

FOCUS ON TRANSLATORS

The newly independent nation of the *Solomon Islands* consists of a population of around 200,000 people living on a group of large and small islands to the east of Papua New Guinea. More than 80 different languages are spoken. The island of Malaita is one of the larger islands of the group, and a number of the largest languages are spoken there. One of these is known as *Lau*, which is spoken by some 10,000 people in the north-east part of the island. (It is also understood by many speakers of a neighbouring language.)

A Bible translation project has been going on in Lau for some time, with the goal of completing a new translation of the New Testament during the next 3 years. The translator is a Solomon Islander, a native speaker of Lau, and he is being assisted by an overseas Catholic priest who also speaks the language. At intervals of about 6 or 8 weeks the translator spends some time discussing his work with a translation consultant of the Solomon Islands Translation Advisory Group (SITAG).

This project is interesting in that the translator is following the lectionary which is used by the two main churches in his area—Catholic and Church of Melanesia, which claim some 80% of the population. This lectionary follows a 3-year cycle, and includes 41% of the New Testament. Week by week the passages for the following Sunday are being duplicated and distributed to the 100 or so churches for use in their services.

Years A and B of the lectionary have been completed already, and year C should also be completed by the end of 1983. The translations are finding good acceptance in the churches. Besides the lectionary passages complete translations of Mark and the epistles of John have been made, and they are to be published soon. The plan for the next two years is to translate the other passages not included in the lectionary and thus produce a complete New Testament.