

NOVEMBER-
DECEMBER
2023

Tiffany in Tanzania

FAITHFULLY
SERVING THE
DATOGA

"My heart's desire and prayer to God for them is that they may be saved..." | ROMANS 10



Wapendwa Ndugu wa Kristo,
(Dear brothers and sisters in Christ)

As 2023 begins to wrap up, I'm spending more time reflecting over this past year and all the ups and downs that it provided. This has definitely been the most adventurous year of my life, and I don't expect it to get any less exciting from here on out. Here's what we are planning for the upcoming year or two in Tanzania...

More workshops and continuing education for our team members. We have been in discussion about the Taturu language - which dialect will be most appropriate to use in the translation project, and how do we find the answer to that question? Well, one of our thoughts ever since attending the Oral Bible Storying workshop in Arusha this September is to host an Oral Bible Storying workshop next year. The participants would be representatives from all the regions where Taturu live, in hopes that when they gather and practice oral storying they will discuss the differences in their dialects and designate one to be the dialect they use in the translation. This idea could be a better solution than traveling from region to region doing language analysis, because in the end the communities still need to be in agreement on which dialect to use, and the easiest way to come to this agreement (we hope) would be to bring Taturu from all over the country into one room so they can sit and discuss the matter with one another.

While we deliberate how and when we will do this workshop, our project coordinator and other LBT partners in Tanzania are going to continue their education in Bible translation principles and methods. We want our team to be competent and confident so that they can be well-informed leaders of these projects.

I, too, want to continue my education, and so I plan to take every opportunity I can to learn more about translation methods such as Oral Bible translation and recording. I had a wonderful time in Thailand last Spring where I participated in two different workshops, and I would like to do something similar again in 2024.

Although not directly affiliated with Lutheran Bible Translators, the diocese in Shinyanga is in the process of building a seminary for pastors and deaconesses, which should be finished by Summer of 2024. This is exciting for multiple reasons, number one being that now there will be a place for men and women to study ministry right here in Shinyanga, rather than traveling to another city or region. (Continued next page)



STAY IN TOUCH

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If you would like to give to my ministry, please mail all checks to Lutheran Bible Translators' headquarters at the address below, or give online.



2023 Funding: 90%



Vehicle Update

Every day I get a little closer to reaching my goal for a Land Cruiser!

I am still hoping to raise all of the funding by the end of the year. I have no doubt that God will continue to provide!

If you are looking for an end-of-year gift, please consider giving to this project. This car will help me in daily life and work here in Tanzania.

This is a \$38,000 project. You can designate gifts to "Smith Vehicle Project" by check or online at the addresses on the bottom of this page. Thank you for your support!

Current Vehicle Funding:

 62%



Prayers and Praise

Philippians 4:6-7

Pray: For our preparation and planning for 2024. Some plans are being adjusted due to budget and current needs.

Praise: For a wonderful first year in Tanzania!

Pray: That God continues to give me clarity and encouragement on the days when I feel less than capable.

Praise: For my family, who really had my back this year and were always ready to pick up the phone when I called.

Pray: For the Taturu, who are patiently waiting for a Bible in their language. May God inspire and encourage them during this journey, and fill them with His Spirit.

Another exciting reason is that an idea has been floating around between some colleagues and I for a few months: With this new seminary being established, it's worth considering adding a Bible translation program to the curriculum in the future. This idea, of course, needs to be discussed in much further detail, but currently Tanzania does not have a seminary with a Bible translation program.

In our projects we often hire pastors as translators or exegetes because of their biblical knowledge and experience with biblical languages, plus their innate passion to preach the Word of God to all people, so it just makes sense to incorporate Bible translation principles and methods into their studies at seminary. Plus, you never know who of these men and women are still waiting for the Bible to be translated into their own mother tongue. They could be one of the first people in their community to make that happen!

I'm praying that someday in the near future we can find a way to make this idea a reality, but it will take a lot of work, so for now we are just focusing on the matters at hand.



Photos page 1: (L) Me on our trip back from Rwanda. (R) A shop keeper I buy groceries from in the Shinyanga market. Page 2: (L) My neighbor's house girl preparing fried bread. (R) The choir rehearsing at my church.

Finally, I would like to leave you with some thoughts I've had since moving to Tanzania - the things I've learned over the last 12 months.

- Tanzanians are really, truly, special people. I knew from the moment I met a few of our partners on my trip back in 2022 that they were lovely folks, but since moving here I have learned so much from them and the culture here. I think the most important being to always put your neighbor, friend, or even a stranger on the street above yourself. Sometimes it's hard to do, but relationships are always going to be more important than your time.
- "Laugh loudly, because someone else in the world today is crying." This is a saying that a friend told me months ago when I commented on her bright and contagious laugh. Have fun, don't take life too seriously, and when you have a reason to laugh don't take that moment for granted.
- The Taturu are a beautiful people with a rich history and a hunger for God's Word. I'm looking forward to learning more about them and their language in the months and years ahead. It won't be easy work, but I can tell it will be worth it.
- It's difficult to see God move in your life if you don't. There were many days in the past year where I hid in my house because of one little setback. There were days I didn't want to go outside because I was scared of what could go wrong. I often avoided talking or moving because I was worried about making a mistake or setting off a chain of reactions that I wouldn't be able to control. Yet, almost every day I was praying that God would use me for His glory. It's difficult for God to use you when you stay stiff as a board and keep your mouth shut. This year I've learned more than ever what it means to walk by faith and lean on God's strength and power rather than my own. I've never felt so incapable as I have this year, and yet God has still been so good to me and used even the smallest actions I've made to bless my life, though I did not deserve such grace.

I'm especially grateful to God, more than ever, for my supporters back home. God has used you to provide for me, pray for me, and encourage me through messages and letters. As I enter into my third year with Lutheran Bible Translators, I pray that you will join me and watch as God continues to work in my life and the lives of our partners in Tanzania. May God richly bless you!