

SPRING 2018

FRONTLINES

REPORTING YOUR IMPACT ON THE WORLDWIDE BIBLE TRANSLATION MOVEMENT

GOD IS AT WORK IN NIGERIA

Nigeria is Africa's most populous nation and the most linguistically diverse. More than 500 languages are spoken in Nigeria; more than 300 of those languages are still without a single verse of Scripture.

Nigerians face many challenges such as ethnic diversity and religious persecution and fighting. Young Nigerians also confront the challenges of drug abuse and immorality.

About 40 percent of the population claim Christianity as their religion while about 50 percent claim to be Muslim. Traditional religious beliefs and practices have also been blended into Islam and Christianity.

But God is at work in Nigeria.

One Bible translation cluster project serves three people groups who speak related languages. Located in the Middle Belt of Nigeria, a region between the predominantly Muslim

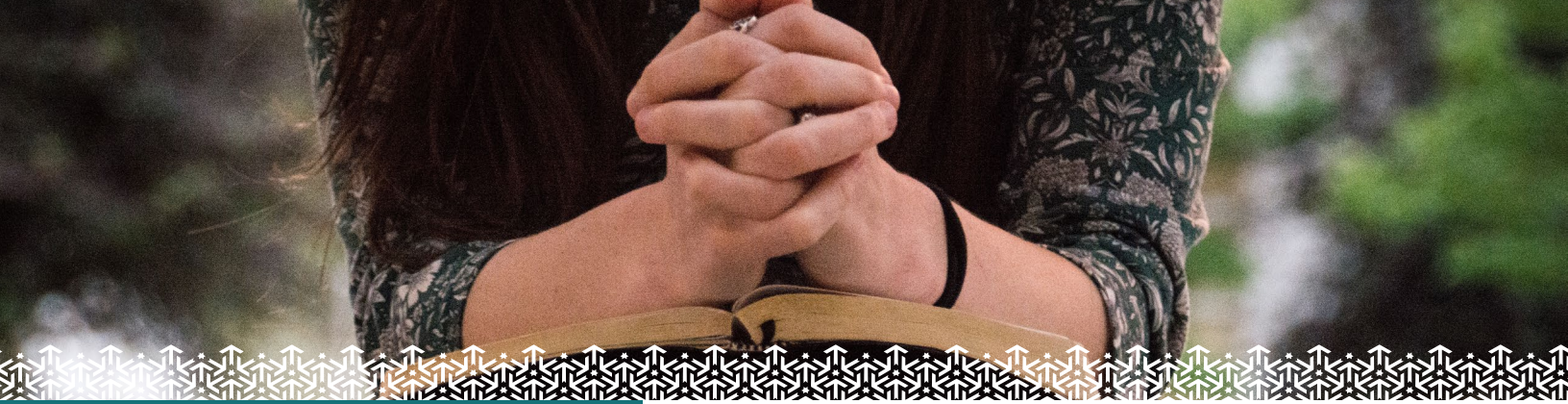
north and the predominantly Christian south, these three groups live on the frontline of the battleground for the spiritual allegiance of Nigeria.

First among the challenges that the more than 20 partner organizations in the area are trying to address through Bible translation is the reality of life in the middle belt.

To support the spiritual, physical and emotional needs of the people, various churches in the area have established local congregations to conduct Sunday services, Sunday school, Bible studies and fellowship groups. Churches also conduct marriage seminars to support Christian marriage principles.

Translated Scripture — in audio and video formats — is having an impact. Even in isolated areas cellphones are common, so phone apps on SD memory cards will be used to distribute translated Scripture.

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Literacy work also engages the people to access Scripture in print format. Community-based literacy programs supported by local churches are planned for all three language groups.

Pastors and members of various churches in the area help comprise the language committees for the three languages. Pastors from all denominations gather two to four times a year for all-night prayer meetings for all these discipleship ministries.

Through the influences of religious and cultural practices, women have been marginalized. Historically women have not been educated, so few can read. Christianity is greatly changing attitudes about women and relationships between men and women.

God is indeed at work in Nigeria as translated Scripture becomes available in print, audio, video and cellphone apps! “It is the same with my word. I send it out, and it always produces fruit. It will accomplish all I want it to, and it will prosper everywhere I send it.” (Isaiah 55:11, NLT).

HOW TO PRAY THROUGH THE NEWS

The internet and social media provide 24-hour access to worldwide news — straight to your television, computer, tablet or phone. Being so connected to events around the world can feel emotionally exhausting.

Praying through the news allows you to surrender your worries to God while also lifting up communities that need to experience his healing and love in tangible ways. Here are some tips on how to pray through the news:

PRAY FOR THE VICTIMS.

Whether you’re reading about a hurricane that has ravaged a town, a city that has suffered a mass shooting or a country that is facing high crime levels, stop and pray for those immediately affected by the event.

PRAY FOR THE COMMUNITY.

Pray that local churches, schools, businesses and more would rally together and support each other.

PRAY FOR GOD TO MAKE US BRAVE.

Pray that local believers would be equipped to shine God’s light, helping to bring healing to their community by being Jesus’ hands and feet.

PRAY FOR GOD TO BE GLORIFIED.

Pray that God would redeem the situation and ultimately glorify himself; pray that people would be sensitive to his hand at work.

Praying through the news can turn a negative input into a positive outcome, both for you and the people you lift up. Start praying through the news today!

Read more at wycliffe.org/prayer/how-to-pray-through-the-news.

SCRIPTURE COMES ALIVE FOR THE DEAF IN JAPAN

When Uiko was growing up, she faced the kind of oppression many Deaf people experience. In school, teachers discouraged her from signing — from using the language she learned as a child — and commanded her to speak Japanese instead.

Her first encounters with Christianity were similar. Uiko was told she needed to read the Japanese Bible. “[I thought] I was already happy,” she remembered. “And if Christianity just meant more rules, I wasn’t interested.”

Then Uiko joined the Japanese Sign Language (JSL) Bible team.

To bring God’s Word to the Deaf in Japan, the project records a Deaf person signing the Scripture so that it can be presented in a video format.

Uiko serves the team as an on-screen signer. “When I began translating,” she recalled, “I had no intention of changing my mind [about Christianity]. It was just a job.

“But then I began to see Scripture in my own language as a result of my own work. I saw God’s Word come to life on screen, and it began to change me. I gave my life to Christ.”

Uiko continues to work with the project to make all of God’s Word accessible to the Deaf community in Japan.

Today 30 percent of the Bible has been translated, recorded and released on a Scripture app*. Through the app, Japanese Deaf can easily access portions of God’s Word in the language that speaks to their heart.

The team is currently finalizing drafts of 1 and 2 Timothy and Jude. Please pray as they look to accelerate the translation work by launching a second production team.

With your help through gifts to the Worldwide Projects Fund, the JSL Bible project has brought God’s Word to life for Deaf communities throughout Japan.

The Worldwide Projects Fund (WPF) fills a crucial role to ensure that support comes at the right time and work continues without missing a beat. To learn more about the impact of your gifts to WPF, watch the new video at wycliffe.org/wpf.

**You can find the free app download by searching “JSL Bible” on Google Play or the iTunes App Store.*





PRODUCING THE “JESUS” FILM FOR THE CHUKA

Thanks to your gifts to Wycliffe’s Gift Catalog, “JESUS” film production for the Chuka people in Kenya is making good progress. The finished translation of the book of Luke in Chuka enabled the script to be completed and checked by consultants of the Jesus Film Project. Voice actors have been identified and notified about their roles. Filming should begin this spring.

A respected elder of the Presbyterian Church in the Chuka area regularly visits the Bible translation office. At each visit, he buys two copies of the Gospel of Luke. When asked why he buys the book so often, he said, “Whenever I go to preach, I use this book of Luke. Yesterday I read Luke 18-19 and another parable from the book of Luke. After the sermon, one man came and snatched the book of Luke, telling me, ‘Go and get another copy for yourself, wherever you got this from. From now on this is mine.’”

Praise God for the hunger of God’s Word among the Chuka and for the impact of translated Scripture.

ORAL STORYTELLING WORKSHOPS REACH THE SEPIK NUKU CLUSTER

Along the southern edge of Papua New Guinea’s Torricelli Mountains, the 12 language groups of the Sepik Nuku Cluster live off the land. Predominantly an oral culture, the Sepik people often practice traditional beliefs of sorcery and animism that have been passed down through generations. Churches in the region are poorly attended, and none of the cluster languages has a piece of translated Scripture yet.

Now, a team of story crafters from all 12 language groups has begun a series of oral storytelling workshops. Oral Bible stories will provide a point of connection for the Sepik culture. As one project supervisor said, “This project is bringing the ultimate resources — God’s Word in the heart language and in oral story form that’s perfect for these oral cultures.” Four translators from each language are working to translate 20 stories for their communities, and the stories will be made available to each Sepik group through digital recordings and trained storytellers.

The team is hopeful that the Bible stories will be told at all kinds of community gatherings and will address ways that traditional beliefs may not align with Scripture. The project adviser added, “This is a good team and a good project. It represents what could be the set of Sepik languages with the best potential for further work!”



A PASSION FOR PARTNERSHIP IN BIBLE TRANSLATION

Sandy grew up in the 1950s and developed a love for missions while in the Girls' Auxiliary at the little Baptist church her family attended. Now a retired nurse, Sandy has two sons and is the proud grandmother of seven grandchildren.

When her husband of 48 years died suddenly in 2012, Sandy turned to her Savior. She spent more and more time in God's Word — which she already loved: "God began to show me who I was without my husband and to clarify how I should use my many blessings for His glory."

When Sandy's high school friend Margaret retired from serving as a missionary in Brazil, she began working at the Graduate Institute of Applied Linguistics* (GIAL). Margaret invited Sandy to tour the campus, and it sparked a love of Bible translation. "With one son, his wife and four children in tow, I toured the GIAL campus," she said. "It was then that my passion for Bible translation and for training those called into that special service began.

"As I prayed about the way God wanted me to use some of my resources, it was an

easy decision to support Wycliffe Bible Translators, GIAL and JAARS. They beautifully work together to accomplish the monumental task of bringing God's precious Word to peoples around the world in their heart language."

Sandy decided to make her gift through a charitable gift annuity (CGA) with the Wycliffe Foundation. In exchange for her charitable gift, the annuity pays her a fixed lifetime income she can never outlive, generates an income tax deduction and provides her the opportunity to make an impact on the work of Bible translation.

If you would like to learn more about charitable gift annuities, please call us toll-free at **877-493-3600**, or email info@wycliffefoundation.org.

**GIAL is a graduate professional institute in Dallas that provides training and research opportunities (e.g., linguistics, language and culture learning, language assessment and development, literacy and Bible translation), and equips students with the skills to train and serve others.*



WORDSEARCH

FINDING THE RIGHT CHUKA WORD

I am in chains now, still preaching this message as God's ambassador ... — Ephesians 6:20a (NLT)

This proved to be a difficult verse for the Chuka Bible translation team in Kenya. The concept of an ambassador was a troublesome idea, because in the Chuka culture they don't have ambassadors. The team consulted community members about the word ambassador, and the closest options offered were words for "spy," "spokesman," "messenger" and "representative." The team decided to replace the noun "ambassador" with "messenger" and reinforce the word with the verb "represent."



NEWS + NOTES

FROM THE FIELD

Please pray for these Wycliffe projects around the world.



EASY ACCESS ON MOBILE DEVICES IN ASIA

“This is what we’ve been looking for!” exclaimed a local pastor after seeing the Selaru Bible app. The translation team has been making portions of God’s Word available through the app for mobile devices.

One of the team members said, “I am thankful I now have a cellphone that I can use wherever I go to share the Word.” He carries with him the Selaru Bible app, recordings of Jonah and James, a test version of the “JESUS” film and more.

Whenever he can, he shares God’s Word in the Selaru language. People are delighted to listen to Scripture, and they love reading the text — sentence-by-sentence — in sync with the audio. “It’s better if we hear it in our own language so that we can understand the meaning,” said one Selaru speaker.



THAI SIGN LANGUAGE IMPACTS OTHER SIGN LANGUAGES

“Many Deaf who have been exposed to community testing [of translated portions] are excited to have the Scriptures,” said a project adviser for Thai Sign Language. “People are eager for more.”

These Scripture stories impact the Deaf who use Thai Sign Language, and Bible translators are hopeful that this translation may even meet the needs of all three sign languages in the country. The team will assess how well two other sign language communities in Thailand understand them. Depending on their findings, these stories could potentially be used as a source for adaptation into those languages.

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