

Co-Creative Processes

By Rev. Dr. Rich Rudowske

Wisdom from the Fields, January 2023

Removing Barriers to the Gospel

According to the words of Scripture itself, the gospel of Jesus Christ is powerful and effective, it is the power of salvation for all who believe. Thus, all missiological reflection must necessarily be not a discussion of how to be more effective in mission, but rather to speak about how to remove barriers that mankind has intentionally or unintentionally erected to the gospel.

Scripture engagement work, and Bible translation as a subset of it, is rightly understood as work that removes barriers to the gospel, particularly those hinder understanding of Scripture. The barriers are medium, language and teaching, especially those that arise due to differences of culture and worldview understanding.

I suggest that intentional use of co-creative processes to lower and to cross these barriers to the gospel ought to be thoughtfully employed in planning goals and scope of Scripture engagement work, including Bible translation work. I contend that this type of work is more important than the technical and linguistic methods that are usually in focus in Bible translation training and best practice discussions.

Three Co-Creative Processes



In this Essentially Translatable podcast, I describe and evaluate three co-creative processes or tools used by and with the Shekgalagari language community of Botswana:

1
Governance by
Local Advisory
Committee



Rev. Rich Rudowske (right) meets with a member of the Shekgalagari language community to discuss goals with the Bible translation program

2
Local Agency in
Selecting
Translation Staff



Tshwari Tjetjoo, Shekgalagari translation team member, was selected by the local advisory committee

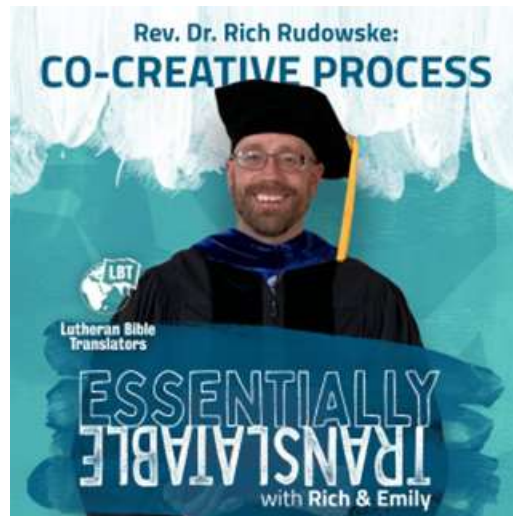
3
Assessment of
Community
Expectations of
the Translation



A group from the community sits to discuss and offer feedback on drafts of the New Testament

I suggest that these have had a positive impact on the translation process and acceptance of the outputs of the project. I have also suggested that the main ingredient in co-creative activity is not cookie cutter methods, but a critical mix of influential local agents and access to personnel with expertise and resources employed in a supportive and humble manner in each specific context.

Authentic partnership that can arise from thoughtful use of co-creative processes that favor the agency of the most local expression of any language community can bridge intercultural divides and help lower barriers to the gospel.



Episode 57: Co-Creative Processes, June 10, 2022

Lutheran Bible Translators' Executive Director Rev. Dr. Rich Rudowske becomes the interviewee, sharing his research and insights in Bible translation.

You'll want to listen to this episode!

Go to: <https://lbt.org/ep57-co-creative/>

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Rev. Dr. Rich Rudowske serves as Executive Director for Lutheran Bible Translators since January 2023. In 2013, he served as Regional Director for Southern Africa before returning to the U.S. in 2014 as Director of Program Ministries and Chief Operating Officer at LBT's international office.

Additional author information: *Rev. Dr. Rich Rudowske's leadership approach draws on his experience as a Bible translation advisor in Botswana. He and his wife, Maya, partnered with the Bakgalagari community to translate and produce the Gospel of Luke in their previously unwritten language. In 2013, he served as Regional Director for Southern Africa, facilitating partnerships with 24 language communities/Bible translation programs. Rich and Maya – with their five children – returned to the United States in 2014 upon Rich's assignment to serve as the Director for Program Ministries for Lutheran Bible Translators at the international offices. Dr. Rudowske earned a BBA from Eastern Michigan University in 1996, an MDiv from Concordia Seminary in 2005, and a PhD in Missiology from Concordia Theological Seminary Fort Wayne in 2022.*