



The

Storyboard

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Just What is a “Support Worker?”

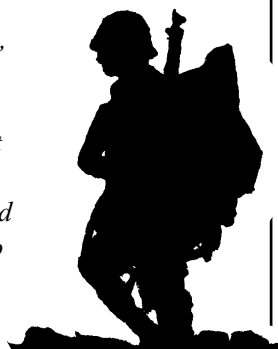
by Sandra Schofield

The Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor December 7, 1941 identified a weakness in the U.S. armed services – the need for skilled tradesmen who could also fight. Shortly thereafter authorization was given to recruit men from the construction trades and then give them some military training so their skills could be adapted to military needs. The result was the establishment of Naval Construction Battalions. These soon became known as the “Seabees,” a derivative from the first letters of Construction Battalion.

In the Pacific, units of Seabees provided a crucial service as they worked around the clock to clear jungle growth, creating airstrips literally overnight for the Allied planes to land in strategic positions for refueling and maintenance. They were given tough assignments in an unfamiliar tropical climate and, often without adequate equipment, figured out innovative techniques to get the job done. In addition to building and repairing airstrips, they built ocean ports, roads, hospitals, warehouses, dormitories and the list goes on. Besides the ultimate outcome of the war, which many attribute in part at least to the efforts of the Seabees, evidences of their endeavors still abound in Papua New Guinea.

For similar reasons the support personnel of Pioneer Bible Translators are a necessary arm of the Bible translation and literacy process. Skilled men and women who have worked in home countries as bookkeepers, school teachers, computer specialists, administrators, carpenters, and mechanics are essential in order to keep the work progressing. Just as the efforts of the Seabees were often “behind the scenes”, so is much of the work of our support personnel. They may not be the ones actually serving on the front lines as the Gospel penetrates a culture for the first time, but their contribution is what keeps the planes coming to bring supplies and medicine, vehicles running, and what turns the translated page into books.

Take a look inside for a glimpse at why some of our support personnel choose to use their skills serving in Papua New Guinea.



Drawing by Cindy Davis

Announcing the Arrivals of...

We are pleased to announce that we have two new couples with us in Papua New Guinea! **Bob and Jacque Harper** will be serving as part of our support staff in Madang. After doing language surveys, **Mark and Diane Shreve** plan to serve as Bible translators. Both couples are currently attending the Pacific Orientation Course. We will tell you more about them in our Summer issue.

Dear Mom and Dad,

I just want to write this letter to tell you what it has been like having you leave the country to be missionaries. To be honest, it was a little unsettling at the beginning. I mean, most parents raise their kids knowing that they will have to “let their kids go.” You aren’t like most parents though. Instead of letting your kids go, you went. Do you know what it is like to experience “empty nest syndrome” before you even have kids? Every time I fill out a form with a section labeled “Permanent Address,” I’m forced to ask what “permanent” means. Do you know how few people understand what you did? Yet, I’ve always had a peace in my heart, peace that only comes from God, given when His children are being obedient.

Since you left, I now know what it means to “sell all that you have... and follow Me.” I know you left us because of love—love for God and your family. You have never been like most parents. You have always tried to do things a different way—God’s way. Granted, you have failed at this from time to time, but I have never doubted your sincerity in desiring to follow God’s will.

Without the love of Jesus, leaving your home to go to a far off land doesn’t make sense. As Christians, God doesn’t ask us to do things that make sense. He asks us to be obedient. Thank you so much for teaching me this, not only with your words, but with your actions as well. I love you Mom and Dad, and I know you love me—that’s one of the reasons you left.

*Your homeless son (and proud of it),
Jacob*

Jacob Robinson is the adult son of David and Chris.



Investment in Things Eternal

by Jim Davis

Missions, in one form or another, has always been a part of my life. I grew up a missionary kid in Zambia and returned as a single missionary straight out of Bible college. Later, after marrying and starting a family, my wife and I returned to the U.S. for a period of about ten years. During this time we were involved in various local church ministries. As is often the case, it became necessary to find supplementary sources of income. This led to my involvement in the golf business, and motivated my wife, Cindy, to pursue opportunities as a freelance artist.

We were praying about a return to the mission field. The golf business proved to be very lucrative and indicated great

financial possibilities; however, pursuing the American Dream was never an end in itself for us. I sold the golf business and we came to Papua New Guinea to serve as support personnel. This role allows me to make use of my Bible training in the form of leadership training and encouragement to the local church in this country, as well as provide pastoral support to the missionaries themselves. I am also allowed to put my administrative skills and business experience to work in the PBT office here in Madang. Cindy has found there will be plenty of opportunity to

put her artistic skills to work as well. There are

moments when I find myself reflecting on what might have come of that business had we chosen to stay put. But I know in my heart what we would have gained would have been hay and stubble in the end, and the investment we now make is in things eternal.



I Wouldn't Trade it for Anything

by Kirby Weythman



I sometimes get asked, "Why are you working overseas?" Sometimes I ask myself that. Why go through all the stress of moving to another culture that is hard to understand, at times incomprehensible to me? I could have a comfortable 8 to 5 job in the US, have gotten a couple of raises by now, and be living quite well.

The answer you may expect is that *God* called me to the mission field, and *that* is certainly true. But in my case He didn't call with a voice out of heaven saying, "I am sending YOU to Papua New Guinea."

God's call on my life has always been much subtler than that. I have been led along by the chances He has laid before me and the adventurous spirit He gave me.

You know, I think I can blame everything on my parents. Because they came to Papua New Guinea to work with PBT when I was a child, my worldview was changed. Because of them I knew how much of this world I have not seen and how many different ways there are of looking at things. Because of them I also realized the responsibility I have to spread the life-changing message of Jesus Christ.

So I guess to answer the question, "Why am I here?" I would have to say because my parents before me obeyed the Lord's call to serve Him in another country and they didn't hesitate to pack up the family of seven and go.

That is why today I turn wrenches and wield a hammer in Papua New Guinea instead of Spokane, Washington. I wouldn't trade it for anything.



Jim Davis teaching Bible stories

You've Got a Job to Do

by Lori Witham

What does the word "ministry" bring to mind for you? How about "career"? Before God led me into mission work, I would have put those two words into separate categories. I would have said that while working to pay the rent, I could also serve God in a ministry at my church. But it would be more of a sideline to my life. When I graduated from high school and was going into the working world, I asked God to be used by Him. But I never considered my career to be my ministry to God.

God knew otherwise. When I thought I had made an ordinary career choice as secretary and word processing operator, He was giving me ten years of training for work overseas to do desktop publishing for Bible translators. I later learned that, like every Christian, my entire life is a ministry to be used by God. I learned that He has assigned each of us our own personal role – our ministry – in order to do our part to fulfill Jesus's Great Commission, that every person in the world may come to know of His saving grace.



Can't Live With Them, Can't Live Without Them

by Jan Messersmith



Maddog gives Murphy a little attitude adjustment. (1981)

It's hard to imagine how we ever got along without computers. When Eunice and I first came to Madang in 1981, our office equipment consisted of a rusty manual typewriter and a fairly accurate mechanical adding machine. The office fax machine hadn't been invented yet, and a copy machine . . . forget it! We brought with us one of the first small computers available. It was called an IMSAI. We named it Murphy. I'm addicted to nicknames, having come to be known as Maddog in the Army. The name Murphy seemed to be appropriate for any computer. (*Murphy's Law* states: Anything that can go wrong *will* go wrong.) It had two giant eight inch floppy disk drives, a big green screen, and a hundred pound printer that used cute little things called daisy wheels with the letters on the ends of the petals. Murphy soon succumbed to the moist salt air and we were left computerless.

By 1983 our group had decided to purchase a mini-computer. The minis were mankind's first feeble attempt to manufacture computers that regular people could use. For the techno-weenies out there, it was a DEC PDP-11/73. I can clearly remember praying while looking at the four foot high stack of manuals that came with it. I had never even seen one of those machines before. We did get it all working, and it proved very useful, however difficult it was to learn to use. It was fairly easy to network it, so by the mid Eighties we had five terminals connected to it. We ran a great deal of linguistic material through it, all of our admini-

strative paperwork, our newsletters, and our accounting system. It was, however, very expensive equipment to purchase, and also expensive to maintain.

Because so much of our critical work is done in remote locations, we needed to get information recorded in a way that a computer could understand. Enter the Radio Shack Model 100! This little machine was proof that if there are enough people with a job that needs to be done, somebody will invent a machine to do it. It was a kind of stone age laptop. The translators used the Model 100s to enter village stories and translated scripture, and to perform simple computing tasks such as writing letters, keeping addresses, and yes, playing games. They could record information on audio cassette recorders and send it to town where we could read it (with prayer and holding your mouth just right) and transfer it to the DEC for heavy duty processing. We were thankful, during this period, for what we could do with these machines, but at the same time exasperated by the knowledge that others were doing much more with different equipment. By this time the PC had been invented by IBM and instantly copied by others. We were held back by our reluctance to let go of our investment in machinery and the knowledge of how to use it.

The single most important factor in our decision to change to PCs was the invention of desktop publishing. This technology was impossible to resist. When Eunice

It was a kind of stone age laptop.

and I returned from furlough in 1988, we brought back with us a personal computer, a Hewlett Packard ScanJet scanner, and a Hewlett Packard LaserJet II printer. (Both of the HP machines still work today.) As we learned to use these machines, we began to depend more and more on them to work efficiently. We wrote an accounting program in BASIC, which we used until 1998. We also produced many other programs to help in office management. The Summer Institute of Linguistics (Wycliffe Bible Translators) was producing a great deal of software for the linguistics and translation area, all of which they made available to us. During the period of 1988 to 1990 our operation was completely transformed in every area of effort by the presence of personal computers.

Today, we have nine PCs in our office alone. They are networked together so that we can easily share information and printers. We just purchased a Konica network printer. It's like a big heavy duty copy machine that shows up on your computer just like a printer. We used it to produce this issue of *The Storyboard*. Our translation teams all have at least one computer and some have as many as three. We transfer information by email attachments if we're 'connected' and by floppy diskette if we're not.

It's hard to say what may be in the future. At this point we're waiting for satellite phone technology to become affordable to us. Truly rugged and dependable laptop computers still seem to be unavailable. Wonderful new gadgets lay just over the horizon. We'll have difficulty deciding that we need them and can afford them. Then after a year, we'll wonder how we ever got along without them.

Current PBT PNG Support Personnel:

- **Jim and Cindy Davis** - Church Growth
- **Bob and Jacque Harper** - Currently in orientation course
- **Steve and Rhonda Hayward** - Director
- **Jan and Eunice Messersmith** - Finance and Assistant Director (Eunice), and Data Processing (Jan)
- **Diane Miller** - Children's Education
- **David and Chris Robinson** - Advisor for PNG Bible Translation Association (David), and PBT Office (Chris)
- **Sandra Schofield** - Logistics
- **Kirby Weythman** - Technical Services
- **Lori Witham** - Desktop Publishing

The Word Made an Impact

by Chris Urton

A couple years after Lori and I were married, I started working at a new job. I made some new acquaintances at work. One of the things my "new friends" and I did after work was to go out and have a couple of cold ones while we shot some pool at a neighborhood establishment.

Going to bars two or three times a week was becoming routine. I began smoking marijuana occasionally just for some extra "fun." After a couple hours of drinking, I would go to the babysitter's to pick up my little daughter, Stephanie. I didn't even think twice about driving drunk with her in the car. I was playing Russian roulette with this precious gift that God had given us. Thankfully, I made it home with her every time.

One Friday, I stayed a little too late at the bar. The babysitter called Lori at her workplace to tell her that I hadn't picked up Stephanie yet. Lori then had to start calling the bars I frequented. However, by that time I had picked up Steph and gone home. Lori arrived later crying and very upset. That was how my actions were

making my wife feel. It broke me. We both yelled at each other. I locked myself in the bedroom.

I didn't know what to do. I didn't know what the future held. Lori had a *Living Bible* in our bedroom. I knew that the book of *Revelation* was about the future. So I started reading. As I read my way through this book I discovered the condition I was in. I had no hope because I didn't have Jesus in my life.

There was a change after that Friday. We started going to church that Sunday. Several weeks later I was baptized.

Perhaps I made that decision because I had God's Word in an understandable form. I don't know if I would have picked up the Bible if it had been an older version. If so, I don't know if I could have understood it well enough to make that decision.

This is the reason why we are in Papua New Guinea with Pioneer Bible Translators. People need to be able to learn of God's love for them in their own language. Our prayer is that someday we can give someone the Bible in his heart language and that it will make a difference in his life.

Chris and Lori Urton, along with their children, Stephanie and Ryne, spent over a year working in our Madang office. They are currently living in Lincoln, Illinois. Pray for the Urtons as Stephanie finishes high school and the rest of the family prepare to return to Papua New Guinea in August to serve as Bible translators.



Chris talking on the PBT short wave radio

To all of our wonderful support team members in Madang,

I woke up this morning thanking the Lord for you. Yesterday William Butler and I were discussing how that, in terms of translation output, this has been one of the most productive months ever in the history of the PBT PNG branch. This morning my heart was overflowing with thanks to the Lord for His blessing. And I just kept getting back to the intense gratefulness for the many ways you all facilitate and enable us translators to do what we've come here to do. This last month you encouraged me and blessed me in so many ways. Thank you for your patience and understanding. Thank you for your intercession on our behalf. Thank you for your professional skill and excellent standard of work. Thank you for your loving servants' hearts.

I pray that you never lose sight of how you are connected to front line, grass-roots ministry to the language groups of this country. And I pray that you will never lose the sense of how much we translation and literacy teams need you. Our lives and ministries are inextricably intertwined. Thank you for being there for us.

*Love in Christ,
Marsha Relyea*



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