TRANSLATION Matters

March 2017

CELEBRATING ACCESS TO GOD'S WORD FOR ALL

By Karen Floor



2017 is a momentous year, marking the 500th anniversary of the Reformation. 500 years ago, Martin Luther translated the whole Bible into standardised German. This sparked the beginning of the Reformation, and fuelled a movement of translating and printing Bibles, made possible by the invention of the printing press. Finally, people across all of Europe could celebrate the Word of God coming alive in their own language. Over the years, many more translations have followed and the Bible translation movement continues to grow.

We are very excited about REFORMATION YEAR 2017, and have planned several events to commemorate this important landmark. On Saturday 2 September 2017, we will be hosting the WORDALIVE BENEFIT CONCERT in Johannesburg, featuring the Grammy award-winning Soweto Gospel Choir. Please save the date and we will keep you informed about ticketing details.

This year will be the 5th time Wycliffe enters a team to Ride for a Purpose in the TELKOM 947 CYCLE CHALLENGE. Our "Africa Alive" team will be on the road on Sunday 19 November 2017. In keeping with our Reformation theme this year, we are aiming to raise R500,000.00. We invite all Kingdom-minded cyclists to join our team, so please help us spread the word.

Aside from these two events, we will keep you posted on other Reformation events throughout the year. Please plan on joining us as we celebrate the privilege of having free access to God's Word. Imagine if we were to join hands to extend this privilege to all people. Today, there are more than 100 language communities in Southern Africa still waiting for their first Scripture. Together with our co-labourers around the world, we are working hard towards the goal of Vision 2025 – starting a translation in every language that needs one by 2025. We invite you to join us!







UNEARTHING THE NEEDS IN THE FIELD

By Linda Jordan



Linda Jordan is a Bible translation needs assessment surveyor, hailing from Wisconsin, USA. A surveyor identifies language needs and gathers relevant information before a Bible translation project starts. She heads up a survey team in Angola, whose surveys are revealing more about the languages in the area. The team is also making contact with people interested in helping with translation projects.

"Praise God that we are gradually piecing together a picture of the San languages spoken in Angola, and that translation work in some of them is due to begin soon," says Linda.

In May 2016, Linda travelled to Huíla Province, where new translation projects are being planned. Accompanied by a member of a partner organisation, she began the trip with a visit to the Tchilenge people to discuss possibilities for an oral Bible translation project in their language. "The church's response was encouraging and emphasised the need for such a translation in their mother tongue," says Linda. They made some good contacts that will be helpful as the project progresses.



Tchilenge church members gather in the shade to say goodbye

They also visited several San communities in Huíla. Linda had done initial survey work there before, but she saw the need to do a follow-up, as different communities speak their own variations of the languages in those areas. In Mupembati, Linda learned more about the number and location of the various San languages spoken in Angola. She visited Derruba to determine their need for a Bible translation. After spending time there, she discovered that their language variation was so different from other San communities that they would need a separate translation. Next, they visited the Handa people, where together with the community, they discussed possibilities for an oral Bible translation project.



Handa believers in front of their church in Huíla Province of southwestern Angola



San community leaders being interviewed in Mupembati

In June 2016, Linda and her Angolan colleague travelled to Moxico Province for a second survey of the languages in the southern part of the province. They gained a greater understanding of the interaction between the different language groups, as well as the attitudes they have toward each other. She also identified language preferences among different segments of one community.

During the trip, they met with the Mashi and Makoma people groups who have speakers in both Angola and Zambia. A partner organisation is involved in a translation project for these groups in Zambia, but research with speakers on the Angolan side gave Linda more insight into the potential need to expand the project.

At the start of the five-year survey project in Angola, it was thought that there were about 40 languages needing translation. As the project draws to a conclusion in 2017, the survey project has revealed that there are 20 of these languages in need of translation.

It is of extreme importance to Wycliffe that the viability of a potential translation project is verified before committing resources to it. Karen Floor, CEO of Wycliffe South Africa explains, "We will not waste resources by duplicating efforts or rushing in to a project without research, yet we also won't leave people without access to the Scriptures in their own heart language".

AFRICA ALIVE CYCLE TEAM HANDS OVER CHEQUE

On Thursday 2 February 2017, the Wycliffe Africa Alive cycle team handed over a cheque for R118,475.10 to Bishop Josias Mudenda, representing the Tonga Bible Translation Team in Zimbabwe. It was a special evening to honour the cyclists who rode the Telkom 947 Cycle Challenge and raised the funds, the Tonga Translation Team, the intercessors who pray for the project and all the people who helped along the way.

Photos by Roy Tibbit



Wycliffe CEO Karen Floor sharing a laugh with Bishop Mudenda



Pieter Engelbrecht hands over the cheque to Bishop Mudenda



Showing appreciation to Ninette Oliver who managed the refreshment tent



Thanking members of the cycling team



Bishop Mudenda flanked by Intercessors for Africa Coordinators, Harry & Elsbeth Brasem



Cyclists, friends and supporters of Wycliffe South Africa

CYCLE TO SEE AFRICA COME ALIVE

The Telkom 947 Cycle Challenge takes place on Sunday 19 November 2017. We are aiming to recruit riders for Wycliffe's "Africa Alive" team, and to raise R500,000 for Bible translation work. Join the "Africa Alive" team today to ride for a Kingdom purpose! Visit our website homepage for a link to a video clip about the race. Even if you don't cycle, please share with your family and friends.

THE IMPACT OF THE TRANSLATED WORD

By Harry Brasem

Bishop Mudenda shared some wonderful testimonies, including a testimony about the serious car accident he was involved in last year. His car rolled three times and he was bleeding profusely from the head from an injury. He heard the Lord telling him not to be afraid and that he would not die because he still had much work to do.

He told of an evangelistic outreach held by Pastor Elek, who read a portion from the Tonga translation about the adulterous woman (John 8:1-11). A woman in the crowd, hearing the story for the first time in her heart language, began to weep. When Pastor Elek invited people who wanted prayer to come forward, she went forward and confessed that she had been living a life much like the woman in the story and was an outcast in the community. The story brought her healing and forgiveness, as she was overwhelmed by the love that Jesus showed the woman.

One of the translators, Pastor January Muchimba, experienced transformation in his understanding of the Scriptures as he worked on translating it. He confessed to his congregation how he had not clearly understood the Scriptures, which until recently he had only been able to read in Shona, resulting in wrong teaching. He asked their forgiveness and promised that they would only receive the right teaching from then on, because it would be taken from their Tonga Scriptures. The people in his church love him for this honesty and have been very responsive.

Bishop Mudenda and Petros Karekera visited the Speaker of the House of Assembly in Parliament and received favour as they presented translated Bible stories in Tonga. The Minister of Education gave them his full support and requested that they use the Tonga Bible stories as a foundation. He told them, “Get the Tonga Bible translated as soon as possible. We need it!”

These inspiring testimonies demonstrate the huge impact of the translated Word of God, truly changing and transforming the Tonga people of Northern Zimbabwe.





HELP SAVE TREES

We are constantly updating our database, so if any of your details are going to change, please let us know. If you would prefer to receive this newsletter via email (and save some trees in the process), please send a request to wycliffe@wycliffe.org.za.

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BIBLE TRANSLATION

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