



Wycliffe®  
BibleTranslators

Winter 2017

# FRONTLINES

REPORTING YOUR IMPACT ON THE WORLDWIDE BIBLE TRANSLATION MOVEMENT

## SACRIFICE AND HOPE IN SUDAN

### *A life spared for Bible translation*

The Sudanese civil war in the 1970s dealt a heavy blow to the Gbaya people group. The Gbaya people suffered severely from the persecution by northern authorities. People who did not convert to Islam were killed, as were Muslims who continued to practice traditional religion and anyone who possessed materials in African languages. But God spared Lino Biyanga.

At just over 50 years old, Lino was one of the few men from his generation who survived the persecution, even though he refused to convert. He lost many friends and relatives during that time, but never displayed anger or bitterness. He had hope and believed his people could have a better future if they had access to basic education and Scripture in their own language.

Language and translation work for the Gbaya speakers started in the late 1970s in Raga, which is now western South Sudan. The SIL\* team arrived a few years after the end of the first Sudanese civil war. The Gbaya people were afraid to help the SIL team, but Lino was eager. He was among the few who were literate, and had worked as a teacher, government clerk, tailor and subsistence farmer. So Lino helped the SIL team learn his language.

Several years later, Lino was the first to read Scripture passages in a church service. It was the Easter service, and nearly everyone in town attended, including many Muslims, Catholics and animists.

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## SACRIFICE AND HOPE IN SUDAN

When the second civil war broke out in the 1980s, Lino and others had to walk more than 200 miles through the wilderness to a refugee camp. He continued to teach literacy to his people, and translation work continued with Lino's son Carlos. When the war ended in 2005, Lino — in his 80s — walked back to Raga, suffering the dislocation of his hip.

When Lino died in August 2016, he was one of the oldest men in Raga, having lived more than nine decades. Leading up to his death, he kept encouraging people to learn to read — especially in their language — and promoted the Bible translation project. Lino Biyanga sacrificed and suffered much, but never lost his hope in the future for his people.

The New Testament is completed and undergoing final revisions.

*\*SIL is one of Wycliffe's primary partners.*

## WYCLIFFE FOUNDATION

# TRANSLATING THE WORD NOW AND IN THE FUTURE

**M**arjorie, a long-time Wycliffe partner, was in the process of updating her estate plans. In addition to providing for her heirs, she wanted her legacy to include supporting Bible translation. Marjorie shared, "People need God's Word in their heart language. I want to continue supporting the work of Wycliffe as long as I live. And when God calls me home, I want to leave a final gift so Wycliffe can continue the work of translating his Word for those groups who have yet to receive it."

Marjorie met a Wycliffe Foundation Gift Planning Advisor who assisted her in designing her estate plan. She learned there are several ways to leave a charitable gift in her estate: a bequest via her will or trust; a beneficiary designation on a financial account, retirement plan, or life insurance policy; or the remainder interest in her residence. Marjorie worked with the Gift Planning Advisor and determined that the best option for her specific situation was to include a beneficiary designation to Wycliffe on a taxable retirement account. Now Marjorie feels at ease, knowing that by making her plans, she can save her family from future decision-making and ensure that her desire to support Bible translation will continue even after her lifetime.

If you would like to learn more about making a gift to Wycliffe through your estate plans, please contact the Wycliffe Foundation at **877-493-3600**, or by emailing [info@wycliffefoundation.org](mailto:info@wycliffefoundation.org).





# 75 YEARS OF SHARING HOPE THROUGH BIBLE TRANSLATION

**T**his year we celebrate 75 years as an organization involved in Bible translation around the world. It all began in 1917 when William Cameron Townsend went to Guatemala to sell Spanish Bibles. When Cameron realized that most of the people he was meeting didn't understand the Bible in Spanish, he knew something had to change. Cameron thought everyone should be able to read God's Word in the language of their heart. And it's that belief that ultimately led him to establish Wycliffe Bible Translators USA.

A group of Wycliffe staff and partners recently went to Guatemala to take part in the dedication of the complete Bible in the Akateko language.

## *God's Word for the Akateko*

After more than 50 years of translation work on the Akateko Old and New Testaments, a dedication for the whole Bible was held on September 22, 2016, in San Miguel Acatán, Guatemala. The New Testament translation project began in 1969 and was completed in 1981. The translation of the Old Testament was begun by a committee appointed by the local churches in 2005. Finally a dedication for the complete Bible was held in 2016! People traveled for miles to attend. Many came early to stand in line for their copy of the Bible. Marissa Newby, a Major Gift Associate for Wycliffe, shares, "When they received their Bible, some of the people were picking

them up and kissing them, some were immediately ripping the plastic off and looking through them and others were careful not to mar them at all. It was moving."

Katie Wheeler, a translation consultant working with neighboring Guatemalan languages, shared how special the day was for the Akateko people.

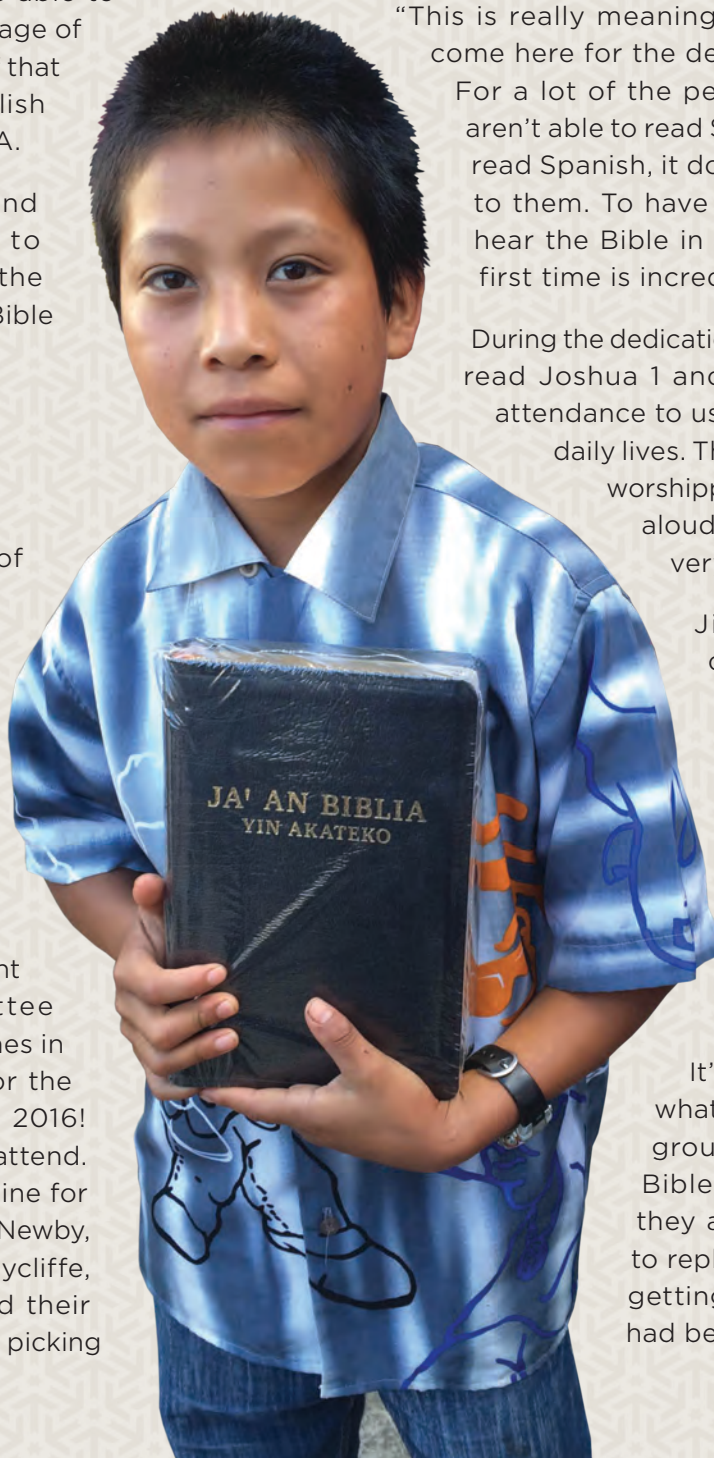
"This is really meaningful for them today to come here for the dedication of their Bible.

For a lot of the people here today, they aren't able to read Spanish — or when they read Spanish, it doesn't mean very much to them. To have their eyes see or ears hear the Bible in their language for the first time is incredible for them."

During the dedication service, a local pastor read Joshua 1 and challenged those in attendance to use the Scripture in their daily lives. Then the Akateko people worshipped together by reading aloud from the Bible for the very first time.

Jim Wise, managing director for Ron Blue & Co.,\* shared: "I saw joy and some tears. Some of the men who were clutching their Bibles, you could see a look on their faces as if they were trying not to show too much emotion. I was feeling the same thing.

It's hard for me to imagine what it's like to be a people group that doesn't have a Bible available. It isn't like they are getting new Bibles to replace old ones. They are getting Bibles they've never had before."





## What's Next

The dedication represented a major milestone for Akateko translator Arvid Westfall and his co-translators. The New Testament was completed in 1981, but because of subversive activity in the area, the Westfalls weren't able to attend the original dedication. He said, "We never in our wildest dreams thought that there would be such an incredibly large group of believers and committed churches that are using the Scriptures and are excited about everyone having their own Bible."

Now the team plans to finish the script for the "JESUS" film and record an audio version of the Old Testament. They are looking forward to having the audio and video versions complete so that Akateko speakers can download them onto their cellphones. That way, they can take Scripture with them wherever they go.

## Thankful for You

We rejoice over what God has done and is continuing to do for the Akateko! Just like every Bible translation project that is started and completed around the globe, you played a role in the Akateko Bible translation. Arvid expressed his appreciation, "We are so blessed that people have joined us in the work. I feel that they are truly our partners. We couldn't have done it alone."

*\*Ron Blue & Co. is a financial planning, investment management and estate planning firm that shares a strategic relationship with Wycliffe Bible Translators based on mutual values.*





## YOUR GIFTS AT WORK: TRAINING FOR TRANSLATION IN PNG

**B**ible translation impacts not only the community receiving God's Word in their language; the translators also experience life change.

Unsure of his chosen career path, Eddie decided to take a year away from his university studies. That year turned out to be pivotal in his life.

Eddie met Victor, a translator with the Bible Translation Association of Papua New Guinea. Victor encouraged Eddie to spend his year working with the team translating the Mekeo Old Testament. So Eddie joined the Mekeo translation team. As part of the translation processes, the team searched for the best words to convey the meaning of each passage. Sometimes finding the right words took several tries.

When translating to describe the Ark of the Covenant, Eddie first used the word kofu, meaning "box" in

Mekeo. However, this word didn't quite communicate the significance of the Ark of the Covenant to the Israelites, as it held the stone tablets with God's law written on them. Eddie then tested the word maufa, meaning "special" or "treasure box," with the local people. They agreed that maufa best communicated the importance of the Ark of the Covenant to the Israelites.

For Eddie, translation work revealed God's Book to be a rich treasure in itself, containing wisdom and truth.

One gem that Eddie has found within it is peace. He testified, "When I am translating God's Book, it gives me a deep peace that I never had before. It is like opening a treasure box. You won't get rich in this life, but you will have true treasure in heaven."



## WORDSEARCH

When Bible Translators Find Just the Right Word

### *Bundled with Christ Jesus*

**T**he M people live in a highland area of Southeast Asia, with fertile rice paddies nestled between mountain ridges. As M farmers harvest the rice, they bind together the heads of grain in small bundles for ease of handling and storage. Each bundle is called a kappa'. In 1 Corinthians 1:2, Paul called the believers in Corinth "those

sanctified in Christ Jesus" (NIV). In the M language, the term for being "in" Christ Jesus is mesa kappa' — "one bundle" with Christ Jesus. This idiom helps the M people understand the vital union that believers have with Christ.



# NEWS & NOTES

FROM THE FIELD

*Please pray for these Wycliffe projects around the world.*



## BIBLE TRANSLATION BRINGS HOPE AND A FUTURE TO A COMMUNITY IN SOUTH ASIA

For years in one South Asian village, families who wanted their children educated had to send them to a major city, which was an eight-day walk away. Because of the distance, many never saw their children again. All they could do was support a better life for them. The Wycliffe Bible translation project for this people group brought with it language development, education resources and training for local educators. Now, even after the completion of their Bible translation, this village has one of the top school systems in the area. They educate their children themselves in their dialect, the national language and English.



## BIBLE STUDY MATERIAL IN CENTRAL ROMANI: ROMANIA

Praise the Lord that the Bible study booklets on James 3 in a version of Central Romani, influenced by both Hungarian and Romanian languages, are finished. Trial copies were presented to the church leaders. Please pray for the Bible study group leaders as they learn to use this booklet. Pray for fruitful Bible studies that will help people grow in their faith.

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