



Lutheran Bible  
Translators

# the messenger

Spring 2020

**Celebrating the  
Word of God  
Here and Now!**

**Leading  
Towards  
the Broader  
World of Bible  
Translation**

**They All Serve**  
*Working with the Lutheran  
Women's Missionary League*

Follow



**Rally around**  
*Vision*

**“We walk by faith not  
by sight.” [2 Cor 5:7]**

See | Follow | Understand | Share

**Celebrating the Word of God Here and Now!**

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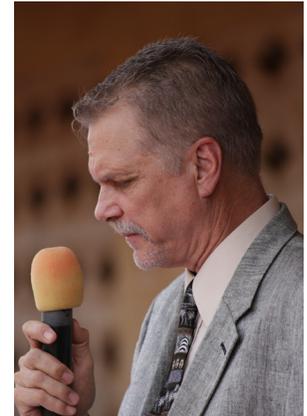
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**FROM THE CORNER OFFICE**

*Dear Reader:*

Wow! How quickly events can change our context.

February and March had many moments of joy – celebrations with partners in West and East Africa. **Then everything changed.** The COVID-19 virus unfolded quickly. Uncertainty reigned. I traveled back through empty airports.



**DR MIKE RODEWALD**

First, the moments of joy. In February, the Lutheran Church of Cameroon **dedicated a Vuté lectionary and a new building to house translation projects.** Mekane Yesus Seminary in Ethiopia is constructing a building for **training seminarians in Biblical languages and translation skills.** Lutheran (EECMY) church leaders gathered representatives from 21 remote language community projects to **discuss mutual Bible translation goals and share the vision** for mission into Ethiopia and beyond. Mekane Yesus TV (MYTV) **broadcast proceedings** to more than ten million members. In early March we **celebrated the publishing of the Gola New Testament** with our partners – the Bible Society in Liberia. Those were happy moments!

Each of these moments are evidence of God’s blessing. **Sometimes it took many years of ups and downs** to reach those moments of joy. But at the end there was celebration and joy.

That is how it is serving in this story – the one of God’s salvation to us through Jesus no matter what our circumstance. **God is faithful.** He is with us at all moments. He uses us together to accomplish His purpose. Thank you for being a part. **There is no better place to be.**

*In Christ,*

**Dr. Mike Rodewald**

*CEO and Executive Director*

**On the Cover,** a man plays the drums, celebrating the Vuté Lectionary dedication in Yoko, Cameroon. *Photocredit: Ariana Schulte*

# Celebrating the Word of God Here and Now!

*Dedications of lectionary series in Vuté & Kwanja-Ndung languages in Cameroon West Africa*

## *Is it important?*

“The lectionary connects present Christians with past generations who have used the same schedule of readings,” a local pastor shared. “Amazing unity is created among millions of Christians across the globe on any given Sunday. They hear the same texts following the same lectionary! Spanning thousands of miles and generations of believers, we are one body, strengthened by one Word.”

## *What is a lectionary?*

The readings for each Sunday and church holiday – an Old Testament reading, a Psalm, an Epistle reading, and a Gospel reading. The lectionary creates an annual or three-year pattern of readings, following the Old Testament people of

Israel. The readings also retell major events in the life of Jesus on a yearly basis, such as His birth, life, death, and resurrection.

## *Why use it?*

Using local languages in public church practice, like the lectionary, dignifies those language communities. When a translation is recognized by the larger church, the language community is recognized as part of the body of Christ. The translated readings give readers and listeners God’s Word in their heart language!

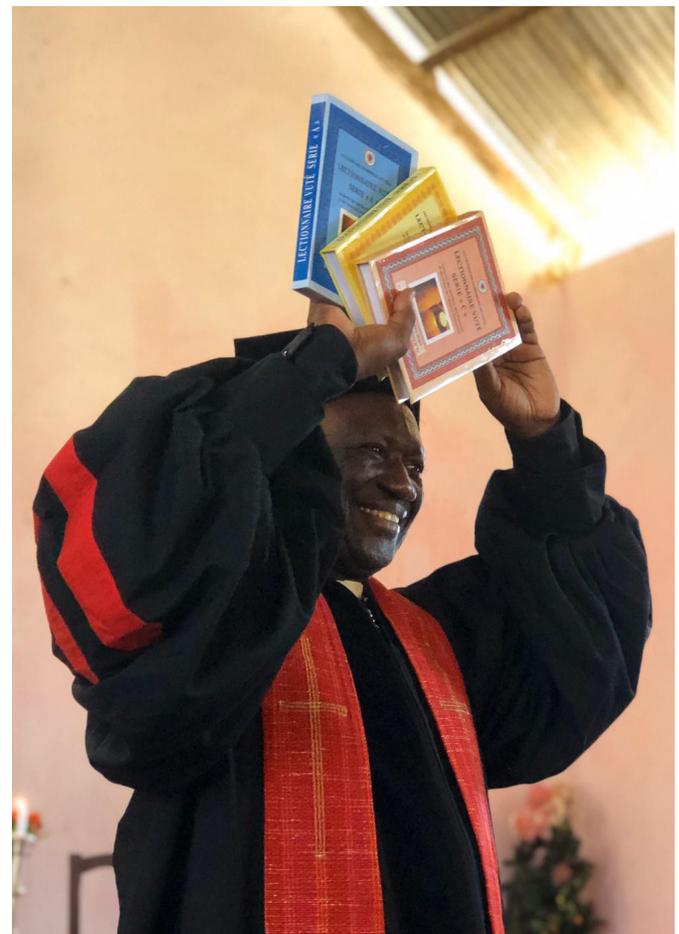


***In other news***, Cameroonians dedicated the **Bible House in Ngaoundéré, Cameroon** on March 1<sup>st</sup>. This building helps **make God’s Word available in the languages spoken in Cameroon**. Lutheran Bible Translators thanks God for those who funded the Bible House and sister organization – Lutheran Bible Translators of Canada. **m**



Thank you to all of our supporters. **Bible translation cannot happen without you.** With your help now people like the Kwanja-Ndung and Vuté have **access to the Word of God in their own Language.**

**PUT GOD’S WORD  
IN THEIR HANDS**



*Pastor Paul Tshell, one of the Vuté translators, presents the lectionary series to the Vuté community at the dedication ceremony.*

*FACING: Specially-composed songs were sung at the Kwanja-Ndung dedication ceremony which included men and women performing various dance-like moves. These women were symbolically “sweeping” to prepare the way for the “Victor” or “Chief” to come, acclaiming the Word of God as their Hero or Victor.*

## REPORT

# Leading Towards the Broader World of Bible Translation

*Reported by Lutheran Bible Translators staff  
Dr. Jim Kaiser in Ethiopia & Rev. Dr. Berhanu Ofgaa,  
Director of Ethiopia Program*

**R**epresentatives from 21 Bible translation projects of the largest Lutheran church body in the world – Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus (EECMY) – gathered in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. They were joined by local coordinators, advisors, and consultants. With 88 unique languages in Ethiopia, many language communities have no access to Scripture in their own languages. This special event was the first comprehensive Bible translation conference convened by the EECMY and representatives from all 21 EECMY projects assembled.

This conference marked the beginning of the process to bring all the EECMY translation projects together under one central administration in the church's Department for Mission and Theology. Previously, most of the projects had been isolated and not consistently managed and supported.

The top leadership of both the EECMY and Lutheran Bible Translators addressed the conference. The EECMY president, Rev. Yonas Yigezu, and the EECMY general secretary, Rev. Dr. Teshome Amenu, explained how Bible translation is vital to the work of the church in evangelism and preaching.

The head of the Department for Mission and Theology, Rev. Dr. Lalissa Daniel, spoke of the EECMY experience in vernacular Bible translation, the languages commonly spoken by the people. The work of Bible translation is tied to the very beginning of the EECMY. It goes back to 1899, when two freed slaves, Hika (Onesimos) Nesib and Aster Ganno, finished translating the Bible into their own Oromo language, the largest language in Ethiopia. This helped spark the growth of the church among the Oromo people.

**“This new [administrative] structure will help the work of Bible translation to be more efficient and effective.”**

*(Dr. Jim Kaiser, Lutheran Bible Translators consultant)*

Lutheran Bible Translators executive director, Dr. Mike Rodewald, shared about the world of Bible translation outside of Ethiopia.

He helped participants to see how their work is a part of a much broader picture.

Much time was devoted to hearing from those representing the projects. The participants shared good things happening in their work and talked about the struggles they face. The teams from language communities where most of the people are Muslim had the greatest challenges. Small groups discussed the issues and possible solutions, such as how to meaningfully involve their language communities in the translation project.

This was the first time many of the participants heard about the broader world of Bible translation outside of their own project. They were encouraged to learn what is happening in other places and challenged to pray for their fellow translators. There were many requests for this meeting to be held annually so that they could continue to learn from each other and encourage each other. **m**

For more information go to <https://lbt.org/project/ethiopia-partnership/>



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LAST SUNDAY  
of SEPTEMBER  
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*Members of the Bible Translation Conference in Ethiopia.*

# They All Serve

*Working with the Lutheran Women's Missionary League*

The Lutheran Women's Missionary League (LWML) is an invaluable partner in mission. Local, district and national support for Lutheran Bible Translators (LBT) ministries has helped impact over 20 million people in marginalized language communities with God's Word through their own languages. Members pray for the ministries they support. **But that's not all.**

Evelyn Weibke, from LWML Iowa District East, is just one of many who volunteer to staff LBT booths at LWML conventions or promote Bible translation in other ways. "I support Bible translation because I can't go to another country and bring God's Word,"



**Lutheran  
Women  
in Mission**



*Out-going national LWML president, Patti Ross, with missionary Alvena Federwitz and international participants at a previous Michigan District Convention.*

shares Evelyn. "But I see other people who have **gifts for bringing God's Word to people in their heart language** – people like [LBT missionaries] Alvena Federwitz and Joan and Martin Weber."

Diane Reimold, LWML Mid-South District President, **posts missionary newsletters and lobbies for Lutheran Bible Translators in her local LWML budget.** "Every person should be able to read the Bible in their own language, in their heart language. If there's not a writing system already, start with that. It's so important for the Gospel to be shared," she says.

Ella Kunkel of the LWML Washington-Alaska District served with her husband as a missionary in Africa for more than 20 years. She recalls, "**I found that educated people were 'turned on' when they saw or heard the Bible in their own language. It spoke to them.**" Back home, she reminds pastors of the importance of Bible translation.

Though each LWML member **story is unique**, the goal is the same. Some served abroad. Some never set foot outside the US. They come from different backgrounds and different areas of the country. Their ages vary as much as their roles in LWML.

Most of all, they **love to serve**. They volunteer their time with enthusiasm, organizing booths, securing staff, setting up banners, and distributing materials. They relate stories of their personal relationships with missionaries to the constant stream of women who stop by the booth. A long-time enthusiast for both LWML and LBT says, “Convention attendees often get excited when they learn **that people who have never had the Word of God in their language now have it** because of the work that LBT is doing around the world. There are no strangers at LWML conventions – everyone there is focused on **reaching the lost!**”

One LWML member said that volunteering to assist LBT makes her feel like “a real missionary.” **Advocates for the Bible translation story are welcome to join her and the rest of the team** at future LWML conventions. **To find out more, contact [alyssa.petty@lbt.org](mailto:alyssa.petty@lbt.org)**

## “Every person should be able to read the Bible in their own language, in their heart language.”

— Diane Reimold LWML Mid-South District President



*Former National LWML president Virginia Von Seggern and past Board Chair of Lutheran Bible Translators visits Jennifer Kunkel at the LBT booth at 2019 National Convention in Mobile, Alabama.*

# Following the Cause



*Pastor Matlhaope understands the impact of Scripture in his native Shekgalagari language.*

“Oboletswe Matlhaope has a PhD in New Testament theology,” Rev. Carl Grulke shared. “He’s studied the Bible his whole life. He knows Greek and Hebrew and has two degrees in theology. But when he heard **the Bible in his own language for the first time, tears welled up in his eyes.** He was thrilled to hear it! He insisted on being involved in the translation project moving forward.”

Rev. Grulke and his wife, Kelsey, are missionaries with Lutheran Bible Translators. They recently met Pastor Matlhaope in Botswana, southern Africa, where they are **bringing the Word of God to life** for those who speak Shekgalagari.

“**Moments like these** are the reason we serve in Bible translation,” says Kelsey. “Pastor Matlhaope got very quiet – was moved to tears – when I played the audio recording from the Shekgalagari New Testament for him. The words

of Scripture come alive in a new and amazing way when they are in the language of the heart, even for someone who knows the text. **Hearing the Bible in your language** makes it an entirely different experience.” This is the heart of Lutheran Bible Translators’ ministry – putting God’s Word in their hands.

And this is the impact of mother tongue Scripture. It is a cause **people want to support – and want to follow.** It energizes people and drives them to action. Pastor Matlhaope is now one of the reviewers for the Shekgalagari New Testament project. Praise God for these words in his own language and the impact they have had on him! **Go to [lbt.org/projects/shekgalagari](http://lbt.org/projects/shekgalagari) to learn more. m**

# Birthdays

## June

Eshinee Veith  
 Claude Houge  
 Audrey Grulke\*  
 Elijah Wagner\*  
 Joshua Rudowske\*  
 Jo Ann Megahan  
 Chris Pluger

## July

Mary Holman  
 Aili Esala\*  
 Jim Kaiser  
 Isaiah Wagner\*  
 Joshua DeLoach\*  
 Vanice Schultz  
 Nathan Esala  
 Josiah Federwitz\*  
 Stephanie Luetjen  
 Andrew Beckendorf\*  
 Jeannie Peterson

## August

Valerie Federwitz  
 Tim Miller  
 Kara Kuhn  
 Ruthie Wagner  
 Rachel Federwitz\*  
 Rich Rudowske  
 Amy Gerds  
 Katie Hogan  
 Mariah Olson\*  
*\*missionary kid*

### 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.

## FINANCIALS

January 1—  
 March 31, 2020

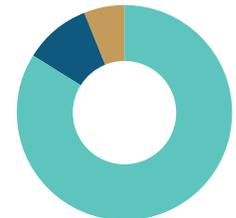
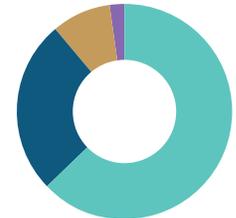
Unaudited 1st Quarter      Unaudited Year-to-Date

### INCOME

■ Designated	\$	741,456	741,456
■ General (Undesignated)		310,911	310,911
■ Restricted Funds		(1,047)	(1,047)
■ Bequests		101,634	101,634
■ Endowments		23,620	23,620
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>1,176,664</b>	<b>1,176,664</b>

### EXPENSES

■ Program	\$	1,288,060	1,288,060
■ Administration		153,110	153,110
■ Endowments		92,022	92,022
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>1,533,192</b>	<b>1,533,192</b>



### Pray for:

#### Botswana

> Give praise for the passion and energy of the **Wayeyi Advisory Council** promoting the Wayeyi Bible translation effort.

#### Ethiopia

> Pray for the students enrolled in the **6-week summer course at Mekane Yesus Seminary** and the 15 who will be recruited to begin the official Bible translation course.

> Pray for **peace and unity among the Konso** people.

#### Ghana

> Pray that the **Komba people will continue to look to God's Word** to guide their daily lives.

#### Liberia

> Pray for the **Bible Society in Liberia** working to assemble and train the Bandi Old Testament translation team.

> Pray that funding will be available to **expand Dan literacy** programs.

#### United States

> Praise God for the **47 years Alvina Federwitz has served** with Lutheran Bible Translators. Pray that her work will continue to be fruitful and a blessing to all she encounters.

> Praise the Lord for **Emily Wilson** and her dedication to share Lutheran Bible Translators' mission with those she encounters.

> Praise God for **Michael and JoAnn Megahan's 16 years of service** with Lutheran Bible Translators. Pray that their ministry will continue to be a blessing to them and all they encounter.

> Pray for **Angela Tayloe** as she continues to manage the finance department of Lutheran Bible Translators.

> Praise the Lord for the **41 years Mike Rodewald has served** with Lutheran Bible Translators. Pray for continued blessings and growth throughout his ministry.

#### Sierra Leone

> Praise God that the **Mende translation** has progressed so far and so well.

> Praise God that completed Old Testament portions are being well received by **Themne churches** and communities.

#### Tanzania

> Pray the Holy Spirit will call more **Kerewe people to faith** and worship attendance in churches will grow.

#### Worldwide

> Pray that the translated Scriptures bring hope and comfort to **Aramaic speakers** scattered across the world.

> Pray for safety for those still in **danger from the violence of war** and the prejudice of their fellow countrymen.

Dr. Mike Rodewald, Editor

Barbara Beermann, Editorial Management

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Correspondence may be directed to *The Messenger* Editor.

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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



Lutheran Bible Translators

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Lutheran Bible Translators

# ESSENTIALLY TRANSLATABLE

with Rev Rich Rudowske

Check out Lutheran Bible Translators' new podcast, ***Essentially Translatable***, hosted by Rev. Rich Rudowske!

Join us twice a month with new guests as we dig into what is essential about translation.

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