



# FRONTLINES

WINTER  
2021

## It All Started With a Phone Call

On an ordinary day in December 2017, Wendy Scott-Penson was busy ministering to Wycliffe partners and empowering them to connect their resources to Bible translation projects in communities around the world. She answered an incoming call and quickly realized that it was an unusual one.

The man on the phone, Stefano, was a Kunama speaker who was determined to bring the Bible to his people group who were now living in communities dispersed around the world; Stefano had been displaced to the United States. The Kunamas' peaceful way of life was shaken in the late 1990s, when civil unrest broke out in Eritrea, a country in East Africa. Kunama people were forced to flee — some to nearby Ethiopia and some to Sudan where they lived in refugee camps (some for months and some for several years). Other Kunama people have been scattered across the globe. For most of them, returning home isn't an option.

That was true for Stefano. He and his entire family fled Eritrea when he was a teenager. They traveled on foot for seven days before they reached the border of Ethiopia. "Everyone had to cut trees to build shelters; we all helped one another," he said. "If not for help from

God, many would have passed away. But everything happened for a reason. God humbled us and made us closer to him."

Stefano slept on the streets of Sudan, eventually getting to the United States in December 1986. He accepted Jesus as his savior when he listened to a street preacher praying. Stefano realized the importance of having God's Word in Kunama. "We don't want anyone left behind," he said. Stefano wanted the "JESUS" film in Kunama and contacted the Jesus Film Project.

So Stefano returned to Ethiopia and met with other Kunama speakers who shared his desire to have the Word of God in Kunama. The Bible had been translated into their language, but the translation had several issues that kept Kunama people from reading it like missing verses and inaccuracies. Stefano asked the men if he could join them in their translation work. The Christians in the refugee camps in Ethiopia shared the same vision as Stefano, but he knew they were going to need even more help.

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Wendy's caller was adamant and passionate about God's Word and he was turning to Wycliffe for help.

Stefano's call led to a long string of phone calls and emails, fact-checking conversations, and contact between Wycliffe Ethiopia, Eritrean Bible Society, Wycliffe USA and the Jesus Film Project. The organizations networked and finally connected with teams and resources.

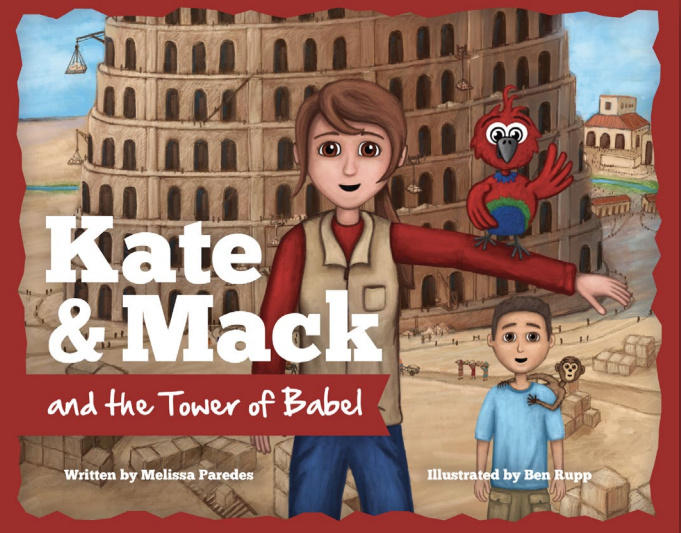
Ultimately two teams were formed — one in Ethiopia that is working on revising the Old Testament and one in Canada with nine men translating the New Testament. The diaspora team and the team in the refugee camps work together, sharing the goal of completing the Kunama Bible in three years.

And to think that it all started with one phone call!

Interested in sharing about Bible translation with the kids in your life? "Kate & Mack and the Tower of Babel" is a great book for elementary-age kids.

Join Kate and her best friend, Mack, on their adventures as they learn about different languages, people and cultures — everything from biblical times to the world today! As they travel, Kate and Mack share about God's amazing love for them. Because no matter where people live or what language they speak, they all need to know that for themselves.

Visit [wycliffe.org/adventure](http://wycliffe.org/adventure) to buy your copy of the latest Kate & Mack book!

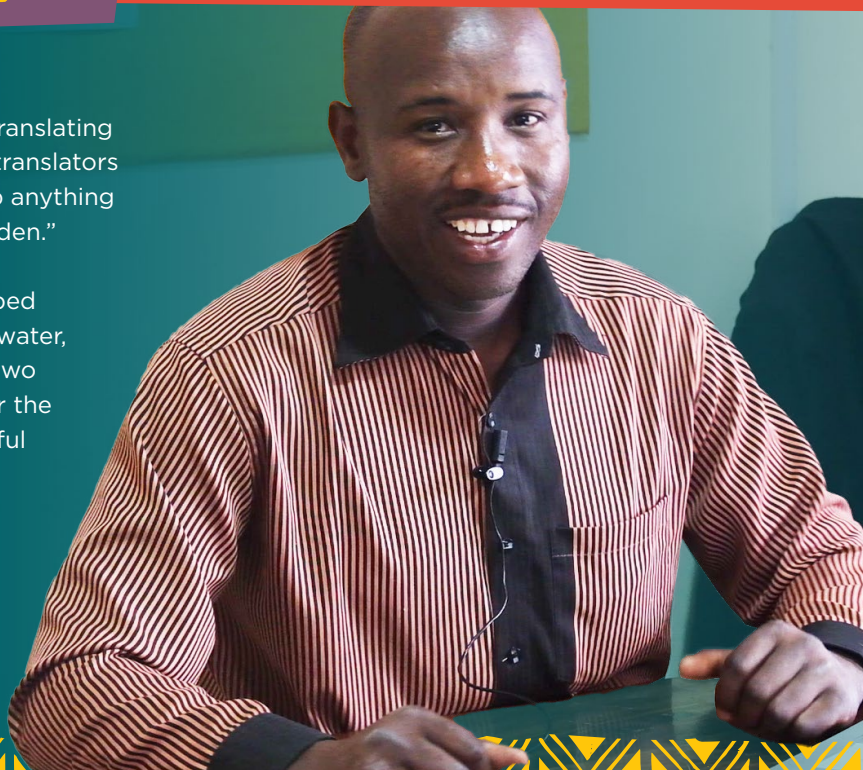


## WORDSEARCH

## Not Your Ordinary Garden

The Rangi translation team in Tanzania was working on translating "Garden of Eden" in Genesis 13:10. The Swahili word the translators used was bustani. This word, however, did not conjure up anything special or beautiful about a garden; it simply meant "garden."

The translation consultant working with the team described how beautiful the Garden of Eden must have been, with water, animals, trees, flowers and more. During the discussion, two of the Rangi translators, Paulo and Maingu, "saw" that for the first time. They realized the best Rangi word for a beautiful garden was ntindika. Paulo described ntindika as a place which, even though people need to tend and cultivate it, never fails to produce a great variety of delicious fruit. Paulo said, "You can always find food there." The team agreed — they had found the right word for the Garden of Eden.





# Feeling Like a Part of God's Family



The Scripture dedication ceremony for the Puguli New Testament took place the morning of March 7, 2020, in Burkina Faso. But half of the Puguli churches were already celebrating the night before, singing and dancing until daybreak.

The next morning, all 400 seats were filled and additional people participated under the surrounding trees. It was a very impressive turnout since, due to security concerns in the country, the translation team could not widely broadcast the event. Instead promotion was done by word of mouth throughout the churches.

In order to keep those attending safe, the celebration team ended in enough time to ensure that people could return home before nightfall.

During the event, speakers shared what having the Word of God in Puguli meant to them. A Puguli church representative and elder named Thomas Zingué, said, "Today, we [the Puguli people] are like Zacchaeus. We were not able to see Jesus, but he gave us a Sycamore [tree] on which we can see him. This Sycamore is this New Testament before us. Now we can see Jesus like the others."

Victor Soma, a Christian and Puguli native, said, "Today, the Lord Jesus is no longer a stranger. He is a Puguli speaking Puguli to me as if he dwelt among us. Now I can fully understand the words of Paul, Peter, John, Mark, Matthew and the other apostles. They are speaking my mother tongue; they are my brothers. Praise the Lord! We are now fully part of the family of God."

At the end of dedication, 354 New Testaments were sold and are impacting the community! When a young lady named Boguipan Gnenio met one of the Puguli translators, she said, "Now, I can understand what Easter means. I read the whole story about Jesus, his birth, death and resurrection. In the past, I just knew that Easter is about the death of Jesus and his resurrection, but I had no idea how Judas betrayed him and how Jesus tried to save Judas by not revealing clearly his name during the supper. I had no idea about how Pilate was hesitating to condemn Jesus, knowing he was clearly innocent, but the Jews preferred [to release] another person instead of Jesus. Easter is a good story of Jesus' love and forgiveness to wicked people: Judas, the Jews and us today continuing to sin against him. There is really no one like Jesus!"

*Through your prayers and partnership with Bible translation projects, you're making more Scripture dedications around the world possible. Thank you for your partnership in this important work!*







## From Collaboration to Bible Translation for Rwandan Sign Language

The sign language translation team in Burundi worked for six years to translate 110 Bible stories. When they finished the project, the team members thought about their Deaf brothers and sisters in neighboring Rwanda. "They don't have the Bible," the team members said. "And there's no funding. There's no money for anyone to come and teach them how to do Bible translation."

So the team members worked and saved money for bus fares from Burundi to Rwanda. When they had raised enough money, translators from Burundi traveled across the border into Rwanda. They met Deaf people there and began to train them how to do Bible translation.

That initial collaboration blossomed into a Bible translation project in Rwanda that now has resources to continue moving forward. Today the Rwandan Sign Language Bible Translation Society is working to translate stories from Genesis and Exodus.

These translated stories are already making an impact in the lives of Deaf people throughout the country like Yazidi. "I was born a hearing child," Yazidi shared. "However, when I was in high school, I fell down from a tree and in that process I became deaf. The students carried me back to the dormitory, and the next day I had lost my hearing. I felt hopeless. It was a new challenge for me."

"At first, my classmates and teachers thought that I was misbehaving, because when they talked to me I didn't give them a response. ... The teachers later reported to my parents that I was completely deaf. I had to leave my high school and was taken to a disabled school."

Yazidi is learning about God through translated stories. At school, Yazidi attends a sign language church service every Sunday that uses the translated videos. "It made me very interested to learn more."

Yazidi hopes to become a skilled sign language user to help the Deaf people in his community learn and share God's truth.

*You partnered with the Rwandan Sign Language team through your gifts to the Wycliffe Summer Campaign, helping them translate and produce Bible stories for people like Yazidi. Thank you for your generous partnership in Bible translation!*



## A Lifelong Passion for Sharing Scripture

In times of great joy or deep sorrow, God's words in Scripture have reminded Jan Kennedy Ferguson that he is with her and guiding her. "God's Word has been alive to me all my life," Jan said.

Jan remembers visiting a Wycliffe regional office with her mother as a young child. She saw her parents' commitment to follow Christ and how that devotion led them to share his Word with others. Later on, Jan met and became friends with Marge Crofts, a Wycliffe missionary. Jan and her husband partnered financially with Marge, who worked as a translator with the Munduruku people in Brazil.

But Jan's vision for Bible translation truly expanded while she was on a business trip to Bethel, Alaska, as a program officer for Murdock Charitable Trust. As she toured a local hospital, she noticed signs in both English and Central Alaskan Yup'ik. Jan's two young tour guides were fluent in both languages and eagerly shared why the local language was important to them.

The following Sunday, the community would celebrate the publication of a new version of the Yup'ik Bible. The version they'd been reading before that included outdated language; the new version would be more readable and meaningful.

"They were absolutely thrilled," Jan said. She saw the significance of Scripture in a language and format that speaks to a person's heart. The importance of Bible translation — work she had been involved in for years — was confirmed for her.

"To think that someone doesn't have a word of Scripture in a language that speaks to their hearts is just a heartbreaker for me," Jan said. She's passionate about moving Bible translation forward by partnering with local communities, both now and as part of her legacy. When planning her estate, Jan met with Michael Occhipinti, a senior gift planning advisor at the Wycliffe Foundation.

Jan noted: "Wycliffe's biblical guide to estate planning was very helpful in the process." Based on Jan's estate inventory and her goals for the stewardship of her estate, Michael helped put together an estate plan design. "Working with the Wycliffe Foundation was most helpful and illuminating," Jan said. "I knew I needed something like this."

When Jan's husband, Chuck, passed away in 2019, God's Word comforted her as she faced a new season of unknowns. Throughout her life, Jan has been assured that, "God is always present with everlasting love. He speaks to us in ways we can understand — a gracious shepherd." The importance of truths like this from Scripture is, for Jan, the impetus for sharing God's Word with the world.

*To request your free estate planning guide, please return the enclosed form.*

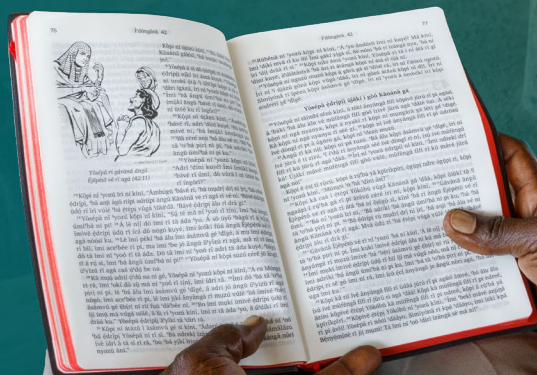


# Become a WordGiver!

Join a special community of donors who are investing in a world where everyone has God's Word in their language. As a WordGiver, you'll see the impact your monthly gift makes for people groups around the world through Bible translation. You'll receive:

- » Email updates about Bible translation work, milestones and prayer requests around the world.
- » Special invites to Wycliffe's Scripture celebrations.

Becoming a WordGiver is simple! When you give your first monthly gift, just check the WordGivers box on the enclosed response card — your gift will be matched! — or give online at [wycliffe.org/wordgivers](http://wycliffe.org/wordgivers).



## News and Notes from the Field

### A Light Passed Before Us

#### *Recording the "JESUS" Film*

Bennis, an audio technician, noticed the change in the speaker's voice and pressed the "pause" button. He had been watching the lines on the computer screen as a young Siarlak man read the voice of Jesus for the recording. Bennis saw tears in the eyes of the young man, and the young man got choked up as he explained to the recording team, "I can't read this Jesus part. My heart is not ready for this role. Jesus touches my life too much!"

For some participating in the recording, it was the first time they had ever read the Bible in their own language, and they were moved to tears at the beauty of the words.

#### *Recording Completed, Public Viewing*

When the "JESUS" film recording was finished, it was time for the Siarlak people to watch it in their language. As the movie began, and the crowd saw men and women on the screen playing the parts from the Gospel of Luke, they murmured, asking each other: "When did these foreigners learn our language?" The recording team explained to them that some of their own people were speaking the words.

Men, women and children sat on the ground and watched the drama unfold on a large portable screen. When they saw Jesus being nailed to the cross, the whole group fell silent. Bennis testified, "I could feel the emotion in the crowd, and I knew the Holy Spirit was working."

Afterward, some of the women said, "In our local language the message is so simple and we can understand the meaning much more clearly than before. It was like a light passed before us!"