



The

Storyboard

published by the
Papua New Guinea branch of Pioneer Bible Translators

Fall
1997

Ethnologue

The Somau Garia by Todd Owen

It is cool. The night has been restful and the sun begins to rise over the Finisterre Mountain Range. The village begins to stir. The people of Uria village fan dying coals to life and huddle around the resulting fires. They shiver as they prepare taro, sweet potato, or breadfruit for breakfast. Another day is beginning.



The Christmas Story, prepared by the Somau Garia people.

For some of them, though, the night has not been so restful. They have burned the midnight oil (or perhaps I should say the midnight kerosene), preparing literacy materials to be used in the mother-tongue pre-schools which they themselves have started in their language group. This work is usually done at night, after they have spent the day working either in their gardens or working on community development projects, like the cocoa fermentery, or working in the coffee groves.

The Somau Garia people have had a long history of contact with outsiders, beginning as early as the late 1800's. The Lutheran mission established a work among the Somau Garia in the late 1920's.

Yet, through all of the outside contact, they maintained belief in their traditional

gods, their rituals to appease these gods, and their secret rites of passage.

As time passed, though, the Lord began to turn the hearts of many; they began to forsake the rituals which kept them in bondage to the gods they had formerly followed. They began to walk away from the demons that haunted them.

And as they walked away, they noticed a void that needed to be filled. Though they had had contact with Christianity for nearly 70 years, the Bible had not yet been translated into Somau Garia. And though they had schools in the area for nearly as long, they still had no writing system for their language and thus, no ability to read their language. They needed that which would give them the strength to stand in the day of trial and temptation—the word of God.

In 1993 David and Ann Judd allocated to Uria, one of the central villages of the Somau Garia people. They helped organize translation, literacy, and checking committees, learned the language, and helped the people to devise an alphabet. In 1995 the Judd family decided not to return to PNG.

What happened in the next few years reflects the heart and attitude of the Somau Garia people. Without an expatriate advisor living in the area, they pressed on. Many groups would have been faint of heart and given up. Instead, with their goal of translation and literacy before them, they went to a missionary in a neighboring language group, the Girawa, for training in literacy. They proceeded to produce literacy materials, start two pre-schools, and translate the Christmas story on their own. In 1998, five more schools are slated for opening.

Our family came to work with the Somau Garia in July 1997. We have been encouraged by the fervor that they exhibit in the projects they approach. We have been particularly impressed with the motivation behind the fervor. Amos Ligai, coordinator of the literacy project, articulated his motivation well one evening as we were talking. *"If we do not translate the Bible into Somau Garia, many people will never repent and turn to God. The Pidgin Bible just isn't clear enough to penetrate their hearts. If the people can hear God's word in Somau Garia, then they will understand."*

For some, the night has not been so restful. They have been working on literacy materials. They will not rest until the work is finished and the Somau Garia can read God's word in their language.

Todd, Angela and their sons Andrew and Samuel came to work in PNG early this year.

New Teams New Experiences

Our three new teams, the Hildebrand, Owen, and Weatherhead families, have just about finished their first year in Papua New Guinea. We wanted to introduce them in this issue of the *Storyboard* and have them tell of their experiences. Please pray for each of these new teams as they start into their second year of their first term in Papua New Guinea.

Becoming Oriented

by Lori Witham



Living in a bush house - a way of life for five weeks.

When a new team arrives in Papua New Guinea, before they begin working either at their allocated village or in town, they attend the Pacific Orientation Course (POC). POC is lead by the Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL), and attended and taught by SIL members as well as PBT members. During this fifteen week course each team learns about Papua New Guinea and its culture, people, and trade language (Melanesian Pidgin). Here are just some highlights.

WEEK ONE—WEEK THREE. After spending thirty-five hours or more traveling to PNG, the tired travelers are driven up to Nobnob. This is where POC is located, 1200 feet above sea level on a mountain overlooking the ocean. The students begin their Pidgin classes, taught by national teachers from the Nobnob villages. Each team builds a *haus kuk*, a shelter outside where all of the weekend cooking will be done. Learning to cook on an open fire can be a challenge! Since walking in PNG involves plenty of steep hills, hiking is a priority at POC. Everyone starts out by taking short walks around the Nobnob villages.

WEEK FOUR. Classes begin on PNG current events, culture, politics, and medical information. All the students

are “adopted” into families from the area villages, and share meals one night each week. The Nobnob families help the students with their Pidgin and to learn about life here in PNG. Building relationships is a very high value in the PNG culture.

WEEK FIVE. The Pidgin classes visit area gardens to see the foods grown in PNG, including yams, taro, papaya, tapioca, sweet potato, pineapple, sugar cane, banana, and sago palm.

WEEK SIX—WEEK SEVEN. After one hike each week, the dreaded five-hour “Kamba hike” finally comes. The students hike up very challenging hills and through beautiful jungle (where the bird of paradise hides) to a “nearby” village.

WEEK EIGHT—WEEK NINE. To get a taste of what a survey hike involves (where a survey is done to find out about one language), the hikers head out with their backpacks for three days.

WEEK TEN—WEEK FIFTEEN. Each team will spend these final weeks living in separate villages. Sleeping in a bush house, washing clothes in a stream, cooking dinner on a fire, and speaking only in Pidgin will be a way of life for five weeks. On return from village living, everyone shares with the group his or her experiences. It is both exciting and sad when the teams pack up their belongings and say goodbye to the other students with whom they have spent ten long weeks, as they head off to begin the work they came to do in Papua New Guinea.

THE JOY OF LANGUAGE LEARNING

by Norm Weatherhead

“*Nanempand, ihind ensa Norm*” (Good afternoon, my name is Norm.) And so begins our learning of Nend, the language of the Angaua people of Papua New Guinea. Our task is to learn Nend well enough to continue the work of translating God’s word into this language. So where does one begin?

Part of the fun of language learning is the discovery of those words that sound similar in more than one language.

When we discovered the Nend word for “mother” is *yang* (which sounds like “young”), Jill was thrilled to know that as long as we are here she will be forever *yang*. And then there are those important phrases you want to learn early on. While out cutting trees, I learned the word “*KEK!*” which means “*LOOKOUT* (the tree’s falling!)”

Do you remember the Abbott and Costello skit of “Who’s on First?” Well, during a discussion with our language helper (in Pidgin, not English), I was trying to get the Nend phrase, “*Where are you going?*”. The first response was “*waring ombrin*” (to the garden). I knew enough that this wasn’t quite right. Deciding to come from another angle, I said, “*say, ‘I am going.’*” He said, “*ami ombran.*” Then I tried it, “*ami ombran,*” pointing to myself. He shook his head no. I tried again, “*say, ‘I am going.’* Same response. OK, let’s try “*you are go-*

ing” — “*inzi ombrin.*” I tried this one pointing to him. No, that wasn’t right. After a few minutes of going back and forth, we discovered he was switching the pronoun. So instead of saying “I”, he would say “you” and instead of “you”, he would say “I”... so who’s on first?

And then there’s the words for banana and string bag, which sound very close. But you can imagine the look on someone’s face when Jill told her she thought a string bag was the best food to eat.

One Sunday, two of us walked to a nearby village with a translated section of *Mark*. In a lull in the conversation, I read from the Pidgin Bible the story of Jesus feeding the five thousand. There were a few people present and they nodded politely. I then asked if they would like to hear it in Nend (even though I didn’t feel real confident about my pronunciation). Slowly I started reading and noticed a stillness came over the people and a crowd started to gather. By the end of the reading when I looked up, many people had broad grins on their faces, and sparkles in their eyes. The joy of language learning then is complete when the joy is shining on the faces of the people as they hear God speaking to them in their mother tongue.



Norm learning Nend with one of his language helpers.

Norm and Jill and their sons Glen and Eric moved from Canada to PNG in February of this year, and allocated to Pasinkap to work as translators for the Angaua people. They are continuing the work begun by Kyle and Kathy Harris.

Not What You Would Expect (Phil. 3:7-11) by Amy Hildebrand

As a missionary child, I traveled a lot with my parents when they went around to many churches presenting the work that God had called them to in Papua New Guinea. I would hear the comments of the people that had heard their presentation. Many would say something about how great it was for my parents to be willing to make such sacrifices for the Lord and to suffer over there in that third world country.

Mom and Dad would say something to the effect that the Lord was willing to make sacrifices for us, and that He suffered a great deal more than they ever could. They would add that they really did not feel like they were suffering at all, that they were very happy in their work in Papua New Guinea, and they really did not feel like they were doing without that much.

Sometimes I agreed with that. I was able to spend a lot more time with my parents and my brother than were most children in the States. I saw more places and met more people than most children did. I had the privilege of learning and speaking in three different languages, and I was also actually able to be a part of my parents' ministry. What children get to go to work with their parents and help them do their job?

However, there were also many times when I felt like I was really missing out. I was suffering whether they were or not. While I was able to spend a lot of time with my parents, I seldom got to see my grandparents, and I really never got to know my uncles, aunts, or cousins. The two other languages I knew did not benefit me in America because no one except my family understood them anyway. I did get to meet a lot of wonderful people, but we were never in one place long enough to form many lasting friendships. We constantly had to tell people goodbye, not knowing when or if we would see them again. The worst thing was that none of the children we met were interested in hearing about all of our overseas experiences.

Although overall I look back on my life as an MK (missionary kid) with positive memories and consider it to have been a good experience, I was ready to return to the States to finish high school, go to college, get married, begin my career as a nurse, and SETTLE DOWN. The idea of staying in one place for a while really appealed to me.

That is exactly what I did. After two years at Johnson Bible College I met my husband-to-be, we got married and moved to Des Moines, Iowa where he was from. Rod had several family members in that area, and I enjoyed getting to know them. We also would go as often as we could to see people on my side of the family.

We had lived there for five years, the longest I had ever stayed in one place, and then God called my husband to go to PNG. For a month, I must say, I really dragged my feet.

We had just had our first child. He was five months old. I had just gotten my RN degree and was looking forward to returning to work in that capacity. I was most comfortable where I was; yet I knew this was what God wanted my family to do. *"Did we really have to leave now though?"* I would ask. God and Rod would assure me that any excuse I would give as a reason for delaying this plan was just that, and there would only be more of them to follow. So I gave up on all my ideas of how and when we should start our career as a missionary family, but I admit that I am still trying to forget all of those "good" ideas, knowing that Only God Knows Best.

It hurt when I would share our plans with my friends that knew of my background in Papua New Guinea, and the first comment they would make was *"Oh, so you're going back, huh?"* as if this was such a natural decision for me to make. They automatically assumed that I was completely excited about the plan. After all, isn't that the place that I felt most comfortable and at home? NO! I wanted to shout. This is different now. I am not just along for the ride anymore.

I worried about all the same things any young missionary mother would. I was as apprehensive about getting out there and trying to raise support as most other people. True, this would not be a completely foreign experience to me, but there was

still quite a bit of work and most importantly, faith, involved in this decision. Plus, some of the advantages I had of knowing what to expect and be prepared for were the very things that I was struggling with the most. I knew maybe too much about what kind of lifestyle to prepare for, and I wasn't sure if I was ready for it. I worried that my family and I might not get as much prayer support as most new missionary families because people would assume that it would not be that much of an adjustment for us. Worse yet, they would pray for Rod and Josiah and not for me. These were the things that I had to work at giving to the Lord.

Now that the uprooting is once again complete, our house and cars have been sold, our goodbyes have been said, and we are here, I can only praise God that He has considered me worthy to again be involved in a ministry to the people of Papua New Guinea. He has given me a second chance to be a part of the exciting changes this country is going through as they hear more about our Savior and turn their lives over to Him. I only hope that I do not pass up on any of the opportunities He gives me to help these transformations take place in the lives of the people I meet. PLEASE pray for my family and me as we live here and strive to be all that He needs us to be. I may have some experience, but this by no means makes me perfect. There is still much even I need to learn.



Amy, Rod and son Josiah



Changing Places by Todd Owen

"We would like you to consider going to work with the Somau Garia people." "Yeah, right," I thought, the first time I heard this proposition from David and Ann Judd. Our family had been praying and preparing to start work with another language group in another part of Papua New Guinea. The Judd family had begun a program among the Somau Garia people, but had decided after their first furlough not to return to Papua New Guinea. They were hoping the work they had started could go on without delay.



Todd, Andrew, Angela,
and Samuel Owen

"We would like you to consider going to work with the Somau Garia people." We were still attending Pacific Orientation Course when David Parrish and Mike Sweeney (PBT directors) offered this project to us.

"We would like you to consider going to work with the Somau Garia people." Our POC directors had been with us sixteen weeks, noting our strengths and weaknesses, and assessing our abilities. "We think you would fit in well in

Uria village, and would enjoy living there." For the third time we had been encouraged to accept this project.

After weighing the possibilities in our minds, after praying about it, and after discussing the issues with one another, we decided to move to Uria village, and take up the work that had been started among the Somau Garia people.

There have been many advantages in picking up this project. David and Ann had an excellent reputation and relationship with the people. That good reputation preceded us and has helped to smooth the transition of our coming.

They had built a small comfortable house. It has reduced the amount of stress that would have been ours had we had to build a similar structure ourselves during our first term. We have been able to begin work immediately, without many of the delays inherent in a new project.

David had organized translation, literacy, and checking committees, which are still functioning. He also helped devise an alphabet for the Somau Garia language, which the people are using in the mother tongue pre-schools. We are very thankful for the work which David and Ann had begun here and are glad that they laid such a good foundation for the work which we are now continuing.

However, these advantages also carry with them certain disadvantages. One, we have not had the opportunity to build special relationships while working on a group project such as house building.

The most difficult disadvantage deals with trust. One young family came, worked a few years, then left. We are also a young family. Angela is pregnant and we will have to leave the village for a few months to have the baby in Australia. "Will

they really come back?" "Are they serious?" The people wonder among themselves these questions and, in the meantime, are afraid of allowing us to become a fully functioning part of their community. Their concerns are real and need to be dealt with in a way that establishes mutual trust and commitment to the community and to the translation project.

But, I believe that overcoming this trust barrier can only come about supernaturally. The Lord will have to remove the distrust and fear that Satan has sown in the hearts of the Somau Garia people. God desires for these people to have His Word, and Satan desires that these people walk in darkness. Hence goes the battle for the minds of men.

Fortunately for us, the advantages of "changing places" with someone else far outweigh the disadvantages. I believe in time the distrust that has been sown by our common enemy will pass, and the Lord will open their hearts. As we desire to build God-honoring relationships, we will overcome the initial disadvantages. God will work through these same circumstances to build trust and mutual commitment, and strengthen the part of His body that resides among the Somau Garia.

"We would like you to consider going to work with the Somau Garia people." Were I given a second chance to respond to this exhortation, I would choose no differently. "Changing places" with the Judd family is an honor and a privilege that God has allowed us. We thank him for it.

Editor's Corner



In this Storyboard you read of the experiences of some of our new teams. More are on the way next year. While we rejoice that God is faithful in sending new workers to the field, this blessing has created a severe housing crisis for our support teams. PBT-PNG hopes to remedy this problem by building some new facilities in the next two years. Our three top-priority projects include: 1. Enclosing the first floor of one of our existing houses and turning it into a two-bedroom apartment; 2. Adding a building behind our office for use in buying and shipping goods to the bush; and 3. Building a quadruplex behind one of our other houses. We hope to do all of this with volunteer labor. We will be counting on our friends and supporters in the U.S. to help us with both the finances and the labor. If you would like to learn how you might get involved, please contact our International Service Center:

Pioneer Bible Translators; SIL Box 255; 7500 W. Camp Wisdom Rd.; Dallas, TX 75236; phone (972) 708-7463.



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
E-Mail PBT-PNG@maf.org

Missed them but haven't forgotten them.

In our 20 year issue we missed Roger and Bonnie May, our first couple from Canada, on our timeline. They served as short term assistants for a year in 1989 to 1990.