



# they will See and Understand

ISAIAH 52:15; ROMANS 15:21

FALL 2022

Hi from Northfield, Minnesota! I have to say, I LOVE teaching. Training translators and trainers to serve in their project and hopefully other projects is a dream come true. When I worked with the Themne project I knew that "teaching them to fish" would be more sustainable, and it's a joy to have this mentality as my primary focus. I'll give you a brief update on the family and then tell you more about what I'm teaching.



## FAMILY UPDATE

Lots of soccer! All four kids have been playing soccer. It's been a great activity, and we love going to games as a family. As winter hits, it'll be brought indoors, but the kids still want to play. The boys are singing in the Northfield Youth Choirs every Tuesday, and that has given them a lot of confidence and improved skill. The singing in our house is significantly more pleasant. It's also common to find all their noses in books. **Elijah, 10 and in 5th grade**, is playing percussion in band and has started confirmation. He is an outgoing bookworm and prides himself on being a bit weird, or "weirb" as he says. **Isaiah/Zay, 8 and in 3rd grade**, is our logician and math wiz. He likes to play a caring support role in the family and always likes to sing harmony. **Josiah/JoJo, almost 7 and in 1st grade**, is our engineer, championing his own Lego creations and living in a world of imagination and endless possibilities. **Elizabeth/Lizzie, 5 and in PreK**, is our fashionista. She loves to dress up with all the accessories, painted nails, and braided hair. Her favorite activity is drawing pictures, making cards, and sounding out people's names.

**Josh** is studying and writing for his M.A. in Leadership and is working on a nearby farm. It's hard work and he comes home filthy, but it's been a good job and good for him to be outdoors and working with his hands. He hopes to find work in IT early next year.

I, **Ruthie**, am working for Lutheran Bible Translators as Exegete for translation projects in

## WHO WE ARE



The Wagner Family serves with Lutheran Bible Translators; first, several years in Sierra Leone working alongside the Themne people in Translation & Scripture Use; and now as Archive Curator and Exegete for the Kerewe Bible Translation Project in Tanzania.

*Making God's Word accessible to those who do not yet have it in the language of their hearts. (LBT's Mission)*

## TIMELINE

- OCT Lizzie's 5<sup>th</sup> on the 9<sup>th</sup>
- NOV- Ruthie works as Archive Curator and  
DEC Exegete for Tanzania, particularly the  
Kerewe Translation Project
- JAN LBT Tanzania team meetings  
2023
- JAN Ruthie works as Archive Curator and  
-DEC Exegete for Tanzania
- MAY Tentative trip to Tanzania for Ruthie
- JUNE Elijah's 11<sup>th</sup> on the 21<sup>st</sup>

## TAKE ACTION

**JOIN** our "Wagner Updates" group on Facebook! This is where we update most frequently.

[facebook.com/groups/wagnerupdates](https://www.facebook.com/groups/wagnerupdates)

**GIVE** to "Wagner Ministry" online or by mailing a check. Please contact us or LBT if you'd like to set up automatic giving.

**PRaise** for a great start to teaching for Ruthie. And praise for successful treatment for Ruthie's mom's lung cancer. Prognosis is good.

**PRAY** for the Kerewe Translation Team as they work on the translation while also taking Ruthie's course on Relevant Bible Translations.

## CONTACT/SUPPORT

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[facebook.com/groups/wagnerupdates](https://www.facebook.com/groups/wagnerupdates)

📞 612-433-1199 (call or text)

🏠 LBT will forward "Wagner" mail to us.



Designate "Wagner Ministry"

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Concordia, MO 64020

800.532.4253

[www.lbt.org/give](http://www.lbt.org/give)

Are you new to Wagner Updates? Please introduce yourself and contact us if you have any questions about our ministry.

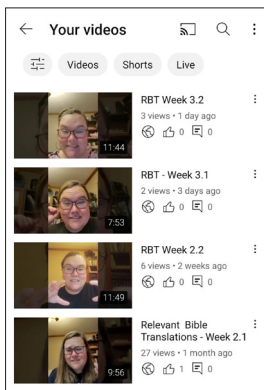
RECURRING SUPPORT

THANK YOU!

THANK YOU!

THANK YOU!

100%



Tanzania—particularly the Kerewe Project—and as Archive Curator for the organization. I'm spending most of my time developing curriculum and teaching a course on Relevant Bible Translations. I'll tell you about that next.

*Please join us in praying for my mom, Margaret Lee, who is recovering from lung cancer treatment. She has finished chemo and radiation, and will get further scans in January. Also, Josh's brother Daniel recently married a beautiful young lady, Jesika, and we pray for their new marriage.*

## RELEVANT BIBLE TRANSLATIONS

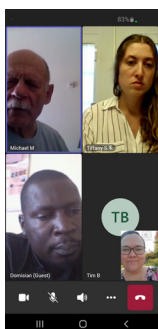
A temptation for translators is to do word-for-word translation. If you have learned a second language, you can certainly relate to what I'm saying. As you learn, depending on the language, you begin to make adjustments for differences in grammar and word order. The deeper you get, the more adjustments you make in word choices, use of idioms, etc. As your accent and intonation improve, your writing and speaking begins to sound more natural. The more you understand about your speaker, the better your communication gets...the more relevant. You begin to connect.

**I believe Scripture is already relevant, and in translation, we are doing our best to keep it relevant... i.e. translation itself is making Scripture relevant to a new audience and language.**

The translators know their language with all its nuances and unique qualities. This is why the actual work of translating the text left the hands of missionaries, who could never become mother-tongue speakers. But still, it's a great temptation for translators to make a woodenly literal, word-for-word translation. This is why we not only train translators in the importance of naturalness, but we take steps to do community reviewing, so that the community can decide whether the translation sounds good or not. Does it connect with them in a meaningful way, as if Moses spoke their language... as if God spoke their language? This is relevant.

We know from Jesus' use of the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament, that translating Scripture was done even before the Bible was completed. Translators have been working on making God's word accessible for thousands of years. Speaking a second language is a challenge with which all translators wrestle. Ensuring that what is translated is relevant is a major undertaking. Thankfully, this is what God does. He created and speaks all languages, and he loves the variety so much that heaven will contain these languages for eternity.

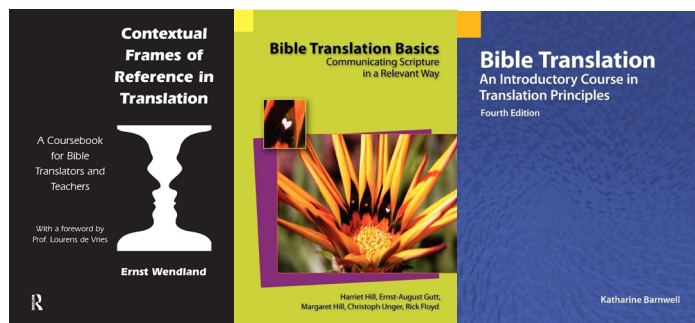
So, what's my part in all this? I am assigned as an Exegete for Tanzania Bible translation projects. There are several projects in the works, but for now I am working only with the Kerewe Team. Kikerewe is a language spoken on Ukerewe Island on Lake Victoria on the northwestern border of Tanzania. There are over 300,000 speakers of the languages. While there is New Testament from 1946, it's not in use, and only one copy has been located.



The translation project aims to complete the entire Bible in Kikerewe. It is overseen by the Lutheran Church with whom Lutheran Bible Translators partners. In fact, the Lutheran Church in Tanzania is the second largest in the world, second to Ethiopia, both of which are in East Africa.

There was a missionary family on Ukerewe Island with LBT, but they have recently left Tanzania. Instead of sending a new missionary unit, LBT decided to take a different approach with the project. The translators are working well on their own and mostly need training and support to do their job better. They have a consultant (Dr. Michael Megahan, based in the U.S.) and a consultant in training (Dr. Tim Benckendorf, based in Botswana) working with them. And there is a new missionary (Tiffany Smith) going to work on a neighboring language in a support role.

So, this left a need for a Translation Advisor to join the project, to work especially with training and assisting technically with the translation work and software. The goal is to train someone from the team to be a trainer for other projects that are starting in Tanzania. LBT asked me to develop a course to teach them in the various methods and theories of Bible translation, primarily using the lime green book *Bible Translation Basics*. I also incorporate lessons from other resources.



I am writing a curriculum, teaching the lessons either via zoom or via recording and sharing through YouTube. Each lesson is about 10 minutes long and contains assignments for them to engage with what they are learning.

One aspect that I'm particularly proud of, is that I am asking them to translate key concepts into Swahili and into Kikerewe. This way the consultant can check to confirm their understanding of the material, and we can have a log of helpful phrases that can be used to guide further training. Hopefully the "trainer" will then be able to reteach the lessons directly, utilizing Swahili, which would be better understood than English by other translation teams.

WEEK and LESSON	ENGLISH	SWAHILI	KIKEREWE
Week 1.2 Hill's Lesson 2	"Translators need to communicate Scripture in such a way that people give their attention to it."	Watafsiri wanatakiwa kuwasilisha maandiko katika njia ambayo kwao watu watawitiwa kusikiliza.	Ababutabuti bahikile kulobya enandiko kwo omuhanda ogwo abantu bakusemelelwa kuhulliziya.
Week 2.1 Hill's Lesson 3	"Audiences need to experience enough cognitive benefits from Scripture to satisfy their expectations."	Hadhira inahitaji kupata uzofu wa kutosha kuhusu faida za ufahamu kutoka katika Maandiko ili kukidhi matarajio yake.	Embagu ekwenda ebone omugasu oguhikile ogwo <b>obumanyi kulaga Munandiko ebone kuhikwa necho <del>ebulugazyu</del></b> .
Week 2.2 Hill's Lesson 4	"For Scripture to be understood, translators need to ensure that audiences are able to experience enough benefits without unnecessary processing effort."	Ili Maandiko yageloweke, watafsiri wanapaswa kuhakikisha kwamba hadhira inaweza kupata faida za kutosha bila juhudi ya kuchakata isiyi ya lazima.	Okayenda enandiko zimanyikane kuzima, ababutabuti bahikile kumanya nkanikwo embaga ekuhicha kubona omugasu guhikile nzila <b>kunazyu emiwe</b> .

Though I still struggle with my health most days, I am thankful for this opportunity to continue working with and supporting Bible translation. Thank you for joining me in this work and for praying for our family. *You shall serve the Lord your God, and he will bless your bread and your water, and I will take sickness away from among you. Exodus 23:25*

♥ Ruthie & Josh Wagner

Elijah (10.5), Isaiah (8.5), Josiah (7), & Elizabeth (5)  
*Missionaries with Lutheran Bible Translators*