



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)

Jesus said, "The kingdom of God is like a man who scatters seeds on the ground. He sleeps at night and is awake during the day. The seeds sprout and grow, although the man doesn't know how. The ground produces grain by itself. First the green blade appears, then the head, then the head full of grain." (Mark 4:26-28)

Singing the Bible

In the village where I (Tim) did my initial language learning back in 2005, there is a man named John who has always been eager to have whatever we have translated of the Bible in Khwedam. He is hard of hearing, yet he taught himself to read Khwedam by listening to our audio recordings (with a very loud audio player) of the Old Testament Khwedam Bible portions while following along in the booklets. A couple of months ago he asked me if I could bring him the New Testament portions that we've translated into Khwedam. At the time, Splash and I were very busy going through typesetting checks, and I consequently forgot. I only remembered recently about John's request. So, one evening I printed out what we have of the New Testament, and the next morning Splash and I went out to John's village to give it to him. We didn't find John that day but did find his wife, a couple of her daughters, and their families. We sat with them for quite a while, listening to all their troubles and the woes of the village: the people feel pressed on every side by their adversaries, feel trapped, and expressed little hope. Then, when we were getting ready to leave, one of the daughters told me that they have a choir that has been composing Scripture songs and asked if I could record them. I gladly agreed and asked if they could sing one of their songs for us. The song

that they sang was about how richly God blesses those who love Him. Here was a group of ladies, quite impoverished, sitting on the ground, singing about how richly God has blessed them. Amazing!



The choir singing about God's blessings

The next day Splash and I went back with my recording equipment. We got a late start because we couldn't find a suitably quiet place to record. The ladies suggested we try one building that is partially closed on three sides, so we set up there. Sound here travels a long ways, and it seemed to take forever for the village to quiet down. After all the babies had stopped crying, the cows had ceased bellowing, and the donkeys braying, we recorded three songs. That evening I listened to and edited the recordings, but I wasn't happy with the sound quality. Splash and I returned to the village the next morning and suggested to the ladies that it would be best if we could find a traditional house with mud brick walls and a grass roof. They discussed it for a while and ended up appropriating one of their sons' house for our use. We recorded 6 songs in that building and the sound quality was much better. Even with the wind blowing, the house was quiet. The next week, when we recorded 3 more songs, I

edited and mastered all the songs and put them on a CD for the ladies (yes, CD players are still in use here). Splash told the ladies that they must not make copies for making money but must make copies, paying for them out of pocket, so that God's Word can be spread.

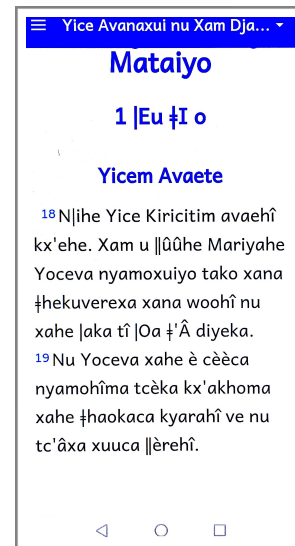
While all of our recording was going on, a man from Splash's home village was there who also has a choir that he'd like to have recorded. Splash's comment was, "You see, now we have provoked the other villages to get involved! This will spread to all the villages!"

Sharing the Bible

Last week Splash and I were in several other Khwe villages sharing samples the typesetter had sent us of the Khwe Bible, getting input on how they want their Bible to look. In one of the villages we were approached by yet another person requesting our New Testament portions (she also has a choir and wants to compose songs for us to record). Printing out our translation is quite a job and takes a lot of paper, so I'm only able to make a couple of copies on our home printer. Since our Bible is hopefully going to be printed soon (early next year, we hope), it isn't feasible to continue to produce them 'in house.'

However, several years ago, I had made a phone app of our Bible with the books that we had finished. There was no interest then because very few people had smartphones. Now, however, inexpensive smartphones are more available and more and more Khwe people have them. Since our Panoramic Bible is completed and only waiting for typesetting, I made a new phone app of the Bible and put it on Splash's phone. When we went back to the village to bring the lady the New Testament portions in print, there were a bunch of people at her house and several smartphones lying about. I showed them their Bible on my phone and asked if the owners of the phones

would like it. They enthusiastically went about sharing it from phone to phone. Since then, we've had several other similar experiences; one when Splash was at a funeral with some of the Khwe from Namibia. One of the Namibian Khwe saw the Bible in Khwedam on Splash's phone and subsequently installed it on his phone, promising to share it with others in Namibia.



A screenshot of our Khwedam Bible app

For years we've been working at translating the Bible and didn't ever expect to see the fruit of the work. It is absolutely wonderful to see how the Holy Spirit has been quietly, yet powerfully, working in the lives of people who are eagerly using the Khwedam Bible before it is even officially published.

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Your servants in Christ,

Tim, Lisa, Aaron, and Andrew Beckendorf