TRANSLATION Matters

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STREAMS IN THE DESERT

By: Johanna Pillinger

"Go, you swift messengers, to a nation of tall, smooth-skinned people, to a people that are feared far and wide, to a nation strong and victorious, whose land rivers divide." – Is.18:2

On the 18th August 2018, the Rendille of northern Kenya received their New Testament.

This took place in Korr, a much-frequented centre because of its many wells. Here, men herding their camels would draw water for them to drink. Women would draw water for cooking in their traditional, round, sticks-and-wild sisal mats, until they packed up the huts on camels to move elsewhere.

God sent Nick and Lynne Swanepoel to the Rendille, using Isaiah 18:2. How were they ever going to see God's living waters penetrate the hearts of the Rendille, hearts dry and hardened as the ground on which they lived? How could they communicate, not knowing the language? The Rendille didn't even stay in the same place for longer than three months!

Steve Pillinger, also from South Africa, went out to help analyse Rendille and make it a written language. Then, in 1981, after three short years, all work stopped. The first of many severe droughts struck northern Kenya. Hundreds of Rendille lost all or most of their livestock. Johanna joined the team to assist with food distribution. During that time one lady said: "So far you have only played with papers, but now we can see that you are doing the work of God by helping the people!" It was the first sign of acceptance.

Eventually, the translation of the New Testament began. This went hand-in-hand with community development work, restocking, and setting up a nursery school, a primary school and a dormitory. A successful Adult Literacy project was set up, one of the first to succeed among nomads anywhere. Every project Nick and Lynne took on showed God's love and explained the gospel. One by one, individuals opened their hearts to the Living Water.

Some young men went to Bible College; some became evangelists, and two became faithful, gifted translators: Joshua and Laban. Slowly, verse by verse, the New Testament was translated, checked, and finally printed and bound in a bright red-and-gold book.

And so the long-awaited day finally dawned, hot and dusty, pregnant with expectation. An event, the size of which no-one had seen in Korr before. Trucks carrying marquees, food, water bottles and chairs came in. People started streaming in from far and wide: Rendille women dressed in their finest, men from nearby and visitors from far and near.

The dedication of the Rendille New Testament featured dancing women and singing groups, praising God to indigenous tunes! Stirring speeches expressed thanks to all those who had made this day possible. Special mention was made of those who were not present, who had done the hard work in their homes, in prayer - especially those in South Africa.

Finally, the boxes were brought in, on the backs of camels. Laban, the translator, dressed magnificently for the occasion as a Rendille warrior, opened the first box. In a moment the table with the boxes was swamped by people! The red-and-gold books were dedicated, and a couple of Rendille people who had been through the literacy programme did the first ever public reading from the Rendille New Testament. The next day we attended a church service in Korr. People came in carrying their New Testaments, delighting in being able to read God's life giving message in the language of their hearts.
The Rendille have many stories. One tells how once, long ago, they had the Book of God. Then somehow it got lost. But one day, the story goes, the Book of God would be brought back to the Rendille.

That day had now come, and what a great celebration it was!





Photo credits for this edition:
Steve Pillinger and Jennifer Sophie



Nick and Lynne Swanepoel celebrate with the Rendille



CELEBRATION, CREATIVITY AND COURAGEOUS FAITH!

What an amazing celebration of tangible Rendille joy and thanksgiving!

We thank God for the incredible commitment of the whole team of prayer and financial supporters in South Africa, and ministry counterparts in Kenya – BTL (Bible Translation and Literacy), and AIM (Africa Inland Mission).

While we celebrate with the Rendille, we are ever conscious of the many language communities who do not yet have their own red and gold book, or any other form of God's Word in their language. The remaining need of over 1800 languages worldwide is daunting. It requires divinely inspired creativity and courageous faith in God, for whom nothing is too difficult.

In our last edition of 'Translation Matters', we shared with you the opportunity to double any donation given by 14 Sept 2018. A huge thanks to each one of you who prayed with us, and participated in this double-up offer. We were able to achieve 88% of the $200 000 match fund. This enables us to launch new Bible translation projects in the next few months. Praise God!

This week, we celebrate the launch of a new project, with the Síphùthì language community of Lesotho and the Eastern Cape. Please be cheering for our team of Africa Alive cyclists, as they ride for Síphùthì in the Telkom 947 Cycle Challenge, this November.

Celebrating God on the move!

Karen Floor, CEO

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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