COMFORTED BY STORY

By Catherine Rivard and Richard Gretsky

When she was still a very young woman, Kristina lost two of her three children during childbirth. The emotional pain devastated her, but she was also very physically wounded. In the attempts to save the children and repair her ravaged body, Kristina underwent four agonizing surgeries. The trauma from these events lingered in her life for many years.

Later on, she was introduced to Christianity. And though the hurts from her life persisted, after a time, she placed her faith in Christ and began to follow Him.

Soon after that, she and twenty-nine other participants from seven languages were given the opportunity to attend an Oral Bible Storytelling (OBS) workshop in Wewak, Papua New Guinea.

The courses at the workshop—divided into four modules that took place throughout the year—were designed to teach Papua New Guineans how to memorize and retell Scripture in a way that’s familiar in their culture where storytelling is an art.

After the first module, Kristina returned home and shared the Bible stories she had learned, but her husband was extremely unsupportive. He wouldn’t let her share the stories publicly or attend the next training session. Kristina was disappointed, but instead of becoming angry, she humbly submitted to her husband and began praying that the Lord would transform his heart. Over time, God did soften her husband and, this past April, he allowed Kristina to attend the next phase of training.

In this phase, the participants listened to a recording of the Bible stories in the local trade language, and then repeated it in their own language as their voices were recorded. Kristina gently closed her eyes as the recording played. As she listened to the story of Moses and the burning bush, she softly repeated what she heard into a second recorder—this time in her mother tongue.

But Kristina was not just repeating those stories; she was being uplifted by them.

"Listening to these stories about the Israelites has really encouraged me," she said. "They were in difficult times, but God was bigger than that and rescued them. I know He’ll bring me through my Red Sea as well.”

Retelling biblical stories has provided great comfort to Kristina, who now knows that God was with her during the loss of her children, the rough childbirths, and even the period she had to wait for her husband’s blessing to attend the training.

That is why Kristina is dedicated to teaching Scripture, because she knows that hearing Bible stories can help change other people’s lives—no matter how deep their hurt.
Dear Friends,

The Cacua are a small group of people who live in the rain forest of southeastern Colombia. Before the translated Word of God reached them, the people around the Cacua viewed them with contempt and treated them as servants, even slaves. There must have been a great deal of hurt in being considered the lowest of the low.

Kristina, the woman whose story is told on page 1, also experienced deep hurt—intense heartbreak, physical pain, and trauma. In both cases, it was the Word of God in their language that brought healing and a desire to share the Word with others.

Today the Cacua are treated with respect, and their influence has spread well beyond their language boundaries. Their love for God's Word and their knowledge of it are well known, and they are much in demand as Bible teachers in the surrounding villages, even as far away as Brazil—a five-day trip each way. Additionally, they’re evangelists who have discovered a way to take cultural events—rowdy all-night parties—and reshape them into nights of healthy fun that include an active witness to unbelievers.

Thank you for caring, praying, and giving so that God’s message of grace and healing can reach increasing numbers of people in the language they understand best. What you do matters!

Warmly in Christ,

Bob Creson
President, CEO
Wycliffe Bible Translators USA

MAZATEC SCRIPTURE DEDICATION—MEXICO

In September of last year, translators Terry and Judith Schram rejoiced with the Mazatec people at the official presentation of the Mazatec New Testament in Jalapa de Díaz. After more than thirty years of anticipation, the event marked the official culmination of many people’s diligent work. Approximately four hundred people came; they praised God and heard Scripture readings and speeches about the Bible in their own language. The people rejoiced together, and at the end of the celebration, Mazatec men, women, and children were able to purchase copies of the Bible in their language, which many did.

BEAUTIFUL TIRES—MOZAMBIQUE

The Bible states, “How beautiful are the feet of the messengers who bring good news,” but what if the feet are the well-worn tires of a heavily loaded flatbed truck? On November 5, 2013, a truck delivered copies of God’s Good News to the Kimwani people of Mozambique. Everyone thanked God not only for the beautiful feet of the team of translators, prayer partners, and financial partners who made this New Testament possible—but also for the beautiful, well-worn tires of a truck loaded down with the Good News of God’s love for all people.

*Romans 10:15 (NLT)