



Lutheran Bible  
Translators

# the messenger

Christmas 2020

Sharing a  
Generous  
Spirit

REPORT  
Sharing Our  
Blessings

Five Years On

Share

WON FÊI EBÒ  
SÌAN DAYÀA

# **Rally around** *Vision*

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

See | Follow | Understand | Share

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## FROM THE CORNER OFFICE

*Dear Reader:*

“Africans are hospitable! Americans are charitable!” In African cultures, resources are shared with family, friends, and neighbors close by. **Those from US cultures often seem more willing to be generous for causes afar than to share with those close by.**

I enjoy the difference in cultures. **Looking through another’s eyes, brings insight.** So it is with the concept of ‘sharing.’



**DR MIKE RODEWALD**

Early in service overseas, I lived in a remote town in northern Liberia. Someone asked to use my hammer. He didn’t bring it back. I had to go looking for it. His concept, of what I considered ‘borrowing and return’, was not the same as mine. Rather to him, **we ‘shared’ equally in my hammer and I could come for it any time!** At the time I was not impressed.

God calls us to share the good news of Jesus. We could be technical and share through Bibles that people don’t understand. But a ‘technical share’ isn’t the answer. Jesus’ parable of the widow with her two small coins (Mark 12:41-44) provides clarity – **sharing is giving from the heart.**

In God’s story of salvation, we share in response to His gift of salvation. In Bible translation, the Word enters our heart through our own language. We respond. God uses our time, prayer, resources, talents. **People in remote language communities hear the story of salvation through Jesus in their own languages.**

**From heart to heart.** That is a great share.

*In Christ,*

**Dr. Mike Rodewald**

*CEO and Executive Director*

**On the Cover,** David Federwitz shares building ideas with local language groups in Cameroon. *Photocredit: Caleb Rodewald*

# Sharing a Generous Spirit

“**G**od loves a cheerful giver.” (2 Corinthians 9:7)  
You want to support Bible translation but maybe you think “it’s not enough to make a difference” or “what I have to offer will not help.”

God gives people different resources. It’s the generosity He seeks – not the size of the gift. How you use those gifts shows how you prioritize. God honors all gifts equally.

## Rebecca

“Faith comes from hearing the Word of God,” says Rebecca, a student at Saint Paul Lutheran High School in Concordia, Missouri. But “not hearing” and “not believing” were a problem, and she wondered what could she do?

Through friends, Rebecca discovered Lutheran Bible Translators (LBT) is located on the campus of her high school. She learned LBT works with local communities around the world to translate God’s Word into their language. “Lutheran Bible Translators is important because if people do not hear, they cannot come to faith.”

LBT offers three simple ways to help. Pray. Give. Go. Not everyone is meant to serve as a missionary with the language teams. But everyone can pray that God’s Word reaches every corner of the earth. And there are many ways to give.

Rebecca shares her heart for Bible translation by giving and organizing others to support this effort, especially through social media. Rebecca used the Facebook fundraising tool, choosing Lutheran Bible Translators as her charity. She set a goal and invited her friends and family to join her in supporting Bible translation. Rebecca has tied this activity to her last two birthdays and plans to do this every year from now on!

“Some of my family members have done mission work in Africa,” Rebecca says, “and I have thought about becoming a missionary myself.” For now, she asks people to celebrate her birthday with her by contributing to Bible translation – helping people hear and come to faith through God’s Word in a language they understand.



*Local students in Concordia, MO, getting involved with the Bible translation movement.*

## Wally

*“Uncle Wally had a heart of gold.”*

A life-long Christian from Wisconsin, Wally learned about his Savior from his family, his church, and the Bible. He knew Bible poverty existed in many parts of the world. He didn’t realize he had the power to do something about it.

When Wally was diagnosed with a serious illness, he carefully evaluated what was important to him. A memory from 50 years earlier still lingered—a missionary serving with Lutheran Bible Translators (LBT) in Africa talking about Bible translation. He spoke to his niece, Sharon, about his priorities. She in turn contacted LBT to learn how to implement Wally’s wish to further Bible translation after his passing.

Wally left a direct gift to LBT in his will. Sharon also helped sponsor a grant through her LWML district, providing support for a project in Ethiopia.

“During his lifetime, his giving was cash in the offering plate,” Sharon recalls, “just between him and God.” Now, Wally’s investment in Bible translation will help put God’s Word into people’s hands in a language they can understand, a legacy that will have eternal impact.



*Students at the Mekane Yesus Seminary in Addis Ababa. Excited to learn about Bible translation thanks to giving efforts.*

## Doing Good Things

Do you have something you cherish from your grandparents or another loved one? Sage advice or a special keepsake? What do you want to share with those who come after you...Advice? Money? Property? Priorities? During your lifetime, you may pass along any of these, but accomplishing this at the end of life requires planning.

Why think about this now? We tend to think time is unlimited – but it’s not true. If you have not prepared a will or designated a beneficiary at the time of your death, someone else will decide how your assets are distributed. No matter how good your intentions, your wishes no longer matter.

By deciding what you want and acting on your decisions now, your desire to “do good” will have effects that last long past your lifetime. Many financial planners, working with a variety of different foundations, are available to help you with strategies for investing your resources most effectively. Prayerfully consider how God is leading you to give. **m.**

If you have questions or would like to learn more about estate planning, call **660-225-0810** and ask for the Finance Manager or contact [finance@lbt.org](mailto:finance@lbt.org)

**You can help put God’s Word in their hands, too.**  
**Go to [lbt.org/give/](http://lbt.org/give/)**

## REPORT

# Sharing Our Blessings

**I**n the first century, Paul encouraged the young church in Corinth to reach out in intentional relationship with the community. He explained, “I have become all things to all people, that by all means I might save some. I do it all for the sake of the Gospel, that I may share with them in its blessings” (9:22-23 ESV). As Paul shared the Gospel, he, too, was blessed.

Spurred on by the Great Commission, Christ-followers seek to bless their communities – locally and abroad. Prayer warriors, generous givers, and zealous volunteers have come together to serve in God’s mission. They -and you- have a vital role to play connecting the Church with those who do not yet know the saving power of the triune God. Living into God’s mission has reciprocal blessings and joys.

Since Lutheran Bible Translators was established, men and women have offered their prayers and faithful support, echoing Paul’s encouragement: it’s all for the sake of the Gospel! As you gather to pray for language partners and missionaries or offer charitable gifts, it makes all the difference! You have shared your time, talents, and treasures. Through your generosity God’s Word has transformed lives of people around the world previously without access to Scripture.

In the Dwayo language community in Cameroon, life and truth was found in the Gospel during a time of loss. After Julianne’s husband passed away, she began to read his copy of the New

Testament in their language. As she read Matthew 6 as Jesus urges his disciples to “seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness” (6:33 ESV), Julianne felt the Lord’s leading.

“Until now, I had other priorities in my life rather than God’s Word. When I read this passage, I understood that God wants us to put our focus on Him and His Word above the things of this life. This verse continues to direct my thoughts like a flashlight lights up the dark.”

The Gospel blessed Julianne in a time of mourning; His Word was a lamp to her feet (Psalm 119:105). Other language communities, like the Vuté, in Cameroon seek God’s light in their own language. Lutheran Bible Translators is proud to partner alongside them. Join the story and share more blessings with Vuté speakers at <https://lbt.org/project/vute/>.

Once people have God’s Word in their own language, the Church naturally wants to share the joy with their communities. Workshops are scheduled to train men and women to become Sunday School teachers to train up future generations of believers. Mary, a young wife (*Note: Specific details were intentionally omitted or changed to protect the affected language community*), was invited to such a workshop but had family commitments. As she was traveling home, she felt God calling her to turn back and attend the workshop at the church.

**“I understood that God wants us to put our focus on Him and His Word above the things of this life.”**

*Continued on page 6...*



“This time together has been one of the best things that has ever happened to me! I have felt overwhelmed with fear about the future and my family, and the stories we learned have encouraged me beyond words. God is so great! He provides.”

During the workshop, Mary read translated passages of Exodus in her language for the first time and was strengthened in her understanding of God’s faithfulness and provision. Workshop participants are blessed by Bible stories of God’s love and sovereignty in their language. They share these blessings with their church and their community. Join in the partnership by going to [lbt.org/give](http://lbt.org/give).

Carl and Nancy were among the first missionaries with Lutheran Bible Translators to serve in Liberia with the vision of sharing God’s Word with Gola speakers. Illness prevented them from staying in the country, but Carl’s heart remained in Liberia with the Gola people.

Although two civil wars delayed the project, the Gola translation of the New Testament was dedicated in March 2020 – fifty years after it first began. Nancy contacted Lutheran Bible Translators: “Would it be possible to send a copy of the Gola New Testament to Carl?” His battle against leukemia was coming to an end. Nancy shared that despite his illness, Carl celebrated holding the Gola New Testament in his hands.

*“Tears of joy flowed down his face.”*

Carl’s joy was founded in the Good News – Christ lived, died, and rose again for every nation, tribe, and tongue! Although Carl could not be in Liberia for the dedication of the New Testament, in his service and partnership, he was able to share his love for the Gola people and the Word. As he was called home, he shared in the blessings of the Gospel.

You have blessed communities abroad with Lutheran Bible Translators through your faithful and generous support. May you be blessed with the good news of lives transformed by the power of God’s Word. [m.](#)



# Five Years On!

**I**n the fall of 2015, Lutheran Bible Translators moved from the Chicago area to Concordia, Missouri. What happened in five years? Does sharing the Word of God change over time?

Five language communities now have either a New Testament or full Bible in the language of their heart – a language they understand. Elsewhere new projects are starting as partnerships expand or involvement increases in new language communities. All accomplished by the language community, local partners and churches, Lutheran Bible Translators, and you!

The Mekane Yesus Seminary opened a new program, following years of behind-the-scenes organization with Lutheran Bible Translators and the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus. In the fall of 2018, the seminary began training its first class of new pastoral candidates to serve in translation ministry.

Seven new missionary units are serving immersed with Lutheran Bible Translators translation teams.

Administratively, Lutheran Bible Translators restructured its funding approach to invest in future priorities, expanded its focus on training, upgraded communications, and advanced with technology.

The Bible translation world has appreciated your support for decades, even in challenging times. Your partnership with Lutheran Bible Translators makes a world of difference to those who do not yet have God’s Word in their language! **m.**

What happens in Bible translation in the next five years? You can make things happen! **Learn more at [lbt.org](http://lbt.org)**





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.  
Find us at **[lbt.org/podcast](http://lbt.org/podcast)** | also available on:



## Member Information

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

**You serve as a voting member, eligible to receive 2020 voting materials and notification of the Annual General Meeting if you are:**

- at least 18 years old
- a member of a Lutheran congregation.
- a 2019 donor or have given a gift in 2020

Provided your email to us in the past? You will receive voting materials by email. Haven't provided LBT your email and would like to now? Email [Board.Business@LBT.org](mailto:Board.Business@LBT.org).

Spouses who donate jointly through one address are eligible to each vote. Notify us of both spouse names by email to [Board.Business@LBT.org](mailto:Board.Business@LBT.org).

Don't have email capability but we have your postal address? We will contact you via the mail.

## Birthdays December

Melissa Schweigert  
Isaac Esala\*  
Judah Grulke\*  
Paul Federwitz  
Joan Weber  
Serena Derricks  
Josiah Wagner\*  
Josh Wagner  
John Davies  
Alyssa Petty  
Kathy Knipmeyer  
Mical Hilbert

## January

Eliot Esala\*  
Karen Tessaro  
Josephine Derricks\*  
Alvina Federwitz  
Michael Ersland  
David Federwitz  
Alexis Olson  
Sarah Stilwell  
Aaron Beckendorf\*  
Micah Federwitz\*  
Carsten Hilbert\*  
Barbara Beermann

## February

Susan Kaiser  
JoyAnna Federwitz\*  
Anna DeLoach\*  
Gideon Kuhn\*  
Cindy Rodewald  
Michael Megahan  
Rhoda Houge

\*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

Jul 1—  
Sep 30, 2020

Unaudited  
3rd Quarter

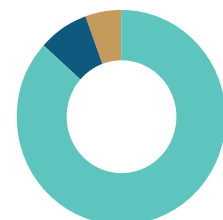
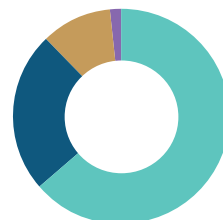
Unaudited  
Year-to-Date

### INCOME

|                          |           |                |                  |
|--------------------------|-----------|----------------|------------------|
| ■ Designated             | \$        | 563,332        | 1,921,524        |
| ■ General (Undesignated) |           | 199,874        | 722,649          |
| ■ Restricted Funds       |           | (20,205)       | (25,866)         |
| ■ Bequests               |           | 110,450        | 322,401          |
| ■ Endowments             |           | 23,592         | 44,281           |
| <b>TOTAL INCOME</b>      | <b>\$</b> | <b>917,453</b> | <b>3,036,721</b> |

### EXPENSES

|                       |           |                  |                  |
|-----------------------|-----------|------------------|------------------|
| ■ Program             | \$        | 1,315,116        | 4,197,759        |
| ■ Administration      |           | 115,319          | 382,185          |
| ■ Endowments          |           | 93,641           | 259,502          |
| <b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b> | <b>\$</b> | <b>1,524,076</b> | <b>4,839,446</b> |



## Pray for:

### Botswana

- > Pray for **Carl and Kelsey Grulke** as they make plans to return to Botswana.
- > Pray that the new **Bible Society office** in Maun, Botswana will be a great resource to local churches.
- > Pray that LBT partner **Bible Society of Botswana** will be able to expand the channels of Bible sales and distribution.

### Ethiopia

- > Praise God for progress on the building to house the **Bible translation training** program at Mekane Yesus Seminary.

### Liberia

- > Praise God for **LIBTRALO** encouraging Scripture use among the people.

### Namibia

- > Pray for the ministry of the Bible Society of Namibia and General Secretary **Dr. Schalk Botha**.

### Papua New Guinea

- > Pray for the Lord to guide work on the **Ipili Old Testament Project**.
- > Praise God for the aviation ministry of **Jonathan Federwitz**.

### Cameroon

- > Pray for the **Subula language community** planning next steps for the New Testament revision project.

### Ghana

- > Pray for the **Erslands** as they head to Ghana for their first term as a married couple.

### Tanzania

- > Pray for ongoing project development in several diocese of the **Lutheran church**.

### Southeast Asia

- > Pray for Scripture literacy and **Christian education** work.

### Worldwide

- > Pray for flexibility, resourcefulness, and patience as Lutheran Bible Translators' work continues around the world with the **challenges of COVID-19**.
- > Praise God for Regional Director **Jim Laesch** as he begins his 49th year of service with LBT.
- > Pray for perseverance, internet stability, good health and return of air travel for the **missionaries and international teams**.
- > Pray that **missionary kids** will develop meaningful friendships.
- > Pray for **Rob Hilbert** as he serves as executive director of Aramaic Bible Translation.
- > Praise God for those who have expressed interest in **serving with Lutheran Bible Translators** and pray for discernment as they decide how to serve God's mission.
- > Pray for the many language communities still waiting for **God's Word in their heart language**.

Dr. Mike Rodewald & Amy Gerds, Editor(s)

Barbara Beermann, Editorial Management

Caleb Rodewald, Layout & Design

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Comments and inquiries are invited.

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



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# DECONSTRUCT

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