



Lutheran Bible
Translators

the messenger

Christmas 2021

Preparing

the Way

GOD'S WORD
IN THE HANDS
& HEARTS OF
THE SUBULA

...page 3



**Lutheran Bible
Translators**



Fan the Flame

[2 Tim 1:6]

Glow | Ember | Spark | Blaze

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FROM THE CORNER OFFICE

Dear Reader:

“Laa lo li.” The young woman’s finger followed each word.

“Laa lo li la.” She looked up and beamed. She just read her first two sentences in her own language.

What is ordinary for me is not ordinary for many. **I take it for granted that God’s Word is available – in multiple versions.** I can read whichever I want.



DR MIKE RODEWALD
LBT Executive Director

It was not the same for this woman. Eighteen years old, her husband did not want her to read. She sneaked to an evening literacy class. The kerosene lamps were dim but her face was bright. She finished the primer. She read every reading skill-builder available. **She read first drafts of Scripture in her language. She wanted more.**

God sent Jesus for the whole world no matter what language we speak. Many do not know. Women are often most excluded – limited by language.

This young woman heard the story of her salvation best through her own language. It was the same 500 years ago when Luther translated the New Testament into common German. It is the same for you and me today.

The New Testament is now published in her language. The Old Testament is underway. God’s Word is now in her language.

In Christ,

Dr. Mike Rodewald

CEO and Executive Director

On the cover, a Subula Woman greets new missionaries to her village
Photo credit: Caleb Rodewald

Transformed HEARTS

Luther's fellow priests could read the Latin translation of Scripture, but it was not understandable to the uneducated, common German speaking people. Luther thought this was unacceptable.

Pastoral care was his goal: how could church leaders better care for the souls in their parish who could not access the Bible?

“Luther decided pretty early on when he discovered the Gospel that the thing that was going to reform the Church was not him. Not a university. Not any church figure. But it was going to be the Word of God itself,” says historical theologian Dr. Erik Herrmann.

Luther labored over the translation of the New Testament while hidden away at Wartburg castle. His translation method was less literal (word-for-word) than other translations of the time. Rather, he translated so that it would be meaningful and authentic to Germans.

Technological advancement helped the German translation. The printing press allowed for quicker production and distribution of Scripture portions at lower costs. Less affluent classes could afford to buy portions of Scripture. God's Word became accessible beyond the elite.


God's Word became accessible beyond the elite



To catch the whole episode, visit lbt.org/luthers-translation

Luther's translation of Scripture ushered in a new era for education. Instructors encouraged both boys and girls to attend school. They became literate in their own language. An increased literacy rate meant more people could read and understand the Bible. God's Word became accessible beyond the university.

Martin Luther recognized access to the Bible would transform the Church. He relied on God to work through the power of the Word to transform people's hearts. "The most important point of

Scripture is not just having Scripture – but grasping it and being grasped by it. And hearing clearly the central message of it," reflects Dr. Herrmann. 

Discover how you can continue the Reformation by making God's Word accessible to people in the language they know best. Contact communications@lbt.org



REPORT GOD PREPARED THE WAY

God's Word in their own language
Continued on page 4...

1 LUTHERAN BIBLE TRANSLATORS' MISSIONARIES ELLIOT AND SERENA DERRICKS' FIRST VISIT TO

THE SUBULA* region in Cameroon could not have been more memorable. They met a crowd of people dancing, singing, and playing instruments — excited for the Bible translation program to begin in their language.

The president of the Subula language committee declared,

**"THIS WORK OF BIBLE
TRANSLATION AND LITERACY
IS FOR YOUR CHILDREN AND
YOUR NEIGHBOR'S CHILDREN!
WE ARE OLD AND MAY NEVER
HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO HOLD
A COMPLETE SUBULA BIBLE IN
OUR TWO HANDS, BUT WE PRAY
AND HOPE THAT OUR FUTURE
GENERATIONS WILL!"**


Time has passed since that first visit. The Derricks advanced in language learning, moved to live within the Subula language community and began to partner with the translation and literacy teams. Language speakers in the community are growing in engagement and investment in Bible translation. They make decisions regarding the correct dialect, orthography (writing system), and literacy classes.

Literacy classes also began in the local schools this year. More than 400+ students will take part. Classes focus on encouraging students in the importance of their mother tongue and culture, the Subula alphabet, and learning about their country's beauty and diversity.



A literacy team member reflected,

"WHEN I ATTENDED SCHOOL, THEY DIDN'T LET US SPEAK OUR MOTHER'S LANGUAGE BECAUSE THEY SAID WE WOULDN'T BE ABLE TO LEARN FRENCH. I AM SO HAPPY THESE THINGS HAVE CHANGED WITH TIME AND MY GRANDCHILDREN CAN BE PROUD TO SPEAK THEIR LANGUAGE. HAVING IT TAUGHT IN SCHOOL SHOWS THEM HOW IMPORTANT IT IS."

God is working through the Subula language community. One literacy worker marveled, "He prepared the way ahead of them [the translation and literacy teams]." These teams serve in joy as they anticipate receiving – in Subula – the message of hope found in God's Word. Find out how you can support the Subula* language community at GO.LBT.ORG/SUBULA. 

**PSEUDONYM BEING USED DUE TO SENSITIVE SITUATION.*

**"MY
GRANDCHILDREN
CAN BE
PROUD
TO SPEAK
THEIR
LANGUAGE"**



Straight to the HEART

Translators Pontsho Mosweu and Tshwari Tjetjoo struggled at times within the Shekgalagari New

Testament program in Botswana. The Shekgalagari language had not been written down. They wrestled with questions like, “How do we write our language? How will we read it?”

Developing an orthography (writing system) is a challenge. Modifications needed to be made based on community feedback. But it was worth it. Seeing their language written was

Below: The Shekgalagari Scripture app captivates listeners.




exciting – a dream fulfilled. Pontsho and other team members laughed in joy when a listener exclaimed, “I didn’t even know Shekgalagari could be used for the Bible!”

Another time, Tshwari and the team shared a passage from Revelation for review with pastors, church leaders and community members. Some had learned the Bible through other languages – Setswana or English. The pastors often translated the foreign text into Shekgalahari for their congregations. But hearing and reading the text straight from Shekgalagari was a new experience. One pastor said, “It’s like the spirit has taken it straight to my heart. It’s more understandable

“I didn’t even know Shekgalagari could be used for the Bible!”

to read it in my own language even though I thought it was understandable in English and Setswana.” Tshwari agreed.

The COVID pandemic produced challenges and delayed the publication of the New Testament. But that has not dampened the excitement Pontsho and Tshwari have towards the upcoming dedication of the Shekgalagari New Testament. They anticipate the joy of seeing huge crowds of people gathering to celebrate God’s Word in their language – straight to their hearts. 

Join the translation team in praying that God’s Word will soon be in the hands of Shekgalagari speakers in Botswana.

Visit go.LBT.org/shekgalagari.

Thank You SOAR

Isaiah 40:31 NIV – “But those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not grow faint.”

Members of SOAR (Serving Our Awesome Redeemer) of the Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod’s Rocky Mountain District take Jesus’ Great Commission in Matthew 28:18-20 to heart. The group exists to strengthen one another in faith and equip others to know Jesus as their Savior.

SOAR is partnering with Lutheran Bible Translators in 2021 to invite others into the Bible translation movement. Drs. Mike Rodewald and Tilahun Mendedo presented about the ongoing work of Bible translation, literacy, and Scripture engagement at SOAR’s fall gathering.

Executive Development Officer Dr. Brent Smith reflected:

“

The event was filled with Scripture, prayer, and a call to selfless service to our Redeemer. Some participants drove for hours to attend the event because the testimonies of the presenters tell the story of God’s powerful acts of salvation happening today.

His promise in Matthew 24:14 is moving toward its fulfillment!

”



Above: Dr. Tilahun Mendedo giving a presentation at SOAR’s fall gathering.

SOAR has committed to support the Bandi Old Testament translation program in Liberia. Dr. Rodewald served with the Bandi people as a new Lutheran Bible Translators’ missionary in the 1980s. He tearfully shared about the hunger for God’s Word among the Bandi speakers. The process of translation was disrupted by a long civil war, but one older man held on to a tattered copy of Genesis he received in 1987. He preserved, read and studied his copy for three decades. He held on to the hope he found in God’s Word in his own language. Now he is waiting eager for the whole Old Testament. **m.**

Your congregation or small group can be in the Bible translation movement alongside SOAR. Support language communities – like the Bandi – at go.LBT.org/programs. Put God’s Word in their hands.



Lutheran Bible
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ESSENTIALLY TRANSLATABLE

with Rich & Emily

Listen to Lutheran Bible Translators' podcast
Essentially Translatable
with Rev. Rich Rudowske and Emily Wilson

Explore conversations from global leaders
in the Bible translation community.
Discover their stories and why they're passionate
about putting God's Word in the hands
of people around the world.

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



[LBT.org/podcast](https://lbt.org/podcast)

Member Information

Lutheran Bible Translators (LBT) 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 LBT bylaws (charter document).

To see if you are eligible to be a voting member please visit lbt.org/members. Here you will also find:

- Information about the 2021 election for the Board of Directors
- Details on how to request nomination and voting information for the 2021 election
- Information about the Annual General Meeting

Thank you for participating in mission through your membership.

Birthdays

December

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

January

Eliot Esala
Karen Tessaro
Josephine Derricks*
Alvina Federwitz
Michael Ersland
Tiffany Smith
David Federwitz
Alexis Olson
Deanne Gochanour
Aaron Beckendorf*
Micah Federwitz

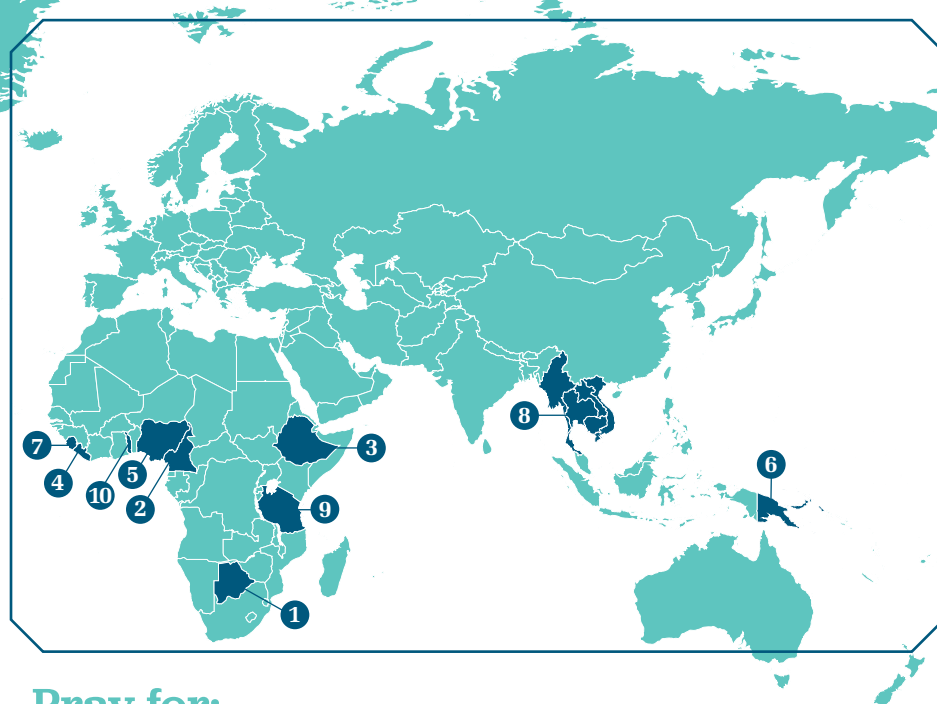
February

Susan Kaiser
JoyAnna Federwitz*
Gideon Kuhn*
Michael Megahan
Rhoda Hogue
**missionary kid*

Gift Designations

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.

Lutheran Bible Translators is a 501 (c)(3) tax-exempt organization and your gift is tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.



Pray for:

1 Botswana

➤ Pray for the Shekgalagari team as they work on the final stages to **publish the New Testament**.

2 Cameroon

➤ Praise God for the community engagement for the **Subula* translation** and literacy program.

3 Ethiopia

➤ Pray for the final stages of construction for the **Bible Translation Training Building** on the Mekane Yesus Seminary campus.

4 Liberia

➤ Pray for the distribution of **Old Testament books** to Bandi speakers to be used by congregations.

5 Nigeria

➤ Pray for blessings upon **Rev. Linus Otronyi** and Rev. Kierien Ayugha as they serve with several language communities in the Ogoja and Obudu regions.

6 Papua New Guinea

➤ Pray for wisdom and perseverance as Mandita and Margret **encourage Ipili people to use God's Word** in their own language.

7 Sierra Leone

➤ Pray for health and safety for the **Mende translators** as they continue in their steadfast commitment to the project.

8 Southeast Asia

➤ Pray that God will continue to strengthen believers as they receive **Scripture Engagement** materials.

9 Tanzania

➤ Pray that God will **bless the Kerewe team** with understanding as they receive training in translation principles.

10 Togo

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

United States

➤ Pray that listeners will be enriched by the **Living Water project** (lbt.org/livingwater).

Worldwide

➤ Praise God for the 500th anniversary celebration of **Martin Luther's New Testament** into German.
➤ Pray for **safety for Aramaic speakers** still in danger from the violence of war and the prejudice of their fellow countrymen.

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

To view Lutheran Bible Translators' financial reports, visit lbt.org/financial-accountability.

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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
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