HOPE FOR SUDAN: EQUIPPING SUDANESE TRANSLATORS

“My words became like sawdust in my mouth because I knew we would never have enough expatriate staff to send to each language group,” commented Russ Hersman, former Director of SIL* Sudan. Russ was recalling a time in Sudan several years ago when delegations from various language communities would come and ask for help in writing their language, promoting literacy, and starting translation projects. There weren’t enough expatriate translators to meet all the requests for Bible translation.

Usually at least one community a month would send a delegation to his home in Sudan. One month delegations from five language communities requested help. “It felt like telling cold and hungry people, ‘be warm and fed,’ and then sending them away with nothing to meet their need,” Russ said.

“At that time we knew there were potentially 90–105 more languages in need of translation. My leadership team and I met and said, ‘what can we do to use the resources we have more effectively to reach all these languages in our lifetime?’”

The answer was to equip the Sudanese to become linguists and translators, and then train them to become trainers themselves. Russ’s team decided to host a workshop

* SIL is Wycliffe’s primary strategic partner.
**FAST FACTS**

**Sudan**

**Location:**
North Africa

**Total Population:**
30,894,000

**Languages Spoken:**
62

**Translation Stats:**
- 4 languages have complete Bibles,
- 10 have complete New Testaments,
- 7 translation projects in progress

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**HOPE FOR SUDAN**

on translation principles—the start of the Sudan Workshop Project. They hoped for a turnout of fifteen people from six languages, and were thrilled when fifty-one people representing seventeen languages showed up on the first day.

Since that start, the Sudan Workshop Project has continued to offer workshops in writing, Scripture use, translation principles, biblical exegesis, computer training and software use, and other topics to help meet the needs of the Sudanese people.

Thirteen mother-tongue translation projects receive expert help in translation, linguistics, literacy, and Scripture use during workshop sessions throughout the year.

In a recent Scripture-use workshop attended by twenty-two people from six different language groups, participants learned how to use Scripture in their daily lives. Some had gone through difficulties in their church life, and some were ready to assume leadership roles in translation work if they could get help from their local churches. The workshop was led by a Sudanese national.

Through this workshop, Sudanese churches, communities, and individuals learned how to use Scripture in their mother tongue, and as a result, their lives will be transformed. One topic discussed was HIV/AIDS and how Sudanese churches can deal with this devastating disease in biblically and culturally appropriate ways.

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**Your gifts through the summer campaign helped provide funding for the various workshops in this project.**

Your gifts through the summer campaign helped provide funding for the various workshops in this project. The goal of the workshop program now is to continue to provide resources and assist the local church in Sudan to start work on the remaining translation needs. ✝
Around the world, literacy rates for women lag behind those of men. Girls are less likely than their brothers to have the opportunity to attend school, and those that do attend are often forced to drop out before completing secondary school. But when women do receive literacy training, they transform the health and welfare of their families and communities by gaining access to healthcare, nutritional information, and economic opportunities. Literary projects are often a part of Wycliffe’s Bible translation process, teaching both men and women how to read and write in their language and preparing them to access God’s Word for themselves.

No father wants his daughters spurned as potential brides because they cannot read.

Just a few years ago a nomadic shepherd community in Asia was dead-set against girls learning to read and write. They feared that girls would write illicit love letters to boys, ruin their lives, and bring dishonor upon their families. Thankfully some courageous community members saw the injustice and stepped up to put an end to this damaging traditional view. They began by using mother-tongue curriculum to teach their own daughters and nieces.

Today there are twenty-five “mobile school” literacy centers, and the majority of the students are girls. Some of the girls are reading through the Gospel of Luke in their own language. No father wants his daughters left behind, spurned as potential brides because they cannot read and write. So literacy has brought honor and new horizons to these girls and their families!

Even married women want to learn. Rita is a mother of six children. She works hard to find time for her evening studies. There are more opportunities for study in the summer season, when her clan grazes their sheep, goats, and horses on a high mountain plateau.

There’s an increasing demand for literature for this community, which will be met in part by a growing body of translated Scripture portions about shepherds. Please join us in praying that those who read them will understand and believe.

### Last Languages Campaign Completes Fourth Year

In 1999 Wycliffe committed to the mission of seeing a Bible translation program started in every language still needing one by the year 2025. As you might imagine, this challenge requires enormous resources.

In response to this great need, in November 2008, Wycliffe USA publicly launched the Last Languages Campaign—a commitment to work with our partners to raise the remaining resources needed to help reach these last languages with God’s Word.

With God’s help and leading, we’ve raised $406 million in the past four years toward our goal of $1 billion.

Thank you for your partnership! Together, we can help unlock God’s Word for the unreached language communities.
A SPECIAL DIAMOND

By Angela Nelson

Mary Seeger* has lived a full life. She raised three children with her late husband Bob,* cultivated award-winning pecan trees, got to travel overseas a few times, and even went skydiving on her eightieth birthday.

“For someone who grew up so poor, it just blows my mind that the Lord has let me do all these things,” Mary said.

Today Mary lives on a farm in Texas with her daughter, Sue*—the one who originally introduced her to Wycliffe and Bible translation.

In the late eighties, Sue had learned about Wycliffe and decided to move to Waxhaw, North Carolina, to work with Wycliffe’s partner organization, JAARS. When Mary and Bob went to visit her there, they were very impressed with everything they saw and even spent a month volunteering at the new homes for retired missionaries, washing windows and wielding the pick, shovel, and rake.

Through Sue, they met many other missionaries working with Wycliffe, and they began supporting several of them financially.

“We’ve always been more interested in missions than we have been in church buildings,” Mary explained.

To this day, Mary still supports those missionaries. And in order to ensure that they continue to get support for a period once she passes away, she decided to donate one of her valuable possessions—a diamond.

The diamond was a present from Bob. He had given it to her for their twenty-fifth wedding anniversary and had it placed in the setting of her great-grandmother’s wedding ring.

Mary had worn it proudly for almost thirty years, but recently she kept it in her safe more than she wore it, for fear that she would lose it during her farm chores.

“Well, if you have something that you can’t wear and can’t enjoy and you’re afraid you’re going to lose it, you might as well give it back to the Lord,” she explained. “And since [Bob’s] passed away, he won’t mind.”

So Mary contacted people from the Wycliffe Foundation who took care of the details of selling the diamond. Half of the money went “where needed most” at Wycliffe. And when Mary passes away, the other half will continue to be distributed to the missionaries she currently supports through a Missionary Support Plan with the Wycliffe Foundation, for as long as the money lasts.

“If it lies in the safe, nobody’s going to hear the Good News,” Mary said. “And maybe the Lord’s going to use it to bring someone to Christ.”

Perhaps you have property, stock, savings, or a valuable asset like Mary did. Would you consider using some or all of those assets to help people hear God’s Word in their own language? If you have questions, the Wycliffe Foundation is happy to help. Contact them at 877-493-3600 or www.wycliffefoundation.org.

* A pseudonym

Photo by Karen Weaver
LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

THE POWER OF GOD’S WORD

In his book, The Fire of the Word, Chris Webb tells the story of a young man named Francesco Bernardone who attended Mass at a small Italian church one day in February 1208.

When the service ended, Francesco approached the priest and asked if he would read the Gospel passage again because he had not understood the Latin. The priest obliged, this time translating Jesus’ words of love and hope into Francesco’s language. As Francesco listened, his heart began to race, and he exclaimed, “This is what I want!”

Francesco is known to us today as St. Francis of Assisi. His conversion and subsequent obedience to God are legendary, but his experience is far from unique. The transforming power of God’s voice, when heard and understood, has been repeated down throughout the ages.

A woman in Cameroon, West Africa, was changed when she heard Scripture read in her heart language. The passage explained how God wants us to treat widows and orphans. As the woman listened she became very troubled. Many years before, her husband’s brother had died. As was common in the area, her husband seized his brother’s land rather than leaving it for the man’s widow and children.

The woman went home and told her husband about the Scripture she’d heard, saying, “We need to give that land back.” Her husband was also convicted, so they called the widow and her children, asked for their forgiveness, and gave the land back to them.

God brought reconciliation to these two Cameroonian families, and He continues to use Scripture—translated into the mother tongue—to change hearts and bring people together wherever they live.

In the midst of the challenges of daily life, let’s take time to contemplate the tremendous power of God’s Word and thank Him for His goodness in allowing us to have a role in releasing its power to the world.

Warmly in Christ,

Bob Creson
President/CEO
Wycliffe Bible Translators USA

TRANSLATION TREASURE

The goal of Scripture translation is to convey the true meaning of God’s Word in a way the people group can understand. Here is an example showing how important—and difficult—it can be to find just the right words.

The Fuliiru* translation team and their mentor, Roger Van Otterloo, were talking about how one should not steal from widows. The translators laughed and told Roger, “You were correct in stating we should not steal from widows…but the way you said it implied that we can steal from anyone else.” In Kifuliiru, the position in a clause of old and new information is critical to meaning. So the Kifuliiru team had to go back and sort through the 100,000 clauses of the Kifuliiru Bible, from Genesis to Revelation, to get the word order correct in each case. As a result, the Kifuliiru Bible is much more natural and understandable.

Pray for their challenging goal of doing a final check of the entire Bible this year.

*Bafuliiru is the name of the people. It has been simplified to Fuliiru in some contexts; Kifuliiru is the name of their language.
Please pray for these Wycliffe projects around the world.

**Blessings and Challenges for Virtual Teams**

Electronic communication tools enable team members to work together effectively even when they live far apart. For example, a translation consultant living in Europe and checking a draft translation on an Asian language, writes: “I’m checking Acts in the L language at the moment. There are six of us involved in the checking process, and we are in three different countries. The marvels of modern technology make it possible for us to meet together by Skype.”

**Opposition to Scripture Translation in South Asia**

In the past two years believers from a South Asian language group have come under strong opposition. The translation team has received threats, and volunteers have been forbidden to listen to oral Bible stories. Oral recordings of twenty-two New Testament books are scheduled for launch December 2013, but key members of the translation team have been denied entry into the country. Pray for encouragement for believers and perseverance for the translation team as they complete the translation from a new location.