

Transcending Borders

By Seth Hinz

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Transcending Borders Through Bible Translation

In a world marked by complexity, diversity, and rapidly changing technology, the message of the Gospel endures. Today, Bible translation ministries across the globe work tirelessly to ensure that every tribe and nation can access God's Word in the language they understand best. As we reflect on various facets of mission work, we see a vivid tapestry of collaboration, determination, and divine intervention.

The recent agreement between Lutheran Bible Translators (LBT) and United Bible Societies (UBS) is a testament to how collaborative partnering efforts advance the Kingdom. With UBS being the world's largest Bible clearing house/publisher, maintaining relationships with over 140 agencies worldwide, and LBT's appreciation of how individual Bible societies collaborate with local churches, the partnership will make a significant impact. The working relationship is familiar; it has roots dating back several decades. Signing the working agreement not only renews ties but also promises quicker and more efficient translation processes. As Rev. Dr. Rich Rudowske, Executive Director and CEO for LBT, poignantly shared, "This partnership aims to put God's Word in the community's hands much faster."

Meanwhile, in Nigeria, Rev. Linus Otronyi recounts the success of a literacy workshop held in March. What was initially planned for 18 participants quickly expanded to 27. Through these programs, communities are equipped to read and understand the Scriptures, proving that mission work goes beyond translation - having God's Word in one's hands is beneficial only if one can engage with it.



Rev. Linus Otronyi

Human Element Remains Crucial

Yet, for all the strategic plans and formal agreements, the human element remains crucial. For the Komba Bible translation project, one can trace God's handiwork over two decades, where

missionaries, church members, and Ghanaians converged to cultivate a locally driven and sustained translation and literacy effort. No story better embodies the personal touch of mission work than that of the Old Testament Project among the Komba people. The effort is more than just translation—it's about building relationships, understanding cultures, and fostering mutual growth.

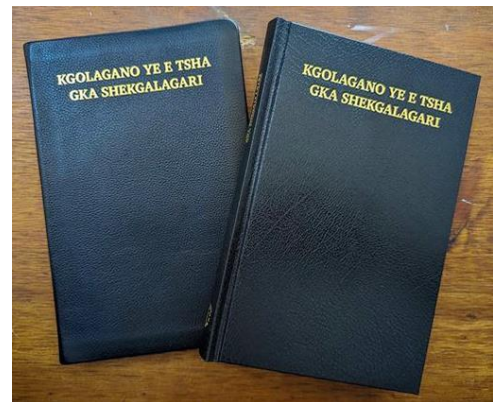


Translation team members working on the Komba Old Testament project

In Botswana, Carl and Kelsey Grulke's efforts culminated in the mock-up completion of the Shekgalagari language New Testament. The anticipation now pivots to the dedication ceremony and the arrival of printed Bibles—a moment many have awaited for years.



Rev. Carl and Kelsey Grulke family



Completed mock-up of Shekgalagari language New Testament

On September 1 in Ethiopia, a significant milestone was achieved as the team conducted a consultant check for Romans, the final book for Tsa'makko. Amidst power cuts and technical challenges, the team's dedication shines through, highlighting that passion and purpose often overcome the most significant obstacles.

Back in Ethiopia, the return of missionaries Dr. Jim and Susan Kaiser to the United States marked the end of an 11-year mission. Jim Kaiser will continue to serve remotely, bridging borders and amplifying the reach of God's Word.



Jim and Susan Kaiser



Ethiopia translation team working to complete consultant checks before Jim's return to the U.S.

One Undeniable Truth

In conclusion, the stories woven from diverse corners of the globe reaffirm one undeniable truth: God's work transcends borders, cultures, and challenges. Whether through partnerships, literacy workshops, or dedicated individuals, the mission to make the Gospel accessible to all continues. Through faithful servants old and new, God continues to provide for the mission field, and He raises up local leaders to bring hope, life, and transformation to their language communities. And as we celebrate these missions, we're reminded that in the grand tapestry of God's work, every thread—every story—is significant.

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About the Author



Seth Hinz joined Lutheran Bible Translators as Director for Branding + Marketing in March 2023. For over 14 years he has helped churches, schools and ministries develop marketing strategies. He is a founder of the resource Facebook group Lutheran Communicators and became a StoryBrand Certified Guide in 2019.