



# 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)*

## Teaching

In our last letter I wrote about working in Sierre Leone, consulting with the Themne translators. For the last several months I have also been working with the Wayeyi translators here in Botswana. I have been with them twice so far, and we've completed some of the smaller books of the New Testament: Titus, Philemon, 1, 2, 3 John, and Jude. Though brief in verses, there is great depth packed into these letters so it was not a "quick" check. When we began the first day on Jude, one of the translators commented, "There is a lot here!" Though the book is only 25 verses long, I had 13 pages of notes on Jude; some for myself but also a lot for the translators to consider. I had not studied the book in any depth previously so it was a thoroughly enjoyable dive into a letter that many people avoid.

Consulting work is not only checking through a team's translation, it is also an opportunity for teaching and helping the translators to become more skilled and confident in their work. Each consultant brings experience gained from working on a translation project as an exegete/coordinator for a number of years and has "I wish I had known back then . . ." enlightenments which they share with the people they serve as consultants. I really enjoy that part of the work!

## Travel

For the last couple of months, we've been traveling around the Midwest, putting thousands of miles on our van and visiting with partners, many of whom have been with us for many years and some who have only just met us and are becoming interested in the work that we do with Lutheran Bible Translators. It is always a lot of fun to visit with people and see them get excited about the work God is doing through Bible translation. Too often we don't see the big picture of what God is doing as we live out our daily routine. Too often we get bogged down by frustrations.

## Trials

Like many others have experienced before us, when a translated Bible moves toward completion, it feels as though the devil is throwing everything he has against it so that it fails. For the last two years you've been reading/hearing about typesetting the Khwedam Bible. Two years! Now that is frustrating. When we began that phase of the project, we anticipated six months or so. We have proofread the manuscript countless times and made little corrections in spelling and punctuation, the typesetter has sent back the wrong manuscript for proofreading several times, our maps have been mislabeled by the typesetter, one of our proofreaders quit in frustration, the other proofreader went on maternity leave for six months. Now that the manuscript is at the printer, we still need to check the whole text each time the printer makes a change in formatting or in adding publication information. Each time we think it is now ready for printing, we receive another e-mail asking us to check this or that because of a change. So, the good news is that the manuscript is with the printer, and now we are praying that it is finally ready to print.

We were greatly blessed a couple of weeks ago to attend worship in Michigan on the Sunday celebrating the Feast of Michael the Archangel. The service centered on the victory that Jesus has won through the cross and open tomb and the protection we have as the defeated devil frantically tries to bring others down with him to his eternal misery. "Though devils all the world should fill, all eager to devour us. We tremble not we fear no ill they cannot overpower us . . ." It is a salient reminder that no matter how savage Satan attacks, he truly is powerless against those in Christ.



Tim consulting with a team in Tanzania

**We give thanks for the opportunity to work together with other translators to bring God's Word to their communities.**

## Triumphs

In anticipation of visiting with people who have been with us for years and years, I began thinking of what I could possibly share that isn't already known. Looking back over the 19 years that we've been in Botswana seemed to be a good way to look at what has happened and what prayers and financial support have enabled. Honestly, I was quite amazed. We have had the opportunity to see tremendous spiritual growth in the communities. When we arrived there was an overwhelming sense of hopelessness because of many factors. Some of those factors still are pressing on the communities, and there are new ones, but for those who have come to know God's salvation story, there is hope. "How richly God has blessed us . . ." is a refrain from one of the songs written by ladies in one village. Their economic and living situation hasn't changed but their perspective has. The Holy Spirit is at work!

As we wait for the printing to actually happen, many of the Khwe are eager to have the Bible — and they want in **now**. So, before we left for the States, I used app building software that is specifically designed to work with the software that we use for translation to make the Bible available on a smart phone. This has been remarkably well-received and shared in the communities. Choirs are composing songs based on the translation. People are making dramas. The Holy Spirit is working!



A Khwe choir singing from the book of Genesis.

**We give thanks for God's protection from and power over the devil and for the work of the Holy Spirit who gives and nourishes faith.**

## Transition

If a photo is worth a thousand words, then this one speaks volumes. After living in the bush of Botswana since he was five months old where there is a low population density and no snow, home-schooling his whole academic career and enjoying lots of time alone, Aaron has begun his university adventure at Michigan Tech in Houghton, MI. MTU has 7000 students - he is sharing a dorm room, has group projects, and though it hasn't snowed as of this writing, they average over 200 inches annually, and is a major feature of life. He is doing very well in all of his classes so far and also attends several Bible classes every week.



Aaron next to the Michigan Tech Husky Statue on campus.

**Please pray that Aaron will continue to transition smoothly to living in the States and attending university.**

### *Correspondence and Support Information*

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*Your servants in Christ,*

*Tim, Lisa, Aaron, and Andrew Beckendorf*