

TEACHER TRAINING IN MELANESIAN

PIDGIN

by

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Vernacular Bible School Centre - Rintebe

"How can we train pastors and evangelists to carry on the work of the indigenous church if they are illiterate? What do we do about the hundreds of children growing up in our congregations who are unable to read the Bible for themselves? Should geographical location -- proximity to an English school -- be the determining factor in the opportunity for education?"

These and other questions led to the establishment of a Vernacular Bible School Centre at Rintebe in 1964. Located approximately 17 miles east of Goroka in the Bena area, Rintebe was prior to 1964 a registered Primary T school and an English teacher training centre. In 1965 the English training centre was moved to its present site at Balob in Lae, and the vernacular program has continued at Rintebe.

At first, teachers in the field were brought to the centre for short retraining courses. Each succeeding year the courses were lengthened so that now in 1970 there will be a 2-year course upon completion of which the trainees will be prepared to teach a 4-year program in their village Bible schools.

Students are sent by their congregations from all districts of the Territory as well as from some districts in Papua. Because there is such a wide range of language background, instruction is carried on in the only language common to all: Melanesian-Pidgin. Students from the Morobe District are also prepared to teach in a vernacular of their area.

While the main emphasis is on the Bible, and on literacy, other subjects such as Social Studies, Hygiene, Mathematics are also included in the program. Almost all of the books and programs used are produced by the staff.

In addition to attending lectures the students themselves make a large number of their teaching aids. Much of their time is spent in the practice classrooms, where the local children are the pupils. Students also do campus work daily, and are involved in extra-curricular activities such as sports, music and student entertainment.

Upon completion of their work at Rintebe, these men and women will return to their own villages or perhaps be sent to other isolated villages where there are no Bible literacy centres as yet. Although some will have the active support of the locals, many will have to build their own houses, their own schools, and raise their own food. After a full day's work, some will also conduct adult Bible classes in the evenings and church services on Sundays. For a year's service to the community the average salary will be about \$40.

It is upon the foundation of dedicated men and women serving their own people and their larger community that a young country can begin to find its place among the nations of the world.

sentences, construed a variety of interpretations in an unsolicited effort to render them meaningful.

Prior to publishing Dr. Pawley's original article in KIVUNG II/2 I had pointed out to him that one of the senses of bell is - as listed in explaining dictionaries - 'the sound or ringing of the bell' and that he was in error in attributing syntactic structure to a lexical item. Dwight Bolinger's critique of Pawley's article in this issue, in which Bolinger argues with his customary lucidity against the obfuscation of linguistic structure through excessive reliance on the notion of an alleged deep structure in every sentence, seems to confirm my view.

Eric Hamp is an old friend of KIVUNG, even though his 'Yesterday in Oceanic . Today' is his first contribution to the journal. I am happy to report that another Hamp article is due in our next issue.

Ronald Forrest deals with a crucial problem for teachers of TESL and TEFL. His is a voice of experience worth listening to.

Edgar Wolfers has contributed an interesting summary of a minor dialect (?) of English, that of Australian expatriates in T.P.N.G. Perhaps because of its closeness to Australian English it should not be called a dialect, if only to clear the way for the gradually emerging dialect of English spoken in the Territory, that of indigenous Papuan and New Guinean speakers.

While travelling around the Territory I visited the Rintebe Teachers' College of the Lutheran Mission and was greatly impressed by the quality of the teaching, as well as by the perseverance of the teaching staff, who provide instruction without any financial assistance from the Administration, because the language of instruction is Melanesian Pidgin. Yet if you consider that approximately half of all indigenous children still have no opportunity for formal education, the work done by the Rintebe staff is a laudable attempt to fill a gap that the Administration does not seem able to fill in the foreseeable future.

The following language courses - Halia (3c), Kamano (27c), Kuman (31c) and Nasioi (8c) can be obtained from the Technical Studies Office, S.I.L., UKARUMPA. E.H.D. T.P.N.G.
