

FEBRUARY 2018

For a number of years my department, International Media Services, has sent one of our teams, Lauren and Connie Runia, to Papua New Guinea (PNG) to help in media production. Recently they have been making trips to teach islanders how to record and produce media. The following are two excerpts from one of their recent prayer letters.

Training in making Bible apps



“One of the goals for our time in PNG was to train the islands media team in making Bible phone apps so they could create apps for all the New Testaments they’ve recorded so far.

“We were all learning things together, as the Scripture App Builder software is fairly new and we found ourselves running into some software related and file organizing issues that required a fair amount of trouble shooting. It didn’t discourage the

guys though, and they felt like the trouble shooting helped them learn the software even better.

“It was so fun to see their excitement and amazement as they tested the new apps on their phones, listening to the Bible as they watched the highlighted text follow the recording.

“They have completed apps for all the New Testaments they’ve recorded and now have the skills to continue making apps for the New Testaments they’ll be recording next. The new apps are now being loaded onto SD cards to be distributed at upcoming audio Bible dedications as well as in language areas where they’ve already had dedications.”

Reading in the recording process strikes a chord in hearts of bibleless peoples

One of our team members shared with us that many times while they were out recording the New Testaments, the readers would break down crying. He told us of a man who was reading during the Tungag New Testament recording. While he began reading the book of 1 Peter, his voice started quivering. As he read that God in his great mercy gives us an inheritance that will never perish, spoil or fade, and that He shields us by His power as we go through trials, the truths of God's Word filled him with emotion. He began sobbing and cried for 20 minutes before he was able to continue reading.

“During the recording of the Kuot NT, the woman who was reading Acts chapter 2 came to the verses where the Holy Spirit enabled everyone to hear the believers speaking in their own language. She became overwhelmed with emotion and began to cry. It was tears of gratitude, that God would care about people from every language, even the smallest language groups. The Kuot people only number about 2,400. Later that day as they were reviewing the recording and came to those verses again, she broke down once more, crying tears of joy!”

Cancer--an answer to the question of retirement??

I had thought I would work a long time in order to save for a continuing care place (independent, assisted living, nursing care) other than the cheaper ones in Florida. However, medical problems seemed to multiply in 2016 and 2017. Then last December I learned I had cancer, and January 24 I learned it was invasive. The good news is that it is slow-growing and none was found in the lymph nodes. I thank the Lord for that and how He is leading me through this.

Throughout the dental and eyelid problems that started in the fall of 2016, I thought I could eventually get back to writing people as before. But now this cancer diagnosis!

But how can I retire when I have a strong vision and passion for our work?

The thought of retiring now has been perplexing because it seems the Lord has given me a vision and passion for encouraging my department to focus on its academic side. When I arrived here in 2003, I took a class that covered the principles of providing media that's appropriate for each culture. Right now the focus is on producing media, and I'd like to see us become more analytical and academic about media production. (Dr. Pike, my Sunday School teacher before I joined Wycliffe and for years the academic head of Wycliffe, is a model and inspiration.)

Last fall my supervisor approved my plan to have an academic section in the newsletter I edit, and I started planning for that by contacting an SIL Ph.D. anthropologist who serves as a media consultant. He is to start producing articles for the *Vernacular Media Newsletter* (VMN) this fall. I also made some changes to the newsletter format that gives an emphasis to academics.

A possible solution

Retirement in Wycliffe means staying away from the work for at least two months and then volunteering as you wish—as long as you don't work over 20 hours per week. I could retire from Wycliffe and still do some volunteer work. One possibility is to no longer be the editor of VMN but put in some hours to create and maintain an academic portion of the newsletter.

It seems that the big future decisions are still on hold as we decide how best to handle the cancer. In between meeting with doctors, I'll get out the issue of VMN that I had been working on. Then there will be a period of treatment. It looks like the prognosis is good (no chemotherapy needed), and I'll keep working as fatigue from radiation allows. But with this blow, I just might finally decide to retire. We'll see.

How to proceed

Wycliffe will notify my current donors if/when I retire, and I certainly would let everyone on my list know. I can understand donors wanting to redirect their money to someone who is healthy. I have Social Security, money from the savings Wycliffe has made us save, and an inheritance. But if any of you want to keep giving, that's a possibility. After I retire, donations will automatically go into my personal pension fund, from which I understand I can easily make withdrawals. The switch would be seamless for donors; the only change current donors would notice is that they wouldn't get a tax-deductible receipt anymore.

As always, I thank you for being on my team—some for many years. Prayers, financial help, encouragement—amazing. The Lord gave me the call, and you added what has made it possible.

In Christ,
Madelyn
Madelyn Beltz



Praise the Lord, all nations! Extol him, all peoples! Ps. 117:1 (ESV)

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