

WINTER 2020



Lutheran Bible  
Translators

# the messenger

See

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## FROM THE CORNER OFFICE

Dear Reader:

Google lists over forty different church bodies in the US. There are 110 independent Lutheran church bodies in Africa, according to the *Journal of Lutheran Mission*. The count is more than 150 even before adding Europe, Asia, and elsewhere. It is no surprise that **there are a wide variety of hymns, languages, and practices expressing our Lutheran Christian identity.**

But there is one notion—firmly rooted in the Reformation—upon which Christians in every Lutheran church body agree—**God's Word is the light of salvation (Isaiah 49: 6) reaching the end of the earth for all people and nations.** Where will the light shine in 2020? In this issue, you will notice new projects developing on the horizon. You will see where people will celebrate milestones this year!

Knowing **Scripture through one's own language is the story of salvation.** Those without the Word urgently need to see and hear the story of the light of their salvation. **God uses us as His people** toward a collective impact that others know Jesus too.

Thank you for participating in mission through Lutheran Bible Translators. Bible translation **is the story of God's Word moving throughout the world.** Rejoice knowing the Word reaches others and is bringing the light of salvation to the end of the earth.

In Christ,

Dr. Mike Rodewald  
CEO and Executive Director



DR. MIKE RODEWALD,  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

## On the cover:

*A local boy fishes on Lake Victoria, Tanzania.  
Image by Rev. Andrew Olson.*



# A Look at Fishing Through Other Eyes

*Andy enjoys fishing in 1982.*

Andy loved fishing as a child. He spent his early years in western Africa as a **missionary kid**. His family served on a translation project in Liberia. Thirty years later, he is a **carpenter and fisherman** in northern Illinois. He's also the son of Jim Laesch, Lutheran Bible Translators regional director for southern and east Africa.

Father and son recently traveled to a new translation project for the Kerewe people on Ukerewe Island in Tanzania. Andy found a common interest because **he and the Kerewe people are avid fishermen.**

Jim organized a **training activity** for the local language team. The task was to translate a story about an ice fishing experience. Team members knew about fishing, but translating this story had an extra challenge. They had **never seen ice!** It wasn't a good first translation.

Then the translators met Andy. They saw **ice fishing through Andy's eyes**. They translated the story again. This time, they were more successful.

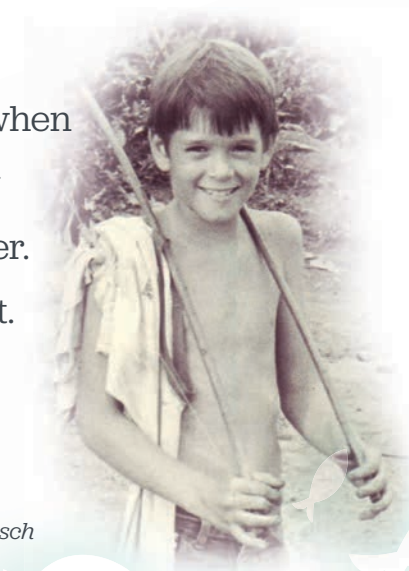
Both teacher and students benefitted. Andy says, "Visiting another part of Africa offered another perspective and a chance to witness why we were in

“

The first thing I saw when I stepped off the ferry was a cell phone tower. Technology is present. Yet, the pace of life is much more relaxed.”

”

—Andy Laesch



Liberia years ago.” The translators learned directly from Andy how to better translate unknown ideas. Their accuracy and creativity improved. They experienced ice fishing **through faith, not sight.** **m**

## Original Story in English:

Last winter I went ice fishing with Andy. He's a carpenter by trade and has built his own shanty. It's very sturdy and even has a window and a door. We drilled holes in the ice and fished for hours. Brats were grilled and chili was cooked. We ate a lot and we laughed a lot. Then we went home. Fish? Didn't catch a one.

## Background Information:

- “Winter” is a cold season in some northern countries.
- In the cold season, the lake will freeze with ice on top. A person can walk on the ice.
- A shanty is a small shelter that is portable.
- It can be for 2-5 persons.
- The shanty gives the people protection from very cold weather while fishing.
- A special tool (auger) is used to make the hole in the ice.

## Back-Translation:

The year we pass, we went fishing. This fishing, it was on a sea/lake. This lake, it was ice because of the very cold. Him, he is a craftsman expert. He built his own bush-tent for that place. It has window and door self. We use craftsman thing, it will make hole into the ice. We turn turn turn until it reach the water, then we fish.... The time, it was good, but fish, we not see any.



*Ukerewe Island in Lake Victoria is accessible only by boat. Image by Hayden Wilkens.*



*Andy explains the finer points of ice fishing.*

## Aramaic Bible Translation Project

Today's Aramaic speakers descend from the early Assyrians. The Old Testament refers to these Assyrians. They were among the first to adopt Christianity. These ancient language communities of early Christians had the Scriptures from Biblical times, but many of the descendants of the Aramaic language communities have never learned the ancient languages. The texts need updating to modern form.

The goal of the Aramaic Bible Translation Project is to translate God's Word into all five modern Aramaic dialects—Assyrian, Chaldean, Suryoyo, Ma'Luli, and Mardini. Progress is occurring in each language.

- Some teams are assessing need.
- Others are in the review and checking stage.
- New staff members have joined one team.
- Another aims to increase use of the Gospel of Mark in audio format.

With today's political and cultural conflict in the Middle East, many members of these language communities have been displaced. The comfort of Scripture in their own language is priceless. With the updated translations, the church better serves them, eases their trauma, and points them to their Savior.

Go to [www.lbt.org/give](http://www.lbt.org/give) and select "Aramaic Bible Translation" to get involved.

## FEATURE STORY

### Faith Beyond Sight:

# Seeing the Potential

UNWAVERING FOCUS: PUTTING GOD'S WORD IN THE HANDS OF PEOPLE IN THE LANGUAGE THEY BEST UNDERSTAND.

"Lutheran Bible Translators has remained a **trusted organization in Bible translation ministry** for nearly 60 years," according to Rev. Rich Rudowske, Director for Program Ministries and COO. "The Lord has sent Lutheran Bible Translators to the least-served language communities on the globe. This happens because of your faithful prayer, encouragement, and gifts and also because of the collective support of those who have come before us."

The focus remains constant—putting God's Word in the hands of people in their own language. The historical **strategy** for Bible translation has always been **based on sending people to aid in translation**. Missionaries are recruited, trained, and sent to serve in intercultural ministry. Often one missionary serves with one language community from start to finish, sometimes for 20 years. "Putting God's Word directly in the hands of the people is an important part of Bible translation ministry. In some contexts, it offers the best chance of success in this generation," he says. "The need for western missionaries to go and serve is still great!"

But **approaches to Bible translation as mission have shifted** over the decades. Partner churches and foreign Bible societies also put mission strategy into action. Lutheran Bible Translators partners with them **through a grant system**, not directly managed by a missionary. Rather, the missionary coordinates





*Building relationships with local partners.*



*Smoothing out the finer points of language.*

and advises programs for multiple language communities and initial skill-building.

**“The Lord has blessed these partnerships and led us to new ones,”** says Rev. Rudowske. In 2020, expenses for programs will exceed missionary-based expenses.

New ways of serving in mission create new ways to support Lutheran Bible Translators. **Directly funding a missionary family is always valued** but supporters can **pray, encourage, and sponsor these new partnership programs** as well.

Those who first gathered **in the 1960’s** to imagine the vision of Lutheran Bible Translators could not have seen where that vision would lead. Yet **they stepped forward in faith** and trusted God to guide them. The year 2020 marks 56 years of service for Lutheran Bible Translators. The vision is undertaken by different people and carried out in a different way. But the **goal is still the same**—God’s Word for every language.

“We walk with faith beyond sight, not knowing how the Lord will provide what we need to meet all the potential opportunities. We don’t know how requests to expand our programs in Tanzania, Madagascar, and Southeast Asia will be fulfilled. What we know is that **this is still His mission,**” says Rev. Rudowske. “Our role is to keep **serving together to put God’s Word in their hands.**” **m**

## Literacy Projects in Sierra Leone

People need the Bible in a language they can read, hear, and understand but what happens after the Bible is translated is also important. Lutheran Bible Translators serves with partners in eight different language communities in literacy in Sierra Leone. In the past four years, partners have started over 200 literacy programs, graduating more than 3000 people with varying levels of literacy in local languages.

**“From 2010 until now, I was able to open 24 literacy classes. I had a group which I was teaching, and after teaching them, I taught them how to teach their friends.”**

—Mr. Daniel Fullah, Literacy Trainer

**“My heart is to promote literacy in the mother tongue in the church. Many of these people in the church have not been to school, but now they can read the Bible. They can understand concepts better in their own language. When they are able to read the Bible in their mother tongue, they can share this Bible with their children at home. They can also share this Bible with their friends in the street or in the community.”**

—Mr. Lamin Kargbo, Programs Manager, Kisi Literacy Program

**“Our mandate is to make the Word of God available in the heart language of the people to reach them in different ways. In the last 10-15 years, we saw the need to start teaching our children, start teaching adults, to read and write in their local languages for the Bible to be meaningful to our people.”**

—Mrs. Christiana Jones, General Secretary of Bible Society of Sierra Leone

Go to [www.lbt.org/give](http://www.lbt.org/give) and select any of the literacy projects to get involved.

# A Blessed Tuesday



## Who cares about Bible

**translation?** Social media users cared on Giving Tuesday! This one-day event each year celebrates the generosity of charitable giving in the holiday spending season.

Lutheran Bible Translators set a simple goal for Giving Tuesday – **raise \$25,000 for Bible printing in three languages.** Social media posts rolled out stories of the great need. Shares, likes, and follows multiplied the reach. At final count, **gifts of \$32,892 were received** for these and other projects!

As a result, the Bandi and Yala language communities in west Africa will reprint sold-out New Testaments. The Shekagalagari of Botswana will print the first copies of their soon to be completed New Testament translation. Other projects will also benefit.

“

**The Word of the Lord  
does not return empty,  
it shall accomplish  
God's purpose.**

”

—Isaiah 55:11

Giving Tuesday participants saw the need and responded. Givers were blessed, as well as those who will receive the translated Bibles. Prayers and financial support offered that day will help to **put God's Word in the hands of people who do not yet have it.** **m**



Charlotte Brandt and Gift Records staff accept gifts by phone.

## What's Ahead in 2020

Relying on faith beyond our sight, Lutheran Bible Translators anticipates great potential in this year. While exact dates are not yet known, expect to see progress marked by these special events:

### DURING QUARTER 1

- Dedication of the Vute Lectionary Series in Cameroon, February 23
- Dedication of the Bible House in Cameroon, March 1
- Dedication of the Kwanja-Ndung Lectionary Series in Cameroon, March 7
- Dedication of the Gola New Testament in Liberia, March 8

### DURING QUARTER 2

- Dedication of the Khoekhoegowab Bible in Namibia

### DURING QUARTER 4

- Dedication of the Shekagalagari New Testament in Botswana
- Dedication of the Konso Bible in Ethiopia
- Dedication of Yala New Testament second edition in Nigeria

## WHY DO YOU SUPPORT BIBLE TRANSLATION?

*“I personally know  
the impact of having  
the Bible in my heart  
language.”*

*“So that people can hear  
the Bible in their own  
language to believe in  
Jesus and go to heaven!”*

*“Because everyone  
deserves to learn about  
and understand God's  
love for them.”*

# Birthdays

## March

- 1 Lisa Beckendorf, Botswana
- 2 Levi Federwitz\*, Ghana
- 9 Maila Davies, Papua New Guinea
- 12 Lydia Derrick\*, Cameroon
- 13 Tilahun Mendedo, International Offices
- 18 Selah Olson\*, Tanzania
- 22 Hannah Federwitz\*, Ghana
- 24 Danny DeLoach, United States
- 26 MaryJane Grulke\*, Botswana

## April

- 13 Tim Beckendorf, Botswana
- 17 Annaka Esala\*, United States
- 20 Elliot Derrick\*, Cameroon
- 25 Tom Holman, United States
- 26 Nancy Burmeister, United States

## May

- 6 Carl Grulke, Botswana
- 9 Berhanu Ofgaa, Ethiopia
- 11 Mike Rodewald, International Offices
- 12 Tobias Kuhn\*, Cameroon
- 13 Nathan Federwitz\*, Papua New Guinea
- 13 Julia Federwitz\*, Papua New Guinea
- 15 Janet Borchard, Papua New Guinea
- 15 Michelle Miller, Southeast Asia
- 15 Emily Wilson, International Offices
- 17 Ali Federwitz, Ghana
- 19 Wesley DeLoach\*, United States
- 22 Angela Tayloe, International Offices
- 25 Mike Kuhn, Cameroon
- 28 Ken Bunge, United States

\*missionary kid

# FINANCIALS

October 1—December 31, 2019

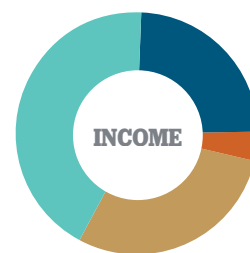
## INCOME

	Unaudited 4th Quarter	Unaudited Year-to-date
Designated	\$ 880,532	\$ 2,535,873
General (Undesignated)	493,747	1,442,082
Restricted Funds	78,129	2,207,064
Bequests	585,955	1,712,779
Endowments	2,069	71,817
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>\$ 2,040,431</b>	<b>\$ 7,969,615</b>

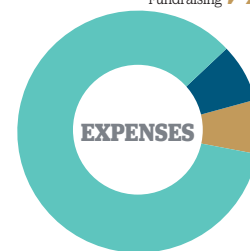
## EXPENSES

Program	\$ 1,081,366	\$ 3,909,558
Administration	107,927	473,409
Fundraising	93,738	377,311
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$ 1,283,032</b>	<b>\$ 4,760,277</b>

General (Undesignated) **24%** Restricted Funds **4%**  
Designated **43%** Bequests **29%**



Program **85%**  
Administration **8%**  
Fundraising **7%**



# Pray for:

**Botswana** > Pray for the three-week literacy workshop taking place during April.

**Cameroon** > Pray for **Elliot and Serena Derrick** as they continue to visit villages and meet partners in their new language community.

**Ghana** > Pray for **Michael and Naomi Erslund** as they take classes in Dallas, Texas, to further their ability to work with the Komba language community.

**Liberia** > Pray for the Bandi team's search for translators to work on the **Old Testament project**.

**Nigeria** > Pray for the **Bokyi language community** while training a literacy teacher.

> Pray for the **Kukele translation team** reviewing and checking Genesis 31-50, as well as the books of Exodus and Joshua.

**Sierra Leone** > Pray for the **Kono literacy team** for guidance in developing literacy and Scripture engagement materials, as well as stories, calendars, and teaching/learning materials.

**Tanzania** > Pray for the **Kerewe translation teams** as they finish drafting the books of Luke and Acts.

**United States** > Pray for all those gathering at the **Best Practices for Ministry Conference** in Phoenix February 19-22, especially Lutheran Bible Translators staff as they build and support relationships.

# Gift Designations

We make every effort to honor donor designation preferences; however, all gifts are subject to the discretion and control of Lutheran Bible Translators.



## the messenger

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Lutheran Bible Translators, an independent mission group founded in 1964, is the only Lutheran organization dedicated to making God's Word accessible to those who do not yet have it in the language of their hearts. 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. Mike Rodewald



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## LITERACY IN THE SHADOWS

# Encouraging Faith

*Note: Specific details were intentionally omitted or changed to protect the affected language community.*

For 22 years, Lutheran Bible Translators shared the task of translating the Bible for a small western African language community ("WALC"). In 2008, the **New Testament was dedicated**. "We no longer need an interpreter," one speaker said that day. "We can now read the Good News of Jesus Christ in our own language!"

Fast forward to the present day. Boxes of **printed "WALC" New Testaments are available**. Local people want to use God's Word **but many cannot read**, even in their own language. In addition, there are others around that seek to persecute those who want to follow Christ.

The local Lutheran church is discreetly planning to improve the "WALC" people's literacy. The goal is to recruit 35 literacy teachers to train 525 people to read in the next three years. Reading will unlock the Scripture in their own language, translated so many years ago. Lutheran Bible Translators is partnering with the "WALC" church to nurture Bible literacy through this **new project**. Ultimately, **knowing God through reading the Bible will strengthen their faith and help them stand firm in the face of any persecution.** **m**



*Translated Bibles are available in WALC language, but many people cannot read.*

“

People want to use God's Word.  
But many cannot read,  
even in their own language.

”

**3 YEAR GOAL  
RECRUIT  
35  
LITERACY  
TEACHERS  
TRAIN  
525  
PEOPLE  
TO READ**