

News from Danny & Becca

Dear Friends and Family,

Life has been moving fast lately. Many of you have not heard from us in quite some time. We apologize for that. You'll see below that many things have been happening! Your prayers and support play a direct role in this ministry. We are thankful to God for each one of you.

Meet Joshua Daniel DeLoach!



Born July 10, 2006 at 2:20 PM in Cairns, Australia, weighing 7 lbs 9.5 oz and 20.5 inches long. We praise God for this precious gift. Both Becca and little Joshua came through the birth very well. Anna has quickly come to love her baby brother. We know that Joshua is going to be tough, because he will have to survive Anna's onslaught of hugs and kisses!



Sore Feet

Since our last prayer letter Danny had the opportunity to discover what it is like to walk into our village by road. Once again we had problems getting the Wantoat airstrip cut. After waiting a while we decided that Danny should try walking in. This was a daunting challenge, and it proved to be a great adventure! A truck took Danny and some Wantoat friends a short ways down the only road into the area. About 7:00 PM they came to a spot where a landslide blocked the way. The truck dropped them off there. After walking a few hours and crossing fast rivers in the dark, the group decided to find a place to sleep. Fortunately a nearby village agreed to take them in. Having a missionary in the crowd was probably a great incentive to the hosting village. Wantoat people travel this

way often, but it isn't everyday that a white person shows up on this road! The next day the group hiked about 14 hours. The road crossed several mountains, constantly going up and down. From where the trek started until its final destination was a gain in altitude of about 5,000 feet. However, if you count all the ascents and descents, it was much more than that! Danny arrived at our village house at about 10:00 PM. He was exhausted and had sore knees and feet for several days. The ironic part was that the officials in the Wantoat area started cutting the airstrip the same day that Danny had begun his hike. The good part was that this allowed Becca and Anna to join Danny in the village a few days later, and we had a very productive and encouraging time of ministry while we were there.





Clockwise from top: Our literacy team, Reading the story of Jesus feeding the five-thousand, Teaching word attack skills



Literacy Hike

A major obstacle to people using the Wantoat Scriptures is wide spread illiteracy in the mother tongue. Although many Wantoat people know how to read Tok Pisin (the national trade language), very few are literate in their own language. These people need to transfer their reading skills in Tok Pisin to Wantoat. With the help of colleagues and Becca's literacy training, we developed a transfer literacy seminar to accomplish this purpose. The lesson included: singing a simple Wantoat song, reciting in unison the Lord's Prayer in Wantoat, showing people how Tok Pisin letters corresponded with the Wantoat alphabet, teaching word attack skills for the very long words in Wantoat, and then practicing reading by starting with a short, funny story and moving up to reading Scripture. We had never done anything like this before. We had no idea how it would come off. But the results far exceeded our expectations.

Danny and seven Wantoat church leaders hiked to distant areas of the language group. Over the course of six days they conducted three classes in three different villages. Each time the progression was the same. At the beginning of the class people were curious but a little wary that they could

actually learn to read Wantoat. Gradually they overcame their lack of knowledge and inhibition. The climax of each lesson was asking 15 people to come forward to read John 6:1-15, "Jesus Feeding the 5,000". We expected to hear two or three fairly good readers and several faltering ones. But each session produced readers that were all at least adequate, and some were much better than what we had ever heard in the language! We hope that this will be the beginning of a great literacy movement among the Wantoat. To make it self-sustaining we need to re-visit the areas where we have already taught, and we need to continue training our Wantoat co-workers so that they can conduct this training without our presence.

Quotes from church leaders after seeing so many people reading the Wantoat Scriptures:

"This is like a sweet food we are eating".

"It is like a hospital. It has medicine for our wounds."

"We have thrown our language in a hole. You have come to help us recover it."

Gospel Recordings

After returning from the literacy hike we had a few days to catch our breath before Pastor Nickson Soal came to minister in our area. Pastor Nickson is a Papua New Guinean who serves with Gospel Recordings. He is trained in creating oral media for communicating the Gospel in Papua New Guinean languages. He collected songs from various segments of the Wantoat church in order to produce a worship cassette. The people can't wait to get their hands on it! Pastor Nickson also brought with him some cassettes of Wantoat Bible stories that had been recorded many years ago. We were not sure how people would react to the recordings. But their response overwhelmed us. Church leaders said things like, "Man! That is true Wantoat. The way people spoke Wantoat back then was very clear. These days we mix our language too much with Tok Pisin... We need more of this!" Pastor Nickson is planning to return in August to record some new Bible stories in the Wantoat language. In all there are nine sets of Bible stories that we would like to record. Each cassette will have a companion picture book that corresponds to the stories on the tape. Gifts from a partnering church and school in California are subsidizing the cost of the materials. We hope that at least every Sunday School class in Wantoat will purchase a set of the curriculum. Many people have already said that they will buy the full set of materials once they are available.

We can't stop praising God enough for showing us these two effective strategies – transfer literacy lessons and an oral approach. We feel that these two projects will provide a solid foundation for further ministry.



Wantoat school children contribute songs for the worship cassette. Insert: Church leaders were excited about the Wantoat Bible stories Pastor Nickson (left) distributed.

Future Steps

Our next goal is to complete all the paperwork for Joshua - a birth certificate from Australia, a passport from America and a visa from Papua New Guinea. Then we will be able to return to Ukarumpa. There we will receive some training (a furlough workshop in preparation for our furlough next year and a strategic planning and thinking seminar). We will also provide some training (sharing with others in the branch about what Danny learned at the Scripture Use conference this past spring). Danny also plans to make one or two visits to the Wantoat area before Joshua is old enough to allow the whole family to return.

Scripture Use Conference

In March Danny was invited to attend a Scripture Use conference in England. 117 attendees came from 22 different home countries, representing 29 Christian agencies, serving in 37 countries. It was a great opportunity to learn about recent research and trends in Scripture Use. There were many ideas that can be applied in Papua New Guinea. The conference also provided an invaluable atmosphere for rubbing shoulders with other missionaries serving in similar roles.

Danny was also very excited to see Becca's brother, David Federwitz. David and his wife, Valerie, and their family live in Ghana, West Africa where they are serving in a Scripture Use ministry. Danny was grateful to the Lord for this chance to see family - an all too rare occasion in our line of service.

Praises

- J For the healthy birth of Joshua!
- J That Becca's mother and Danny's mother were able to be here to welcome Joshua. It was a tremendous blessing that each of them could visit.
- J That the literacy lessons and cassette recordings have produced good results so far.
- J That church leaders in our village have taken significant steps to heal divisions in the local congregation.

Prayer Requests

- V That we will continue to be the parents that God wants us to be for Anna and Joshua.
- V That we can complete the paperwork for Joshua and return quickly to Papua New Guinea.
- V That God will give us wisdom as we continue to seek the most effective ways of encouraging our Wantoat friends to read and hear His Word in their own language.

Love,

Danny & Becca

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Recent updates:

More pictures of the literacy hikes, cassette recordings and Joshua Daniel