



# the messenger

AT THE

Fall 2024

# Translation Table

More on pages 5-6



# PRAY FOR:

## 1. Botswana

Pray for the Khwedam Panoramic Bible as the team prepares for printing and distribution. Pray that the Lord would make the process smooth and that He would squash any plans of the enemy to interfere with its successful launch.

Pray for the Shekgalagari as they listen to the newly dedicated New Testament through a smartphone app created by Kelsey Grulke.

## 2. Nigeria

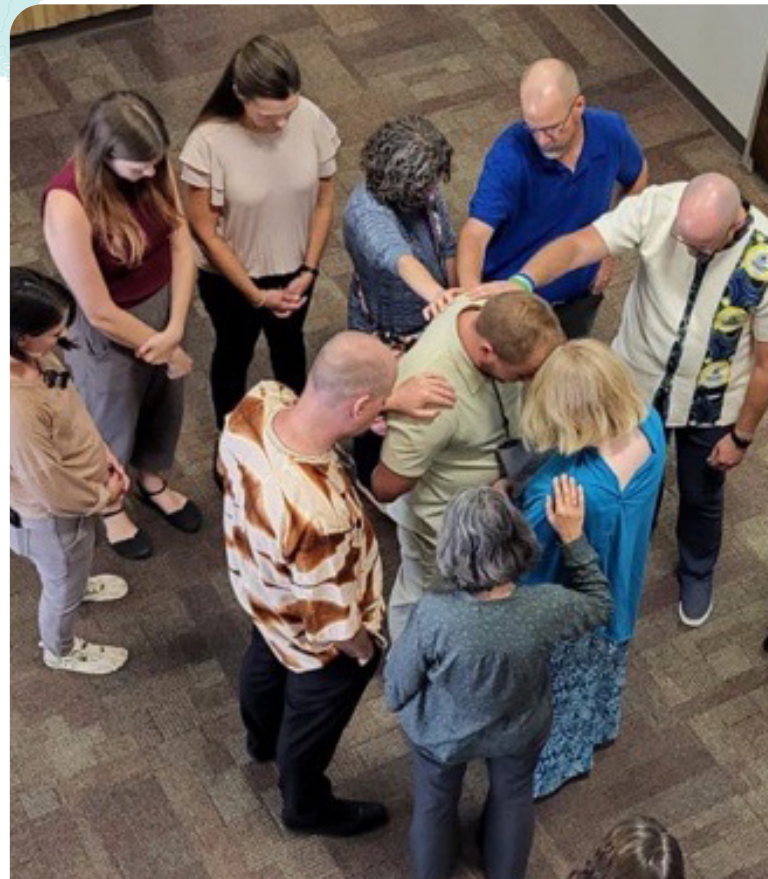
Praise God for the successful launch of the Yala Audio New Testament. Pray for those leading ongoing online and in-person Scripture Engagement work in the Yala language community.

## 3. United States

Pray the Lord raises up prayer and financial supporters for Nathan and Sarah Federwitz as they continue pre-field training as full-time missionaries. Nathan will be a missionary pilot.

## 4. Cameroon

Pray for Rev. Tim and Deaconess Erin Schulte as they begin their full-time missionary service with the \*Subula community.



*Staff at the Lutheran Bible Translators international office praying over the Schultes before their departure to Cameroon.*

# MORE THAN WORDS

**So They May Understand Deeply**  
page 3

**Literacy & Language Development**  
page 4

**At the Translation Table**  
page 5-6

**Scripture Engagement**  
page 7

**Field Notes**  
page 8

**More Than Words Update**  
page 9

## FROM THE CORNER OFFICE

Dear Friend:

**“The goal of translation is not a printed product. The goal of translation is people engaging with the Word of God.”**



**REV DR RICH RUDOWSKIE**  
Executive Director + CEO

In my time here, I have heard this phrase a hundred times. Most often, Dr. Chris Pluger has shared and exemplified this in his work as a translator, exegete, and professor. It’s important to keep that paradigm at the forefront of our minds. Translation is an exemplary aim, even a holy calling, but if God’s Word is not heard – if it is not read – ears, eyes, and hearts remain separated from the story of salvation.

At face value, Lutheran Bible Translators is as straightforward as it gets. It’s who we are and what we do. However, the process of walking with a language community as they encounter Scripture is entirely contextual.

**Having partnered on nearly 50 Scripture publications with language communities around the world, we understand how deeply important community engagement is to the process.**

In this issue, my prayer is the critical role of community engagement shines through. Through services such as language development, and literacy education, liturgy training, the global Christian community can fully experience the power of God’s Word and its relevance to our daily lives.

**Thank you for being a mission partner.**

*In Christ,*

**REV. DR. RICH RUDOWSKIE**  
Executive Director + CEO

*\*Pseudonym used due to a sensitive situation  
On the cover, the Komba team in Ghana at work*



# SO THEY MAY UNDERSTAND DEEPLY

**I**magine you receive a gift but have no idea how to use it. You shove it into a drawer. Years later, you find the gift and throw it away without regret.

Scripture has the power to change hearts, minds, and lives, but too often this gift sits on a shelf. Community engagement illuminates the power of God's Word. **"THE FUNDAMENTAL COMPONENT OF SUCCESSFUL BIBLE TRANSLATION IS BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS AND RELATIONSHIPS WITH PEOPLE,"** shares Rev. Tim Schulte, community engagement specialist in Cameroon.


**“THE BIBLE GUIDES US. IT LEADS US TO THE WAY OF GOD..”**

With each new translation project, Lutheran Bible Translators establishes strong relationships in the community. Missionaries spend six months or more working alongside farmers, chatting with fellow shoppers on market day, and inviting others into their home. They work with the local church to find qualified, passionate people to serve on the translation team.

For the Shekgalagari program in Botswana, now-CEO Rev. Dr. Rich Rudowske helped recruit a remarkable local woman for the team: Pontsho Mosweu.

She remembers experiencing the joy of sharing Scripture in Shekgalagari, "One man, he nearly cried because Shekgalagari was being read in the Bible. He said, 'It was so nice in my ears.'"

Pontsho's love of the Scriptures overflows. "The Bible guides us. It leads us to the way of God, how we should live. ...it is a tool that each and every Christian should have, to defend us from all the evils of this world." She wants to see Shekgalagari speakers, **"READ IT IN THE LANGUAGE OF THEIR HEART SO THAT THEY CAN UNDERSTAND IT DEEPLY HOW GOD COMMUNICATES WITH THEM."**

Through local leaders like Pontsho, the gift of Scripture will not sit on a shelf. It will live in the hearts of God's children in every language! 



**Pontsho Mosweu**  
Community Connection Liaison  
Shekgalagari Bible Translation project  
Botswana

# Community Engagement

## as the translation process begins



## The Translation Brief

Developing translation program goals in partnership with language communities

**W**hen all partners—local, national, and international—collaborate to create a translation brief, they establish agreement on key project details: who the participants are, what is being translated, the project’s timeline, where the work is based, and how the project will be organized and executed. Although the translation brief doesn’t cover every detail, it serves as an essential starting point, ensuring all partners are aligned and working toward the same goals from the beginning.



## Language Development

“Language development is where the rubber meets the road”

**L**anguage communities may approach Lutheran Bible Translators seeking help in developing a written format for their oral languages. “Language development is where the rubber meets the road,” says Carl Grulke, Program Director of Southern Africa. The process involves three key steps: **Data Collection and Research**, where Lutheran Bible Translators workers gather linguistic data and engage local speakers; **Synthesizing Information**, where linguists work with native speakers to create orthographies and grammar; and **Testing**, where the community ensures the written language is accurate and impactful across regions and dialects. **m.**

AT THE

# TRANSLATION TABLE

FROM DRAFT TO PUBLICATION

## BEFORE TRANSLATION

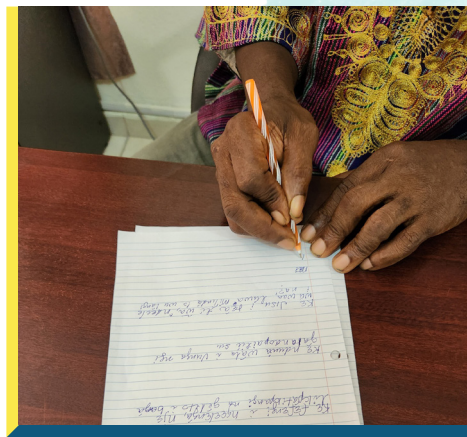
### The Invitation

A community asks Lutheran Bible Translators to aid in the translation of Scripture into their language.

### Feasibility Studies

Language studies are completed in the area to determine the best steps forward.

## THROUGHOUT THE TRANSLATION PROCESS:



### Drafting

The translator carefully works through each section or paragraph, meticulously retelling the original meaning in the new language, ensuring that the message remains clear, accurate, and culturally appropriate for the audience.



### Team Checking

Team translators review the completed book, refining flow, clarifying meaning, and checking for omissions. Some suggestions lead to revisions, while other times the draft is deemed sufficient as is.

### Community Engagement

Lutheran Bible Translators missionaries spend time developing relationships with the community to collaborate on a translation brief and build local ownership and support.

### Exegesis

The exegete (expert in Biblical interpretation) helps a translator determine what the original author of a text intended.

when the draft is ready

if the team

if the team does not approve

if the community

# GOAL OF TRANSLATION

## Dedication & Distribution

The community celebrates! Distribution involves sharing printed and digital copies with the community and making Scripture accessible through churches, schools, and local networks. It ensures widespread engagement and lasting impact.

## Engagement

Team members lead or facilitate Bible reading or listening groups, Bible studies, Sunday school, and other activities which build excitement about Scripture and encourage the community to invest in spiritual growth. **m.**



### Community Checking

Community members review drafted Scripture, working independently or in groups to ensure accuracy, clarity, natural flow, and suitability for the intended audience. They verify if the meaning is successfully transferred.



### Consultant Checking

A qualified translation consultant carefully reviews the translated passage to ensure it is both accurate and natural, making sure the language flows smoothly and effectively communicates the original meaning.

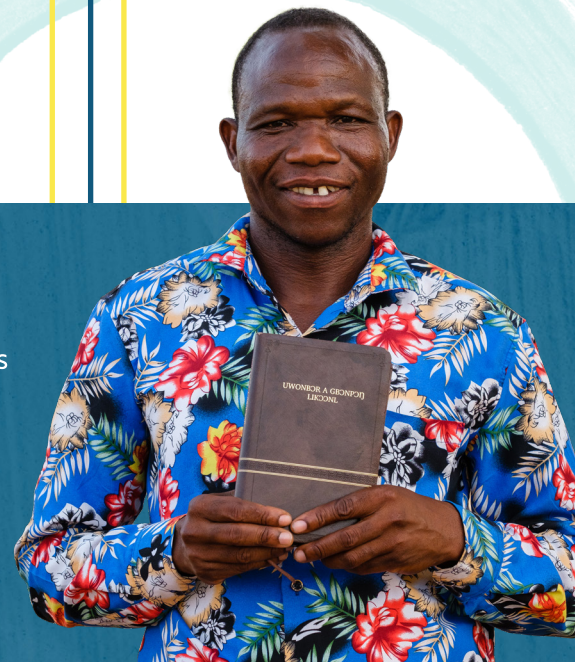


### Literacy

Partnerships with the local church and organizations support literacy education in the community so all may experience Scripture.

### Publishing

The translation team works with a publishing officer to position maps and illustrations and format the manuscript. Typesetting is often sent overseas, and the community waits months for the printed and bound books to be shipped.



# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

## ENCOUNTERING GOD'S WORD AND GOING DEEPER



### Oral Bible Storytelling

In areas where Christianity cannot be openly taught, oral Bible storytelling discreetly shares Scripture. "As people hear the Word in a language and format they understand, they see its relevance and life!" says \*Marie Lawler, \*NOLA project leader. **"Many come to faith during a crisis, but it's vital to root them in the Gospel to prevent them from returning to old beliefs."** Missionaries and national believers record Bible stories, using technology like the Ri Gospel YouTube channel to reach thousands. Please pray these stories strengthen new believers and inspire others.




### Bible App Promotes Scripture Engagement & Literacy

Bible apps, like the one Kelsey Grulke developed for Shekgalagari, with oral Bible reading are vital tools for both literacy and Scripture engagement. For those learning to read, hearing the text aloud while following along can enhance comprehension and fluency. For people in language communities with no written language, or for those with limited access to printed Bibles, **these apps make God's Word accessible, allowing them to engage with Scripture in a way that resonates with them.**



### Children's Scripture Engagement

Engaging children with God's Word in their native language is incredibly important for building a strong spiritual foundation. Early Scripture engagement also promotes literacy and language development, supporting both spiritual and educational growth.

In many communities, these resources are scarce, leaving children without the age-appropriate tools needed to connect with Scripture. Creating accessible materials ensures that future generations will value and preserve their linguistic heritage, **share their faith, and carry the Gospel forward into the next generation.** 



# Field Notes



## 1 COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE

Over five months, members from six countries engaged in a “community of practice,” a collaborative Bible translation training approach. This method fostered peer support, relationship-building, and shared learning across diverse contexts. Assistant Bishop Oscar Lema applied this training to organize an advisory committee for the Kerewe program, demonstrating the community’s practical impact on local translation efforts.



## 2 VISITING NIGERIA

Paul Federwitz, Chief Programs Officer, visited Nigeria to strengthen relationships and collaboration in Bible translation. Paul focused on understanding local challenges and supporting Nigerian leadership. His trip emphasized the importance of building trust and sustainable partnerships, ensuring effective and respectful collaboration in Bible translation efforts. Paul is pictured above with Rev. Dr. Christian Ekong, Archbishop of the Lutheran Church of Nigeria.



## 3 MEKANE YESUS M.A. IN BIBLE TRANSLATION

10 students in the inaugural cohort of the Master of Arts in Bible Translation program at Mekane Yesus Seminary (Ethiopia), sponsored by Lutheran Bible Translators, successfully completed their first summer of classes. These students, already involved in Bible translation programs in Ethiopia, will continue their studies over the next three summers, including January intensives and a thesis project.

# MORE THAN WORDS

# 94.1%

41.3 MIL  
as of 9/30/24

## LET'S FINISH STRONG!

As we near the end of our five-year More Than Words campaign, your faithful giving continues to bring God's Word to life. Bible translation is about people engaging with Scripture in the language they understand best.

Your partnership transforms lives through the hope and truth of God's Word. Help us reach 100% of our campaign goal by the end of 2024.

## Member Information

Lutheran Bible Translators bylaws define who may vote and **give you a chance to participate in nominating and electing the Board of Directors** as well as participate in changes to the bylaws (charter document).

To see if you are eligible to be a voting member please visit [LBT.org/members](https://lbt.org/members).

Here you will also find:

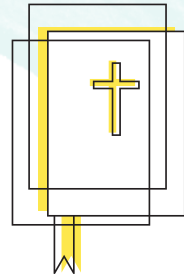
- **Information about the 2024 election for the Board of Directors**
- **Details on how to request nomination and voting information for the 2024 election**
- **Information about the Annual General Meeting**

Thank you for participating in mission through your membership.

*Contributions are solicited with the understanding that Lutheran Bible Translators has complete discretion and control over the use of all donated funds. Lutheran Bible Translators will attempt to honor gifts preferred to support particular workers, but the final decision on the use of all funds rests with the organization.*

*Lutheran Bible Translators is a 501 (c)(3) tax-exempt organization and your gift is tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.*

To view Lutheran Bible Translators' financial reports, visit [lbt.org/financial-accountability](https://lbt.org/financial-accountability).



**BIBLE  
TRANSLATION  
SUNDAY**

# **HOST A BIBLE TRANSLATION SUNDAY**

**UNITE YOUR CHURCH AROUND A GLOBAL MISSION**

Of the 7,000+ languages spoken in the world, only 750 have the full Word of God.

By hosting a Bible Translation Sunday, your church joins a network of partners determined to bring God's Word to every language in this generation.

**Sign up: [LBT.org/BTS](https://LBT.org/BTS)  
660-225-0810**



Jessica Albers & Seth Hinz, Editors  
Molly Poppe, Writer  
Sarah Rudowske, Graphic Designer  
Executive Director, Rev. Dr. Rich Rudowske

*The Messenger* is the official quarterly periodical of Lutheran Bible Translators,  
205 S. Main St, Bldg 5, PO Box 789, Concordia MO 64020.  
1-660-225-0810 | [LBT.org](http://LBT.org) | [info@LBT.org](mailto:info@LBT.org)

Printed at Mittera Chicago, Berkeley, IL  
Standard A Non-Profit postage paid at Aurora, Illinois.  
Volunteers assisted with the assembly of this mailing!

Comments and inquiries are invited. Correspondence may be directed to *The Messenger* Editor.

Permission is granted to excerpt from this publication. Please send a copy of use of material to the editor.

A Canadian edition of this newspaper is published by Lutheran Bible Translators of Canada,  
137 Queen St. S., Kitchener, ON N2B 1W2.

Lutheran Bible Translators, an independent mission group founded in 1964, is the only Lutheran organization dedicated to making God's Word accessible to those who do not yet have it in the language of their hearts. Lutheran Bible Translators partners with local leaders around the world to launch Bible translation movements. The ministry is supported by the prayers and contributions of fellow Christians. It is not subsidized by any church body or sponsoring agency.

©2024 Lutheran Bible Translators, Inc.



Lutheran Bible Translators

PO Box 789  
Concordia, MO 64020

Non Profit Org  
US Postage  
PAID  
Chicago, IL  
Permit № 2237



illumNations



FORUM of Banks  
Accountants  
INTERNATIONAL



## THE KOMBA BIBLE is with the printer and the Komba language community of Ghana will soon have the full Word of God!

The demand for the printed Bible in the Komba community is so great, that we've set our fundraising goal at \$176,000 to meet this urgent need.

A full Bible costs \$20 to print and ship. As of October 1, \$157,000 has been raised - that's 7,850 Bibles for Komba speakers!

**The goal is to print + ship 8,800 Bibles to the Komba language community.**

**Donate \$20 to join this effort.**



[LBT.org/give](http://LBT.org/give)  
660-225-0810

