



News from Danny & Becca

Dear Friends and Family,

Well, it has been a long time since many of you have heard from us. We sincerely apologize. Many factors contributed to the delay between prayer letters. One of the primary obstacles was the death of our computer hard drive in September. Unfortunately there are no corner repair shops in Wantoat-land to service the drive. We praise God that through the help of friends and fellow missionaries we are back up and running again with a new hard drive. Many more exciting (and not so exciting) things have occurred in the past several months. Your prayers, encouragement and support are what keep us going through all the ups and downs, and we are deeply grateful.

Wantoat Church Conference

After returning to Papua New Guinea we were no sooner unpacked from our trip home before we were packing again for the village. We felt it was important to be back in time for the annual Wantoat church conference.

During the conference the church leaders asked us to give a report about our ministry. We shared about our goal of seeing Wantoat Christians grow stronger in their faith through hearing God's Word in their own language.

We reported that our year of language and culture learning was over and although we still had much to learn, we were ready to begin planning together with them specific strategies and projects. Their response was very positive.

They assigned a committee of church leaders to work together with us. Furthermore, the president of the entire Wantoat church volunteered to be the initial chairman of the committee. This is very significant, because he is a godly, wise man with strong leadership skills. His commitment to this ministry will give it more respect in the eyes of the Wantoat people.



Elaborate headdresses are part of the opening ceremonies of the Wantoat church conference.



The Wantoat Scripture Use Committee: Baafekee Yosam, John Dangepnana (co-translator of Wantoat NT), Sangung Betange, Kilamu Yanding (Wantoat church president), Danny DeLoach, Noah Yambat

Trip Home

In our last newsletter we shared about some family needs that led us to return to America for six weeks this past summer. God graciously answered your prayers and ours in wonderful ways. Our time spent with family was very worthwhile. There are some things that you just can't communicate well via e-mail or even over the phone. Although our time at home was short, it was packed with many encouraging and fruitful conversations. Our purpose for returning home was more than fulfilled. It was also a great chance for Anna to meet much of her family for the first time and vice-versa. We are so grateful we had this opportunity and very thankful to each of you who made it possible through your prayers and gifts.



Scripture Use Training for the Wantoat Church

Soon after the conference ended the church leaders invited us to share at a gathering of church workers. They gave us several hours to share about God's view of the mother-tongue, God's view of culture and how to more effectively use mother-tongue Scriptures in Christian ministry. They seemed particularly interested in God's view of culture and how Christianity should not consist totally of borrowed Western practices, but rather it should be expressed through many of the God-given aspects of their own culture. Overall there was a very positive response to the entire message.

Near the end of our stay we also held the very first Scripture Use seminar in the Wantoat language group. We devoted each morning of the course to training people who are already literate in Tok Pisin (the trade language of Papua New Guinea) how to read their own language, Wantoat. Virtually all leaders and influential people in the Wantoat church are literate in Tok Pisin. Teaching them to read their own language occurs much more quickly than teaching non-literates. Hopefully their fluency in reading Wantoat will create more prestige for the language and motivate many more people to learn to read. It was hard to contain our excitement as we observed the participants growing in their reading ability and confidence. By the end of the course nearly every participant was willing to read the Wantoat Scriptures publicly!

Other topics in the course included a more in-depth look at the ideas shared in the church workers' conference. We also explained how reading the Scriptures in family devotions is an excellent way to build fluency skills while providing spiritual nourishment to their family at the same time.

Challenges

Wantoat church leaders have identified the following primary barriers to using Scripture

- People can not read their own language
- Dialect variations within the language group
- People are too occupied with other concerns

We need insight as we tackle these obstacles. The third barrier, especially, can only be overcome through prayer and the work of the Holy Spirit.

Your prayers are very important!

A rift has developed in the local congregation of the village where we live. Much of the controversy centers on proper interpretation of Scripture. But there are also deeper cultural and social factors involved. The fissure has caused many people to leave the village, affecting our ability to learn the language and build relationships. **We need wisdom from God as we discern how to best foster a clear understanding of Scripture and promote healing in the situation.**

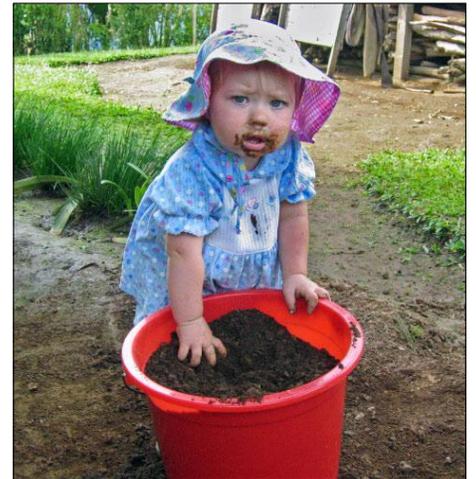
Another challenge is a familiar one – the airstrip. It has been a continual struggle to keep the airstrip properly maintained. As we write this newsletter the airstrip is not fully cut, and we are unable to return to the village. We have had numerous meetings with many different community and government leaders to find some way forward. **Please pray that the people with the power to act would soon develop a sustained commitment to keep the airstrip open.**

On a more encouraging note, there is one major challenge that has finally turned into a positive reality. It was a much bigger struggle than we anticipated, but we finally have an indoor shower and toilet in the village!!! We certainly will not miss the muddy treks to the outhouse in the rain and dark, nor will we miss sharing the space with spiders and other creepy-crawly residents! An indoor bathroom also makes caring for a busy toddler much easier for Becca when Danny is gone for several days teaching a seminar.

Anna's Antics (And a New Sibling!)

Wow! Life is so different now that I can go anywhere I want... and even run! Never mind the hills and un-even ground all around my house, I just motor up 'em and keep goin'. Everyone says I am a true Wantoat girl because I can walk on all the mountains and not fall down. I like to be on the go all the time. I had so much fun this summer meeting my grandmamas, granddaddies, aunts, uncles and cousins. I didn't know I could be kissed and hugged so much....but I loved it! I just wish they could see and hear me now. I can say all kinds of things, but my favorites are "Mama", "Dadn" (that's my word for "Daddy), "Bye, bye" and "gako." "Gako" is what I call the geckos that live above our front door. Daddy says that he especially loves the way I say "Bye, bye" with a Georgia accent.

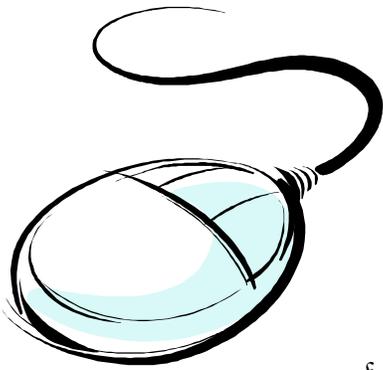
My most exciting news is that I'm going to be a big sister in July!! We will all go down to Cairns, Australia in June. That is where I was born. I'm already practicing being a big sister by carrying my dolls around with me, buckling them into my high chair and reading books to them.



Plans for 2006

Just before leaving the village in November we met with the Wantoat Scripture Use committee and made plans for the coming year. They were excited about the workshop we recently held, and they want to do more next year. They also want to pursue some oral strategies of hearing God's Word, like putting Scripture on cassette and learning a new method of re-telling Scripture as stories. We are excited about implementing some of these new projects next year. Some of our mission leaders have also asked Danny to attend a Scripture Use conference in England at the end of March. This will be a great opportunity to network with others involved in this type of ministry and to learn new ideas to share among the Wantoat and with other missionaries in the country.

Digital Options



If you are interested in either of the e-mail options, please let us know. If you request our prayer letter electronically, please indicate whether it is in addition to or in lieu of the printed copy.

Even though we live in the South Pacific and spend much of our time in a remote village, we try to keep our communication current!



DeLoach Update

We try to send an e-mail message once or twice a month with more timely information than we can provide in our printed prayer letters. Sometimes we use these updates to share urgent prayer requests.



Prayer Letter via E-mail

You can receive a copy of our printed prayer letter via e-mail. We can send you the prayer letter in PDF format. Nearly all computers have the software to read PDF documents. If you don't have the software, we will let you know where to obtain it for free.

The advantages of this option are that you receive the prayer letter much sooner and you get the pictures in color!



DeLoach Website

Don't forget our website www.deloach.info. We updated it recently with pictures and some short videos.

Love,

Danny & Becca

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