



Messenger

A Very Momentous Meeting

New Language Project in Zambia

by Chris Pluger

Do you remember what the last church meeting you attended was about?

Was it the annual budget? The congregational mission statement? The number of Sunday School teachers needed for next year? The date for the church picnic? The color of the new carpet in the nursery?

I'm not criticizing or belittling these issues. They are very important, all of them. I've spent many hours in meetings about those and similar topics. The work of the church includes those things, and more. But this September, I experienced a whole new level of significance and importance in church meetings.

We met to plan a new translation of Scripture — a translation of the New Testament into a language that does not have a really usable Bible, a language spoken by as many as two million or more people in south-central Africa.

I'm a new LBT translation advisor and exegete. My wife Janine, our son Sean, and I are being assigned to the Nsenga Bible translation project in eastern Zambia. Thanks to LBT's generous donors, I traveled to Africa for a two week pre-field visit to get a firsthand look at the area where we will be living and working. I got to attend and participate in meetings with the Bible Society of Zambia, leaders from the Lutheran Church of Central Africa, and with the Nsenga Bible Translation Project Committee.

Imagine being part of the initial planning and organizing behind a completely new translation of the New Testament. Think of all of the decisions: Can we do this project? How will we get people involved? What will it cost? How will we meet the financial needs? Who will do the translating? How will we find and recruit people to help with reviewing, editing, checking? How will we answer questions, settle disagreements



Chris gathers information from a group of Nsenga speakers.



Nsenga church elders.

and set schedules? What if we don't meet our schedules?

These meetings were crucial to the project — not only because of what was discussed, but because of who was doing the discussing. To see committed Christians from all over the Nsenga language community across Zambia, and around the world, coming together around a common table for a common goal was to see “church meetings” in a whole new light.

In Africa, it often seems the focus isn't so much on *what* is accomplished, but on *who* is involved in the process. This relational view of life squares well with Christianity's worldview. It holds that we can accomplish *nothing* on our own, but rather it is through our relationship with Christ that God makes us part of His kingdom.

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The mission of Lutheran Bible Translators [LBT] is to help bring people to faith in Jesus Christ by making the Word of God available to those who do not yet have it in the language of their hearts.

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a heart
for missions

Taking Time

Time is money! Ever heard that expression before?

In our corner of the world, most things seem to be measured by money—including time! But in most of the places where LBT missionaries live and serve, the time = money formula is simply not applicable.

One commodity that cannot be constrained by time is relationship building. A new translation project cannot be launched until this occurs. Influential leaders in the community must be identified and agree to engage in the project. The missionary must get to know the people in the community and the people must get to know the missionary. Nothing will move forward until these relationships mature.

Missionaries often speak of plans that take longer to accomplish than expected. The reality is, it almost always takes longer than anticipated. For the western missionary, taking long blocks of time to build relationships or long periods to accomplish sometimes limited goals is frustrating — especially when they are eager to get on with the task.

Whether it's launching a new project in Zambia, training translators, or celebrating Christmas in Botswana, establishing and nurturing relationships is crucial. Healthy, growing relationships bring joy to the work and prepare the way for those times (and they will come) when things aren't going so well.

Time = money? No, time equals a clear, beautiful, accurate translation of Scripture that will speak to people's hearts. Time equals God's priceless Word.

Please pray that God, by the power of the Holy Spirit, will continue to give our missionaries wisdom and strength as they seek to develop and grow relationships in the communities where they live and serve. 📖

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Dr. Marshall R. Gillam, CFRE
Executive Director



Ideal for Bible Class and Mission Presentation...

Free 12 Minute DVD Provides Biblical Foundation, Summary, of LBT's Mission and Challenges

Ever thought of presenting Lutheran Bible Translators (LBT's) story to your congregation or church group, but felt you lacked the tools to do the best possible job?

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- Defines the scope of the problem LBT was formed to address
- Reviews what God commands us to do
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Copies of a companion brochure "God's Word in Every Language" in quantities large enough to provide for everyone at your presentation, are also available.

To get your free DVD and brochures, email druhter@lbt.org, or call 1-800-532-4253. Please provide your name and mailing address and, if you would like companion brochures, the quantity needed.

Jesus loves them... but how will they know?

by Peter Slayton, LBT Mobilization Coordinator

When did you first learn that God loves you? If someone were to say, "Jesus loves me, this I know..." I'll bet you would automatically know how to complete that sentence. Not only that, I'll bet most of the young children in your church could complete it. One of the first songs we learn as children contains one of the most profound truths of our faith — God loves us! But it's the next line I really want to talk about... "for the Bible tells me so." How do we know God loves us? Well, because the Bible tells us so. Whether you heard it first or read it first, the source of that wonderful amazing knowledge of God's love for us is God's Word, the Bible.

We Need More Missionaries to Help Translate the Bible

This summer has been the biggest recruitment summer in the history of LBT! What does that have to do with God's love? Well, the reason LBT exists is so that people can hear and read for themselves in their heart language that God loves them. For that to happen, we need missionaries. God has greatly blessed our ministry and brought forward more people

Continued on page 5

Celebrating Christmas 8,000 Miles from Home

God's Greatest Gift of All Remains Everywhere

by Rev. Rich Rudowski

What is Christmas to you? Most of us know the “correct” answer is some version of “the day that we remember the birth of Jesus”, or “Jesus is the reason for the season.” You might even use theological words like incarnation and talk of the wonder of God becoming flesh.

You're right — it's all those things. But the reality is, for all of us, other things and experiences get wrapped up with Christmas and are very much part of it. So when you move 8,000 miles to another continent and life, things are bound to change; things like family, candlelight church celebrations, Advent services, Christmas trees and tons of lights. If you live far enough north, snow is a part of Christmas. Retail shopping madness and grabbing a cup of Starbucks while making the frosty rounds is too. Turkey, mashed potatoes, gravy, exchanging and unwrapping gifts and watching bowl games are part of it. We don't say or act like these things are necessary. But for many of us these are important aspects of Christmas we take for granted.

In 2009, my wife, five children, and I moved to the rural Kalahari Desert village of Kang, in Botswana. We have a passion to help translate the Bible into Shekgalagari, a minority language spoken by over 200,000 people. A few months later we celebrated our first African Christmas. All of those familiar things from home were stripped away from our celebration.

Most Familiar Things Missing

Advent services? Not here. Christmas lights? A few in the city. But electricity out where we live is a scarce luxury not squandered on such things. Starbucks and making the frosty rounds? Try iced water and 100 degree temperatures in the southern African desert. Christmas Eve celebrations by candlelight? Try a midnight service in a stifling tin building where I got ill and had to leave early.

Waking up early to go to Grandma's? Instead, my kids and I got up early on Christmas morning to travel with our neighbors to their cattle post. There, because it was a very special occasion, we helped them slaughter a goat; the main course for Christmas dinner. Instead of a pine Christmas tree filling the living room with that wonderful aroma, we made our Christmas tree by tracing our hands on green



People gather to watch traditional dances.



The family shared Christmas dinner with neighbors.



The Rudowkse family Christmas tree, 2009.

paper, cutting them out and taping them to the wall in an evergreen tree pattern.

Several congregations that help support us sent much appreciated small gifts for the children. Maya and I were able to buy and hide some things for the children when we were in town a month or so before Christmas so we could surprise them.

“Pass the Christmas Goat Please”

We waited until nearly 4PM, letting the heat of the day pass, before gathering with neighbors for Christmas dinner. We ate outdoors in a shady, sandy area of our yard, with potato salad and watermelon complementing the main course of goat. Fresh, free range goat isn't as tasty as you might hope. It's cut into big chunks and boiled in salty water for about four hours. When finished, the pieces are not very meaty and have a pungent odor and taste that can sometimes stay with you for a few days.

Our children couldn't get enthusiastic about eating goat... but made up for it by consuming large quantities of delicious donut-like “fat cakes” a neighbor mom made and brought to the celebration.

Many people here spend Christmas at their home village, preparing food and celebrating. They go to the village gathering spot, dressed in their very best, dance and watch traditional dances and choir competitions. No football, no pie, no TV, no stuffing, no after Christmas bargain shopping.

It was so different. I never realized how much being a northern hemisphere Christian influenced my Christmas feelings. I never realized how much I expected Santa and snowmen as much as Jesus and a manger. I never expected that the sun staying up until 9:30 on Christmas Eve would take some of the ‘holiness’ out of the Silent Night.

Biblical Christmas Truths and God's Gift Remains

But in it all one thing really came through to me. You strip all that other stuff away and the historical fact remains. God became man. Jesus was born of a virgin in a small Middle Eastern village some 2,000 years ago. His arrival in world history irrevocably altered the course of the universe

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What's Most Important?



Rick Allmon

by Rick Allmon

Is that rhetorical? Then why do I spend so much time asking the question? Don't we as Christians really know what's most important?

There are millions worldwide who live in unstable societies, in poverty, with little or no help at hand. There are the sick and the homeless, even in our own communities. We hear daily about those whose lives have been turned upside

down in these economic times. As Christians who want to help, we ask the question, "What's most important?"

The list is so long. Unless you never watch TV, read a paper, or talk to a neighbor, you know that we live in a sin-filled challenged world. We are bombarded by the difficulties that people wrestle with everyday. It's tough. Some have described it as the "world after Eden." But after Eden, God sent us hope in Jesus Christ.

And now the answer to the question has become crystal clear. What's most important?

"For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life." It may not be in God's plan that all should live earthly lives of ease and comfort, free from challenges and hardships. But His plan does include life eternal for all people. And that's what LBT is all about — helping to make God's Word available to all people, in every language, so they can come to faith in Jesus Christ. Your support makes that possible.

Join me in facing the world's tough days with an enriched life of faith and hope, with courage and strength, and with joyful assurance of God's saving Grace. Join me in celebrating God's Good News for all people everywhere, especially for those who face difficult times. Thank you for doing what is most important — sharing God's Word through your prayers and financial gifts to the ministry of LBT.

Need More Information?

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Additional on-line giving opportunities and information about LBT are available on our web site: www.LBT.org

Zambia and the Nsenga Speaking People

Nsenga is one of 73 languages and 12 dialects spoken in Zambia. As many as two million people living in Zambia, Zimbabwe and Mozambique speak Nsenga. Located in southern Africa, Zambia is about the size of Texas. The climate is tropical and high plateaus, hills and river valleys dominate the landscape. Most people make a living through either subsistence farming or mining. Generations ago, a Nsenga language New Testament translation was made. But the language has changed so much over the years that modern Nsenga speakers find it almost impossible to use and understand the old translation. As one pastor put it, "While this is an Nsenga language Bible, it is not our Nsenga."

LBT's goal is to work with local Nsenga speaking churches and leaders, the Bible Society of Zambia and other partners to make a heart language translation of the New Testament that is clear, beautiful and treasured by all Nsenga men, women and children wherever they live.

A Very Momentous Meeting

Continued from page 1

In a way, I believe it was the meeting itself that was the chief accomplishment of the trip. For me to see these men, dedicated to the goal of a usable New Testament in the Nsenga language, is an inspiration. They told me they were encouraged to see me! They were grateful that my family and I want to move to Africa and help them with their Bible. Our meeting, our relationship, has advanced the process that will help to bring about the Nsenga Scriptures.

In one meeting, an Nsenga elder told me a story. “An eighty year-old man goes to plant a mango tree. His grandson says to him, ‘Why are you doing this? You will die soon. You will never eat the fruit from this tree.’ The grandfather says, ‘All my life, I have been eating mangos from trees I did not plant. But now, before I die, I want to plant a seed so that other people, even you, will be able to eat mangos someday.’”

Then the elder told me, “Many of us on this Nsenga Bible Committee will not see the end of it, because it is the work of many years. But our hope is that, like that mango seed the grandfather planted, the Nsenga Bible will bear fruit for many many years to the Nsenga people, so that our grandsons and great granddaughters might hear, read, understand and believe God’s Word in their own language.”



A typical Zambian village.

Yes, there will be smaller, less-critical issues to deal with in the future: Where should the translation office be? What color should we make the cover? One column or two? But by God’s grace, the foundation we laid in these first preliminary meetings will allow all of those other decisions to be made by the right people at the right time in the right way. We hope that one day soon the Nsenga will be able to read God’s Word in the language of their hearts so that they will someday be able to join with other believers from around the world in that final greatest “church meeting” around the throne of the Father in heaven, where people from every tribe, tongue, language, and nation will join to praise the Lamb forever and ever. 📖

Chris and Janine Pluger, with son Sean, are preparing for their first overseas assignment.

Jesus loves them...

Continued from page 2

than ever to consider overseas service with us. Each summer, LBT conducts introductory workshops called IDIOM, In Depth Investigation of Mission. Two IDIOM events were held this summer. Both had an attendance of eighteen individuals. Eighteen was the largest group to ever attend any LBT event like this, and it happened not once, but twice!

So what is it like to attend IDIOM? Let me give you a little glimpse of what goes on during these three-day events.

Like a good Lutheran, I open each IDIOM with a question: “What if the only way for you to worship God was in a language you didn’t speak or understand?” For millions around the world, this is a very real situation because God’s Word has not yet been translated into their language. Because of this problem, worship services are often conducted in majority languages, even if a significant number of the congregation speaks another minority language as their heart language. They might hear that God loves them, but that one life-changing fact runs the risk of not being fully understood.

During the three days at IDIOM, participants experience some of that frustration firsthand as they attempt to worship in a language other than their own. This experience also helps them focus on why they are at IDIOM — to consider whether God is preparing them to serve overseas to help bring people to faith in Christ by making the Word of God available to those who do not yet have it in their mother tongue. So for three days they learn about what it takes to be a translation advisor, Scripture engagement advisor, ethnomusicologist,

or serve in a number of other missionary roles essential in helping LBT fulfill God’s mission.

Potential Missionaries Come from Diverse Backgrounds and Training

There are many reasons to come to IDIOM: to learn more about LBT, learn more about the need for Bible translation and Scripture engagement, meet others with similar interests and learn more about service opportunities. The people who come to IDIOM are just as diverse as the reasons for coming. Some are still in college, with majors in nursing, theology, education or missions. Others are in seminary. Still others are pastors looking to continue their ministry overseas. High school students attend, wondering if Bible translation is the right career path. We’ve had engineers, accountants, mechanics and teachers attend IDIOM. But despite these diverse backgrounds and varying reasons to attend, each person has something in common — a passion for God’s Word and the desire to help others have access to it in the same way they had since they were a child.

Of those who attended IDIOM this summer, nine are in the application process for career service, eight are seriously considering it within the next two to three years, and four more are interested in internships before making the move to career service. An additional four interested individuals have five or more years before they could serve with LBT.

Out of the 36 who attended IDIOM this summer, 25 expressed a very serious interest in career service within the

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The Good News Channel

by Rev. Michael Megahan

During a workshop that I helped teach, we were discussing new Bible Translation Principles under the idea of Relevance Theory. One main point of Relevance Theory is that people tend to pay attention to what is important to them and filter out the surrounding noises and distractions.

For example: if you are in a room listening to something really important — a business speech, sermon, a school lecture — you really don't pay attention to the noise of cars passing by. But if somebody suddenly shouts, "Fire!" you will probably quit listening to the speech and start paying attention to how to get out of the building. But, if during a coffee break, you are talking about the lecture and somebody mentions that there was a bad fire in a building in Botswana (and you are in America and don't even know where Botswana is), you probably will not pay much attention to the news, and keep talking about the lecture.

This example still works, but has lost some of its validity because of modern news casting and globalization. If there is a major disaster anywhere in the world — earthquake in Haiti or China, tsunami in Indonesia, floods in South America — our news channels bring us, very quickly and often, pictures and reports of the devastation and pain. Many of us are very sensitive to the pain and trauma of others, and we quickly take them into our hearts in prayer and donations. Globalization and news channels are 'mixed' in their negative and positive

impact — some cultures are negatively changed and some economies ruined, but, for many others, there is better economy and a closer sense of 'humanity-helping-humanity-in-need.' Our sisters and brothers in-need around the world have become more important (relevant) to us.

That is, our brothers and sisters who suffer under *physical distress or abuse* are very important to us now. That is great! But what about their spiritual well-being? What about those who suffer the death of a loved-one, but have no hope of the resurrection? What about those tormented with guilt and sin, but have no understanding or hope of forgiveness and mercy? What about those who still live enslaved to ancestors and demons and powers of darkness, but have no light to give them joy? What about those tempted to walk a life of drugs, alcohol, sex addiction or crimes unspeakable, but have no knowledge of an alternative life?

The Church is the *global* body of Christ. As it says in Ephesians 4: "There is one body and one Spirit, just as you too were called to the one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all." (NET)

The Bible is our news channel, a channel of Good News for everyone! There are millions who daily hear, in their own language, of the physical sufferings of war, hunger, earthquake and fire, BUT not one word about God's love in Christ, yet they are searching for answers to the questions that only the Bible can give them. Please keep them in your prayers. And pray for us who are working to bring them the Good News Channel through Bible translation. 📖

Rev. Michael and Jo Ann Megahan serve with the Kalanga Old Testament Translation Project in Botswana.

Celebrating Christmas

Continued from page 3

and all within it. He made it possible for all of us to be reconciled to God.

With so many things different and so many familiar things missing from our celebration of Christmas, that fact has become more prominent and clearer to me. You can take away all the stuff of Christmas, which is good and salutary for our celebrations and faith — but take them all away and you still have Jesus. You still have the incarnation.

Jesus came to walk among the human race in a place very different than the glory of heaven. He gave up His glory to lead us to God. Only in being completely removed from all that I had found familiar and in striving to become incarnate in another place and another culture could I really focus on the gift of Christmas. God became man in Jesus Christ. We have the privilege to share that Good News with hundreds of thousands of people who otherwise might never know.

That is the greatest gift of all. 📖

Rev. Rich and Maya Rudowske and family serve with the Shekgalagari Translation Project in Botswana.

Thrivent Choice and LBT

Thrivent Choice is a new program that makes supporting LBT as easy as a few clicks or a phone call. Instead of gift matching, Thrivent benefit members can now decide which organization(s) should receive a portion, or all, of their allocated "Choice Dollars." Choice Dollars are based on the dollar amount of the qualifying products (insurance, annuities, etc.) that you have with Thrivent.

LBT is one of the organizations eligible to receive your Choice Dollars. We would appreciate it if you would consider giving to LBT through Thrivent Choice.

There's no need to wait! Just go to Thrivent.com/choice and click, "Get Started," or call 800-THRIVENT (800-847-4836) and state "Thrivent Choice." Thank you for your help and support.

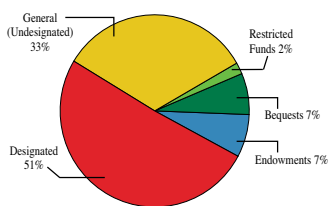
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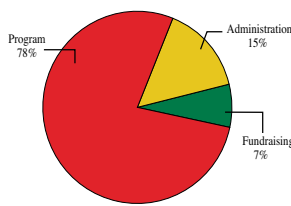
INCOME

	Unaudited 3rd Quarter	Unaudited Year-to-date
Designated	\$393,186	\$1,166,066
General (Undesignated)	259,716	732,023
Restricted Funds	15,470	70,896
Bequests	53,645	325,842
Endowments	<u>51,732</u>	<u>80,290</u>
Total Income	\$773,749	\$2,375,117

3rd Quarter Income



3rd Quarter Expenses



EXPENSES

	Unaudited 3rd Quarter	Unaudited Year-to-date
Program	\$698,484	\$2,155,004
General & Administration	138,884	451,513
Fundraising	59,025	179,820
Total Expenses	<u>\$896,393</u>	<u>\$2,786,337</u>
Net Total	(\$122,644)	(\$411,220)

CUT HERE

CUT HERE

Birthdays

DECEMBER	JANUARY	FEBRUARY
2 Allen Larsen Guatemala	4 Matthew Rudowski (2002) Botswana	3 Susan Kaiser United States
5 Isaac Esala (2008) Ghana	6 Karen Tessaro Nigeria	8 JoyAnna Federwitz (2008) Ghana
9 Larry Johnson United States	7 Wilma Rupprecht Nigeria	11 Anna DeLoach (2004) Papua New Guinea
14 Paul Federwitz Ghana	12 Joe Dunsey Service Center Staff	16 Cindy Rodewald South Africa
18 Joan Weber Cameroon	13 Karen Benesh Service Center Staff	17 Michael Megahan Botswana
19 Katherine Rudowski (1998) Botswana	14 Mike Buhrke Service Center Staff	23 Donald Jensen United States
22 Thomas Larsen (1997) Guatemala	15 Alvina Federwitz Ghana/Liberia	27 Mary Gruell United States (LOA)*
25 John Davies Papua New Guinea	22 David Federwitz Ghana	
29 Terry Borchard Papua New Guinea	24 Karen Campbell Service Center Staff	
	24 Ruth Snyder United States	
	27 Aaron Beckendorf (2005) Botswana	
	29 Micah Federwitz (2006) Ghana	

*Leave of Absence


Jesus loves them...

Continued from page 5

next five years! Praise God with us for bringing forth such a wonderful harvest of potential workers.

Next IDIOMS: June 1-4 and August 3-6, 2011

Perhaps a Lutheran you know is considering becoming an overseas missionary. If he or she has a deep appreciation for God's Word, I'd love to talk with him or her about the opportunities LBT has to offer. Perhaps *you* are that Lutheran. If you are considering overseas missionary service or know someone who is, mark your calendars and, in the words of one of this year's participants, "Be ready to learn, to be amazed, and have your heart touched by amazing people!"

Jesus loves me, this I know, for the Bible tells me so. Would you be willing to step up and help make that simple truth available to people across the ocean who don't yet have that truth, in the form of God's Word, translated into their language? 

Gift Designations

Your gifts in support of Mission Projects and Programs are applied to the designated project or program. When a designated project is fully funded, surplus funds are applied to comparable projects. When a designated program is fully funded, surplus funds are applied to the general fund.

LBT MISSIONARY Currents

Prayer partnership is the backbone of this ministry. Here are several prayer concerns for which we ask your support. May God bless you abundantly!

BOTSWANA

- Give thanks for **Carl and Melody Knight**, who are retiring at the end of 2010 after 25 years of Scripture engagement ministry.

ECUADOR

- Praise God that the entire Bible in the **Cañar Quichua** language will be available sometime next year.

CAMEROON

- Pray that **Kory and Cara Fay** will be able to begin their first field assignment to the Nizaa people of Cameroon in February.

GHANA

- Pray for **Rev. Nathan and Sarah Esala and family**, who have returned to Ghana and resumed their translation ministry to the Komba people.



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Lutheran Bible Translators is an independ-
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in Jesus Christ by making the Word of God
available to those who do not yet have it in
the language of their hearts. It is the only
Lutheran organization totally devoted to this
specialized ministry. LBT actively recruits
Lutherans to serve as Bible translators,
literacy or vernacular media specialists and
support missionaries. The LBT ministry is
supported by the prayers and contributions of
fellow Christians. It is not subsidized by any
church body or sponsoring agency.

Executive Director:
Dr. Marshall R. Gillam



Want more information about translation,
Scripture engagement, or LBT's ministry
in a specific country?
Sign up to receive one
or more prayer letters
from LBT missionaries.



Call Karen Campbell
at 1-800-532-4253 for more details.

NAMIBIA

- Praise God that the **Dhimba New Testament** will be ready for dedication in 2011.
- Pray for **John Strasen** as he completes his ministry to the Dhimba people. He returns to the U.S. in February to work on partnership development and to prepare for a new assignment.

NIGERIA

- Praise God that the **Ikwerre New Testament** has been printed and should arrive in Nigeria early in January.

SIERRA LEONE

- Praise God that the **Krio and Themne Old and New Testaments** will be dedicated in 2011.

UNITED STATES

- Pray for the families of **Jon Berg** (brother of Jo Ann Megahan), **Edna Snyder** (mother of David Snyder), **Gertrude Ruhter** (mother of Don Ruhter), and **Shirley Climie** (aunt of Sharon Vega). Each of these people passed away over the summer.



- Praise God for the September 3rd birth of **Eden Selah Federwitz**, daughter of Paul and Ali Federwitz and sister to Hannah and Levi. Pray for Eden's healing and development, as she was born with a diaphragmatic hernia which required surgery when she was one week old.

- Pray for **Rev. Tim and Lisa Beckendorf, Rev. Chuck and Karen Tessaro, Rob and Eshinee Veith, Chris and Janine Pluger, Rev. Ken and Carol Bunge, and Rev. Chris LaBoube**, who are all working on partnership development this fall.

- Pray for **Paul and Kedra Kinney**, who are expecting a baby in April.
- Pray for complete healing of the ankle and leg wound **Larry Johnson** suffered in a motorcycle accident in Liberia in May 2009.
- Praise God for 45 years of missionary service for **Helen Marten**, who retired in September.
- Praise God for **Dan and Kay Finley's** work to record the Portuguese New Testament in Brazil in partnership with Faith Comes by Hearing.
- Pray for LBT administrators as the search continues for a new Director of Program Ministries.

