



The

# Storyboard

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## Position Available

### Ethnologue

#### The Azau by Kyle Harris

As the survey team was preparing to leave the village of Manemong, one of the village leaders approached and asked me to follow him. He took me to a very small house off to one side of the village and, undoing the latch on the door, invited me to go in. As my eyes adjusted to the dim light I was able to see a large war shield, several masks, and other objects hanging on the walls of the single room. Right in the center of the room was a cardboard box. "I want to show you this," the old man said. As he opened the box I found myself face to face with a human skull. "This," the man said proudly, "was the founder of our village."

While attending anthropology lectures at the University of Texas I had heard about things like this. Animistic people sometimes keep the bones or certain possessions of powerful leaders in the belief that by doing so they can access the same power. I never thought, though, that I would see such a graphic illustration of the principle after only a few months in the country. As the survey progressed, we continued to see indications that in spite of a long history of contact with Christianity, many of the Azau people were still depending on the spirits of the deceased and on the spirits of the jungle to meet their everyday needs.

The transforming power of the Spirit of Jesus was yet to make an impact here.

In another Azau village I witnessed an event that moved me deeply. It was Saturday morning and we were attending church in the village of

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Jirikin. The Seventh Day Adventist Church had established a work in that village and, since we were there on Saturday, we decided to attend church with them. The pastor stood up and read the scriptures for the day, first in English and then in Melanesian Pidgin. Then he struggled through an off-the-cuff translation of the scriptures into the Abu language. Clearly this man had a strong desire for his fellow villagers to know the Word of God, and clearly he felt that neither English nor the trade language were sufficient.

It saddened me to think that these people had by this time been asking for a translation team for years and because there had not been anyone available, they were having to make do with what they could understand of the

other languages and with their own rough translations. That was in 1985. Today, almost ten years later, the Azau are still waiting. They continue to contact PBT occasionally to check on the progress of their getting a translation team and we must continue to tell them that there just has not been anyone available to send to them.

This will not be an easy place to work. Many of the Azau people live in an area of swamp and dense jungle. It is a hot sticky area filled with enthusiastic malaria-carrying mosquitoes. Getting from village to village can be difficult to impossible, especially in the rainy season. Further complicating the situation is the fact that three different denominations have established works among the Azau and these denominations do not usually cooperate.

Yet there is something special about the Azau people. After spending a few short weeks with them, I couldn't help but think that in few places would one find such an obvious need for the Word of God alongside such an obvious desire. These people want a translation team to come and minister to them. They need a team. Please join us in praying that the Lord raises up someone (maybe like yourself) to come and minister to the Azau people.

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Kyle, PBT translator for the Angaua people, is currently serving as Director for the PNG branch

## An Arena for the Gospel by John Pryor

Generally, our village is a rather quiet place—not much out of the ordinary happens day in and day out. However, once a year around September 16, PNG Independence Day, our village becomes the center of sports for this area. The main interest is the soccer tournament, but volleyball and basketball are also played.

This year we had 27 different soccer teams descend upon our area, as well as several men's and women's volleyball and basketball teams. Since the team members were accompanied by their families and fans, we had an incredible number of people "around." It is a good news/bad news situation. The good news is that people from just about every village in our language group attend. The bad news is that since it is the driest time of the year for us, water becomes a very crucial factor. Also, there is a never-ending stream of people at our doorstep with every kind of need one could imagine.

A bit of explanation is needed because when we say "tournament" over here, it is different from what you would expect to see back in America. Since it is for many teams their only outlet for inter-village play, they try to make a whole season out of this one tournament. Before the "actual" tournament ever really started, each team played six games. That means there were six rounds of 13 games. All 78 games had to be played on the same field. It took over eight days to accomplish this. Then the top 18 teams were chosen for the "knockout tournament" (similar to single elimination), which took just two days to complete. While all of this was going on, the men were also participating in basketball and volleyball competition.

There were some very interesting highlights to this year's activities. Primarily, we were able to introduce the book of Luke that was published just before the tournament began. Since there were representatives from almost every village in our language group here, we gave a copy to someone from each village to take home with them to tell others about the book.

We explained to the village representatives the cost of the book and how that cost was determined. Briefly, the Bible Society of PNG pays for the printing of the book minus the price that we think people would be capable of paying. One of the ministries of the Bible Society is providing Scriptures in the languages of PNG at a price that people are able to afford. We encouraged the village representatives to send orders for the book of Luke to us so that we can send them books later.

Another highlight of the tournament was that we met the teacher in charge of the vernacular pre-schools for our area and were able to make plans for future involvement in that work. Also, we met the coordinator for women's projects for this area and, to our surprise, learned that her daughter is married to a US serviceman stationed not far from where we usually base ourselves in the States when we are on furlough.

The tournament meant a lot to us in another way. It was our son Jesse's last "hurrah" as far as bush sports were concerned. Since he will be staying in the States

when we come back after this next furlough, it was his final opportunity to participate in this Independence Day tournament.

One last sideline involved an answer to prayer. As mentioned earlier, this is the driest time of the year for us. We have a 5000 gallon water tank, and it is the main source of water for the majority of the people in our village, and people from nearby hamlets as well. About a week before the tournament, we had a rain that filled up the tank. We knew with the extra people coming in that that wouldn't be enough water to last the projected ten days of the tournament. A week after the tournament began, we reached the level on the tank where we cut off the water for other than our family's use. It is always a hard decision, but if we have no water, we can't stay here and do our work. The people can still resort to their shallow wells and get by. We sent an announcement to the tournament officials and asked them to ask the people to join us in prayer for rain so we could share our water again. Within 24 hours we had a two inch



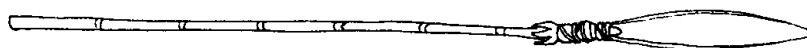
*A man from a neighboring village receives the first Ap ma copy of Luke*

shower. There now was enough water for ourselves and others. The reason we know that this was surely an answer to prayer is that it has been nearly two weeks since that rain, and we have not had a drop since.

Things have pretty much settled back into the normal routine now, but I think you can agree with us that God does indeed work in strange ways. Sometimes the situations that we like the least and try the most to avoid turn out to be the situations in which great blessings are received. We are praying that God will use all that happened—the new Luke book; the answer to prayer for the water; as well as our being able to expose more people to the reason for our being here, to the glory and expansion of His kingdom here on earth.

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John and Bonita are PBT translators among the Ap ma people of PNG



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## Different Roles, Common Goals by Mike Sweeney

They say that no man is an island. Every person needs other people to relate to, to work with, and to fulfill him or herself. The same thought amply applies to missions. The Great Commission is greater than any one person, congregation, or mission. It's certainly greater than Pioneer Bible Translators. We need others working alongside of us, contributing their gifts to the task of making disciples of all nations. And that is why this past May, for three weeks I found myself sitting in meetings in a hotel in Chiang Mai, Thailand, a very long way from the bush of Papua New Guinea.

Almost from its inception in the mid 1970's, PBT developed a fruitful working relationship with the United Bible Societies (UBS). After all the ground work has been done, the language has been put into a written form, national translators have been trained, and portions of the Bible have been translated, there remains that crucial step: publication. Scripture portions need to be approved, printed, distributed, and paid for. This is where the UBS steps in. Their trained consultants check and approve completed portions, help make arrangements to get them printed, and work with PBT and the people of the language group to help pay for it all.

In Papua New Guinea there is one consultant for the UBS, Norm Mundhenk. But while the average UBS consultant oversees about 20 different projects, Norm has responsibility for over 40. So after I met the UBS requirements for being a translation consultant, Norm asked the UBS to appoint me as an Honorary Translation Advisor, a member of another mission that the UBS grants authority to act as a consultant. This means that I now work with Norm in checking and approving PBT's completed scripture portions, and I am on call to help with other UBS projects if needed. It also means that the UBS generously paid for my trip to Thailand to attend the UBS Triennial Translators Workshop, along with about 70 other consultants from all over the world.

While Linda and the kids were riding elephants, visiting temples, and buying silk, I spent my days in meetings, hobnobbing with men whose works I have been reading for years: Robert Bratcher, the primary translator of Today's English Version; Barclay Newman, whose little Greek lexicon is worth its weight in gold; and Paul Ellingworth, the editor of "The Bible Translator." They may only be names to you, but I had

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## Editors' Corner

*Those who read the financial pages often see stories of rampant inflation and currency devaluations in countries all over the world. Usually economic fluctuations of this sort cause serious problems for missionaries serving in the affected countries. Occasionally, however, these things prove to be real blessings.*

*Recently we have seen this happen in Papua New Guinea. Until late this year the PNG kina had been trading steady at about 1.05 U.S. dollars to the kina. In October the PNG government devalued the kina by almost 20% to .87 dollars to the kina. So how is this a blessing?*

*Earlier this year the branch had made a large step of faith and took out a seven year K125,000 mortgage on a new duplex property. As the branch has grown over the years we have found a need to expand our facilities. When this property came available we felt that would be a good move. By October the mortgage had been paid down to K116,000 or about \$122,000. Suddenly, though, because of the devaluation, the loan had magically shrunk to \$101,000; a savings of almost \$21,000!*

*We began thinking that if we could borrow enough money from Christian friends at a lower interest rate than the 10.25% we are currently paying, we could pay off the mortgage here and, along with the savings from the devaluation, be able to pay back the loans in the US in five years instead of seven. This would mean a tremendous savings for the branch.*



*In consultation with our Stateside Board of Directors it was decided that the best approach would be for the branch to offer promissory notes in \$500 denominations at 7% interest for five years. These notes would be secured by the good faith of Pioneer Bible Translators. Some notes would be repaid each quarter and we would seek to retire those promissory notes first whose owners request an earlier repayment.*

*This seems to us to be good stewardship for all involved. Compared to passbook rates at the banks, 7% is a healthy interest rate. Yet it is less than we are currently paying and it will allow us to save thousands of dollars on the purchase of this property. Our International Office has full details of the offering. If anyone is interested in investing in this, please contact them at:*

**Pioneer Bible Translators**  
**P.O. Box 381030**  
**Duncanville, TX 75138-1030**  
**Phone: 214-709-2460 Fax: 214-709-2463**

*Even if you cannot invest at this time, please be praying that if this is truly how the Lord would like to work, that everything will come together in His time.*

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## And He Gave Some As Gophers\* . . . by Sandra Schofield

Occasionally I find myself in a reflective mood and my memory takes me back to high school days—that awkward time in life when one is *supposed* to be making the all-important “Career Choice.” While I had in mind several possibilities, I lacked a solid career choice, unlike most of my friends. When I typed in answers to the questions on my Guidance Counselors’ computer, my printout had some good suggestions, but it also told me my interests and talents indicated a potentially promising career as an embalmer or restroom attendant. What an encouragement to a high schooler with a somewhat fragile self-esteem!

Before applying to Pioneer Bible Translators in 1990, I had several months to contemplate my abilities when I wasn’t working. What could I do as a missionary? The desire was there, but I knew my talents weren’t in translating, teaching, public speaking or computer programming. That ruled out a lot. During this time of praying and reading the Bible and other books, I came to the conclusion that God overlooks no one when He assigns talents. As our Creator, He has installed an unique package of abilities in every person (I Peter 4:10) and often leaves it up to each of us to discover and develop them.

Since coming to Papua New Guinea in August 1993, I have gotten an even better idea of the true thrust of Paul’s description of the Body of Christ in Ephesians 4. In our work, there are many occasions when we really do need and depend on each other. Often those of us in Madang are the voice, hands and feet for our family in village allocations and many times, those roles are reversed. So many times I see *my* limitations and am frustrated, but I am so thankful for team mates who already have and are using those talents. It is our responsibility and privilege to work together towards our goal of scripture translation.

Yes, He has given some to be apostles, prophets, evangelists, translators, teacher, directors, literacy specialists.... But as I drive to the Mission Aviation Fellowship hangar with fresh vegetables and supplies for Pryors; prepare a mailbag for Parrishes; arrange a medical evacuation for a man seriously injured in Butlers’ village; do the necessary paperwork to renew Messersmiths’ passports; and communicate with all of our bush teams via radio during our 4:30 radio time, I’m thankful He has made me to be a “gopher.”



*Busy renewing a passport*

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Sandra serves the branch as Administrator of Logistics

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## Different Roles . . . continued

looked forward to meeting these people for years. And while they were very much the scholars I had anticipated, I was happy to find that they were also gracious and friendly to the new kid on the block.

Our days began early with a short worship service at 8:00 every morning. Then we faced two hours of lectures from our visiting scholars. Dr. Joanna Dewey educated us on the finer points of literary analysis and biblical interpretation, while Dr. Ian Mason and Dr. Basil Hatim spoke on translation theory. It had been a while since I had been in a classroom as a student, so it was a good thing that the hotel provided lots of rich coffee. After a short break we then headed into our work groups. I was involved in Scripture Use in Multi-media, the Hebrew Old Testament Text Project, and Computer Programs for Bible Translation.

But the real fun came in the afternoons. Every person attending the Workshop had to present a scholarly paper dealing with some aspect of Bible Translation. The idea was that you present your paper to the group, and then try to defend it as they pick it apart. If you survive in good shape, your paper will end up in “The Bible Translator” sometime in the next couple of years. And of the 70 consultants at the Workshop, guess who had to go first. (By the way, I survived, and my paper should be published sometime next year.) On days when we weren’t listening to, or presenting papers, we were attending professional development workshops. Two management consultants led each of us through 12 hours of training in communication skills.

I am happy to say that it wasn’t all work. We spent several evenings at Chiang Mai’s wonderful night market. On two days everyone hopped into tour buses to see the sights around Chiang Mai, including the king’s summer palace, a leprosy mission, and an elephant show. And we were able to meet some of the missionaries that work in Chiang Mai. But the most valuable part of our time in Chiang Mai was the opportunity to form new relationships with men and women in the UBS.

The task of translating the Bible for the bibleless peoples of the world is indeed an overwhelming one, beyond the scope or abilities of any one mission. In our cooperative efforts with the United Bible Societies and other groups, we hope to go beyond our own limitations and make a greater impact for God’s Kingdom.

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Mike and Linda are PBT translators among the Mum people of PNG

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