

# MISSIONS FOCUS: PIONEER BIBLE TRANSLATORS

PAPUA NEW GUINEA



## Does God speak your language?

“We are so blessed to have the Word of God in our own language.” Millions of people around the world can say this sentence, especially those who speak English, French, Mandarin, Swahili, German, Indonesian, or one of the many other so called “world languages.”



by Norm Weatherhead

And for those of us who speak English, we have the privilege of being able to read the Bible in dozens of popular English translations.

In 2024, we are very close to having eight billion people living on planet Earth. With great joy, we know 11% of the world’s language groups have at least some portions of God’s Word, and 88% of the remaining languages have some current Bible translation work being done among them. As wonderful as this sounds, there are at least 90 million people whose Bibles are filled with blank pages. Not even one verse of Scripture exists in their language. Many of the remaining 1,300+

languages which have no verse of Scripture, have less than 5,000 speakers.

Pioneer Bible Translators of Canada is one agency seeking to reach these small language groups with translated Scriptures, one of them being the Akukem people who live in Papua New Guinea. Working slowly on their own, some translated materials were published over a 15-year period, though the quality was mediocre. Then in April of 2019, my wife, Jill, and I took on the role of Translation Advisors, working with the Akukem national co-workers. Very quickly we saw translation work increase greatly, literacy workshops being run, and audio recordings of their translated portions were started in March of 2024.

In traditional language projects, a great deal of work focuses on the translation of Scripture, and it can take many years to produce a Scripture publication. There are five major stages of translation: rough draft, peer check, exegetical check (to match the original Greek New Testament or the Hebrew Old Testament), community check for naturalness of the translation, and

a final outside consultant check. The end result is Scriptures in their local language. But wait! Many groups never had an official alphabet until we worked with them, thus the need for literacy workshops. This is a good thing, and yet, it can

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still limit the widespread impact of God’s Word on their people group, when only a few can read what is being translated. So, we praise God for our modern technology, such as audio recordings of the printed vernacular Scriptures, and when these are released, then ALL the people will

have access to God’s Word, whether in printed or in audio format.

As of October 2024, the Akukem now have five books (Mark, Luke, 1&2 Timothy, and Titus) translated, checked and ready to be recorded. Praise God that He is reaching to the very ends of the earth to bring His Word to people in their heart language.

## HOW CAN WE AT OAK PARK HELP?

1. Pray for the Akukem Translation, Literacy & Scripture Impact project that God’s Word in every format will touch and transform the hearts of the Akukem people.
2. Sign up to receive the Weatherhead monthly “Prayer & Praise” email update by writing to Norm at: [norm.weatherhead@pioneerbible.org](mailto:norm.weatherhead@pioneerbible.org)
3. Ask God to provide a “Point Person” (or two or three) who can travel occasionally to PNG for a month to help the Akukem translation work sessions by being a facilitator who works alongside of Norm when he is connecting remotely with the team in PNG.



### Akukem Important Key Terms For Luke

Verse(s)	Greek	English	Tok Pisin	Akukem Key Term
Luk 8.31	ἄβυσσος	Abyss; place of the dead	hul i nogat as ples ol daiman i stap	mbinij patisir toon*
Luk 1.13	ἄγγελος	angel	enzel	enzer*
Luk 4.34	ἅγιος	holy/clean ___ in God’s eyes	i stap klin long ai bilong God	Gotin arimasi rifaagn * uzuesi*
Luk 2.25	πνεῦμα ἅγιον	Holy Spirit	Holi Spirit; Spirit bilong God	Gotin Ijeroon*
Luk 14.26	ἀδελφή	big sister; big sisters;	bikpela susa	aveennameen* / umbuaramisi*
Luk 10.39	ἀδελφὴ	little sister; little sisters;	liklik susa	afumuun* / afumuir
Luk 16.9	αἰώνιος	eternal	i stap oltaim	mighasigha mamaghre iti* / ika* mighasigha *
Luk 10.25	ζωὴ αἰώνιος	eternal life	gutpela laip i stap oltaim	itir ikirimiran aghuun*
Luk 21.19	ψυχή	Context: [complete] life	gutpela sindaun	ambirambijn aghuun*
Luk 9.24	ψυχή	Context: [natural] life	gutpela laip	ikiran aghuun*
Mat 9.11	[ἀκάθαρτος] in FN	unclean before God’s eyes	doti long ai bilong God	Gotin arimasi rifaagn mbize*
Luk 5.13	[ἀκάθαρτος] in FN	not clean before God	i no klin long ai bilong God	Gotin arimasi rifaagn uzueghem pati*
Luk 4.33	ἀκάθαρτος	evil; bad	nogut	maghatigh* / maghatisi*
Luk 15.18	ἁμαρτάνω	to sin, do wrong behavior	mekim pasin nogut	otivan maghatigha* *amu* (sg) otevir maghatisi *amu* (pl)
Luk 5.20	ἁμαρτία	sins; wrongdoings	ol pasin nogut	otivir maghatisi* (*amu*)
Luk 18.13	ἁμαρτωλός	sinner; sinful	man nogut [i mekim pasin nogut]	gumaghan maghatigh*
Luk 13.6	ἀμπελών	vineyard	gaden rop wain	uainir umbeer migh*
Luk 6.13	ἀπόστολος	Apostles; messenger	Ol Man [Jisas] i Bin Makim	[Ilesusim] Mbisevisi* Gumasi* / Gumagh*
Luk 22.54	ἄρχιερέυς	High Priest	Hetman Bilong Ol Man i Givim Ofa Long God	Gotin Apurapurir Gumasi Apan*
Luk 9.22	ἄρχιερέυς	Chief Priests	Ol Bikman Bilong Ol Man i Givim Ofa Long God	Gotin Apurapurir Gumasi Ikii*
Luk 8.49	ἀρχισυναγωγος	head man who looks after the things of a house for talking with God	hetman i save lukautim ol samting bilong Haus Bilong Toktok Wantaim God	Gotin Porugha Mbingeer Ripenan bisir garir gumaghan apan
Luk 24.20	ἄρχων	ruler(s); leader(s)	bikman; ol bikman	gumaghan ikiv* / gumasi ikii*
Luk 18.18	ἄρχων	ruler(s); official(s)	hetman; ol hetman	gumaghan apan* / gumasi apan*
Luk 5.37	ἄσκος	wineskin	kontaner bilong skin abus	asighan nerim mbisiv*

