



The

Storyboard

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A TRIBUTE

by William Butler

HOW DID SHE DIE ?

In early 1995 cancer was discovered in her body and even radical surgery did little to slow it down. Yet, in spite of the advancing cancer and pain, she spent the rest of the year continuing her ministry among women throughout the Churches of Christ. Though she had never had the opportunity for formal training, those who worked alongside her recognized her gifts for teaching, leading, and ministering to women. Even after surgery, as the cancer spread and pain became her constant companion, she never ceased using those gifts. She willed herself to carry on. She encouraged others. She led workshops to train others to minister, to have better families, to achieve their potential for God.

As her strength failed, there came a point when she could not leave her bed for long. So she wrote Bible studies and lessons to be used by others. Then she made sure her husband typed them, so that she would know they were finished before her death. She wrote good-bye letters to those missionaries who had encouraged and worked with her. She prayed, "Father, if you want me to live, it is up to you. This work you've given me is your work. You see that I am suffering greatly but this has not stopped me from doing your work. Please, Father, be gracious unto me, so that this hard work I have done does not come to nothing."

At last she came to the hospital knowing she would never leave alive. That evening from her bed in the public ward, with her husband at her side, she began to loudly speak the Gospel to other patients, encouraging them to commit their lives to God.

Concerned about the possible repercussions of her actions, her husband told her, "Take it easy. This is a public hospital and the nurses and doctors will get upset with us."

"I can't stop," she said, "There are people here who have never repented. I want them to hear about Jesus and repent. I want the nurses and doctors to hear too." So she continued on.

After a while she confessed to her husband, "I'm afraid to die."



Anna Atibam (center) - Chairman of the Women's Department of the Conference of the Churches of Christ in Papua New Guinea

He asked her, "Are you sure you are united with Christ and he is with you?"

"Yes," she responded.

"Then there is no reason to be afraid," he calmly reassured her. After praying together, her peace returned.

Soon she began to sing a chorus, "Jesus I want to go with you, Jesus I want to go with you, to Paradise, to Paradise. Paradise is my home." She sang and witnessed to her fellow patients all through the night.

In the morning she was given some pain medication and taken for more tests. Soon after returning she called for her

continued on last page

Aruamu Mark Dedication by Harv and Marilyn Coon

On January 5, 1996, we had the privilege of participating in the celebration to introduce the very first Bible book translated into the Aruamu language; the book of Mark (Buk Mak). John and Marsha Relyea, translation and literacy specialists with Pioneer Bible Translators, invited us to Tiap village, where they live and work among the Aruamu people, so that we might be part of this special event. We represented the churches, individuals and PBT Board of Directors back in the USA who have supported this translation effort with prayers, finances and encouragement. The articles in this Storyboard will help you experience this celebration with us.

Translation Team

Since 1986, John and Marsha Relyea and their children have lived among the Aruamu people in the village of Tiap. They learned the Aruamu language, designed an alphabet suitable for recording the complex sound system and then trained a team of men and women to use that alphabet. In addition, they trained teachers to teach their own people to read and write in Aruamu and have helped them develop a self-reliant school system. A translation team was also trained to understand and use sound translation principles. Several Aruamu are doing translation work, but Francis Dagonov and Steven Marguma were the main co-translators of the book of Mark.

Aruamu People Plan Celebration

A Literacy Committee composed of several Aruamu speaking villagers, exists for the purpose of doing whatever is necessary to encourage the people to read their language, particularly the scriptures as they become available.

The day of dedication and celebration was under the guidance of the Literacy Committee. This included preparation of the grounds, building shelters, decorations, food planning, nine speakers, dancers and singers.



Cover of the Aruamu Gospel of Mark

Dignitaries Participate

Included on the program during the day were the following dignitaries invited by the Literacy Committee.

Paul Akuram — Senior Magistrate, PNG court system and an Aruamu man from Tiap village.

Otto Avorosi — PNG politician and government official, working in Madang and an Aruamu man.

David Parrish — PBT Director

Harv Coon — PBT Board of Directors

Norm Mundhenk — Director, Bible Society of Papua New Guinea

Christopher Ikiraghi — Aruamu man and Catholic church official

Ignatius Amani — Foursquare Gospel church official

Joe Orobi — Aruamu Pre-school Supervisor

Steven Marguma — Aruamu co-translator

John and Marsha Relyea — PBT translators
Literacy Committee members

Feast for 1400

It was estimated that 1400 people, including people from all over the Aruamu area and visitors, were fed by the two steers, mountains of sweet potatoes and 800 pounds of rice. The meat and vegetables were wrapped in banana leave and cooked underground using large hot rocks.

The Bigger Picture

Over the years, the work that has gone on in Tiap has been much more than an individual team effort. In addition to those who have supported the work through finances, prayers and encouragement in the United States, many others also based in Papua New Guinea have contributed thousands of hours of labor. The Madang based PBT support teams have served as buyers and shippers, computer consultants, financial managers and provided technical and logistical support. Other PBT translators have served as consultants and support workers. Several PBT personnel were present for the January 5 celebration.

Buk Mak is also far from being just a PBT effort. Bible Society of PNG, Christian Radio Missionary Fellowship, Summer Institute of Linguistics and Missionary Aviation Fellowship are just a few of the other organizations who had vital roles in this achievement.

Harv and Marilyn Coon visited Papua New Guinea in January. Harv is on the PBT Board of Directors and both he and Marilyn serve as Forwarding Agents for the Relyea family.



Major Events

IntheWorld

- 1978 President Jimmy Carter promotes the Camp David Peace Accords
- 1979 Worst nuclear disaster in US history at Three Mile Island
- 1980 Mt. St. Helens erupts killing 26
- 1982 U.S. supports Great Britain in the 'Falklands War' with Argentina
- 1986 Space Shuttle *Challenger* explodes
- 1990 After Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, U.S. launches Operation Desert Shield: more than 200,000 U.S. troops move into Saudi Arabia
- 1991 December - Soviet Union is disbanded and replaced by the Commonwealth of Independent States
- 1992 'Ethnic Cleansing' begins in Croatia
- 1994 US sends troops to restore order in Haiti

AmongtheAruamu

- 1979 New Aruamu Christians begin praying someone to translate the Bible into their language
- 1986 John Relyea and David Parrish conduct language survey of Aruamu area
John and Marsha Relyea and 3 year old Heather move to Tiap village in Aruamu area
- 1987 Aruamu Alphabet Conference and Writer's Workshop held and a Literacy Committee appointed
- 1990 Aruamu co-translators begin training
- 1991 Translation of the Gospel of Luke in Aruamu begun
- 1992 Rough draft of Luke completed
- 1994 Aruamu translators draft Mark
Literacy Committee launches Preschool Program and literacy awareness patrols
Mark translation checked by village checking committee
- 1995 Aruamu preschools begin classes — eight villages participating
Mark is peer checked by PBT colleagues and checked by Bible Society consultant
Typesetting and printing of Mark
Galatians and I John drafted in the village
- 1996 Mark dedication
Aruamu preschools ongoing with ten participating villages
Aruamu preschool supervisors currently attending literacy course; Marsha Relyea and Bobbye Eiland of PBT on staff
Luke is currently being checked and Acts is being drafted by co-translators



TOP: Aruamu Performers add traditional singing to the dedication ceremony.
 BOTTOM: Aruamu singing group with PBT teacher Bobbye Eiland on the keyboard.

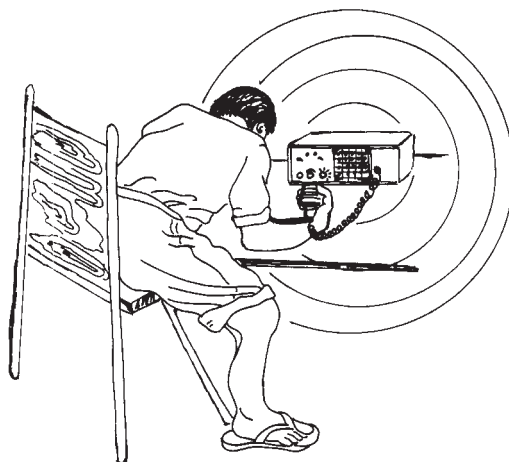


Radio: Our Lifeline By Kyle Harris

Could a magnetic storm on the surface of the sun possibly affect the life of an old man in a remote village of Papua New Guinea?

Yes!!! The condition of the sun has a large impact on short-wave radio propagation and the radio is the lifeline for our teams in the bush and the people they serve.

PBT's office staff in Madang first learned of a problem in the village of Angguna when we received a phone call telling us that Martha Wade, the translator there, had been trying to contact us on the short-wave radio. After getting off the phone, Sandra Schofield immediately turned on the base station and by listening intently could just make out that Martha was there. There was some sort of medical emergency, but the transmission was so faint that it was impossible to make out the nature of the problem. Over the past couple of weeks the sun had been undergoing a magnetic storm. Because of that, there had been intermittent difficulties hearing our village stations from Madang. This turned out to be another of those days. Sandra called me in to try, but I had no better luck. The conditions were just too disturbed. Fortunately I had my amateur radio set up at the office. (This is a higher power radio, with better antennas, and a wider range of usable frequencies than the radio used for our PBT radio time). By repeating the above request a number of times, Martha, also an amateur radio operator, understood that she was to switch over to her amateur radio in an attempt to pass the information. Within a few seconds, I was talking with

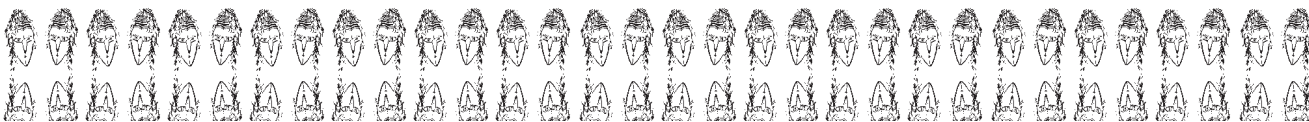


Martha, whose voice was weak, but audible, and was able to take down her information.

Martha is working in a very isolated village, far from the nearest road or airstrip. It is also far from the nearest health clinic. Because of that, many people come to her for medical help for problems ranging from simple cuts to meningitis and cerebral malaria. The more serious cases usually require that the patient be sent down river by canoe to the nearest clinic, a trip of several hours. Less serious cases can be treated in the village. A doctor in Madang will listen to descriptions of the symptoms and prescribe treatment. That was what Martha was needing at this time. There was a man in the village who had been suffering from prolonged dysentery and due to his age and general poor physical condition, Martha was concerned that this might be a life-threatening situation. I called the local physician who, on the basis of the description of the symptoms, was able to prescribe a course of treatment. I passed on the recommendations to Martha and was relieved to hear that she had the prescribed medicines on hand, thus avoiding the necessity of an emergency air-drop. Immediate treatment was begun.

This is just one example of how much we rely on radio communications. Most of our radio traffic is much more mundane than this. Grocery orders, linguistic and computer questions, and general visiting account for most of the traffic. But occasionally something more serious comes along when, barring interference from the sun, the radio is literally our lifeline.

Kyle Harris has served as a Bible translator for the Nent people and as the Papua New Guinea branch Director. He is currently serving in the US as PBT's Recruitment Coordinator.



A TRIBUTE . . . continued from first page

husband. With him at her side, she breathed her last. Anna Atibam was dead at 35.

But her witness was not over yet. Her husband and many others who saw her face as it was stilled by death noted the smile that was there and the glory of God that was upon her. And the ripples from her life and ministry continue to spread throughout the Churches of Christ and beyond.

How did she die? You could say, she died of cancer. But a more perceptive answer would be, she died victoriously. Like her namesake in the Scriptures, Anna was faithful unto death. She could have chosen despair and self-pity but instead she chose to invest her final months in fulfilling the ministry God had given to her and her final hours to testifying to those in the hospital who needed Christ. How did she die? She died with the glory of God reflected in her face.

Anna Atibam was, at the time of her death on January 30, chairman of the Women's Department of the Conference of the Churches of Christ in Papua New Guinea. Prior to assuming that role, she had served for 8 years as the Women's Coordinator for the Churches of Christ in the Keram/Biwat area.

William Butler is the Bible translator for the Waran (Banaro) people of Papua New Guinea.

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