

NEW TRIBES MISSION

NTM@work

your connection with tribal missions



what is success?
page 16



contents

NTM@work

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Cover photo: Dale Stroud

Left photo: Bill Bosley

Right photo: Curt Sharp

4 *connect:* Research your road to relevant responses. Find out where you can connect with missions, missionaries and opportunities.

14 *go deeper:* plant, water and wait



16 **more precious than gold**
Faithfulness. Obedience. Perseverance. And above all, trusting God. These are the true measures of success in ministry.

18 I didn't want an old tribe.

22 no magic formula

26 get me out of here.

30 a voice from the past

 **online** ntm.org/magazine

< **Photo gallery:** See the Piapoco church today

< **Ka'apor work:** Find out how church planting can be like a mule ride





[connect]

All knotted up

The Mungen people of Papua New Guinea have a unique way of telling someone that it's time to repay a debt. They tie a knot in a piece of vine and send it to the person who owes them something.

NTM missionaries realized this would make a wonderful illustration to teach an important spiritual truth. It would help the Mungen people, who prided themselves on good deeds, to understand the huge sin debt we owe to God and how only Jesus' death can cancel it.

So when they taught on the Ten Commandments, the missionaries passed out pieces of rope. They told the people to tie a knot in it every time they heard one that they had broken.



As the ropes quickly filled with knots, understanding crept into the Mungen people's eyes. Their sin debt was far deeper than they realized.

Hear more: ntm.org/magazine



*"We don't know anyone that loves us the way the Lord does!"
- Sese, Ka'apor tribe, Brazil*



He who is too busy to pray is busier than God ever intended him to be.

What's in a name?

People in remote tribal areas can sometimes come up with names for their children that seem strange to outsiders. Missionaries Paul and Bella Gervasi in Indonesia have met Aspirin, Rinso, Spinach, Plastic and most recently, Santa Claus.

the difference an **L** can make

We have a slip-and-slide that we typically pull out on really rainy days so our kids, and all the village kids who want to, can soap themselves up and have some fun. One day when I brought out the soap, I told them all to *sopi la tilam* instead of *sopi la tiam*. What I was trying to say was to soap up your belly, but what I actually said was to go soap up your mom, which of course got me quite a few confused looks. Thankfully I realized what I said when I saw their faces and was able to correct it. It's quite amazing what a difference one little L can make.

—*Nikki Buckner*
Nakanai tribe, Papua New Guinea

quicklook

"There's no hole. Nobody cut a hole in the casket," missionary Tony Finch thought to himself.

According to the **Tarahumara** culture of **Mexico**, Eleuterio had no escape route.

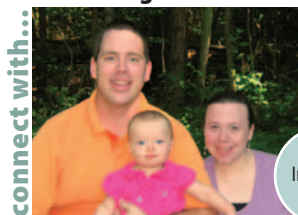
Several years earlier, Eleuterio had instructed Tony in the proper way to make caskets. It was necessary to put a hole — about one inch in diameter — in the casket to provide a way for the spirit of the dead person to leave the casket.

Now Eleuterio was lying in a casket with no hole. Though Eleuterio had been taught God's Word for two years, he was never known to have placed his faith in Christ. So both culturally and spiritually, the Tarahumara man had no escape route.

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Joel & Alegria Williamson



connect with...

Indonesia

Child: Karen

Ministry: Church planting

Sending churches: Blue River Bible Church, Kansas City, Missouri; Grace Community Fellowship, Newnan, Georgia

Joel and Alegria were raised in Christian homes and heard the Gospel early and were led to the Lord by their parents. Alegria declared her interest in missions at age 5, saying that she wanted to be a "missionary wife" one day. As Alegria grew, so did her desire to serve the Lord. God opened the door for her to take mission trips in 2004 and 2006 to South America.

"After returning to finish my associate degree, I felt God beginning to pull upon my heart for the unreached around the world," Alegria wrote. In Spring 2007, she applied and was accepted to the Missionary Training Center for Fall 2007.

Joel was saved at age 7 and during his teenage years was challenged to serve the Lord in missions. His freshmen year in Bible College, God moved in his heart to consider serving overseas. In the summer of 2000, Joel traveled to Papua New Guinea to participate in New Tribes Mission's Interface program. "During this time, I saw the needs of the unreached firsthand and began praying about joining New Tribes," Joel wrote. After graduating from college in 2001, God allowed him to spend six years serving in his home church. In 2007, he began training with New Tribes Mission.

"We met the Sunday before training at church and thus began our whirlwind courtship, engagement and marriage. We both saw how God was uniting us to serve in Indonesia. The burden of our hearts is to serve in whatever ministry role God needs us to be. We don't want to do great things for God, but rather be changed by Him and used by God."

ntm.org/joel_williamson

[connect]

The top ten ways to know you're teaching literacy in a tribe:

10. You canoe to class every day.
9. Your "school bell" is a piece of metal pipe hung from a tree.
8. Because you're meeting in a cooking house, the fire that cooked the family's breakfast must be put out before class can begin.
7. One student has written a row of straight lines instead of "Ts" as instructed. When you go to correct him, he says very confidently, "Oh, I'm going to cross them all at once."
6. Our version of Dick, Jane and Spot is Talo, Kita and Ila —and they do a ridiculous amount of fishing in the first several stories. (With only a few letters of the alphabet introduced at this point, fishing is a familiar activity and very easy to say and spell.)
5. A daily reminder to the students is to not chew betel nut — the Papua New Guinea habit similar to tobacco-chewing — during class because the blood-red spit will get on the books. (They try to sneak it in anyway.)
4. Many students have a tendency to not put periods touching the bottom line but rather put them in the middle where a dash would go.
3. One of the village leaders, who is also a student, regularly leaves the class to chase away noisy children with a stick — and gets cheered on by the other students as he does so.
2. One student regularly goes to the side wall of the house and spits outside. (And he's a possible future teacher.)

And the number one way to know you're teaching literacy in a tribe:

1. The men and women, who've helped you go from not knowing a single sound of their language to becoming fluent, are now the ones sitting there listening as you tell them how to read and write those very same sounds.

— *Adam and Julie Martin*; Akolet tribe, Papua New Guinea



“We are resting our lives on Jesus,” Kamalus said of himself and his wife, after Bible teachers from among his own people — the Kauls of Papua New Guinea — taught lessons spanning from Creation to the resurrection. **“This teaching is so clear, I want all of my family to hear it.”**

* pray

Wano believers in Indonesia are becoming more involved in reaching other language groups with the Gospel and in the process are an example and encouragement to believers from other tribes to do the same. Please pray that God’s Word will continue to go from tribe to tribe and bring forth fruit.

More opportunities to pray:
ntm.org/magazine



“ WE ARE HARD-PRESSED ON EVERY SIDE, YET NOT CRUSHED; WE ARE PERPLEXED, BUT NOT IN DESPAIR; PERSECUTED, BUT NOT FORSAKEN; STRUCK DOWN, BUT NOT DESTROYED.” 2 COR. 4:8-9

connect with...



Paraguay

Ministry: Church planting
Sending church: Northside Baptist Church, Liverpool, New York

Jenna was raised in a Christian home and accepted Christ at the age of 5. From early childhood she was fascinated and challenged by the many visiting missionaries who spoke at Constantia Center Baptist Church, but she always felt she was “too normal” for God to use her.

It wasn’t until Jenna was a teenager that she realized that God could indeed use her to do something special. At 14 Jenna went on a Northside Baptist Church youth retreat and was challenged with the question: “Are you willing to do whatever, be whoever, and go wherever God wants?” It was a critical point in her life: She realized that she was willing for God to use her – though she did not know how.

While training for a summer mission trip to Botswana, Jenna heard about the work of New Tribes Mission through the film *Ee-Taow*. She attended New Tribes Bible Institute in Jackson, Michigan, and New Tribes Missionary Training Center in Camdenton, Missouri, graduating in December 2008. Near the end of her time at the Missionary Training Center, God brought Jenna and fellow student Rebekah Huffman together as a team. They will be serving God in Paraguay with one of the seven tribes that still does not have the Gospel in their own language.

ntm.org/jenna_currey

[connect]

I will be able to read God's Word.

Bisinti stood nervously before the crowd of onlookers in his tiny mountain village. He swallowed hard. Then with hands shaking and voice wobbling, he did something he never thought he would. The tribal man began to read.

For generations the Palawano people of the Philippines didn't have a written language. And because of it, others made them feel ashamed and ignorant. They were looked down upon, swindled and taken advantage of.

But then missionaries came and developed a written language and taught them how to read and write it. Now their life of shame is over.

As Bisinti and the other literacy graduates read aloud that day, the onlookers cheered. But one Palawano graduate summed up the real joy. "I will be able to read God's Word," he announced, "That's what I want!"

For more stories like this, go to ntm.org/magazine



hair loss, your gain

I was talking to a lady in the village about her new short haircut the other day, and she told me that her husband cut it because she was too skinny. Her husband believed that short hair would fatten her up. Man, I wish I had known short hair makes you fatter before I cut my hair!

— *Joanna Jansma*; Arimtap tribe, Indonesia

"We have darkened eyes
and we are being led around
by those with darkened eyes.
We want to know the truth."

—Hap, Southeast Asia



“*The more obstacles you have,
the more opportunities there
are for God to do something.*”
— *Clarence W. Jones*

I need those books.

“You can’t forget! You must send us in those new books as soon as possible! We need to carry the Creator’s message to my relatives up the valley and I need those books to do it! Please don’t forget!”

Debatoma spoke with urgency to Scott Phillips just a few hours before Scott and Jennie left to go on home assignment to have their first child. Debatoma even wrote a letter and handed it to the missionaries as a reminder so they wouldn’t forget to make and send in his new books.



Travis & Renee Whitman

connect with...



Paraguay

Children: Canaan, Isaiah and Jordan
Ministry: Church planting
Sending churches: First Brethren Church of Pleasant Hill, Ohio; West Park Baptist Church of Knoxville, Tennessee

Travis grew up in a Christian home and attended a Brethren church from the time he was a toddler. Even though he had heard the Gospel many times while growing up, it wasn’t until Easter Sunday during a difficult fourth grade school year that he placed his trust in Christ.

Renee was blessed to be born to Christian parents and was saved at a young age. “I was exposed to (and intrigued by) missions at a young age through my grandmother who took mission trips and told me mission stories.”

At the age of 22, the Lord impressed on Travis’ heart to leave his little town of 1,000 people so that he might know Christ better. In Tennessee he began working with inner-city kids and soon realized that he was not equipped to disciple them. Travis and Renee decided to attend New Tribes Bible Institute.

“We didn’t feel like we knew the Bible very well and wanted to get prepared for whatever God wanted us to do,” wrote Renee. “During this time we also came face to face with the fact that there are millions of people who have never heard God’s Word in their own language. The Lord challenged us through His Word to be a part of reaching these people – going to them, learning their language, and giving them the opportunity to have a relationship with their Creator and Savior.”

ntm.org/travis_whitman

[connect]

This grass wasn't green

A new missionary in Papua New Guinea found out the hard way the necessity of clear communication.

He owned some ducks that were in a fenced-in area and one day he noticed that the grass around their pen was getting tall. He asked some kids to "cut the duck's grass," then left them to it. He came back later to see that the grass was still tall.



He called the kids over and asked them why they didn't cut the grass. They insisted that they had. At that moment a featherless duck waddled out from the enclosure and the missionary realized his mistake.

His jaw dropped as he asked the children, "Not all of the ducks?" Being pleased with their work they responded, "Yes!" He then had to go and explain the situation to his wife.

Instead of saying, "Cut the duck's grass" he should have clearly said, "Cut the grass around the duck's pen."

In Melanesian Pidgin the word *gras* means grass, but it also means hair, fur and feathers.



A Bible that's
falling apart usually
belongs to a person
who isn't.

"Only Jesus could
come back from death!
Is there anything at all
that He is unable to do?
I don't think so!"

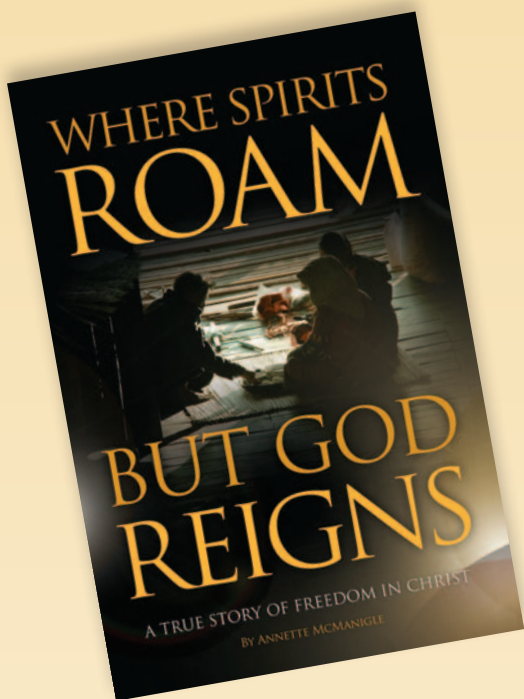
-Wikipai, Dao tribe, Indonesia

*praise

One village of Uriay people in Papua New Guinea has been hearing evangelistic Bible lessons and will soon hear about the death, burial and resurrection of Christ. Pray that they will have a good understanding of the Gospel and put their faith in Christ.

More opportunities
to pray:
ntm.org/magazine





LISTEN TO THE HEARTBEAT OF GOD AS HE REACHES OUT TO PEOPLE WHO HAVE LIVED FOR CENTURIES IN THE DARKNESS OF SIN AND DESPAIR TO PREPARE THEIR HEARTS TO RECEIVE HIM.

The simple truth is that God loves everyone, from the least to the greatest, whether clean or unclean. This love is demonstrated every day by missionary families like that of Annette and Scott McManigle, who lived in the jungles of Thailand among the Pwo Karen tribe in order to share God's love with people who didn't know Him. Now you can journey with them in the land *Where Spirits Roam but God Reigns!*

ntmbooks.com | 800.321.5375

Tim & Kat Warner

connect with...



Mozambique

Child: Caden Jude
Ministry: Church planting
Sending churches: Church of the Hills, San Elijo, California; Daybreak Community Church of Carlsbad, California; Generation Neighborhood Church of Oceanside, California; Beach Church of Myrtle Beach, South Carolina

"We were challenged into missions when we were both still in high school. An NTM missionary who had planted a church in Papua New Guinea shared about the work NTM does in bringing God's Word to places it has never been. Our hearts were set on fire when we learned that so many people in the world are still without an opportunity to hear about the Lord and know Him, and so few believers are going to tell them.

"From that time on, we began to pray and ask the Lord to keep the fire alive in our hearts to reach these people. He has been faithful every step of the way. Ten years later, we finally reached the field and are continuing to follow His lead and desire to share Him with the people of Mozambique."

ntm.org/tim_warner

[connect]

Audrey Bacon Hoogshagen went to be with the Lord on May 18, 2010. She was born on September 22, 1921 in Saginaw, Michigan, to Claude and Eva Burgess.

Audrey married Dave Bacon on October 8, 1942, and two months later they joined the first group of missionaries traveling to Bolivia with the newly formed New Tribes Mission.

After a very difficult trip to the interior of Bolivia the couple settled in Roboré and five men began planning to go into the jungle to reach the Ayoré people with the Gospel.

In June 1943, Dave came out of the jungle for a supply trip and Audrey shared the news that they were expecting a child. Soon Dave and the other men on the team returned to the jungle. They were never seen alive again.

On March 9, 1944, several months after the men were reported missing, a baby girl was born in Roboré, Bolivia. Audrey named her Avis, the name that Dave had chosen.

Seven years passed before it was confirmed that Dave and the others were killed by the Ayorés who they were trying to reach with the Gospel message.

Audrey continued serving with New Tribes Mission in Bolivia. She was the cook for the guest home when a new missionary, Rolland Hoogshagen, stole her heart. They were married on September 16, 1956, and served together in Bolivia until 1961.



Audrey with husband Dave Bacon, new to both marriage and the mission field in 1942

Rollie and Audrey were then asked to move “temporarily” to Woodworth, Wisconsin, so Rollie could help with the bookkeeping. Seventeen years later they moved to Florida to continue their ministry, finally retiring in 2001.

Audrey’s daughter Avis and son-in-law Ron Bodin recently retired from New Tribes Mission. Audrey was extremely proud of her four grandchildren—Rhonna, Richelle, Ruthie Williams and Robert—and her great granddaughter Madison.

Audrey will be missed greatly by them as well as the many people she blessed through her cheery smile and encouragement.

Sharing Your Lunch

Like the little boy in the Bible who shared his five loaves and two fishes, God can stretch our gifts farther than we ever knew was possible. And like the 12 stunned disciples, we'll be standing with our full baskets afterwards, amazed.

That's what happened to Mary from Minnesota.

Years ago when I was newly born-again, I asked the Lord how I should direct my giving to His glory. He led me to New Tribes Mission.

My heart, from the beginning, was to bring His Word to lost souls. Being a missionary wasn't my calling ... but, if I wasn't to go, I could send.

Then an unexpected refund check arrived. The Lord had provided a way for me to bless others. I was excited to invest it in the Gospel through an NTM annuity. It wasn't much, but I prayed for a "loaves and fishes" miracle, and I trusted He would work through NTM to make it happen.

Thanking the Lord and NTM for the privilege to serve in this way,

Mary

But how does Mary's NTM annuity actually work? How does it stretch?

Annuities work like the reverse of life insurance. With life insurance, you pay in a small amount at a time and your family receives a large sum later when you pass away. With annuities, you pay in a sum (\$5,000 minimum) at the beginning while you are still living and then get a set amount back every month for the rest of your life.

NTM receives a blessing by the interest from your annuity account. And that blessing helps plant strong tribal churches in the farthest corners of the globe — changing tribal lives forever.

Consider the blessing of sharing your lunch all around the world as well. And to all the Marys out there, thank you for sharing yours.

Find out how you can start a charitable gift annuity:
Stewardship Development Office
www.ntm.org/give | sdo@ntm.org | 800-813-1566

Dylan & Angie van Rensburg

connect with...



Indonesia

Children: Raquel and Gideon

Ministry: Church planting

Sending church: Crossway Church, Germantown, Wisconsin

Two years after Dylan and Angie married they attended New Tribes Bible Institute in Waukesha, Wisconsin, to gain a better knowledge of God's Word. "We wanted to do what He wanted us to do with our lives, but didn't know what that would look like," the couple wrote.

Angie was always interested in doing mission work but Dylan wasn't so sure. Slowly but surely Dylan began to see God's heart for people and that throughout His Word He was reaching out to have a relationship with everyone.

One day during class, a teacher read them a letter from a tribal man begging for missionaries to come and tell them about God. The man had seen the new life in neighboring tribes who had been taught evangelistic Bible lessons. Over and over he begged but sadly no one ever went and told him about Christ. "Our teacher told us that that was one of the many letters written requesting missionaries. After hearing that, we told God we wanted to go. Since that time He has continued to open the doors for us," the couple wrote.

ntm.org/dylan_vanrensburg

[go deeper]

plant, water and wait.



by Chet Plimpton
General Secretary
NTM USA Executive Board

I was planting spring flowers when I was surprised to see a gladiola shoot poking up through the soil.

A year ago last spring, I had planted some bulbs in that spot, but they didn't all come up when I hoped they would. As I looked at that tender green shoot, I was reminded that after planting that bulb and watering it thoroughly, my work was done. I couldn't determine the timing for when new life would spring up.

When it comes to gardening, we plant, water and wait. When it comes to sharing the message of the Word of God, we must deliver it with clarity and accuracy, but we must trust God with the results. In 1 Corinthians 3:6 Paul wrote, "I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase."

The new growth I saw in my garden was not my doing. It had all taken place underground, where I couldn't witness what was taking place. Likewise, we can't see how the Spirit of God is working in hearts. Often, the indication of new life isn't according to our expectations. I had actually given up on what I had planted and had forgotten about it. Many faithful servants of Christ struggle with discouragement after they have poured out their hearts and souls in proclaiming the Gospel message because there are no indications of a spiritual harvest.

When there is little or no indication of results, does it mean we have failed and our work is in vain? Does it mean all the preparation, prayers and sacrifice have been for nothing?

If we look at "results" alone, we may easily draw wrong conclusions, because we cannot know what God is doing "underground" or what His timing is. That doesn't mean we shouldn't objectively evaluate our efforts in order to increase the effectiveness of

our ministry. We may need to change our methodology to become effective “planters of the seed.”

Robert Moffat was a Scottish pioneer missionary who arrived in Cape Town, South Africa in 1817. In 1822, he described the people group he and his wife were seeking to reach in these words: “They turn a deaf ear to the voice of love, and scorn the doctrines of salvation.” Moffat reportedly said to his wife, “Mary, this is hard work, and no fruit yet appears.”

Mary replied, “The Gospel has not yet been preached to them in their own tongue in which they were born.” From that time Moffat devoted himself to learning the language. Still, it was ten years before people came to faith in Christ.

If we cannot draw accurate conclusions by measuring results alone, then what evidence should we examine? Two foundational truths hold us steady in our ministry when results prove disappointing.

God has commissioned us as Christ’s ambassadors. 2 Corinthians 5:20 says, “Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ.” An ambassador is not required to produce results but

to faithfully deliver the message of the One who sent him. We might also think of ourselves as stewards because a steward, like an ambassador, is someone who has been entrusted with something. Paul reminds us that “it is required in stewards that one be found faithful” (1 Corinthians 4:2).

But what if we have endeavored to be faithful ambassadors in delivering the message but still fail to see evidence of a response to that message?

God has promised us that His Word will be effectual. In Isaiah 55:11, we have an amazing promise: God likened His Word to the rain and snow that waters the soil so seeds will sprout and things will grow. He said, “So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; it shall not return to Me void, but it shall accomplish what I please, and it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it.” When we couple that promise with 1 Peter 1:23 that describes the Word of God as the “incorruptible” seed that produces spiritual new birth and Hebrews 4:12 that depicts the Word of God as “living and powerful,” we can better understand God’s promise in Isaiah.

think about it.

- How would you encourage a missionary who is facing discouragement and disappointment because of a lack of results?
- Can reviewing the results of our ministry effort be helpful to us? Can you explain your answer to that question?
- What do you think about this statement: “Results are important, but faithfulness is essential”?

more precious than gold

by Bill Bosley; missionary in Senegal, West Africa

A detour to see the gold fields on our way to visit a tribal village got me thinking about parallels with the work NTM is doing here in Senegal.

Under the relentless sun, each worker toiled at his or her assigned task amid a fusion of sounds: the dull ring of rock struck by iron picks and *dabas* (a short, traditional digging implement), men and women grunting while hauling up heavy buckets, and the clatter of quartz chunks tossed aside or bagged for crushing, accompanied by a continuous murmur in different languages—Budik, Malinké and Pulaar.

After the quartz is dug up, hauled out, inspected and sorted, promising samples are pulverized, using a mortar and pestle fashioned from an old welding bottle and a truck axle. The crushed stone goes through a sieve to remove all but the finest particles, then into a “pan”—a scrap of old inner tube—to be tested.

The tester holds the inner tube over a small tub of muddy water, and slowly drips water into the crushed rock. He adds more water, and rocks the pan back and forth with a gentle circular motion to bring the heaviest of the tiny pieces to the edge. And suddenly... perhaps... a glint of gold!

It was easy to see similarities with the work in the Budik village where Ron and Debbie Abram, Ken and Kathy Satorius and Steve and Jessica Bas-tow have ministered for more than 30

years. (Steve and Jessica now run a guest home for NTM in Senegal.) And it's like the experience of many NTM missionaries in Senegal, elsewhere in Africa, and in other parts of the world.

They've labored long and hard in isolated villages, in difficult-to-learn languages, dealing with an inhospitable climate and seemingly incomprehensible cultures to bring the Gospel to tribal people—who often have



photo by Ron Abrams

little response. They have faced illnesses such as malaria, hepatitis and dengue fever, and even death. Ken and Kathy's 15-year-old son died from an allergic reaction to an insect sting in January 1997.

But the missionaries have continued to be faithful in the work God has given them to do.

Although NTM has worked in Senegal among eight different people

groups, including the Budiks, for more than 50 years, probably fewer than 100 believers have come to faith as a direct result of NTM's ministry. But like the few grains of gold that appear in the pan at the end of all the hard work, they are precious; their value is far beyond that of mere gold, causing all Heaven to rejoice. (Luke 15:7; 1 Peter 1:7)

i didn't want an old tribe.

by Lori Morley; missionary to the Simbari tribe, Papua New Guinea

At first, I did not want to work among the Simbari people of Papua New Guinea.

The work started in 1966 — before I was born — and I wanted to “boldly go where no one had gone before.” Besides, the Simbari language was among the most difficult in Papua New Guinea.

But as I searched for the ministry God had for me, He opened my eyes to the needs in tribal works where missionaries were already working. The team working in the Simbari tribe, Dennis and Jeanne Best and David and Shari Ogg, invited me to visit and explore joining their team. I flew in and spent a week with them, and I immediately felt welcomed and accepted. There was still much to be done in the Simbari tribe and I saw how I could fit in, so I joined the team in 1997.

After translating chronological Bible lessons and using some Scripture that Dennis had translated, David was able to present the

Gospel in 2001. He taught in an open area in our village, and a few people came regularly to hear the teaching.

Many, however, didn't want to hear. Missionaries had been living

in their village for 35 years. The people had heard another message from a religious group that taught salvation by works. As a result, most of the Simbaris had become apathetic toward



spiritual things.

But after the teaching a few people did believe. Since they were willing to get together regularly, we poured our energies into them with weekly Bible teaching.

Through literacy classes they learned to read and write in their own language. With further discipleship they began to take over some of the responsibilities of teaching literacy and

Bible lessons. For years we invested in this small group of people.

And slowly, almost imperceptibly, change began.

One of the first changes I remember was



when the wife of one of the Bible teachers came to know Christ as her Savior. Previously, she had not been interested in hearing the Bible teaching. She had heard the teachings of another religious group and believed that you needed to be good and follow the Law in order to be saved.

Most Simbari husbands would have beaten their wife and forced her to come to church with them. But the Bible teacher did not. He was patient. He prayed for her and talked to her about Jesus and grace. As he helped David revise Bible lessons, he

took them home and read them aloud to her.

Quite unexpectedly, she showed up at church one Sunday. The lesson that week was about the thief on the cross. He was unable to do any good works to please God, and yet because of his faith Jesus said to him, "Today you will be with me in Paradise."

After the lesson, this Bible teacher's wife did something very uncommon for Simbari women. She spoke openly to the group of believers about her salvation. She and her husband have been active and passionate witnesses for the Lord ever since.

Because of the obvious changes in the lives of some of the believers, their family members also began to come to our meetings and sit under the Bible teaching and more people were saved. Gradually, the number of believers began to grow. Other people in the community began to see the changes and request to hear Bible lessons, and the Word of God began to spread.

But perhaps the most significant event took place when all of us missionaries were away from the village.

A young couple from another village became very ill. Their families gave up on them but the believers prayed for them and took care of them. They spooned water into their mouths and later fed them. When the couple regained their strength they wanted to hear "God's Talk." The Holy Spirit found fertile soil in their hearts and the Word of God took root and grew.

They accepted Christ as their Savior. Through their changed lives, others in their village have seen the difference that Christ can make. It made a big impact.



photo by David Ogg

Missionaries have worked among the Simbari people for more than 40 years. But when the tribal people saw the difference in the lives of the missionaries, they would always say, “Oh, the outsiders are just different from us.”

But when they saw how Christ transformed the lives of some of their own people, they no longer had that excuse. Now they want this new life for themselves.

The work here among the Simbaris is far from being finished. Because of the difficulty of the language, translation has been a slow process.

David and Shari and I have been developing our translation procedures and have begun making quicker progress than in the early years of working on translation. But 73 percent of the New Testament remains to be translated.

The Simbari believers also face opposition from another religious group that does not preach the Gospel. New believers are often fearful of persecution if they publicize their faith. They have been slandered, and one woman’s husband beat her for wanting to be baptized.

Please pray for the Simbari church. Like a tender shoot springing up out of the dry ground, they are growing in a hostile environment and are still fragile. Pray that they would grow in the Lord to become a strong and mature church.



... and the Word of God began to spread.



photos by Lori Morley





no magic formula

by Matt Zook; missionary to the Lolo tribe, Mozambique

If we listen to these lessons, what will we receive?

Growing up on a dairy farm meant a lot of hard work, but at least you could measure what you accomplished. At the end of the day we could calculate how many acres of hay had been cut, how many bales were in the barn and ultimately, how many gallons of milk were in the tank.

But the results of our work in Mozambique have been sparse and hard to measure.

When we started, our battle cry was, “Let’s pray that God will open the hearts of the people so they will desire to hear and believe God’s Word.”

After a few months in Mozambique, we identified the people group we would be working with — the Lolo people. When our house was completed in their village three months later, we began full-time culture and language study. While the task was dif-



difficult, God allowed us to enjoy learning the Lolo language and we found the people friendly, peaceful and easy to get along with.

By God's grace alone, after two years of study, I reached the level needed to leave full-time language learning. Now I could finally communicate the Gospel to the Lolo people!

Interest was fairly high when the Bible teaching began. But after about

a week, the people began to ask, "If we listen to these lessons, what will we receive?" The people expected to be paid! Despite all our prayers and efforts, the lessons were not enough. Many quit attending.

After 66 evangelistic Bible lessons, a few of the people who had stayed to listen really seemed to understand the Gospel and professed faith. Yet many were not faithful in their attendance

and showed no interest in continuing to meet and study the Bible together.

Since there was interest for God's Word in another community, we decided to do an outreach with two believers from the original group. We knew these men would expect payment to help teach, so we tried to make sure they understood that we would not pay them. We explained that they needed to go because they wanted their friends to hear the Gospel. They agreed and went faithfully to help teach all 66 evangelistic lessons to this other small group. A handful of people showed real understanding and professed faith in Christ. Though the outreach was hard, I was so thankful for how it turned out.

Then the two men asked what they were going to be paid for helping! I reminded them of our agreement at the beginning and that they had been working in God's garden, not mine.

They replied, "You were honest with us, but we were fools. . . . When someone goes to the water hole to bathe and an alligator snaps at him and the man manages to escape, he will run home and take a bath behind his house. That is like us. We went once without pay but we sure will not do that again."

Around the same time, rumors began to surface about the man who had helped me write the Bible lessons. He had clear testimony of faith, saying, "Before, I thought that whoever follows God's commands will be saved, but now I have heard the truth that only Jesus saves." As he grew, I began training him to teach Bible lessons with me.

But then the rumors said he was involved in adultery. He denied it, but the evidence continued to mount and he finally resigned.

The Bible meetings were poorly attended and factions began to develop among the ten or so believers who met somewhat regularly. Only one or two believers showed evidence of a thankful spirit to God. Lives weren't being transformed in any noticeable ways. Those who confessed faith had no real understanding of their identity as children of God and there was no sense of worship. Serious gaps existed in the application of the truth they professed to believe.

As a whole, our evangelistic efforts did not engage the women, children or youth. The few men who had listened to the Bible teaching seem to be impacted by it more as a fairy tale story rather than true reality. It seemed to impact them the way *The Three Little Pigs* impacts me. I can tell you the plot and the moral of the story, but it has nothing to do with my reality.

Despite our best efforts, the Gospel has not impacted the community or many individual lives in a noticeable way. Many of those who profess faith are not living in a way that is noticeably different than before they heard

There is no "magic formula" that guarantees success when dealing with the hearts and lives of people with a will — or with a sovereign God who has His own perfect agenda.



the Gospel. Why has there been so little measurable results? Because there is no “magic formula” that guarantees success when dealing with the hearts and lives of people with a will – or with a sovereign God who has His own perfect agenda.

Had we known beforehand what our ministry with the Lolo people in Mozambique would look like, would we still have gone? Absolutely. Why? Because God’s name and fame and deeds and honor and glory are always worthy to be declared among the nations—even if most do not believe.

We have just returned to Mozambique from home assignment. Praise God for the little group of believers who truly understand the Gospel. We have yet to see if our work here will result in a strong Lolo church that transforms the Lolo people, but we plan to continue to translate, teach and disciple toward that end.

Come what may, our hope is in God—not in the results we are working toward. Our prayer and the prayer of our many faithful supporters will continue to be, “God, please open the hearts of the Lolo people to hear and believe Your Word. Transform us and the new Lolo believers into your image.” Please make that your prayer as well!





get me out of here!

by Jennifer Hatcher, Contributing writer

If she'd had a radio to call for a plane, Sharon Goodman would have been out of that Kuna village in a heartbeat. She would have left the thatch-roofed hut with the dirt floor, the naked tribal children, the dug-out canoes, the muddy river and the boisterous women in colorful, hand-stitched blouses.

And Sharon had many good reasons.

Privacy isn't valued among the Kunas, so the people "visited" and watched Sharon and her husband, Joe, night and day. Language learning was harder and taking much more time than they had ever dreamed.

A handful of tribal men wanted to force the missionaries out of the village, so for days the villagers heatedly discussed this, finally resolving the issue with a village-wide vote in favor of keeping the missionaries.

But then their ministry partners left the tribal work. Following that, Joe dealt with hepatitis for three months. Sharon missed her oldest child, who

was boarding at the mission's elementary school far away. And she had her hands full in the village with a preschooler, a toddler and a new baby.

Surrounded by the ever-present Kuna people – but still only able to speak and understand their language like a child – Sharon was lonelier than she'd ever been.

Yes, if she'd had a radio, she would have packed up her children and flown away. But the Panamanian government wouldn't allow them to



have a radio, and the next plane wasn't due for weeks. She was stuck there in that village.

But even in their darkest moments, the Goodmans knew God had led them to Panama and the Kuna people. The Lord has closed doors on other ministry opportunities that had seemed available to them, yet opened the door to them to work among the Kunas. And when missionaries from other organizations wanted to work there, God put obstacles in their way.

"While we didn't know if there would ever be any believers, we knew that God had put us there and hadn't told us to leave," she said.

So they stayed, in spite of the difficulties.

Language learning happened in starts and stops. Work was delayed by Joe's hepatitis, bouts of giardia (from contaminated drinking water) and a life-threatening blood platelet problem for Sharon. Trips to the city for doctor's appointments, handling of paperwork, or to visit

with their son at school, though all necessary and good, also slowed progress.

"We went in with such high hopes . . . and it was way different, slower, longer," Sharon recalls.

Four years later, it was time for the Goodmans first home assignment in the USA. By now they knew the Kuna language, but the Bible teaching hadn't begun yet. Sharon remembers feeling like they were, "limping home from the battle with nothing to show for it."

But the beginning of the Goodmans' second term was more encouraging. They lived in a wooden house by the airstrip, instead of in a pole hut in the village with constant "peekers." Another NTM missionary family, Jerry and Joyce McDaniels, were their co-workers in the village. Sharon and Joe could now understand and speak the language more proficiently. And they had good relationships with many of the Kuna people.

Finally, near the end of 1987, after more than six years of living in the Kuna village of Morti, Joe practiced evangelistic Bible lessons with his two best tribal friends. They listened and the Holy Spirit worked in their hearts. Both of the men accepted Christ. After

all the long years of studying and praying and building relationships, after all the days of loneliness and frustration and sickness, the work had paid off. Two Kuna men had believed. Now Joe was ready to begin teaching the entire village.

But that went slowly as well.

Whenever the village leaders called a business meeting or work project or their own religious meeting, Bible teaching was postponed. When Joe did resume teaching, he had to review what he had already taught. Both

God had brought them to Panama and every detail would work out in His timing, not theirs.



photo by Sharon Goodman



the teaching and reviewing had to be done very carefully because the Kuna people had never learned in a formal, traditional way before. So he taught slowly off and on, as the village schedule allowed, all that year and into the next.

But the Goodmans reminded themselves that God had brought them to Panama and that every detail would work out in His timing, not theirs.

Then in the spring of 1989, Joe and Sharon moved out to the city temporarily to help with NTM leadership needs. Joe continued to write Bible lessons in Kuna and send them back to the tribe in the same plane with the McDaniels' groceries. Then Jerry would teach them.

Finally, in the summer of 1989, while the Goodmans were still away in the city, Jerry completed evangelistic Bible teaching and about a dozen Kuna men believed and were saved.

Joe and Sharon had planted and watered seeds through years of hard, lonely work. But God allowed the McDaniels alone to harvest the initial "crop" of believers. Sharon smiled and nodded her head, saying, "It was all God's timing." The Goodmans were excited to finally have a group of believers in the village, and looked forward

to moving back and discipling the new little church. As time went on, more Kuna men, as well as women and children, also trusted Christ as Savior.

In the summer of 1994, Joe and Sharon moved back into the tribe. Joe and Jerry were training Kuna men for church leadership and began gradually turning over the teaching to the Kuna believers. In early 1996, the Kuna New Testament was distributed throughout the village. As they read and studied their own New Testament, the believers asked questions day and night. "They were at our house even more then!" Sharon said with a laugh.

Fifteen years after their arrival in Panama, Joe and Sharon were living among a growing, thriving little church in Morti. And though they and the McDaniels had to leave in 1996 due to guerrilla activity, the church is still thriving, and even sending out Kuna missionaries to other villages.

Sharon is glad she didn't have a radio back in the early 1980s. She's glad she couldn't call for a pilot to come rescue her. Instead, she got to see God rescue the Kuna people.

Editor's note: The Kuna people of Panama have two distinct groups with their own dialects: San Blas Kuna and Border Kuna. The Goodmans worked among the San Blas Kunas, and the Border Kunas were ministered to by the Tenenoff, Mankins and Rich families. Colombian guerillas crossed the border and kidnapped Dave Mankins, Mark Rich and Rick Tenenoff in 1993, and killed them in 1996, although there was not sufficient evidence to reach that conclusion until 2001. The San Blas Kuna believers have continued the work among the Border Kunas and today there is a church among each group.



a voice

by Patsy Gibson;
missionary in Latin America



from the past

As a young man, Hector was interested in the Word of God.

God's Word began to speak to his heart when he worked on the Old Testament translation with Paul and Pam Rasmussen. Paul and Pam were co-workers with my husband, Wayne, and me on the Piapoco missionary team. Hector eagerly anticipated the day when the missionary team would teach his village in the Piapoco language in Colombia.

Then suddenly the translation work and evangelism preparation were cut short. The missionaries had to leave, forced out by leftist guerrillas. We promised to return someday. Hector and the villagers waited, but we were not able to go back.

Eventually the security situation in the area deteriorated so much that even Hector and his wife, Alicia, packed up their family and canoed far downriver to a small town, protected by a military base. On the outskirts, they set up their own Piapoco community with their numerous children, in-laws, and grandchildren.

Years later, Hector learned the missionaries were teaching God's Word in another area, and some of the Piapoco villages even had churches. Hector thought, *Will my family and I ever be able to hear this teaching in our own language?*

One day in May 2010, Hector heard the usual Piapoco greeting but from a voice long ago tucked away in his memory. He couldn't believe his ears! Turning around, he encountered Wayne's smile, and a huge grin broke across his weathered face.

"It's been a long time," Hector exclaimed, hugging him, "and now we see you again!"

The men sat and talked a long while, bridging the distance of more than 25 years. Then Hector turned the conversation to a matter close to his heart. "Will you come and talk to us, my family group, about God's Word? I will call them all to come and hear."

Wayne readily agreed.

Returning that evening to share the Gospel message, Wayne found Hector's sizable family waiting and attentive. Some in the crowd had never heard this message in their own language. The words would continue to be mulled over in their heads, and discussed around their cooking fires.

Hector asked for copies of the Old Testament portions he had helped translate so long ago. Wayne promised to send some. As his flight took off over the jungle, Wayne thought, *What they need is for someone to go and teach them the foundational Bible lessons.*

The lessons are designed specifically for the Piapoco culture, speaking to their hearts about God's character, about His love for them, and His answer to the sin problem by sending a Savior to set them free.

Piapoco Christian men have been disciplined and trained to teach God's Word. Wayne and I plan to work with these men to teach evangelistic Bible lessons to Hector's group. Pray the seeds sown in their hearts will produce the fruit of salvation, and that God will raise up a strong church among them.

A close-up photograph of a person wearing a red button-down shirt, a brown leather tool belt, and tan work gloves. The person is holding a hammer in their right hand and a yellow hard hat in their left hand. The background is dark, and the lighting is dramatic, highlighting the textures of the clothing and tools.

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- Central Pennsylvania

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