



# The Storyboard

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## Ethnologue

### The Ap ma (Kambot)

by Bonita Pryor

Out in the swamps of the East Sepik Province of Papua New Guinea, there is an area of land approximately 250 square miles in the Angoram District that belongs to the **Ap ma** people. It includes fifteen villages scattered in the area south of the Sepik River between the Keram and Yuat Rivers. It is a savanna, or grassland, and is often referred to as the Grass Country. When speaking about our village of Samban, people here in the country will say, "Oh, that is the place where the mosquito originated." It most definitely is known for its abundance of mosquitoes.

The people of our area told us in the beginning that their language was called *Botin*, literally "village mouth" (the mouth of the village). That is, in fact, what we called it for several years. Lan-

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**In times past, the Ap ma people did not have a way to record legends. They had no written language. In order to preserve history and legends, their "written" communication was done by carved stories, wooden storyboards passed down to their children. This newsletter gets its title from the Ap ma people and their carving tradition of passing on stories through their storyboards**

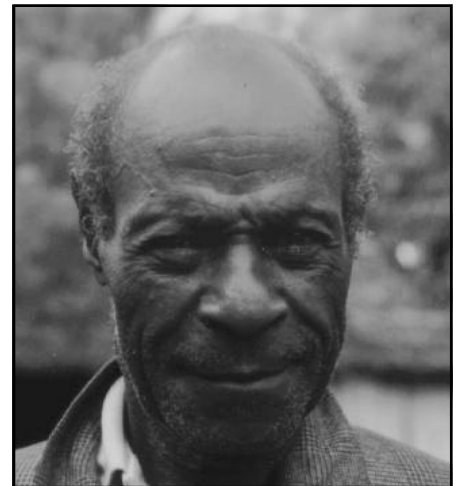
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guage surveys published in years past by other linguists had referred to the language as Kambot, which is the name of one of the villages in our language group. However, when we translated and published *Luke*, discussions with the Bible Society consultant revealed that the people actually followed the pattern of several other language groups in the area. Traditionally, when people from other language groups wanted to distinguish their language from another, they would label their language by saying their word for "no (negative)". For our language that word is *ap ma*. We now formally call the language Apma.

The people themselves are not the warlike people you have probably heard of as typical tribal people of Papua New Guinea. Because of the harsh living conditions they face, the Ap ma people are a very amicable people. The character traits which the people value most are generosity and hospitality. Their lives center around their families, their village, and their subsistence. The majority of their time each day is spent securing food for themselves. This task is made more difficult because of the short growing season in this swampy area.

We feel God had a special plan for the Ap ma people years before we came to learn their language and translate the Word of God for them. When the Australian Churches of Christ made the initial contact with the village of Samban in 1968, the people selected the *headman* to attend their Bible School. His name is Mukok, and his selection was certainly Spirit-led. God has given him a discern-

ing spirit and strong motivation to lead his people in the ways of the Lord. Mukok's faithfulness over the years has been an inspiration not only to his people, but also to us.



*Mukok, man of God among the Ap ma*

Among the Ap ma people, interpersonal relationships are of major importance. In the past, they felt compelled to maintain good relationships with the spirit world as well. One evening as he was visiting with us in our home, Mukok told us how the people used to interact with the spirit world. Each man in the village had a spirit who would come to him when called upon to tell him where in the bush to hunt for pigs in order to be certain of killing one, or how to plant his garden to insure having a good crop, etc. When the spirit came, the man's voice would change, and the spirit would use the man's speech to reveal his message. These spir-

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## Without Hope by William Butler

### Dateline:1981

It washopeless!

I couldn't communicate with this man! Just one look showed we came from radically different worlds. His sole dress consisted of a few vines wrapped around his waist with a handful of leaves jammed into the front and back for modesty.

We shared no common language. Even discovering his words for a few objects involved a torturous exchange in the trade language Pidgin, which he hardly knew, and Banaro, which each of us was just beginning to learn.

I did learn his name was Auna. His people, called the Katomen by the Banaro, lived in small hamlets scattered throughout the isolated, rugged mountains south of Likan, the village where I had begun living a year earlier in order to translate the Bible into the Banaro language. The Katomen had never heard the Gospel, and there did not seem to be any hope of reaching them because of the immense language and cultural barriers.

As the years passed I saw Auna occasionally when he visited Likan. The Banaro reached out to the Katomen in practical ways. They set aside land for them and helped them create a village called Lakan on the lowland plains so they could grow better gardens and cash crops. They introduced them to government officials, and they helped them learn the Pidgin language so they could communicate outside their homeland.

While Auna's people lived at Lakan, Banaro preachers attempted to teach them the Gospel. However, because the language barrier still presented a significant hindrance to communication, progress was extremely slow. In fact, it seemed efforts were wasted. There was no hope.

### Dateline:November1991

When the area church convention came to Likan, Auna and some of his people came as well. They came uninvited to present a *singsing*, a traditional dance with chanting directed to the spirits. But later that night I watched as Auna stood in the center of a group of Christians who were singing and praising the Lord in an all-night fellowship service. Through the night, grim-faced Auna stood there among the worshippers, though he did not know the words or tunes to the songs. He attempted the rhythmic clapping that accompanied the music, but even that was foreign to

him. If ever he clapped at the right time, it was purely by accident, but he was there and he was listening intently.

Shortly after that, Auna's people requested that the Banaro send a preacher to teach them the fundamentals of the Christian faith. Praise the Lord. Maybe there was hope after all!

Banaro preachers responded to that request. As the Katomen's knowledge of Banaro and Pidgin expanded, so did their ability to perceive the truths of Scripture. In 1994 a church building and a preacher's house were built in Lakan and John Bani, a preacher from Likan, went to live there among the Katomen. Intensive teaching followed.

### Dateline:October1995

It was awesome! Christians from Likan and other nearby villages streamed into Lakan to witness the first baptisms among the Katomen. Auna, along with over twenty other Katomen surrendered their fears, their doubts, their very lives to the Lord Jesus Christ that day. Praise God! Now there is hope! Hope in the hearts of Katomen believers who have accepted Jesus as Lord! And hope that other Katomen will

follow Auna's lead and give their hearts to the Lord!

*"Remember that in the past you were without Christ. You were not citizens of Israel. And you had no part in the agreements with the promise that God made to his people. You had no hope, and you did not know God. Yes, at one time you were far away from God. But now in Christ Jesus you are brought near to God through the blood of Christ's death. Because of Christ we now have peace."* (Ephesians 2:12-13a, New Century Version)

These events give us opportunity to testify once again of God's power to bring about victory. God is victorious over the power of sin even when we might think a situation is truly hopeless. The Katomen, who lived in fear and despair, found salvation and victory over their past. They did not know God, but came to know Him and became victorious by choosing to obey Him. The Banaro, who already knew God, were also victorious as they chose to obey His command to go and crossed cultural boundaries to do so in their relentless pursuit of the Katomen.



Auna

## Exploring Ministry Possibilities by Scott and Kathy Graves

The Lord Jesus calls each of us to venture into his harvest fields and teach all nations of his perfect love and salvation. Each summer since 1990, the PNG branch has hosted a team of interns who are seeking to answer that very call. Perhaps the best way for one to determine whether or not he or she should serve full-time on the mission field is to visit a potential field of service. We all have different gifts, and each summer interns of various ages, educational stages, and personal backgrounds learn how they can put their gifts to work in Papua New Guinea.

Having received two weeks of pre-internship training, the interns arrive with great anticipation for the exciting experiences that lie before them. For eight weeks they explore every aspect of the Bible translation process. Whether the interns are interested in Bible translation itself, literacy, church planting, community development, logistics, teaching, computer specialties, technical support, medical care, or even the buying and shipping of supplies, they have opportunities to explore how their gifts can be used by observing and participating in these vital tasks. Intern teams typically spend one-week periods with missionary families in villages and in Madang. PBT's philosophy with re-

gard to the internship is to provide exposure to as many different aspects of the Bible translation ministry as possible. Our prayer is that this exposure will help the interns to understand more clearly God's will for their lives.



*Daron Pitts, 1996 intern, with Michael (Barangu), Kote, and crayfish in Likan*

Those involved in the summer internship program are not just participating in a work trip or field visit. They become involved in a diversity of missionary projects and have opportunities to learn first hand about the culture and people of Papua New Guinea. On any given day interns may be found participating in a wide variety of activities such as hiking through the jungle, going fishing with the villagers, climbing a pole to put up a ham

radio antenna for a missionary family, or sitting cross-legged under a thatched roof while trying to assist with the translation of Galatians. Interns' summers are filled with a lot of learning and many exciting challenges.

The internship program allows people seeking the Lord's will to discover exactly where their skills can be used as missionaries and whether or not God is truly leading them to such a career. Several people have decided to become full-time missionaries as a result of their experiences in Papua New Guinea. We praise the Lord for this and eagerly await the teams who will come in the future. We thank you for your prayers and support of this ministry. Please continue to pray that more and more people will be sent our way. Perhaps one of them will be you.

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Scott and Kathy Graves are PBT recruits currently serving as Internship coordinators as well as coaches for teams of interns in various countries where PBT has translators. They coached a group of interns in PNG in 1995 and another in Guinea, West Africa, in 1996. Scott is studying medicine and they are hoping to direct their efforts on a foreign mission field toward both medicine and literacy.

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## Ethnologue continued from front page

its could be both helpful and harmful. However, according to Mukok, after the people came to the Lord, these spirits



*Samban women gaining inspiration from the written Word*

no longer manifested themselves. He said, "When the Holy Spirit came, these other spirits ran away." Because of the traditional beliefs of the people and the fear of the spirits in their lives, this was quite a testimony for the benefit of the Gospel. "Greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world." (John 4:4)

**Please pray for Mukok as he continues to lead his people. Pray for all the Ap ma people to have a strong desire to learn to read their language, especially the translated Scriptures. Also pray for Maso and Balu, our two co-translators, as they continue to work with us in translating God's Word into the Apma language.**

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John and Bonita Pryor were one of the first two PBT teams to arrive in Papua New Guinea in 1977. They and their son Josh continue to serve as a translation team in the village of Samban in the East Sepik Province of Papua New Guinea. Their oldest son Jesse is a student at Johnson Bible College.



# Jungle Roots

by Heather Relyea

The rickety bench beneath me creaked. The bench was a board set on two small, empty gasoline drums. Four people were perched on it. We were sitting in the “musical” section of our village church. Steven, our co-translator, sat jubilantly belting out a song. His long, callous fingers strummed a rhythm on the cheap guitar he held in his lap. The sounds of my sister’s violin, my flute, and my mother’s guitar blended together and then mingled with the sounds of the congregation of villagers all around me singing in the trade language. Some of them were sobbing. Their singing may have been a little off key, but they were praising God, and I’m sure He enjoyed it.

I glanced out over the heads of the congregation. There was Akasak, my fifteen year old friend, who had married last year and whose first child was due in a few weeks. Carol sat nearby—Carol, who would soon marry a man from a neighboring village and whom I would not see nearly as often as before. Across the room sat Priscilla, who attends high school in Madang. She was one of about three people from our village who passed the sixth grade exam, enabling her to pursue further education. She would have a good chance at getting a job in town. Ten year old Apunguna sat nearby. When she was eight she had been given by her parents to another family, who didn’t have any girls, to help them with their work.

I sighed. I had grown up with these girls. We had played in the dirt with our dolls, and ducked in and out of the bushes playing tag. Together we had hiked to their parents’ gardens

and planted bananas and sweet potatoes. On the way back home, we would stop and swim in the mucky stream and maybe catch a few crabs and small fish. Back at our houses, we would sit around an open fire with the fish and crabs sizzling over it. Then, we would warm our faces and hands in the blazing heat and review our blissful day together.



And yet, now our worlds were definitely diverging. My village friends were getting married at fourteen and having children, while I was just going into the eighth grade. This time, when I left them to go to school and then on to furlough, it would be nearly two years before I would see their bright, smiling faces again. I could hear the wind rustling through the palm trees. The throaty voices of the congregation rose. I would definitely miss my friends.

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Thirteen year old Heather grew up among the Aruamu people in the village of Tiap together with her sister Brigette, her brother Bobby, and her parents John and Marsha Relyea. Her family serves as a Bible translation team for the Aruamu language group.



The Storyboard is published quarterly by:

Pioneer Bible Translators  
P.O. Box 178  
Madang 511  
PAPUA NEW GUINEA

Phone 675-852-2440 FAX 675-852-2506

**Editorial Staff:** Diane Miller, Jan Messersmith  
**Artwork:** David Parrish **Typesetting:** Lori Witham

