



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)

Locked Out!

Maybe you know the feeling, the drop of your stomach when you realize that your house is locked and you don't have the key. All sorts of vocabulary comes to mind and usually some sort of frustration/anxiety is voiced.

In late October I traveled back to Botswana to work with the Wayeyi and the Khwedam translators for a few weeks. Within the first week of arriving I lost a set of keys that were attached to my vehicle key ring. Apparently the ring broke or bent and I didn't notice it in time. For a couple of days I tried to remember what was on that ring: our post box key, a couple of padlock keys for office doors that we haven't used in ages and beyond that I couldn't remember. Then I needed to get into the locked box in the back of my truck where all of my tools, spare parts and air compressor are kept. I'll admit that some frustration/anxiety was vocalized as I realized that the key for that locked box was on the ring that I lost. "Mutter, mutter, mutter . . ." My thoughts were focussed on all the stuff in that box that I really needed but couldn't touch without a key. It was so close, but out of reach.

A few years ago, Andrew became interested in locksmithing and made some tools for picking locks. For Christmas one year Aaron gave him a set of locksmith picks, which Andrew put to good use, demonstrating how easy it was to open all of our padlocks. As my mind raced through options of how to get at my stuff all nicely locked away, I remembered Andrew's lock picks. I thought, "Why not give it a try? I've seen him open locks, so I know it can be done." Equipped with a small assortment of his picks I went to work on the lock. Now this was October in Botswana. Imagine 105+ degrees and then imagine the temperature under the topper on my truck with no ventilation. I was losing weight just kneeling there motionless. I spent a while trying this and that technique trying to open the lock but without success. After thinking things through, I

slowly and systematically found/felt each pin, pushed it down and kept it down with pressure on the cylinder. Click! It finally came open! I was beyond exuberant (and in need of a shower). I have never been so happy to see all of my spare parts and tools.

The next week I was down in Maun, working with the Wayeyi translators on the Gospel of Luke. On my second to last day there, I got back to the guest house after a day of work and promptly locked my car keys in my truck. This happened once previously, over 40 years ago, so it is not something I'm in the habit of doing. Again, the frustration. I could see the keys dangling in the ignition but I couldn't get to them. Aaaaargh! "Mutter, mutter, mutter . . ." I found one of the guys there that does maintenance and together we fashioned a "tool" out of fence wire. I asked if he had ever opened a car door this way. "No, but we can try together." Slowly we fished the wire down the side of the window and pulled up. On the second try the wire hooked the lock post and pulled it up! Again, exuberance beyond description. The maintenance man was so happy that he actually gave me a big hug.

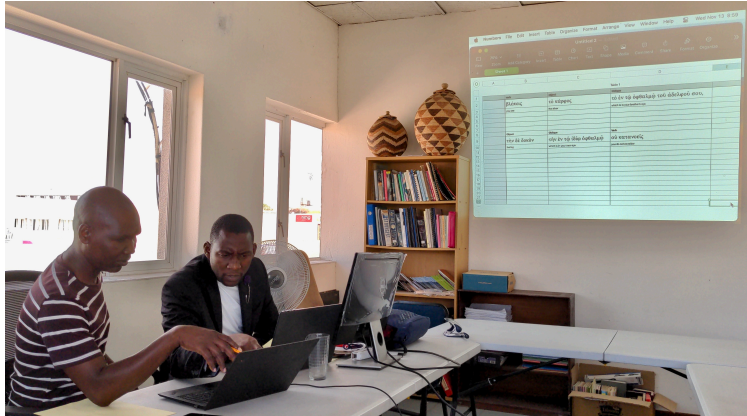
Locks Opening

These experiences led me to think of how people without the Bible in their language must feel. They are locked out of experiencing the beauty of God's Word by languages that they don't know or don't know well enough to read and understand Scripture. Often the language of the Bible is in a language of people who have oppressed them for ages which creates another barrier, a social barrier.

I am exceedingly thankful that I've never been locked out of God's Word and that I have the privilege of working in Bible translation. Similar to a locksmith, translators have special tools that they use such as software, all kinds of exegetical and translation reference books and lots of training. However, even with all of these well designed tools,

creativity is needed when the available tools/keys are inadequate. Thoughtful and artistic minds are also necessary to do the job well. I am deeply honored to work with thoughtful/innovative translators who are passionate about unlocking God's Word for their people.

Please join me in giving thanks for Splash, Moronga, Thapelo, Motswasele, Nicolus, Daniel, Kelvin, Simon, Mr. Kamara and Thomas. Please pray that they will have all they need to successfully carry out their work of translating the Bible into their respective languages.



The Wayeyi translators, Motswasele and Nicolus discussing a revision during our last checking session.

Transitions

By the time you read this Aaron will have completed his first semester at Michigan Tech and registered for the next semester of classes. He is enjoying his classes and is adapting well to life on campus.

Besides Aaron, the rest of us too have had new experiences here in the States this Fall. In October Lisa and I went to the parents' weekend at the University where we spent time with Aaron exploring the Keweenaw Peninsula (where Michigan Tech is located) and attending a hockey game between Michigan Tech and their rival, Northern Michigan University. None of us has ever paid much attention to hockey (it's not a thing in Botswana) but here in the north it is quite popular. The game was a lot of fun to watch but I think the fans and the pep band were the most memorable part of it all. They really enjoyed themselves.

We were treated to absolutely stunning Fall colors on the trees which gradually faded and dropped. Now the color here is predominately white. It has been a long time since I've driven in snow and our

trips to town and to church have been on snow-packed and slippery roads with little visibility at times. Our van has been treated to new snow tires which we are hoping will give us a better winter experience and keep us out of the ditch. We will be here in the U.P. until the end of Aaron's Spring semester in April. Then we will head back home to Botswana. In the meantime . . .

Please pray that Aaron will transition well to University and that we all will remain safe and healthy during our extended time in the States.



Andrew enjoying a walk in the snow.

Correspondence and Support Information

You may support this ministry with gifts payable to Lutheran Bible Translators and indicate that they are for the Beckendorf Ministry. They may be mailed to:

*Lutheran Bible Translators
PO Box 789
Concordia, MO 64020*



*You may also contribute on-line through LBT's secure web site:
www.LBT.org/give*

Additionally, you may also support our ministry by using electronic fund transfer.

Please call LBT@1-800-532-4253 for details.

You may contact us at:

*e-mail: Tim.Beckendorf@LBT.org
web site: <http://www.LBT.org/beckendorf>*

Your servants in Christ,

Tim, Lisa, Aaron, and Andrew Beckendorf