



# the messenger

Summer 2023

Local Translators  
preparing for the future in  
Tanzania

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MORE THAN  
WORDS



# PRAYERS



## 1 Ethiopia

- Praise God for the **40 students who are currently being trained** at the Helge Center for Scripture Engagement and their future ministry roles.

- Praise God the books of **Exodus, Joshua, Ruth, and Joel have been drafted** by the Zayse Old Testament translation team.

- Pray for the tribal conflict in surrounding area to find **peaceful resolution**.

- Pray for **safe travel for Zayse translators** so that they may gather and continue to work on the project.

## 2 Liberia

- Pray for God's wisdom and discernment for the **Grebo community as they discuss and make decisions** following an extensive survey on appropriate translation projects.

## 3 Sierra Leone

- Pray for the **newly reopened Kuranko Literacy and Scripture Engagement Program**.

- Pray that **12 new literacy classes** may be established.

- Praise God for seven literacy classes and **46 students trained on various primer levels** through the Mende Literacy and Scripture Engagement Program.

- Faith Comes by Hearing, a partner organization, enables Mende community members to interact with audio Scripture in the language they understand best. **Pray for the communities to see their need for a Savior.**

## 4 Southeast Asia

- Pray for open doors to interact with **two minority language communities** within the NOLA\* expansion project.

- Pray that **barriers will be removed** so that they can interact with God's Word.

## 5 Togo

- Pray for those coordinating the development of the **Fakki\* Literacy Program**.

- Pray that the Fakki\* are bold to **learn to read and write their language**.

## 6 United States & Middle East

- The Aramaic Translation team has been searching for translation consultants for their projects. Praise God that, through partnerships, **He has provided two qualified consultants**.

*\*pseudonym used because of sensitive situation*

# SCRIPTURE IS MORE THAN WORDS

BRINGING HOPE, LIFE,  
& TRANSFORMATION

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## FROM THE CORNER OFFICE

*Dear Reader:*

**THE MORE THAN WORDS CAMPAIGN** for Scripture Impact was borne out of a vision to **more effectively resource ministry partners for Scripture Engagement**. These partners are pastors, evangelists, and churches who desire to go deeper with the Word and share it with neighboring communities.

Your campaign gifts are making this vision reality!

In this issue of *The Messenger*, you can zero in on efforts in Tanzania as passionate ministry partners build capacity and relationships in their community.

Head west to Cameroon as our longest-standing church partner **enters a new era of leadership and vision - made possible in part by the More Than Words campaign!**

Head then to southern Africa where, through global collaboration, organizations align ministry efforts with churches serving some of the more difficult-to-reach communities on the continent.

There is much to celebrate, but we need your involvement in the More Than Words Campaign for Scripture Impact. Please prayerfully consider a special gift to the campaign at [lbt.org/give](http://lbt.org/give) or use the envelope inside this issue of *The Messenger*.

More importantly, will you join the thousands of people worldwide praying for Bible translation? To join our prayer partners, **visit [lbt.org/pray](http://lbt.org/pray) or scan the QR code below.**

Let's put God's Word in their hands!

*In Christ,*



**REV. DR. RICH RUDOWSKE**

*Executive Director + CEO*



**REV DR RICH RUDOWSKE**  
Executive Director + CEO



[lbt.org/pray](http://lbt.org/pray)

**On the cover**, the More Than Words campaign seeks to equip local leaders who connect with their communities to drive translation forward and deepen Scripture engagement.



# Starting NEW

## Tiffany Smith's Ministry in Tanzania

**H**ave you ever moved to a new city, state, or country? Location change often brings both challenges to be overcome and excitement for new opportunities. Community Engagement Specialist Tiffany Smith just relocated to Tanzania. **Her calling is vigorous: learn a new way of life and share the light of the Gospel with the Datoga Taturu people.**

Tiffany is settling into life in Tanzania, and planning for the Taturu Bible project has her alive with excitement. "I've seen the strength of the Lutheran Church of Tanzania, and it is still growing. Taturu speakers, and communities like them, are far outside the cities, and the local churches are

*Tiffany (right) and Regional Director, Sarah Esala (center) with members of the Datoga Tribe*



the only institutions that still try to reach out to them. **I'm hopeful this Bible project will open a door for the local church.** People here, Christian or nonbelievers, are interested in learning more about the Bible; they just don't always have the greatest resources or access to it. I'm excited to help give them that access."

## I've seen the **STRENGTH** of the Lutheran Church of Tanzania

Pastor Mdindi, who oversees many churches with a large community of Taturu speakers, and Michael Sombi, a respected elder in the Taturu-speaking community, are promoting project excitement. According to Tiffany, "[Michael Sombi] is passionate, proud of his heritage, and in full support of this Bible project. He cares a lot about having a way to witness to the unbelievers in his community." Pastor Mdindi believes "[translating Scripture] will bridge the communication gap and make the Good News easier to receive. As we prepare for the translation project, our focus is to engage the community, create awareness about the project, and encourage the community to take ownership of the project."

The project is big. The stakes are high. But Tiffany is **surrounded by faithful Christian witnesses in the community. God is already opening opportunities,** and this joy is energizing Tiffany's journey. The Taturu-speaking community needs your support and prayer. Support Tiffany, Pastor Mdindi, Michael Sombi, and local leaders as this project begins – **give now at [lbt.org/give!](https://lbt.org/give!)** 





# TANZANIAN WORKSHOP FOCUSES ON LOCAL TRANSLATORS

**E**stablishing and building trust in a language community is critical to driving translation forward. A local ministry entrepreneur is more likely to have success than an outsider. **IDENTIFYING, ENERGIZING, AND EQUIPPING THESE LOCAL LEADERS IS AT THE HEART OF THE MORE THAN WORDS CAMPAIGN** and a groundbreaking, multi-language training workshop recently held in Tanzania.

A former translation project coordinator, Eshinee Veith is no stranger to Bible Translation techniques and challenges, but when invited to help lead the workshop for three languages in Tanzania, she chose to lead with the humility and posture of a learner. Eshinee shared, “People who live in multilingual contexts spend their entire lives translating. They already have well-developed ideas of how translation is done... because they do it every day.”



The goal of this workshop was to work with translator candidates from three different language communities to explore the concept of Bible Translation. Representatives from multiple local churches observed these candidates to see whom they might invite to future workshops.

**"IT WASN'T SO MUCH TRAINING AS IT WAS CONVERSATION."** Eshinee shared. **"RATHER THAN SAYING, 'THIS IS WHAT TRANSLATION IS AND HOW IT'S DONE,' I ASKED, 'WHAT ARE YOUR THOUGHTS ABOUT THESE THINGS?' I AM NOT THE SOURCE OF ALL KNOWLEDGE."**

translation come through the insightful work of the translator, which is ultimately tested by the community."

Translators often judge a translation as "good" if it meets three simple requirements: accuracy, beauty, and clarity. This is traditionally taught in training workshops. But this time, when Eshinee decided to open the discussion to hear what attendees had to say, the room filled with the sharing of ideas. She captured their thoughts on a large whiteboard at the front of the room. A common theme emerged:

## WHAT IS THE COMMUNITY LOOKING FOR IN TRANSLATION?

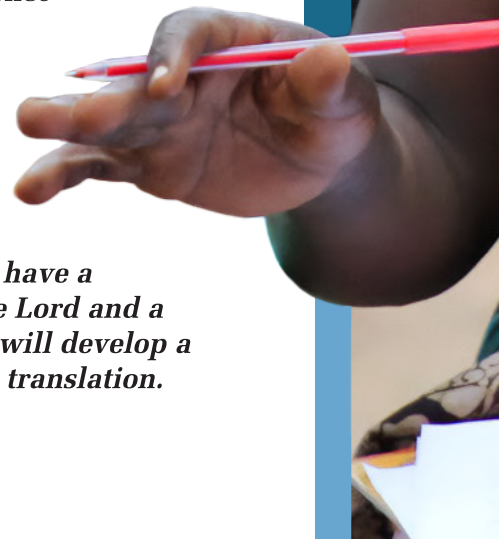
Much of the workshop was spent listening to native speakers share their experiences with translation. Scribes from area churches sat in the background of the event, taking notes, looking to answer the questions, "Who might be the right fit for a translator for our translation project?" and **"WHAT IS THE COMMUNITY LOOKING FOR IN TRANSLATION?"**

Ruthie Wagner, who is working remotely with the Tanzanian Kerewe translation team, attended the workshop. In her work with the Ukerewe people, she has experienced firsthand the benefits of local translators and was thrilled to see community ownership emerging in the workshop. "While we have good consultants in place helping check for the accuracy of the translation, the naturalness and the relevancy of the

**"THE ONE DOING THE TRANSLATION IS SPIRITUAL...HAS WISDOM...IS PRESENTABLE."** This sentiment

reflects the shift in Bible translation from focusing solely on the text to now including the translator's background and respectability. God's Word remains the same and has stood the test of time. Lutheran Bible Translators consultants, Bible translation software, and prayer provide confidence that Scripture will be translated accurately.

***But just as Martin Luther lived among the people before translating Scripture into their language, natural speakers who have a deep connection to the Lord and a heart for their people will develop a quality, approachable translation.***





# WHAT'S AHEAD IN THE REGION

In August 2023, another hand-picked group of Bible translation experts will travel to Tanzania. “There will be an entirely different team that helps to inject different perspectives, skill sets, and voices into the process,” shared Southern & East Africa Regional Director Sarah Esala.

To accomplish the goal of reaching every language community with God’s Word by 2033 (a shared goal of all translation agencies), equipping local leaders to lead translation projects is essential if we are to build capacity. It’s exciting to see how workshops like the one led by Eshinee take root, as we take steps forward in bringing hope, life, and transformation to all God’s children.

**JOIN THE CONVERSATION TODAY! VISIT [LBT.ORG/EP78-TANZANIA](https://lbt.org/EP78-TANZANIA) TO HEAR ESHINEE AND RUTHIE SHARE MORE ABOUT THEIR EXPERIENCE.** 







language community  
afire with HOPE.

## Capacity in Cameroon

A complete Bible translation can take over a decade.

Cameroon is in an early stage – increasing capacity, building relationships, and plotting the path forward. Wise translation requires knowledge that comes from living and working in and among a language community.

### Assembling a Translation Team


The country welcomed its first Cameroonian translation consultant, Reverend Touka. Touka directed the Cameroon Department of Translation and Literacy (DTA) for 14 years. **Touka brings a wealth of experience as well as theological training.**

Reverend Bakari is the incoming DTA director. **“Bakari is well known to have a strong love for his language,** which is the most important thing for somebody leading translation efforts in several languages. Translators need to feel deep inside them the importance of having God’s Word in their language,” says Paul Federwitz, Lutheran Bible Translators’ director for field programs. Reverend

Touka and Reverend Bakari are known for a good working relationship.

Mike Kuhn of Lutheran Bible Translators is stepping into the role of program director. **“Kuhn’s experience, natural leadership abilities, and current degree program in leadership set him up well for the role.** We want to work closely with local partners and language programs. Having somebody in a director-level role in Cameroon means we can be more responsive as an organization,” shared Federwitz.

During a recent visit, Reverend Tim and Deaconess Erin Schulte, new missionaries for Lutheran Bible Translators, experienced the power of a language community afire with hope. A motorcade escort waved them joyfully into one village as groups gathered to dance and sing. They received gifts, such as washing jugs, chickens, and sheep. The joy swept Erin into a dance with welcoming local women. **“It’s not about us,”** the Schultes repeatedly shared, **“it’s about God’s Word.”**

As excitement builds in Cameroon, your prayers and financial support go to build capacity in the region. Be a part of the translation effort by donating at [lbt.org/subula](http://lbt.org/subula) and [lbt.org/dta](http://lbt.org/dta). 





# Engagement

## in Botswana

“For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.”

Romans 12:4-5 (ESV)

The Botswana Language Exploration Program (BLEP), innovative dialogue-based research by Lutheran Bible Translators and Bible Society of Botswana, inspired a groundbreaking Bible translation summit. The research of BLEP seeks to discover the needs, hopes, and available resources for communities in Botswana to receive Scripture in the language they understand best. Many languages in Botswana are also spoken in surrounding countries, providing an opportunity for collaboration.

“Our intention is that this meeting will be a chance for different agencies and organizations to share about their current translation projects and activities as well as future plans. If we are aware of what other organizations are doing, it might open up possibilities for mutual aid (grouping cohorts together for translator training, working on a cross-border language effectively, etc.),”

**Carl Grulke,**  
Program Director for Southern Africa.

Right now, 14 organizations and agencies plan to attend - representing work in eight different countries!

Director for Field Programs Paul Federwitz is excited about what this means for the future of translation and engagement, “**It is important that we coordinate our work at the international, regional, and country levels. We each bring a unique perspective to the work. We want to make sure that our efforts are complementing each other and not competing.**”

Coordinating efforts for Scripture Engagement, a key impact area of the More Than Words campaign, will **break down barriers to the Gospel**. Scripture Engagement creates new pathways for people to connect with Scripture in meaningful ways. Engagement includes language development for unwritten languages, literacy classes, audio Bible apps, video productions, and more.

Connection and innovation as the body of Christ will reach more people with the light of hope. You are also a vital part of the church’s global mission. Be a partner in prayer by visiting [LBT.org](http://LBT.org).

**Hear from Carl and Kelsey Grulke on the Essentially Translatable Podcast at [lbt.org/transforming-lives](http://lbt.org/transforming-lives).** 



## MORE THAN WORDS

The goal of \$43.9 million for the More Than Words Comprehensive Campaign has reached 73% as of May 1, 2023.

**Thank you for your continued prayers and support.** This campaign will increase the sustainability for our partners to continue Bible translation projects to share the light of Scripture.

Please get in touch with **development@lbt.org** if you would like to learn more about the campaign and how you can impact the lives of those in need of the hope, life, and transformation that God's Word brings.

# 73%

## 32 MIL

as of 5/1/23

## Member Information

Lutheran Bible Translators bylaws define who may vote and **give you a chance to participate in nominating and electing the Board of Directors** as well as participate in changes to the Lutheran Bible Translators bylaws (charter document).

To see if you are eligible to be a voting member please visit [LBT.org/members](https://lbt.org/members). Here you will also find:

- **Information about the 2023 election for the Board of Directors**
- **Details on how to request nomination and voting information for the 2023 election**
- **Information about the Annual General Meeting**

Thank you for participating in mission through your membership.

*Contributions are solicited with the understanding that Lutheran Bible Translators has complete discretion and control over the use of all donated funds. Lutheran Bible Translators will attempt to honor gifts preferenced to support particular workers, but the final decision on the use of all funds rests with the organization.*

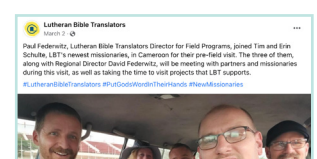
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*To view Lutheran Bible Translators' financial reports, visit [lbt.org/financial-accountability](https://lbt.org/financial-accountability).*





# HOPE, LIFE, & TRANSFORMATION SHARED EVERY DAY ON LUTHERAN BIBLE TRANSLATORS SOCIAL MEDIA





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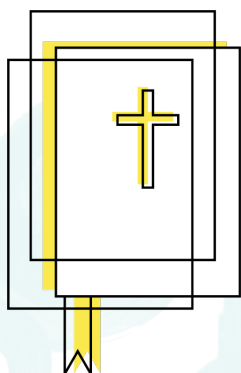
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