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)

The Word of God is going out in six language communities in the Mbeya region of Tanzania! Sixteen years ago, translation work began in a group of neighboring languages in this region, forming the Mbeya Cluster project. This project allowed different language teams to work closely together, helping each other overcome challenges and sharing biblical key terms. Now, five languages are close to finishing their New Testaments, and the sixth language dedicated their completed New Testament!

One language in the Mbeya Cluster is the Nyakyusa. The Nyakyusa New Testament officially launched with a dedication in May 2019. The people have received their printed New Testaments! On his way to a translation team meeting, senior translator Andrew Mwamatandala carried a copy. “I saw a teenager passing and asked him to read [the New Testament] for me,” Andrew said. “He did, and then he laughed and said, ‘I can read it! Before, I could not, but this writing is very nice.’”

The Kinga New Testament has been reviewed and printed. And the Malila translation team is not far behind them! “They just completed a draft of the typesetting of their New Testament and will read through it with their reviewers soon,” said Ahimidiwe Mahali, translation coordinator for the Mbeya Cluster.

The Vwanji translators, who work in the same office as the Malila translation team, are finishing a second typeset draft of their New Testament. And the Sangu team is working with a translation consultant on final checks, with linguistic checks to follow.

The Ndali team is also approaching the finish line! “While they meet with the language committee and prepare for linguistic checks, they have even had a read-through [of the New Testament],” Ahimidiwe said. Two pastors from the Ndali community and 12 local reviewers participated in the read-through. For 15 days they took turns reading and discussing the text.

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“Traditionally we sang war songs,” one Wampar singer in Papua New Guinea explained. “But when God’s Word came, it freed us.”

The introduction of God’s Word in their language has allowed the Wampar to create their own worship music. This process began with Wampar studying the Scriptures in their language. Next, they wrote the words to the tunes they knew and practiced singing them. They were able to record these songs when a team of audio specialists visited seven villages in the Wampar language area. Soon Wampar people will be able to download the recorded music onto their phones and other devices so they can listen to the worship music whenever they want!

In the past, songs were used to fuel anger. The songs the Wampar now sing, which use Scripture, have a very different effect. They explained, “Now when we have a singing event, it makes us happy and makes us feel like God is with us.”

We’re grateful for all who partnered with the Kinga people during #GivingTuesday on December 3. Together we provided 4,077 copies of the Kinga New Testament — that’s 77 copies more than our goal!

What a special day of working together as a community to provide God’s Word. And what a special day it will be for each Kinga person who receives a New Testament in their own language!
People clapped their hands to the beat of the marching band as they streamed through the mountain city of Huaraz, Peru. As hymns like “When the Roll is Called Up Yonder” played, little tongues licked ice cream cones, families held hands and mothers carried babies in tied blankets on their backs. One 70-year-old woman raised her hands, a Bible clutched in one of them, for the entire two-mile parade.

The women’s ministry of a local organization called Alli Willaqui (AWI) led the crowd through the city streets and proudly held a banner with the words of Isaiah 40:8: “The grass withers and the flowers fade, but the word of our God stands forever” (NLT). This was a day to celebrate something new and eternal: the complete Word of God in the Huaylas Quechua language.

Soon the parade arrived at the city’s coliseum. Two thousand attendees from several churches and denominations took their seats inside for the main event: the dedication of the complete Bible. The four-hour celebration included Bible readings, musical presentations and preaching.

Two llamas entered the auditorium with boxes of the newly printed Huaylas Quechua Bibles on their backs. The crowd fell silent, and the program’s emcees were emotional as the boxes were opened on stage and the Bibles were removed. Then applause broke out as the people on stage held the Bibles high in the air.

*Kushi kushi kome* was a phrase repeated often by people throughout the day. It means, “I’m so happy.” The musical groups who performed at the dedication played lively, high-pitched melodies on pan flutes, harps, trumpets and guitars. A woman named Nancy led the attendees in song alongside other women from AWI.

After the program, Nancy’s eyes filled with tears as she shared, “My grandparents were the ones who shared the gospel with me, and all four were believers. But they’re with the Lord now.” Nancy’s grandparents loved God and embraced the Good News but never got to hold the Huaylas Quechua Bible in their hands. “Today I’m celebrating their legacy,” Nancy said. “Thank you for sharing in our joy!”

The next morning at a church in a mountain village, Huaylas Quechua families filed inside and sat on wooden pews — women on one side of the aisle, men on the other. The walls of the church were painted with Scriptures. A woman and her daughter brought fresh flowers and presented them at the altar. Young children bounced into the aisle and moved around throughout the worship songs and sermon.

And together the church, no longer Bibleless, read Psalm 16: “You will show me the way of life, granting me the joy of your presence and the pleasures of living with you forever” (Psalm 16:11, NLT).
Looking for new ways to cheer your Wycliffe missionary on this year? Here are four ideas you might not have considered before.

1. Use Technology to Get Creative
Missionaries appreciate any time their partners reach out! Maybe this year you’d like to encourage them in a new way. Consider connecting through texts, online chat messages or video calls. These real-time conversations with you will be a burst of encouragement in your missionary’s day.

If time differences make a call or chat hard to arrange, consider recording a quick video greeting that you can send via email, text message or social media.

2. Go Deeper in Your Prayer Support
You’re likely already praying for your missionary’s protection, travel plans, refreshment and their ministry effectiveness. But have you given them the space to share the hard things in their life and ministry with you?

Challenges such as fears, frustrations and strained or broken relationships don’t always make it into a missionary’s communication, but they’re often their greatest struggles. Let your missionary know you’re a listening ear. Then actively learn about pressures and realities they face so you can relate to them on a deeper level and ask more helpful questions.

3. Consider Options for Future Partnership
As you partner with the ministry of a Wycliffe missionary, you may wonder about ways to ensure their work continues in the future. Wycliffe Foundation has a gift planning option that allows you to make a single gift now, in cash or an asset, and distribute that gift in the amount and frequency you choose — now and after your lifetime. Your contribution goes into an interest-bearing account, benefiting the ministry of the missionary you’ve chosen for the duration of their service or until funds are exhausted.

4. Be Open to Spontaneous Opportunities
Along with keeping in touch with your missionary and standing with them in prayer, ask God to stir your heart to respond in whatever additional way he calls you. We often hear of answers to this prayer that met a missionary’s need in a surprising way: a gift in the exact amount of a financial need, a word of encouragement when they were feeling down or a care package that was received on the perfect day.

There are so many ways that you can encourage missionaries in your life! Just ask your missionary what is helpful and necessary for them, pray and then follow God’s leading.
Yes, I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who remain in me, and I in them, will produce much fruit. For apart from me you can do nothing. — John 15:5 (NLT)

I have heard John 15:5 many times in Swahili and in English,” said Paulo Kijuu, a Bible translator for the Rangi language of Tanzania. When the team worked on that passage with their translation consultant, they talked about what it means to abide in Jesus. The phrase “to abide” wasn’t clear to Rangi speakers.

“A branch of a vine cannot ‘live in’ the vine,” Paulo said. “Instead it is ‘attached’ or connected to the vine. Also, living ‘in a person’ is an unclear concept to Rangi speakers — and even to me.”

Realizing the team’s struggle, the translation consultant asked questions to guide their search for a better expression. Finally, they found a figure of speech that the Rangi use to describe two very good friends, or a couple who love one another very much. The expression in Rangi, kʉva kɨɨntʉ kɨmwɨ, literally means “to be one thing.”

“When we put this expression in our translation,” recalled Paulo, “I pictured my grandfather sitting with his best friend. My eyes were teary because that helped me visualize my relationship with Jesus. When I live in him, I am one thing with him. I saw how Jesus takes care of me. I could feel his love, and I could see a whole new life with him.”

The Rangi team’s consultant encouraged them to put the new translation of the passage through a community check. “We asked people what this means,” said Paulo, “to abide in Jesus. Right away, they gave examples of people who are very close friends.”

“The Rangi people are so blessed,” he added, “to have God’s Word in their language, to experience his love and the promise of being ‘one thing’ with him.”
Ocha, an Ambonese Malay translator, was struck by the words of Revelation 7:9 as she worked with her teammates on translating the book. “This is God’s plan,” Ocha said. Others from the community have also been impacted by Revelation.

Ray, a college student who read the draft text and offered feedback to the translation team, had tears in his eyes as he read Revelation 3. “We young people want to live freely and do whatever feels good,” he said. “When I read Revelation, it occurred to me that we don’t know when we’re going to die.” For Ray, the text reinforced that he wanted his life to honor God. “I’m very glad I could come and help with this work,” he said.

The final two books of the Ambonese Malay New Testament are currently being consultant checked.

“Ever since my family and I started reading the Word of God in our language, we’ve been rejoicing — and our joy continues to increase each day,” a Komo church leader said. “The Bible passages we read have a different impact on us than those we listen to in Swahili.”

Excitement among the community is building as the completion of the New Testament is now in sight. Many people offer the team what they can — a home-cooked meal, lodging or even a few chickens. Some also give their time, reviewing and providing feedback on drafts of translated Scripture. Komo leaders are eager to see people continue to engage with Scripture even after the New Testament is finished. “The work being done in our language,” one official said, “is God’s answer to my prayers.”