

To begin with, I served in P.N.G. from 1965 until 1977 as a tribal worker and continue to serve there and elsewhere in the world in the capacity of International Consultant in Ethnomusicology.

What I recall in my early days in the branch was a simplicity of life style. Even administrative offices were made of bush materials with thatch roof. We had access to a group vehicle but never dreamt of using it for other than transportation to our village. We were taken to the site and made an appointment to be picked up months later. We had close fellowship with our colleagues most of whom worked in the Eastern Highlands then, like us, and exchange of information about our peoples was an invaluable learning experience.

One of the most memorable events was our decision to move from the village on the road which had become lukewarm to our purpose in being there, as if we would always be around to teach them how to read or what the scripture said, at any time the desire might come to them. They were told that we had a responsibility to all the Usarufa speakers and not just to one village. By and by a group of men from the remote village on the ridge visited our road village. They came to the house to talk. One of them had earlier been a language helper to Darlene. As they departed they said, "Why don't you come up to our village and live with us and teach us." Taken aback, Darlene explained, "But we have no house there, no place to live." Thinking that was the end of it, the incident was forgotten until, twelve days later, the same band of men joyfully approached us with the news, "Your house is ready." After we recovered from

the shock, we began to think seriously about it and to pray about it. It meant a grueling 8-hr. climb over two ranges and to the top of a third. The women told us how it would pain our legs. At least we could go for a while to look the place over.

I shall never forget that first trek, begun too late in the day to have avoided the afternoon rain, the path up to the forested ridge was so slippery and our jeans so wet and stiff that we could not manage to move. It was very steep, and I remember a brown hand coming down from above me, and taking it, I was dragged to the top. Darlene was dragged attentively by someone else. I was too fatigued and out of breath from the altitude to recall the details.

It was that village on the ridge where we chose to remain. These folk had been entirely forgotten by the world and were eager to learn from us. Several bright adolescents learned to read in 8 weeks anything put before them.

We had no trouble building relationships with the Usarufa people. We depended on them for all of our needs, and they treated us like treasures. We allowed them to teach us about living the Usarufa way, and all of us enjoyed it. In the evenings they would come to our thatch where they felt right at home, since it was a house just like their own. We would sit around the open fire and learn from each other. Sometimes the men told us secrets that we were not to tell the women, and we never did. Many times they sang their songs for us or told us stories. They were pleasant and congenial times. On Saturdays there was more often than not a large feast in one or other of the hamlets. The people always invited us to go with them, and we were flattered to be included. This meant

too that we became acquainted with all the hamlets and villages.

When news of Darlene's death travelled to the ridge they were devastated. Several Usarufa men were pall bearers so all of them knew what had happened but just could not believe it. They had never heard of a white ("red") person dying. I visited them by helicopter and the old warriors who had become like fathers to us held me in a gentle huddle, and we wept and wept. One man gave a horrifying exhibition of what it must have been like to face a death in the old days. He crouched like an animal and rolled in the dirt, throwing handfuls of dust over himself and wailing. It wasn't until later that they understood that Christ had overcome death. I too was overcome and for many, many weeks when my eyes met those of an Usarufa friend, we just wept together. I could not speak the language well enough then to say what I wanted to.

Only supernatural help got us through the translation without Darlene. She had done such a good job of analysis, lexicon, anthropology, and all the tools I needed to build on, but those days in the translation cubicle #4 were grief-ridden and many times in the translation of John's Gospel I had to excuse myself to get control. The fellows who worked with me were young, but very faithful. The one is now the local pastor and a colorful preacher to his own. I still see him and his little brood when I go to New Guinea. Concentrating for long stretches was entirely foreign to their culture, and most days ended with a headache and fatigue. I carried on four or five more hours after they finished at 5:00. I always worked with two at a time to make things move along faster. In four years we completed the Usarufa New Testament. But it was

four more years before it was put into the hands of the people. Glitches in the computer copies, which then had to be mailed from New Guinea to Dallas, made it necessary to proof read every tone mark and word from beginning to end, seven times. All but Corinthians and Revelation were finished before Independence in 1976. At the time there were so many rumors flying about that we expatriots were not sure whether we would be staying in the country.

I recall many humorous events in the village, especially those that dealt with misuse of language and other jokes that are too in-house to be funny to the American public.

The chief translation helper who is now pastor, opened the first carton of Usarufa New Testaments and was radiant with joy. As for the rest of the villagers, I suspected that they might treat this long awaited book as too holy to use, so when we had our presentation my co-workers were instructed to announce that everyone should buy two books, one to read and one to put in their box, where they stored all their valuables.

I suppose there were three key men who were most important in the program: (1) Pastor Imaago always loved anything to do with books and had hung around the house since he was a boy. He was also a talented artist. (2) Tebo wanted earnestly for his people to know about God. He went to the coastal city of Lae, probably at the suggestion of a Lutheran missionary, there he struggled to understand through other languages spoken at the Lutheran Seminary. He contracted malaria and died. (3) Maaroni was the son of an important village man. He was not so spiritually keen as the other

two but was very bright and very quick. He stuck with it until it was finished, and I was so very fortunate to have the loyalty of these fellows who were, in a way, showing their loyalty to Darlene too.

Well, it is getting late, and I have reminisced a lot - about happy times and about the sad days. If you want anything enlarged upon, feel free to ask.

Oh, how did I get into Ethnomusicology?? Through an interest in the history of my instrument, the marimba. I was on a Fullbright Scholarship in Guatemala in 1957 doing the research for this. It was before I called myself a Christian, but I loved being in the Indian villages and encouraging the musicians. At that time the marimba was FORBIDDEN in church. I guess I recognized the need for a theory of ethnic music analysis as I became exposed to linguistic analysis. Never could keep my nose out of music!

Ethnomusicology Accounts

Several episodes follow which involve my own and/or my Wheaton students' experience in Ethnomusicology. Students regularly accompany me when I work as Ethnomusicology Consultant with our WBT field workers.

I have taken student interns twice to East New Britain and quote from a letter written by Joel Karekses, national translator with the Baining people. He refers to one of the students who was assigned the analysis of Baining music. Our final act of analysis, by the way, is to apply our knowledge of the indigenous music system by composing a song in the vernacular style, using vernacular scripture as text. We hope thereby to inspire the local Christian composers to create their own hymns. Joel says:

"I called some of the men to my (house) and I played the cassette that you sent to us. And when it came to the last song that you and other students sang, the men sat quietly and listened to the song. The men were amazed to hear you people singing in their language. After listening to the song they told me that you sang just like you are Baining people. They said that you did a very good work, and you have worked hard to compose the song. They said they would be very happy to hear you people sing some more songs in the Baining style... it was very nice to hear you singing in the language. Thank you for working hard on the Baining music style."

Another quote is from British translator John Davies working with the Kobon people in Madang Province, P.N.G.. I had checked an

analysis of their music which had been done in class at Wheaton College and composed some scripture songs in an attempt to trigger their own creativity.

"The Kobon continue to regard the song you composed as one of their firm favorites, and I am glad to say they have added others too."

The following is the response by a Senegalese Christian made to David Maranz in Senegal when he introduced the concept of indigenous hymns:

"His interest (in traditional music) had been squelched. . . and he had suppressed his interest. When I asked him and complained about Senegalese churches using foreign music he became quite excited. His interest practically exploded. At my encouragement he composed 4 pieces in traditional Wolof idiom (both words and music) . . . words based on the Psalms."

From the area where I took my first Ethnomusicology intern, the Sepik River region of P.N.G., word came eight years later that "the whole area has been writing (composing) Christian songs in their own music."

In 1987 two interns and I spent a couple of months in Kenya. Our hosts on one occasion were Scandinavian translators David and Alice Larsen, and I quote from their letter received later that same year when the Gospel of Mark in the Sabaot language was celebrated.

"One of the highlights was Patrick and Kiboki playing two passages from the Gospel on the Sabaot lyre. When they started playing, the old ladies and men could not sit still. They came out and started dancing and singing along on the refrain and as much of the text as was repeated. Those people would never have come to church, but through their own music they got the message of the need for repentance."

Audrey Payne, translator for the Kamanos in the Eastern Highlands of Papua New Guinea wrote me of her experience teaching from a music primer I wrote for the Eastern Highlands peoples:

"I have started evening music class in our home using your primer, Vida. We've just had 4 lessons this week, and it's going well. Everybody doesn't come every night but most do. . . They are all really enjoying it." (And in a later letter) "Our new venture is to make 15 minute programs on tape of Kamano scripture readings and song for Radio Goroka."

Translator of the Rotokas New Testament Skip Firchow who lived with his wife and children on Bougainville Island for many years wrote this letter posted from Vanuatu concerning scripture songs one of the interns composed:

"You will never know how much the songs mean to us. . . Two Vanuatu men came to our Bible Study Fellowship last Monday night. They had been discussing the sad state of affairs here in this country with little or no vernacular hymns (in traditional style). It was just after I had played some of the

Rotokas tape which had arrived that day that they mentioned it. I think they were deeply impressed, and I imagine even a bit envious of what you all had done for the Rotokas church."

Jack Popies, translator in Brazil, writes about the Canela Indians for whom Ethnomusicologist Tom Avery had composed some songs:

"The big problem during our nightly Bible classes is to get the Indians to stop singing long enough to study the lesson! Nice problem to have!"

Australian translator Elaine Geary and her partner Joan Coleman requested my help a few years ago in developing music for worship among the Moimo people in the Morobe Province, P.N.G. I was able to board a JAARS flight out of Port Moresby in order to pay a visit. A preliminary analysis had already been made of this music system in class at Wheaton, and so I arrived armed with some knowledge of how their traditional songs were structured. Under pressure of a very brief stay, I sat down to compose some songs based on translated scripture. It was a few hours before I could generate any melodic idea at all, but strengthened mentally through the prayers of the translators and their friends, I began to compose later that evening. When we introduced these new songs to the people, their response was disheartening. They could imitate the melodies but would periodically laugh uncontrollably.

That is not the end of the story. When I left there in July I thought I had failed. But when I returned to my teaching position

at Wheaton the end of August a small package awaited me. It was a 5-inch reel of new songs composed by the Moimo people. What I had interpreted as failure proved to have been the registering of shock and amazement on their part, signified by laughter, as they heard their language and music for the first time expressing glory to God.

A similar inspiration took hold in one of the Indian Pueblos of New Mexico in 1989 when the composition of a student intern inspired one of the Pueblo singers to create new music for the Christmas service.

I receive letters from countries all around the world written by those who have read my books or articles on indigenous hymn-making or who have heard through the grape-vine of our work in music. One just received is from missionaries to the Arab world:

"After hearing them voice their greatest needs and then sharing how we might be able to help them, everyone was enthusiastic, seeing the importance of encouraging ethnic music for Arabic and Berber Christian worship."

A pastor at Irian Jaya, Indonesia, announced to his congregation that it was no longer appropriate to sing Vali (a neighboring language) or Indonesian songs, but they must sing to God in Kosarek (their own language). I had taken 3 interns to work there in Kosarek music.

I feel we are listening too much to one another in a search for methods and reason, trials and results. I am not putting this as clearly as I want, but instead of pooling our ignorance, so to

speaking, why do we not listen to what composers and musicians of the third world have to say? The moment we take charge of music in someone else's culture we ostracize them. Arthur Appianda, Director of Prisoner Outreach Ministries in Africa, says:

"It is no wonder, then, that those churches in Africa which allow certain forms of expression indigenous to Africa are experiencing rapid growth while those clinging to the 18th century view are gradually phasing themselves out. This is a real-life illustration that a church can be relevant only if its worship experience is consistent with the culture in which it seeks to reflect Christ."

A pastor and composer from Cameroon Jean-Claude Ndamba Eboa came to Wheaton to take the Ethnomusicology course. He wrote for the Wheaton Record:

"Just like language, it is time for anyone who wants to become a missionary to study Ethnomusicology so that he will learn how to understand and appreciate the music of other cultures. Just like language, the mission churches must start using native music for their worship.

Just like language, missionaries must help the natives to appreciate their own music. They cannot do it by themselves now because they were told. . . that their music was not good. So it is through missionaries that they will also learn that their music is good for their worship."