



The

# Storyboard

September  
1996

published by the  
Papua New Guinea branch of Pioneer Bible Translators

## Bible Translation and Literacy: Complementary Tasks *by Marsha Relyea*

A great deal of commitment, scholarship, sacrifice and teamwork goes into the long-term task of translating God's Word into the language of a group of people. However, in the end, all of this amounts to nothing if the people of that language group cannot read what has been translated. Therefore, we who are involved in Bible translation must also be involved in literacy work. Translation and literacy must go hand in hand if we intend to see the Scriptures in use in the language groups where we work.



*Literacy teachers' training course —  
how it's done on the front lines.*

In Papua New Guinea, Pioneer Bible Translators is involved in front-line literacy work. We are developing brand new alphabets for cultures which have, previous to this generation, been non-literate. We are working with local leaders to develop community infrastructure to oversee ongoing literacy programs. We are involved in encouraging national authors, facilitat-

ing the publishing of books and training literacy program supervisors and teachers.

***"Translation and literacy must go hand in hand if we intend to see the Scriptures in use in the language groups where we work."***

We are making inroads in the area of literacy. But there are many more open doors through which we could walk, if we had more personnel on the field to walk through them. We are in need of literacy workers—people who are trained (or willing to be trained) in principles of literacy, methods of teaching, curriculum design, and alphabet development. They must be people who are willing to work in rough living conditions, learn another language and culture, and become facilitators of "grass roots" literacy programs. We need people who are committed to seeing the translated Word of God in use among the people of Papua New Guinea.

Marsha is literacy coordinator for PBT. Her husband John and she are Bible translators for the Aruamu language group.

So far this year in our various language programs, PBTers have been involved in the following literacy activities:

- Children are attending mother tongue prep school classes in nineteen different villages. PBT is developing materials and training teachers for prep school classes next year in several additional villages.
- We are helping to provide staff for the "STEP" program, a literacy supervisor training course. Four men from literacy programs where PBT works are participating in this course, as well as many other supervisors from language groups all over PNG.
- PBT literacy teams have held four different inservice courses for mother tongue preschoolteachers.
- We have held reading fluency courses for church leaders in three of the language groups where we work.
- Women have taken part in literacy/Bible studyclassesintwofourlanguagegroups.
- Papua New Guinean adults are now attending four different literacy classes. Also, materials are currently being developed and teachers trained for other adult literacy classes later in the year.
- Our computer department continues to assist our teams with desktop publishing expertise for material development for the different literacy programs with which we work. We have typeset thirteen titles so far this year.
- Over 100 Big Books\* and large quantities of workbooks, story books and primers have been produced, most of them by people in thatched roof school houses with dirt floors using village level technology—silk screens and hand-cranked duplicators.

\* see **Lap Technique** article on page3.



## Meeting Literacy Needs in Madang by Shain Clark

Although PBT's work involves literacy and translation into *tok ples* (mother tongue languages), I saw a need for literacy in the Melanesian Pidgin language after joining a women's Bible study at the church where we worship here in Madang. The Bibles being used are written in Pidgin, and the people speak Pidgin as well. However, many of the women in the study could not read Scriptures in the Pidgin language being discussed and were, therefore, limited in their ability to grasp God's Word and grow. The obvious need here was for literacy. I began talking with church leaders and ladies in the church who might be interested in getting involved. But I knew nothing about how to go about setting it up!

With this realization, my desire to get involved became a team effort. The first step was to find someone who could guide me through the initial steps: our director, David Parrish. Dave's years of field experience and involvement in a thriving literacy program—as well as his encouraging spirit—were invaluable. He then led me to another source of help: Felicitas, a Papua New Guinean literacy teacher here in Madang, with whom he was familiar through the Bible Translation Association of PNG. In keeping with her philosophy of "grass roots literacy," Felicitas set up a workshop with the explicit understanding that the Papua New Guinean ladies themselves would teach their peers and that



we "whiteskins" would serve as teacher trainers. Diane Miller, one of our PBT teachers, agreed to lend her expertise as a detail/resource person. As an elementary teacher with years of experience in teaching reading, Diane has been a real asset to the group. In addition to Diane, Felicitas and David, there have been others who have lent expertise and encouragement—Marsha Relyea, for one, who is our PBT literacy specialist. And so the work began with teacher meetings where we share ideas (as well as tasty PNG food!) and discuss goals as well as teaching techniques and student progress.

At this point, seven months after its inception, teachers are now holding classes in two locations. Our role has shifted from the initial training phase to teacher support as the teachers themselves control scheduling and actual instruction.

There is opportunity for ministry through the reading classes: hospital visits, newly created classes catering to ladies outside the church community, and children's classes, to name a few. But the future of the literacy project will be largely up to the ladies themselves.

---

Shain keeps busy as wife and mother, typing Scripture and literacy material for the Mbore language into the computer, buyer/shipper for a bush team, as well as training Pidgin literacy teachers in Madang.

## The Lap Technique by Marsha Relyea

From the time our children were infants John and I have shared with them daily, cozy times of reading books together. Through these times they learned important things about reading, such as how stories are put together and how they can predict their way through stories. They learned that what looks the same in print sounds the same when you read it, that reading is for meaning, that one reads from left to right and, most importantly, that reading is enjoyable. Thus, when they reached the age of six, teaching them to read was a cinch. What they had learned from cuddling in our laps with books had prepared them well. Some reading researchers have called this extremely effective way of teaching reading the "Lap Technique"!

Children in the Aruamu culture have a very different childhood experience from our children. Most of them have never held a book in their hands, much less heard one read. Many of their parents cannot read. In the newly-developed Aruamu alphabet, books are beginning to be published, but reading is not yet a value in this culture. By the time they reach the age of six, the children are far from being ready to read.

Thus, in teaching them to read in the Aruamu preschools, we must create a "lap experience" for them. We do this by



*Creating a "lap experience" with a Big Book*

using "Big Books," large books with print and pictures big enough for the whole class to see. The teacher and the children share the enjoyable experience of reading stories together. In the Big Book approach, first the teacher reads the story aloud, tracking the words with his finger. Then the students "read" with him, first in unison, and later individually. After that, the teacher and the children play games with different pieces of the story to help the children focus on phrases and words. As we use this Big Book approach, Aruamu children can learn the important reading readiness skills which our children learned while cuddling on laps reading books.





## Perfect Timing by Lori Witham

You might not have been aware of it, but something great was going on during one week late last year. It was something which took years of preparation. Much labor was involved to get it ready, and there was tremendous excitement when it was completed. What was going on? A translated book of the Bible was completed and brought in to Madang to be typeset and sent to the printers. In October, Martha Wade came into town, and she and I sat down at my computer to typeset the Apal book of Acts—the second book of Scripture she has typeset. We printed out a camera-ready copy to be sent to the printers, but because of problems getting the book printed, Martha and the Apal people had to wait eight more months before they had the published book in their hands.



Using the Apal Genesis primer to learn to read.

The wait was worth it though, and the timing was perfect. At the same time as books are becoming available in the Apal language (Genesis 1-3 was also typeset a short time ago, as well as a Genesis primer, and a Luke workbook), the Apal people have become very interested in learning to read and in wanting to read Scripture. They are eagerly buying the book of Acts, as well as the book of Luke which was published about five years ago, and the Luke workbook. Martha told me that before Genesis 1-3 was published, one of the men in her village had a copy of the Genesis primer, which has Genesis 1-3 text throughout the book, along with other pages of pictures and words, to teach the reader how to read. This man came up to Martha and said, “*I wish we could have a real book of Scripture which only has the Genesis text in it so we can read the whole creation story.*” How encouraging, coming from a person who not too long ago did not know how to read, and probably didn’t care! We praise God for allowing us to see the fruit of this labor.

Lori typesets literacy material and Scripture books for the PNG branch, as well as *The Storyboard*.

### ***The Storyboard***

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



Summer Interns: Katie McKenzie, Jason Brandon, Betty Trueblood (coach), Mark Shreve (coach), Lisa Yokshas, Steve Brewer, Daron Pitts, Joel Tramel

We had a very enthusiastic group of interns share eight weeks of their lives with our branch in Papua New Guinea. They experienced a slice of

### **Summer '96 Internship Experience**

by Tom Clark

a culture on the other side of the world. They learned that there is more to Bible translation than sitting in a grass hut with a helper from the language group and a pile of books. They visited six of the PBT allo-

cations and saw how everyone must work together as part of a bigger team. They stretched their minds and from their inability to communicate in heart to heart issues came to realize the importance of the work. They participated with a number of New Guineans in their day to day activities that we take for granted in America (washing clothes, getting and cooking food, and living without running water and electricity). They now have the challenge of sorting through these experiences and deciding how God will shape their lives as they all go back to serve the Lord in their current endeavors.

Tom works in Madang as a computer programmer/technician. He also helps out with technical services.



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