In the days leading up to the dedication of their New Testament, the Keliko people joyfully sing the words of Psalm 66:5 with a sense of victory: “Come and see what the Lord has done.” The church and translation team have overcome many obstacles to complete their translation project — trials, loss, displacement.

“Those in opposition [to the Keliko project] said, ‘Isaac, will you succeed in this translation?’” reflected translator Isaac Kenyi. “I said, ‘By [the] grace of God the Bible will come out.’ And they have seen it!”

But the Keliko don’t credit this victory to themselves; they simply share in what God has done through them.

A special church service was held at the Imvepi refugee settlement a few days before the dedication. The community that gathered praised God for what he accomplished. Bishop Seme Nigo Abiuda preached, with nods and exclamations of assent from the people, that God himself is the victor and they share in his victory:

“Why do we praise the Lord? We praise the Lord because the Scripture in our language is here! We praise the Lord because if he were not [with us] our [language] would not be in Scripture.

“Did the Keliko do things? I think the Lord has done these things through the people. That’s why we need to praise the Lord.”

The Keliko translation team was responsible for the bulk of the work. But they acknowledge that the Lord brought them many great supporters and co-laborers. Those supporters also share in this victory with the Keliko. So do all the people who came alongside the Keliko to pray and to partner financially.

But the Keliko church leaders know that victory is much more than what’s already been accomplished. It’s about the joy that comes from being transformed by the eternal power of Scripture.

“I am therefore urging all the people to read, reflect and enrich their spiritual life using the translated materials such as the Bible, the ‘JESUS’ film, recorded Bible and [Scripture] songs.” Bishop Seme declared in the dedication program.

They’re also looking to the future, believing that the Word will have transformative power through the generations.

“The Bible has been launched at a time when we are facing many challenges. It is my belief that the love of God provided through friends and partners will impact the next generation,” said Dimba David, dedication organizing committee chairman.

With the light of the Word shining in their hearts, the Keliko testify of God’s power in their lives. At the dedication, the Archbishop of Central Equatoria Internal Province, Episcopal Church of South Sudan, His Grace Dr. Paul Yugusuk was so moved by the transformation happening because of the Keliko New Testament that he expressed a desire to have the Scriptures translated into his own language.

“It is this infallible Word of God we use to bring our people back to Sudan. It is this Word of God we use to bring our people to salvation,” said the Archbishop.

The victory has only just begun.
Step into the Keliko community and see how the Bible in their language — the Book of Joy — is transforming every aspect of their lives. Discover how to live fulfilled, beyond the limits of happiness, in every trial or circumstance.

Share in their joy at wycliffe.org/joy.

A GLIMPSE INTO SOUTH SUDAN

South Sudan officially seceded from Sudan on July 9, 2011, making it Africa’s youngest recognized country. This move to independence marked the end of decades of conflict as well as a surge in determination to rebuild and move forward.

But renewed civil unrest in South Sudan in 2016 forced many people, including the Keliko, to relocate to refugee settlements in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Uganda. Despite these hardships, the Keliko believers continue to persevere with joy.

You can make a difference in countries like South Sudan by joining our prayer team. Sign up at wycliffe.org/prayer to receive prayer emails on different countries, people groups and more to help you pray about what God is doing around the world.

WAYS TO PRAY FOR THE WORLD

» As Scripture is translated and distributed, pray that people would engage with it and be transformed by the power of the gospel in their language.

» Praise God for the work that’s already been done in South Sudan and the impact it’s having on communities.

» Pray that God would use local translators and organizations to further the work of Bible translation in South Sudan and around the world.