this training!

Why is assessing so important and what does this have to do with Bible Translation? If the children don't use the local language, it might not make sense to translate a whole Bible in that language since in a generation, no one will know how to read it. Instead, it might be a good idea to translate specific verses for Sunday School or create an Oral translation for the book of Luke as a way to keep the young people hearing the language.




"We now see that our language is in danger from shifting. We must gather our community to see how we can preserve our language and get Bible Translation going," said a participant.





## Psalms that Sing Workshop

Bring your guitar, drum and keyboard because we are composing songs! Did you know that the Psalms were originally designed to be sung? In the Lutheran Church in the USA we do chant the Psalms, but we don't often sing the Psalms as they don't always rhyme or feel like they have a singable format. Trainers from South Africa and USA came to help a group of 30 participants in the Evangelical Lutheran Church learn how to translate the Psalms poetically so that they can be easily put to music. We all had a blast!



## Waria-Zia Translators



Bethuel, Job, and Robert from Waria were invited to the Psalms training, as they are both translators and musicians. They loved it so much that they voluntarily went back to the Waria area and took it to the next step. They gathered more musicians and translators and got to work translating more Psalms put to song. "We love this teaching and it makes us excited. We already know how to do translation, but we never knew how to do the poetic style of translation. Now we know. We don't have any Psalms yet translated so this is great. Our people love to sing so we want to get these Psalms being sung in our community right away," said Bethuel.

## Historical Note

These two workshops are considered by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in PNG to be their first major Bible Translation events as a church body. Bishop Urame and other key leaders attended both workshops to show their support and gain more knowledge. 2027 has more plans for Bible Translation.

## Check out Social Media to hear the Psalms Sung

- https://www.facebook.com/groups/3961346437509793
- Instagram Account: **@michelle._.gillard**



**Answered Prayers:**

- Thank God for these two workshops coming together and that the participants loved their training and want more!
- Continue to pray for a Bible Translation Coordinator for the ELC. (They are close to making a decision).
- Pray for the Waria Cluster Translators as they finish their work for 2026. It was a great year!
- Praise God for my Summer on the Farm Fundraiser ($2,300 gifted).

## PNG Fundraiser on the Farm




- **Michelle.Gillard@LBT.org**
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- **Donations/Prayer Letter Sign up lbt.org/missionary/michelle-gillard**