



PNG's First Family of Authors

PAPUA New Guineans keep breaking records and changing the status quo by elevating to new heights, discovering new grounds in leaps and bounds.

Wantok Newspaper ran a story a few weeks ago on the 'PNG'S First Family of Authors', the Yareki family who turned up to display their books at Bavarako Primary School to mark the National Book Week celebrations.

The chief author and the head of the family of authors, John Yareki said that they were at the school not to sell their books at that time, but to create an awareness and interest in the children to become writers. In return they will go home and convince their parents to buy them the set of books which were all written by this family of authors.

The purchase of these books was used as entry into a series of coaching for young children as well as whole families to start writing their own books. The 9-pack sell for K1,000 to families and individuals who aspire to be authors or who want to be encouraged to be authors. The books have an accompanying CD that the learner or reader can hear the author reading along with the story book.

In February of this year, this family launched their books at the Rev. Sioni Kami Memorial United Church in the National Capital District. They featured the family as well as other people who have been recruited and have started writing their own story books as well.

"There is nothing too hard that we cannot do," said John Yareki, the chief author and director of the organisation.

The Governor General of Papua New Guinea, Grand Chief Sir, Michael Ogio officiated that launching of the pack of books and was all praise for the family, himself being a former teacher, knows very well the value of reading and writing. Sir Michael commented on the weakness in the society and the families in terms of encouraging reading and writing in English and thus applauded the Yareki family for their initiative and innovation of being the first of a kind.

"Eddy and Helen Yareki are the youngest authors, having started writing at a very young age of 5 and 6, they had their books published at the ages of 10 and 14, respectively. Their parents are also authors having published their own books in 2012. The Yareki children continue to provide inspiration to many young boys and girls to take up the art of book writing and are also assisting many children write books out of their homes. Your efforts and achievement, is highly commendable. You have set a benchmark for present and future generations of our country, and as a positive role model to your peers and others alike, to look to and emulate. For this I congratulate you." Grand Chief, Sir Michael said.

Mista Yareki said both the child who is good in English and the child who is not good in English can write books if they were coached and guided properly.

He has a true story to tell because his two children Eddie and Helen are both writers and they both wrote their own books while they are still young.

Interestingly, the title of the book that Eddie Yareki wrote about the fish got me thinking it was about an 'emperor' as in 'a king', when I first sighted it. However upon further enquiry with the author himself, I found out that it was the story of a red emperor fish which he caught to his own surprise."

Eddie recalled that as a young city dweller, he loved it when he was taken to his dad's village in Dobu, Milne Bay, where he had lots of exciting experiences including having the experience of catching a fish on a fishing line.

Eddie simply wrote about his experience and captured in the other adventures of a young 6 year old into a simple hard cover book that added to the library of the family of authors.

Papua New Guinea is blessed with so much diversity in every sense of the word, and yet we do not have enough captured in books to be kept for future generation or even to enhance the promotion of tourism and education.

Into the 40 years of our being independent, we only have much of the books written by those who were born and educated before the independence. A few of those have passed on, however after 40 years PNG is blessed with much in the education of teachers, writers, journalists, lawyers, artists, economists etc. These categories of people have the knowledge and ability to write about their surroundings, cultures, experiences, etc. and yet it is not being done.

Such are positive initiatives to sustainable development of our human capital as well as promoting economic independence of individuals while preserving our cultural heritage and capturing the beautiful untapped environment before the destruction of today's world get to it.



Eddie the author of, "The Emperor of the Island" gets a handshake from the Governor General, Grand Chief, Sir Michael Ogio.



Governor General, Grand Chief Sir Michael Ogio cuts the ribbon to mark the launch of the PNG's First Family of Authors books.



The PNG's First Family of Authors display their books with the Governor General, Sir Michael Ogio and Lady Esmie Ogio. Photo - Government house media

Your Thoughts...



Your thoughts about the 40th Independence Anniversary



Name: Ben David
Age: 19
Home Province: Eastern Highlands
Employment: Security with Starvii Security Service
Dream Job: Supervisor
What do you say about the 40th Independence?

I'm support the idea to celebrate 40th Independence anniversary and hope it will be spectacular but even better than the Pacific Games opening ceremony. And I am proud to be a Papua New Guinean because we have been free for 40 years now.



Name: Deborah Kana
Age: 16
Home Province: Morobe mix Madang
School: Bavarako Primary School
Employment: Student
Dream Job: Lawyer
What do you say about the 40th Independence?

Independence Day marks the day we got independence back in 1975 September 16th. It gives me great pleasure and privilege to be a Papua New Guinean and to know my culture and identity from where I come from. We all should be proud of our country having its 40th anniversary celebrations this year.



Name: Noel Auo
Age: 21
Home Province: Central province
Employment: Security with Starvii Security Services
Dream Job: Soldier
What do you say about the 40th Independence?

I think they should include rural people especially women, youth and children in the celebration and make it more inviting for people to attend. People should take time to visit their families and friends and lastly stay out of trouble and avoid risky activities such as drink and drive. And let's make this a memorable celebration where we come together as a united nation to celebrate the 40 years of being free.



Name: Wynita Roa
Age: 10
Home Province: Central, Madang & Morobe mix
Employment: Student
School: Taurama Primary School
Dream Job: Air Hostess
What do you say about the 40th Independence?

I feel happy to celebrate the 40th Independence. I'm happy to be free so I can go to school and do anything I want.



Battle of the Bands

By Josiah Kana – Grade 12 Musical Arts student - Kila Kila Secondary School

KILA KILA Secondary School, last but not the least!

Well can anything good come out of Kila Kila Secondary School? Regarded as one of the most hostile and a down cast school in the Nation's Capital Port Moresby, Kila Kila Secondary school, located in the Port Moresby South Electorate made a name for itself when a group of Arts Students who are fond of music went into the Battle of the Bands and won in two divisions of the competition.

Battle of the Bands, a musical competition among the schools in the city was organised by the Don Osco, Technical and Vocational Training Institutions as part of the Don Bosco 200 Anniversary Celebrations. Other schools in the city were invited to participate in a competition to find the best musical band among the schools on Wednesday 12th August.

Kila Kila Secondary school senior band known as the "South Sides" who were the last to perform won the competition to take the first prize of K1,500. Unexpectedly, the junior band from Kila Kila known as the 'Square Roots Band' came second in their category with the winning prize of K800.

St. Joseph Catholic International School came first in the Junior division with their songs "Fire Flies" and received K1,000.

South Sides Band of Kila Kila and Square Roots didn't expect to win because at their school there are no proper instruments for them to practice but they endeavoured to do their best with what they had.

At the final presentation, they only had to play the keyboard, drums, base guitar with three vocalists singing. This was all they had to prepare with. The journey to the winning side was tough for both the senior and the junior bands because they received very minimal support from the administration.

It was unfortunate that they didn't have instruments to practice with but also on the day of the auditions as well as the final day of competition, there was no transport to take them to the Don Bosco School hall at Gabutu for the concert so they had to walk half an hour from their school to the venue.

Despite all these, the two bands won the competition to the surprise of their teachers but with the great support from their fellow students and supporters. In good faith, the moneys won was shared between the school and the student participants.

The South Side band members come from various backgrounds and inspirations and hail from different ethnicity but their love of music binds them together as a family. That sense of belonging and unity is the biggest contributor to winning a competition.

"Now the music department in the Arts school gained more recog-



Members of the South Side Band of Kila Kila Secondary School : Gerard Ketan (Band leader), Josiah Kana (Base Guitarist), Brian Roberts (Drums man), Nathalie Hau, Lead Vocalist/Assistant Band leader, Ernest Harold, Lead Vocalist, Solomon Mope, Back-up vocalist. Photo: Sinclair Maliwai – President KKSS Magazine Committee.

nition from the school administration, especially the principal," says Gerard the band leader.

A week later on the 19th of August, the Governor of National Capital Powes Parkop and the Member for Port Moresby South Justin Tkatchenko were invited to the school to launch a teachers' housing scheme. On that day the

two bands combined and played some popular music as well as the songs which won them the first and second place at the concert a week earlier.

Well guess what? Their musical skills attracted the attention of the two Members of Parliament and so the Governor and the Minister invited the Kila Kila band to be one of

the entertainer groups on Independence Day celebrations.

Wow! What a celebration for the young budding talents! Performing on stage during 40 years Independence Day celebrations is indeed a dream come true! Go KKSS, show the world that SOMETHING GOOD can indeed come out of you!

Stop the Waigani Madness

This is an edited version of the Press Statement from the National Cultural Commission in reference to the contents of an advertisement in the daily newspapers regarding the activities planned for the National Repentance Day on Wednesday 26 August 2015.

Some time ago the national government recognized the need for increased spiritual engagement in the life of its citizens which resulted in the declaration of the National Prayer Day.

This day had been observed for some years and only very recently came to be known as National Repentance Day. Going by the National Parliament Speaker's statement on page 26 on the National Newspaper on 24th August 2015, it seems we now want to change the name to "National Destruction Day". By the tone of this statement, a larger part of this destruction targets the cultures of the indigenous peoples of Papua New Guinea.

On the basis of the above, the National Cultural Commission is concerned about this attempt to create the "National Destruction Day", under the pretext of National Repentance Day. We are very alarmed by statements which seem to incite violence against the cultures of the people of Papua New Guinea. In quoting and paraphrasing parts of scripture, the statement clearly advocates for the "breaking down" of places of idolatry places of worship, the "smashing" of sacred stones, the "cutting down" of idolatry poles and the "burning" of idols in a fire. The statement summarizes the above in this way; "break down", "smash", "cut down" and "burn".

We condemn the call to violence against the cultures of the peoples of Papua New Guinea. If as we suspect, the violence against culture will involve a public display of destruction by burning or other means, we condemn this in the most strongest terms. We consider this action to be criminal and call upon the appropriate authorities such as the police to arrest those who are involved in this perpetration.

We take our stand in this matter on three main grounds;

Constitutional Mandate of the National Cultural Commission.

A number of institutions were created by Government to be responsible for the cultures of the people of Papua New Guinea, such as the National Cultural Commission and the National Museum and Art Gallery. The intentions of Government also include those provisions in the Organic Laws which refer to the administration and maintenance of culture at the Provincial and Local levels of gov-



Parliament House - Haus Tambaran

ernment.

The importance of the traditional cultures of the people of Papua New Guinea in the nation-state and nation-state building is highlighted in a number of areas of the National Constitution. Firstly it takes a prominent place in the Preamble, which reads;

"We the people of Papua New Guinea,

United in one nation

Pay homage to the memory of our ancestors – the source of our strength and origin of our combined heritage

Acknowledge the worthy customs and traditional wisdoms of our people – which have come down to us from generation to generation

Pledge ourselves to guard and pass on to those who come after us

Our noble traditions and the Christian principles that are ours now....."

Reference to culture appears again in the Goals and Directive Principles of the Constitution. This is in goals No5 of the Constitution. Of particular note in goal and directive principle No5 are items 3 and 4, which read;

(3) Recognition that the cultural, commercial and ethnic diversity of our people is a positive strength, and for the fostering of a respect for, and

appreciation of, traditional ways of life and culture, including language, in

all their richness and variety, as well as for a willingness to apply these

ways dynamically and creatively for the tasks of development; and

(4) Traditional villages and

communities to remain as viable units of Papua

New Guinean society, and for active steps to be taken to improve their

cultural, social, economic and ethical quality.

The references to the cultures and traditions of the people of Papua New Guinea in the National Constitution are the bases for the mandate given by Government to the national cultural institutions such as the National Cultural Commission to administer and maintain the cultures of the people of this country. This is translated into the functional goals as stated in Section 4 (a) to (g) of the National Cultural Commission Act 1994. Of particular note is sub-section (a) which reads;

"to assist and facilitate preserve, protect, develop and promote the traditional cultures of the indigenous peoples of Papua New Guinea".

Given our above mandate, we have that responsibility to protect the cultures and traditions of the people of Papua New Guinea, from anyone, including any violence that might be perpetrated by anyone purporting to be acting in line with doctrinal scriptures.

We are particularly concerned about the kind of reverberating effects any action which might be taken at the national level; on the cultures and traditions in the provincial and local areas. On the one hand, the actions can be seen as licence for cultural item owners or custodians to desecrate or destroy these items themselves. On the other hand, it can be seen as licence to anyone at all to destroy anything and everything which might be defined as idol or relating idolatry practice.

We want to assure our people that despite this, these cultures

and traditions remain protected under the National Constitution. And that no one should see the strategies devised under the pretext of National Repentance Day, as giving licence for the desecration and destruction of cultural property.

Violation of Section 45 of the National Constitution – on freedom of conscience, thought and religion.

This section comprises of 5 parts, and particular note should be made of parts (1), (3), (4) and (5). This section reads;

(1) Every person has the right to freedom of conscience, thought and religion and the practice of his religion and beliefs, including freedom to manifest and propagate his religion and beliefs in such a way as not to interfere with the freedom of others, except to the extent that the exercise of that right is regulated or restricted by a law that complies with Section 38 (general qualifications on qualified rights).

(2) No person shall be compelled to receive religious instruction or to take part in a religious ceremony or observance, but this does not apply to the giving of religious instruction to a child with the consent of his parent or guardian or to the inclusion in a course of study of secular instruction concerning any religion or belief.

(3) No person is entitled to intervene unsolicited into the religious affairs of a person of a different belief, or to attempt to force his or any religion (or irreligion) on another, by harassment or otherwise.

(4) No person may be compelled to take an oath that is contrary to his religion or belief, or to take an oath in a manner or form that is contrary to his religion or belief.

(5) A reference in this section to religion includes a reference to the traditional religious beliefs and customs of the peoples of Papua New Guinea.

Continued persecution and genocide of the cultures of the people of Papua New Guinea.

We strongly believe that what is happening today is nothing new to Papua New Guinea. Instead, historical records show that since the first outsiders arrived on our shores (including the foreign denominational missions), there has been continued persecution of the cul-

tures and traditions of the people of Papua New Guinea. In some cases these have resulted in cultural genocide, mostly permanent.

The more better known of these is the cultural genocide known as "The Vailala Madness", a phenomena which swept the Gulf of Papua coastline between 1919 and 1922. This experience decimated the cultures of this part of the country and from which the area has never recovered. In the main this involved the destruction of all cultural properties, including the men's houses and the items that went with them. The destruction was instigated by local pastors who believed they were doing it in accordance with biblical scriptures.

The Vailala madness took a rigid line in the abandonment of the great cycle of institutions that were formerly a centre of social life in the Papuan Gulf. The cycle known as the hevehe and semese would take over a decade to complete and involved the building of a huge men's cultic house. Known as the *eravo*, in which were put ritual paraphernalia that were prohibited to women. The Vailala Madness destroyed the paraphernalia and the first step towards this was the display of the forbidden items to the non-initiated.

It is clear that Christianity which had been introduced by the Rev. James Chalmers I the late 1890s had a profound effect on the people and it is believed that many ideas of the moral code of the movement stemmed from these teachings.

What happened along the Papuan Gulf coastline took place about 100 years ago. However, between then and now, we know of many similar incidents which have happened and are still happening in many parts of the country. People are being compelled, coerced and even openly forced to abandon their cultural practices and traditions which have been labelled as being heathen and Satanic. We have accounts of many kinds of madness which have swept and are sweeping many parts of the country. In this context then, what we are witnessing now at the national level is part of this madness and would be fittingly called the "Waigani Madness". This madness has to stop.

The Aliya

Apart from the above, the matter of the *aliya*, as publicised in the newspaper together with the statement is a matter of concern to all of us as it seems it has been tactfully put into the occasion of the National Repentance Day.

Some of the world's first climate change refugees

By Esther Bralyn Wani

GLOBAL Warming had arrived in Papua New Guinea back in the 1900s. However, it was seen as another foreign issue that was affecting other parts of the world and not PNG. Unfortunately, people have been facing the effects of global warming in 1984 in the Carteret Islands on the east of Bougainville.

A population of 1,200 who lived once on the coral raised atolls of Carterets were displaced and scattered all over the mainland of Bougainville when some generous people and the Catholic Church offered land to them to live a normal life.

The islanders have been struggling for the last 30 years to survive the rise in the sea level. They have built sea walls and planted mangroves to prevent the high tides to washing away homes, food gardens, contaminate water supply and affect their livelihood, but it was a futile exercise.

One of the islanders, Ursula Rakova when asked how the people managed to live a normal life when the Islands are sinking said, "It is difficult to live a normal life on the Carterets when the islanders hardly have food to live on each day".

She said the Carteret started to really witness the changes on the shoreline's degradation and erosion in 1984, when Huene Isles was divided in half by the sea. She said it was also the time when the then North Solomon Provincial Government endorsed a study to be conducted by the University of Papua New Guinea to provide statistical analysis on the situation of the Carterets.

Some of the main impacts on the islands are; shoreline erosion and degradation, salt water intrusion into the food gardens, inundation of water wells, reef and coral bleaching, loss of land to about 50-60 me-

ters, loss of food security and the loss of the main staple food crop on the island, the giant swamp taro.

"We started noticing these problems when the coconut trees, other fruit trees and palm trees were falling down continuously, frequent storm surges and strong winds, very strong currents which destroyed much of the beach trees and plants and of course when Huene became Huene 1 and Huene 2.

These islanders need a home where the children will get a proper education, have a decent meal with the family and live an ordinary life. They have watched their homes being destroyed by climate change. However, they are the ones to take the fall first and nothing has been done to assist them get their lives back.

Ms. Rakova said they have been without government's intervention since 2007; the ABG Government has intervened in the Carteret Integrated Relocated program in Tinputz.

"The Catholic Diocese of Bougainville has gifted 4 relocation sites for Carteret Islanders to alleviate the suffering faced by the people due to lack of food. The ABG must support this program as it complements the efforts of the Government," she said.

The islanders have been relocated to Tinputz in the mainland of Bougainville to start a new life from what was lost. However, the families that went there had to return to the Carteret Islands due to civil conflicts, and hostility from their neighbors. It is more than just finding a place or home for them.

These people are still there in an Island in PNG that is facing the dreadful effects of climate change and trying so hard to overcome each days struggles while many people still think that it is a foreign issue that is happening somewhere else in the world.

The Carterets islands. (internet)



Sea breaking into the beach front.



Coconut trunks now sleeping in the rising sea.



Dead coconut stumps wasting in the sun.



Coconut trees coming out of their roots.