



At the Well



Tim and Lisa Beckendorf, LBT missionaries in Botswana

Jesus answered, "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life."

John 4:13, 14 (NIV)

Training

A lot of positive things have been happening in our language community here and in Namibia that are quite exciting!

While we were in the States, Splash and Moronga spent a couple of months conducting literacy training workshops in several villages here in Botswana. For a long time, the communities have been requesting literacy workshops from us, and we were finally able to respond. All of them had had literacy workshops in the past so there were readers already in the villages. The enthusiasm this time was extraordinary with students keeping Splash and Moronga up until midnight almost every day practicing, asking questions and just wanting more and more. Some of our Bible translation was used as part of the program and that created quite a buzz also. Groups of students got together of their own initiative to create drama, songs, and poetry based on the Scripture. Since we are going to be publishing the Khwedam Panoramic Bible this year, the communities are thinking of ways to celebrate; drama, poetry and song feature largely in their plans.

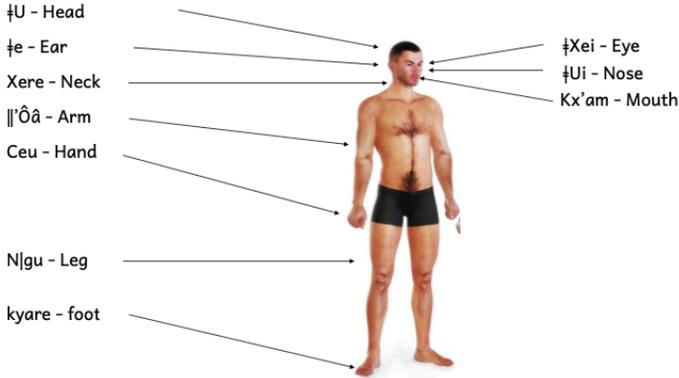
As a result of the workshops, word has gotten around, and other villages are asking (in a rather strong way) to be included in the program. We quite regularly get calls from Namibia asking when we will come there again for literacy work. We have intentions this year to reach 4 villages (COVID protocols allowing) in Namibia and two more here in Botswana. One of the villages here in Botswana has historically been resistant to be included in

language development and literacy for a number of reasons but now are quite adamant that they don't want to be left behind.

One of the reasons Namibia is asking for literacy is that a radio station is going to be starting in one of the villages for the Khwe to use for broadcasting, and they want resources to use. We've been hearing about this possibility for many years, and now that it is actually going to happen, we are quite excited, to say the least.

One of the biggest causes for excitement here and in the villages is that the Ministry of Education has implemented a plan for 10 minority languages to be included in the curriculum in primary schools where those languages are spoken. In the first listing of languages last year, Khwedam was not included. This omission caused quite a reaction in the community as our language met or exceeded all the requirements for inclusion in the program. Several influential people were contacted, and apprised of the situation and they lobbied vigorously for the Khwe, and at the end of last year we were notified that Khwedam would be included! Splash was taken down to the University of Botswana in the capital to meet with some of the people there who are involved with the program. When Splash displayed all of the booklets we've created over the years, spoke of our literacy work and curriculum, and explained our Bible translation work, the head of the program was more than pleased. He held up our work as the model for other minority language programs to follow if they would like to be included in the program.

Splash was then invited to several workshops where he learned the expectations of the Ministry of Education for creating a school primer. The program is to begin early this year, so we are busy putting together the primer to send for approval. Quite honestly, I never expected this to happen in my lifetime, so it is quite a milestone for the Khwe.



An excerpt from the primer that Splash is designing

We give thanks for the opportunities that God has created for the Khwe and for the enthusiasm He has given them for their language and His Word.

Typesetting

When we were in the States, I had virtual online training for two days with experts to learn how to prepare our translation for typesetting. I learned a lot and actually was able to get quite a bit of our translation in shape for the initial presentation to the typesetters. We still have a number of little things to fix, such as adding the book names. This doesn't sound like a big deal, but it requires a lot of meetings for people to discuss how they want to spell the names of books. Throughout the checking process that we use for each stage of the translation things are checked, and re-checked numerous times. Before we print, however, the whole translation will need to be read and re-read just to make sure everything is correct.

One correction I found humorous is one that I noticed as I was going through a first draft of one of the last portions we are translating. In our translation we use a descriptive phrase to express “false gods”. The descriptive phrase that we use is “made gods”, which is “nʘom khyani”. In this specific verse I read the phrase “ʘom khyani”. Well that looks pretty close, right? Without the ‘n’, however, the descriptive phrase becomes “locust god”. While this is a “false god,” it probably was not what was intended by the Biblical author for that verse.

We have a lot of work this coming year to prepare for publication and the celebration of the publication. Please pray that the team will be diligent in their work, that we will make all the deadlines that are in place, and that God will be glorified in all of it.

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Your servants in Christ,

Tim, Lisa, Aaron, and Andrew Beckendorf