

INfocus

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THE WHOLE BIBLE FOR THE KUNA

By Bob Creson

The home of the Kuna people is the San Blas Islands — coral atolls that hug the eastern section of Panama's Caribbean coast. Others live in small villages scattered throughout the country's interior or in the bustling capital, Panama City. Together they number 165,000.

Translation of the Kuna Scriptures began almost 40 years ago. After the publication of the New Testament in 1995, the spiritual walk of believers significantly deepened. But the Kuna people wanted more! They wanted the whole Bible! Eventually, Kuna believers teamed up with Wycliffe translators Keith and Wilma Forster and the Bible Society of Panama, and work on the Old Testament began.

The Kuna dedicated their Bible in three locations in September 2014; it was the 531st completed Bible in the world. My wife, Dallas, and I attended the largest celebration, which was held at Comunidad Apostólica Hosanna Church in Panama City. People from around the world came to celebrate, including several of our colleagues from Wycliffe USA.

It was an awe-inspiring moment when the Bible was brought into the auditorium. The pastor leading the event proclaimed, "The Word of the Lord has arrived in Kuna!" The audience of 3,200 welcomed the Bible with thunderous applause!

The following morning, Sunday, we attended a much smaller worship event held at Crossroads Bible Church. Over the years, Crossroads has invested heavily in Bible translation for a number of people groups. As a reminder to the congregation, the church keeps copies of all the Scriptures they've helped produce in a glass-covered wooden cabinet. At the conclusion of the Sunday service, in unison, the four Kuna translators got up from their seats on the front row, went to the stand at the front of the church where the Kuna Bible rested and picked it up. Then they carried it over to the cabinet, opened the glass cover, took out the Kuna New Testament that had lain there for 18 years and replaced it with the just-completed whole Bible.

Many of us were in tears by that point. We recognized that we were witnessing something that had never existed before — the Word of God, the full counsel of God, available to the Kuna people. The work of translation is done and the Bible is now in the hands of the Kuna people...a good place to be.

Today there are about 30 Kuna churches on the San Blas Islands, 18 churches in and around Panama City and several more churches scattered throughout Panama's jungle mainland. God will be faithful to his Word — He always is. It is now firmly planted in the Kuna community and will accomplish all He wants it to accomplish.



DEAR FRIENDS,

On the front page, I wrote about the deeply moving celebration that took place when the Kuna people received the whole Bible in their language. Along with you, I rejoice that the Kuna can now access their Bible in printed and digital form. They can read it on their smartphones using YouVersion, a Bible

app that allows people to access Scripture in their own language from anywhere, at any time, right in the palm of their hands.

Wycliffe USA recently recognized Bobby Gruenewald, creator of YouVersion, with our 2014 Scripture Impact award. When Bobby and his team at LifeChurch.tv launched YouVersion, they revolutionized the way people all around the world can access Scripture in the language they know and understand best. Currently, YouVersion provides free access to more than 1,000 versions of Scripture in more than 700 languages — including the Kuna language — and more translations are added all the time. To date, the app has been downloaded more than 153 million times.

We're honored to be a partner with YouVersion, and we look forward to continuing our collaboration in the future.

If you'd like to read more about the Scripture Impact award and other Wycliffe news, you can find the articles on our blog at blog.wycliffe.org.

Warmly in Christ,

Bob Creson

Bob Creson
President, CEO
Wycliffe Bible Translators USA

WORLD *focus* SIGN LANGUAGE

ADDING TO THE TEAM — CARIBBEAN

Although a particular sign language team in the Caribbean began translating the Bible, they knew they needed more help to complete the task. So they held a two-and-a-half week evaluation and selection process to find more members for two additional teams. At the close of the evaluation, the new teams were chosen from the group and began to get to know one another and plan for the future of translation for the sign language project.

DISTRIBUTING DVDS — TANZANIA

In rural western Tanzania, there are many Deaf who speak Tanzanian Sign Language who still haven't received much of God's Word in their language. A Bible translation that tells Bible stories chronologically on a series of DVDs is being done in the eastern part of the country. Two Tanzanian Sign Language workers recently made the trek to the western part of the country to share the stories the team finished. As they gathered the Deaf together, they were encouraged by people's excitement. But because there weren't enough DVDs to go around, some people watched the DVDs out of order and didn't understand the Good News about Jesus. So in addition to the videos, the translators shared the gospel with the people, and many received the message with joy.



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