AUG/SEPT 2023

TRANSLATION *Matters*



A Kuvale woman from the Kamukuio Cluster holding her audio Scripture device

ORAL BIBLE TRANSLATION & TRANSCRIPTION

"Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word about Christ."

- Romans 10:17

Oral Bible Translation. What is it - just telling Bible stories? What about OBT&T – Oral Bible Translation and Transcription? There is a lot of terminology that can shroud the translation process in mystery and leave it open to misunderstanding. Why would we do things this way instead of the more traditional approach of written Bible Translation?

Most Wycliffe South Africa (WSA) translations are OBT projects and there are good reasons for choosing this methodology. Busie Khanyile explains several of these in her article on the next page. As she also points out, there are challenges too. This is why we are in the process of holding events, like the OBT Think Tank, to hone the methodology and mitigate the possible risks.

Gerhard Marx's article puts flesh on the bones of these abstract considerations, as he shares the real-life impact of a man called Emmanuel. Through oral Bible storytelling, there was a rapid increase in churches and orphan-support programmes in the Lake Victoria region of Kenya. This is not an isolated story. As you will see from the quotes and anecdotes on the following pages, we have evidence of oral scriptures being vessels of transformation all over southern Africa where we work.

The few pages we have here are not enough to give a full overview of the many facets of OBT&T, so we invite you to share your questions with us as we prepare further materials about this method of translation. What would you like to know? What is your experience?

In this issue, we also introduce you to new members of the team and Board of Directors, and share some updates on partner collaboration visits that have taken place. If you are not already partnering with us in some way and would like to, please see the Wycliffe Links Resources page, or contact us directly.

Jen Pillinger

THINK TANK: ORAL BIBLE TRANSLATION & TRANSCRIPTION (OBT&T)

By Busie Khanyile





In May, WSA hosted a two-day OBT Think Tank represented by different organisations*. The OBT&T approach resonated because of the fact that: first, Scriptures were initially oral; second, most unreached populations are orally oriented (which doesn't mean illiterate); third, oral people need the written text and vice versa; and fourth, communities are requesting the written text which has to be as natural as possible and not differ from the recordings - this is accomplished through transcription.

In this conference, it was acknowledged that OBT is a crucial initiative that requires an academic approach, and that transcription is advantageous to non-written languages as it aims to accommodate oral language features. This approach provides Scripture in two forms: recorded and written. The recorded Word of God has an element of accelerated impact, which is seen immediately in life transformation starting with the translators themselves. It was also pointed out that OBT is a Scripture Engagement activity because it requires discussions on background information, biblical concepts, and cultural and linguistic issues. Lastly, it was suggested that Greek and Hebrew be used as source languages and not merely resource texts for translators.

Some OBT&T challenges were pointed out, such as the fact that most of the remaining languages are small and have no literature and, therefore, there is a need for language development. There is also the issue of quality assurance and authenticity. Furthermore, there is a connection between the carrier of the message and the voice which lays a challenge in the selection of the local teams. Lastly, there is a general shortage of consultants, especially in OBT&T.

As to what the future of OBT&T looks like, this points to a spiritual turning point for oral-oriented communities, minority groups in particular. The second photo above is a local Catholic congregation (in Nampula, Mozambique) that, in one voice, has requested the recently recorded and published Scripture portions.

Next is to continue the translation work, now in entire books, along with analyses of orthography and discourse in all OBT&T projects, by hosting workshops and interviews.

*Wycliffe South Africa, Youth With A Mission, The Seed Company, SIL International, Whole World Institute, Wycliffe Global Alliance, Global Partnerships, Spoken Worldwide, Global Recordings Network, The Word For The World and Faith Comes By Hearing

DIGGING DEEPER: THE STORY OF EMMANUEL

By Gerhard Marx

Emmanuel, pictured right, takes care of orphans on islands in Lake Victoria, Kenya. He once struggled to find food and provisions for one orphanage and inquired to local ministries in the capital, Nairobi. One young leader, Bramuel, invited him to join their oral Bible storytelling training in the village of Vihiga. Vihiga is a village on the eastern side of Lake Victoria, close to Kisumu, and only five kilometres north of the equator. Emmanuel had to travel by boat to Kisumu, and thereafter by taxi to Vihiga, a journey that lasted almost a day.



He did so as he was desperate to learn more about the Word of God, and to apply the Word of God in his ministry, hoping to take better care of the orphans entrusted to him. Over the course of 18 months he studied, spending two weeks at a time in Vihiga and two weeks back on the island. With what amounted to 4 months worth of training he learned 120 Bible stories. Emmanuel shared how he would use his trips between the island on a boat to Kisumu, and between Kisumu and Vihiga in a taxi, to practise what he had learned during the sessions. He said that he had a captive audience; they could either listen or jump! Well, they decided to listen and participate in the oral Bible storytelling practice.

"People who attended the oral Bible storytelling training events commented that everyone who partakes can now dig deeper into the Word of God."

Over the course of these months, some of the people on the boat and in the taxi applied the Bible stories to their lives, after coming to Jesus as their Saviour. Some invited Emmanuel to come and share the Bible stories and the training in their villages as well. The oral Bible storytelling events led to churches being planted. Emmanuel continued to attend the training in Vihiga.

One day, back on the island, some people from a newly planted church visited Emmanuel and brought with them some food as a gift from their harvest. This continued to take place over the next few months. Emmanuel shared that he started with a need to provide for one orphanage, but at the end of the oral Bible storytelling training in Vihiga, he testified that he is now able to help 70 orphanages on

various islands with the support of the newly planted churches.

People who attended the oral Bible storytelling training events commented that everyone who partakes can now dig deeper into the Word of God. A local pastor said that the use of oral Bible storytelling methodologies helps local churches and translation teams really understand the meaning of the story in the Bible.

A young man said that one does not need a lot of books to get the meaning, only follow the story in the Bible and one can get what is needed through deeper discussion, asking questions, and finding treasures, which leads to self-discovery and application. He explained that questions are asked about the characters in the Bible story, the circumstances surrounding the characters, choices and the result/impact of choices made, and what is learned about God. They learn together and take responsibility for themselves. When they, as Kenyans, participate in the message, they see themselves in the story, then they take responsibility for the lesson from the message.

Oral Bible storytelling as a method to internalise Scripture is helpful not just for translation teams, but also for the local church in obedience-based discipleship.

Reference:

"Vihiga." Wikipedia, Wikimedia Foundation, 19 June. 2023, en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vihiga.

OBT IMPACT QUOTES

"This MP3 player is the Bible for us who cannot read. I listen to this MP3 then whatever I listen from it, I will encourage people in the church and community. That's why I have said this MP3 is the best tool for me as Omuhimba"

- Mukaa Mbengera Tjivaro (Himba Translation, Namibia)

"The Scripture was being listened to by a wide range of people in the communities where our translators live. The impact was huge among the people... The recorded biblical stories were being listened to with great respect and devotion. People – the listeners and the translators themselves - were experiencing some behavioural change and spiritual growth in their lives."

- Andre Raul (Makhuwa Cluster Translation, Mozambique)

I have already implemented family evening prayer where all my family gather together and listen to one story and each one shares what he/she understood from it and we finalize with a prayer. I am very grateful to God for being part of this project

- Arlindo António Miguel (Makhuwa Cluster Translation, Mozambique)

"The consistent requests from engaged communities (after listening to translated scriptures) has been for the translation team to leave them the devices so they can listen more by themselves. Praise God for the hunger to hear more of His Word!"

- Report Writer (CD Cluster, undisclosed location)

Watch this video about OBT: https://youtu.be/fUCZ-8cGlSc



ANNOUNCEMENTS

Urgent Need for Kamukuio Funding!
Sponsor Bible Man and help bring more Scripture to the Kamukuio Cluster in Angola.

On Sunday 20th August, Mpho Tsekwa will be walking 8km in the 702 Walk the Talk to raise funds for this language group. Join him or sponsor him through this link: https://wycliffe.org.za/urgent-need

NEW BOARD MEMBERS



Gerhard Marx

Gerhard is passionately committed to building God's Kingdom, caring deeply for every people group and language, especially those who lack access and engagement with the Word of God. He serves as director for the Center for Oral Scriptures based in Jerusalem, as Bible translation consultant, OBT Teacher, mentor and Orality scholar, motivated to be faithful and obedient to God's call on his life.



Trudy De Bruin

Trudy has over 20 years of experience in accounting and tax services. Over the years, she has participated in various positions in ministry, most recently serving as Chairperson of the International Christian Chamber of Commerce. For nearly 30 years, Trudy and her family have helped provide weekly meals to over 250 kids through a soup kitchen. She spends her free time cooking for her family and friends.



Roslyn De Braine

Roslyn is an Associate Professor in the Department of Industrial Psychology and People Management (IPPM) at the University of Johannesburg. She has extensive experience in academic research and lecturing, and serves as a praise and worship leader for El Gibbor Ministries. She also enjoys painting, piano and drawing.

NEW TEAM MEMBERS



Sizukiwe Vimbani

Sizukiwe joined WSA in 2023 as the Psalms that Sing (PtS) Administrator and Intern Project Facilitator. As the PtS Administrator, she provides operational support to the project and its stakeholders. As a Project Facilitator intern, she shadows the senior Field Coordinator to learn and develop the skills necessary for the role.



GROWTH PARTNERS VISIT WSA

We were privileged to host a team from Seed Company Growth Partners at our WSA office in July. Our leadership team, Board of Directors and members of each department, including some of those on the field via zoom, were able to meet with them during their stay to discuss strategic direction and growth opportunities. It was an opportunity to reflect on our higher objectives and assess both our areas of strength and challenges while receiving valuable input from the Growth Partners team.



DARINE AND BEATRIZ VISIT WSA

Darine Conradie and Beatriz Jerónimo (Bia) from The Seed Company visited the WSA team in July. Darine is the Field Project Manager for Internships in Southern and Lusophone Africa. Bia has been appointed the new Field Project Manager for Lusophone Africa. The visit's purpose was to introduce Bia to our team. We work together on many projects and internships and value our relationship with The Seed Company.

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BIBLE TRANSLATION

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