

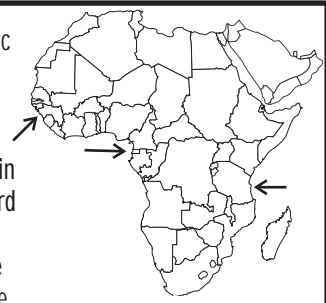


# The Storyboard

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THE STORYBOARD was created as a combined effort of our teams in Papua New Guinea to bring you a panoramic view of the exciting work and amazing things God is doing in our overall ministry here in Papua New Guinea. In this issue, however, we want to share stories and articles from a few Pioneer Bible Translator teams working in countries other than Papua New Guinea and give you a broader perspective of the work of PBT. At present there are PBT teams in three African countries—ten teams in Guinea, one team in Equatorial Guinea, and five teams in Tanzania—as well as sixteen teams here in Papua New Guinea. We have also had a part in translating God's Word for the Crimean Tartars in the Ukraine, and have previously had teams in Liberia and Zaire. Overseas workers in all of these countries have received various kinds of assistance and encouragement from our International Service Center in Dallas, Texas, and the Mid-America Regional Office in Lexington, Kentucky. Stateside workers in these two locations also seek to inform and mobilize churches and individuals to participate in this important task of providing God's Word in the heart languages of various people throughout the world. Read on for a glimpse of some of the aspects of PBT's work outside Papua New Guinea.



## God Provides a Way

by Carole Hoover

The air is filled with the sound of ladies singing, drums playing, horns honking and people shouting as they welcome home their friends and family who have made the pilgrimage to Mecca. The one who has made this journey now has the honor of taking the title of *El Hadj*. They have fulfilled one of the five pillars of Islam, and, according to their beliefs, they are a step closer to salvation. So many times different **Maninka** people have told us that Islam and Christianity are basically the same thing. But as they continue to make sacrifice after sacrifice, we are once again reminded of the assurance we have that our sins are forgiven through the blood of Jesus.



Mission work among the Maninka in eastern Guinea has been going on for many years. The first known Maninka Christian became an itinerant evangelist among his own people. It was very difficult and he faced much opposition. One time he and his wife were left out in the middle of the bush.

Fresh produce delivery lady

They had no idea which way to go. He prayed for God to show them the way, and two young men came, picked up their bundles, and led them out of the bush. Over and over God provided a way when there seemed to be none. God continues to do that for His people. Out of almost two million Maninka people, there are now a dozen or so Maninka believers, and they still face much opposition from their people. At times it is very difficult for the young believers to stand up to the social pressure placed upon them, but God is faithful to them, providing a way if they will simply trust in Him.



Maninka Grandmothers

God is providing a way for all the peoples of Guinea. The Gospel has met with more success among those from an animistic background, but slowly interest is building among the other groups who claim Islam as their religion. Pray that God will work among all the peoples of Guinea in a mighty way. Pray that the name of Jesus may be exalted, His gift of salvation be accepted, and a church be firmly established in each language group to the praise of His glorious grace.



Carole Hoover along with her husband, Joe, and two children serve among the Maninka people in the Republic of Guinea. They are presently doing language learning and literacy work in the city of Kankan. They have been in Guinea since December, 1995.

## LED TO GUINEA

by Brad Willits

*The mud brick room was hot and filled with the smell of sweat as the four village leaders sat down to listen to what their guest, Brad Willits, had to say.*



Through an interpreter, he explained that God had led him to their village so that he and his family could learn their **Susu** language and then translate God's Holy Books into it. As he spoke the words, Brad was struck with how preposterous the proposal was! Why would four staunch Muslim leaders give him permission to live among their people given his objectives? After his intent had been made known, the older official replied, "If God has sent you then how can we tell you not to come?"

Some time later Brad was able to present to the *Imam* (the leader of the Muslim mosque) the first Psalm of David in the Susu language. The response was overwhelming approval. God had worked a miracle to begin to give His Word to an unreached people group in Guinea, West Africa.



There were about thirty men seated in a circle in the center of a small **Yalunka** village in the hills. A businessman in the capital city of Guinea eight hours away had felt an urging from God to visit this small church that had been started about thirty years ago. It had not been visited by missionaries for many years. Having heard that the Susu language was in some way related to the Yalunka language, Brad Willits, a PBT translator, accompanied the businessman. He was eager to see if they too needed a translation of the Scriptures. The men in the circle rose to greet their white guests.

As Brad explained the reason for their visit, they began to smile at each other with a special gleam in their eyes. That very day they had ended a forty day session of prayer and fasting in which they asked God to send them a missionary who would translate the Scriptures for them and teach them to read.

Today Greg and Rebecca Pruett are living in the Yalunka village of Yatiya. Some of the book of Genesis has been translated. An older translation of the New Testament done years before in Sierra Leone has once again become an active part of the Yalunka worship service. As men and women learn to read the Holy Word of God, PBT marvels at how God has prepared the way.



When PBT began work in Guinea in 1986, the obstacles were many. But one by one the Lord has paved a way through the difficulties. Team after team has arrived in Guinea, called by God to take His Word to one of the thirty-two language groups in that country. Door after door has been opened by the mighty hand of the Lord. Now ten families are assigned to the Guinea branch and five language projects have already begun.

God will accomplish His purposes. To Him be the glory!

*Brad and Estel Willits have worked in Guinea, West Africa with their four children since 1988, translating the Bible for the Susu people.*



# African Buses and Other Obstacles to Faith

by Jeff Hobbie



On my way to Dodoma, I was scrunched up in a bus which shook and swayed violently. It reminded me of being in an airplane when it is landing, with all the plastic around the windows and the overhead compartments shaking wildly. One wheel hits

the ground—there's a jerk, a moment of doubt, and then the other wheel is down and there's a roar. The whole eight hour bus ride was like one never-ending landing—shaking, roaring, doubting—and I felt powerless.

I had arrived in Dar es Salaam a few days earlier and made my way straight to the Ministry of Home Affairs to see about our registration. As I walked through the downtown streets, Swahili voices mixed with car horns and some whining from a Mosque. A boy selling luggage had twenty bags and suitcases strapped to every appendage of his body. Another boy wore a Goofy hat, the kind from Disney World with the five inch ears—an export from home to welcome me.

As I walked up the steps to the Home Affairs building, I noticed two big glass windows above the entrance had been broken out. One large wedged-shaped piece of glass remained at the top, and seemed to hang there, ready to drop at the slightest breeze like a medieval guillotine. I darted across, half expecting to be sliced in two. The state attorney was not in. I made frequent nervous leaps across the guillotine-protected battle line and finally met him two days later. He wanted letters from church leaders expressing a desire to have PBT's services in Tanzania. Hence, the trip to Dodoma.

Two weeks later I had only one letter. Taking the bus back to Dar es Salaam, I forced myself to read a book and not to look up, no matter what the apparent danger. Things were not working out. I didn't sleep much the next week. I spent all my time alone, trapped in my own thoughts, going through every possible scenario. I could stay for months and still not have the letters I needed for our registration. Even if I did get them, how long would it take

Home Affairs to respond to them and actually authorize us to begin working in the country? The Swahili voices, taxi drivers, and kids peddling their goods on the street began to annoy me. I started missing my own kids. Loneliness and Worry knocked at the door. I let them in.

By accident, I met Mr. Gamanywa. As we talked about Tanzania and PBT, I discovered he was the chairman of a Christian council. He invited me to his home, where we began to talk about the possibility of our two organizations working together. We laughed a lot, ate a huge meal, and later we prayed. As I was leaving he came out to pay for the taxi. I protested. It was nearly eight dollars, an incredible amount of money for a Tanzanian. But he answered no. "Because of the love," he said. "Because of the love." I had a friend.

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***Many doors of opportunity are opening around us. Of course, they are surrounded by obstacles, but every ride in the bus is another opportunity to rest and believe.***

~~Over the next few days we wrote up an agreement~~ which allowed us to work under their umbrella independently anywhere in Tanzania. Before I knew it, I had a residence permit. Out of nowhere everything was suddenly resolved.

I stepped off the plane in Orlando glad to be home. A billboard with Goofy's face on it welcomed me back. I wrote myself a note in the taxi home. I noticed the date on my calendar and looked at my watch. I had left exactly one month earlier, almost to the minute. I smiled at the symmetry. It was as if God were saying, "See, I had this all worked out years ago. Why all the worry?"

I don't know why it's so hard to live by faith. Like Peter, I had enough faith to step out of the boat, confident God was going to get us into the country. Once I was on the water all I saw was wind and waves. All I saw was a guillotine, a rattling bus, a lack of letters, and an empty house where my family should be. I sank into the dark sea. And Jesus said, "You of little faith, why did you doubt?" I don't know.

Complete trust is hard. I am willing to step out of the boat, but I prefer to do it near the shore with a life jacket on. But God says, "Look at me. Trust me...completely." It sounds easy, but the wind can be very loud. I wonder what it would be like to have absolute faith in God? To ignore the waves and see only Him? To believe completely? Really? Always? Would it turn loneliness to opportunity? Worry to expectancy? Would it turn bus rides to Dodoma into opportunities to rest? I believe it would.

It has been a year and a half since the first bus ride. Now we live in Dodoma along with four other PBT families. Two more are scheduled to join us soon. Already we have received invitations to assist in translation and literacy programs. Surveys indicate that vernacular Scriptures may be one of the most effective ways of reaching the large Muslim community. Only about ten percent of the 130 tribal groups in Tanzania have Scriptures in their mother tongue. Many doors of opportunity are opening around us. Of course, they are surrounded by obstacles, but every ride in the bus is another opportunity to rest and believe.

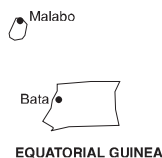
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Jeff and Lori Hobbie and their family first began working with PBT as translators in Zaire, Africa in 1991. They are currently in Tanzania where Jeff is serving as the East Africa Branch director.

## Equatorial Guinea

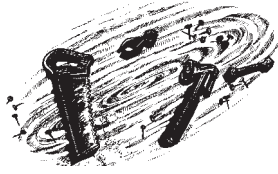


Allen and Betty Pierce were the first PBT team to enter Equatorial Guinea. In 1995 they established initial contact with churches and set up a new PBT base under an agreement with the Evangelical Church for working in the country. They did a socio-linguistic survey, finding nine language groups.



The Pierces discovered that the **Fang** (pronounced f-ah-ng) language is used by about ninety percent of the population on the mainland portion of Equatorial Guinea. They have since built a PBT office and the first Christian library in the country, and have begun the training of two national co-translators. Thus far they have developed a provisional alphabet, and have translated three gospel tracts into Fang.





## Building Project Update

In our last *Storyboard* we promised to continue to update you on the progress of our building projects. We mentioned that there are two projects we would like to complete this year: 1) adding a much needed two-bedroom apartment onto one of our existing houses, and 2) constructing a "buyer-shipper" building behind our office. We are planning to begin the work in Octo-

ber. At present, \$16,000 of the \$45,000 needed to cover the cost of materials for these two projects has been raised. If you would like to help us with these projects, any donations can be sent directly to our International Service Center at **Pioneer Bible Translators, SIL Box 255, 7500 West Camp Wisdom Road, Dallas, TX 75236**. Please indicate that the funds are for "PNG building projects".

## PBT's Mid-America Regional Office by Gerald and Ruth Denny

Operating since September 1993 in Lexington, Kentucky, the purpose of the Mid-America Regional Office is to mobilize churches and individuals in Kentucky and surrounding states to have God's heart for the world, especially the Bibleless people groups.

One of the success stories of the office has to do with the Reidland Christian Church in Paducah, Kentucky. The Dennys were missionary speakers for their Vacation Bible School in 1997. Some of the adult teachers at VBS, along with some members of the church's missions committee, were so touched by what they learned about the work of PBT that they wanted to become more personally involved. Ruth made up biographical sketches for fifteen PBT missionaries. She enclosed a picture of each missionary or missionary family and encouraged the Reidland women to pray for these missionaries and to write them letters, not expecting to be written back but just to be put on the missionary's mailing list.

There was such a positive response to these biographical sketches and pictures that the chairwoman of the missions committee wrote back and asked for three more missionaries. There are now eighteen Christian women in Paducah, Kentucky who are praying for and writing letters of encouragement to eighteen different PBT missionaries.

Another aspect of mobilizing Christians for missions is in recruiting workers to go to the field. The Mid-America Office knew of the pressing need in Guinea, West Africa for a skilled printer to print scripture that had been translated into the Susu language. Gerald was representing PBT at an annual meeting of Christian preachers when a preacher came by and said he had a printer in his church that was interested in mis-

sions. Gerald said he wanted to meet that man. The next week he met with John Johnson of Cynthiana, Kentucky. John went home and talked with his wife, then he talked with his boss at the printing business where he worked.

To make a long story short, in less than three months the money had been raised for him to go to Guinea for a month to

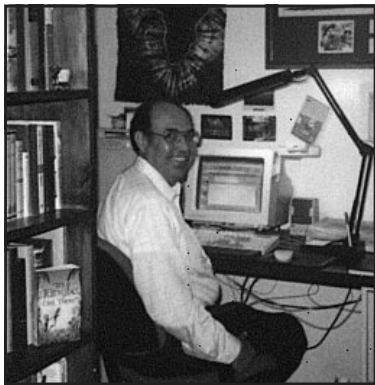
print Susu literature. In that month's time, he printed over one-quarter million sheets of scripture and literacy materials

on an ancient AB Dick machine. Then a little over a year later John returned to Guinea with his wife and six year old son for another short term assignment. For the next ten months John printed scripture and literacy materials until he was completely caught up with what PBT translators and literacy specialists had prepared. The Johnsons are now back in the US, available for PBT stateside jobs.

God is at work through PBT's Mid-America Regional Office. All praise belongs to Him for what has been accomplished so far. The future of the office looks bright. There are still hundreds of churches in mid-America to be reached, churches who do not yet have God's heart for the Bibleless people groups of the world.



Steve Hayward, Ruth Denny, Sandra Schofield, and Rhonda Hayward at the PBT Booth during EnVision '96.



Gerald at work in PBT's Mid-America Regional Office

Gerald Denny is the Director of PBT's Mid America Regional Office and his wife Ruth is the Office Secretary. Previous to the opening of the office, Gerald served on the PBT Board, for many years as Board Chairman.



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