



Messenger

An Eventful Journey

by Ed Rupprecht

‘There is fire on the mountain!’ Those were not the words I wanted to hear. It was late in the night just days before our Ogoja Scripture Engagement Seminar. My co-director, Rev. Father Chokpa, was warning me of a significant problem. As it turned out, the venue for the seminar had suddenly become unavailable. I knew of no alternative other than to cancel.

What could we do now? Where would we find a place for approximately 50 clergy to meet for a five day seminar in such a short period of time?



Ed and Wilma lived and served in the Ogoja area of Nigeria.

My fears were unwarranted — a lesson that I should have learned a long time ago. God had already provided for a new location. My co-director, in a game of ‘let’s go see what God has done,’ took us to a site even better than the one for which we had planned.

This pretty much sums up the last six years Wilma and I served on the Nigerian mission field. Events — whether a horrific automobile accident, the successful printing of Orders of Worship in Lutheran Churches for THREE languages, or digging out of the mud in an effort to get to a necessary language



Nine denominations and 15 language groups were represented at the Ogoja Scripture Engagement Seminar.



The Rupprechts worked with several language groups.

meeting — were all God Events. They led to more effective communication of the Scriptures in languages people understand — their own mother tongue — and God was in charge.

Yes, the change of venue was just one ‘God thing’ of the Ogoja Scripture Engagement Seminar. God brought together 38 clergy, pastors and priests from nine denominations and 15 language groups. They gathered to discuss and practice the use of mother tongue languages for outreach, all without a theological breakdown.

One of the most significant occurrences during the seminar was when a pastor prayed with his daughter in her (and his) own language for the FIRST time. Think of the importance of that!

The closing prayer of the seminar echoed the sentiment of all: let this become a model for many more workshops throughout the region so that many will experience the importance of worship, whether in song, prayer, reading or preaching in their own mother tongue.

The Ogoja Scripture Engagement Seminar represented the culmination and celebration of the six years of our

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The mission of Lutheran Bible Translators [LBT] is to help bring people to faith in Jesus Christ by making the Word of God available to those who do not yet have it in the language of their hearts.

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The Constancy of Change

Life is not experienced in a straight line! There are twists and turns, stops and starts, multiple beginnings and endings.

Now, mind you, these are not necessarily bad things. I recall a college professor who, in the midst of a lecture on church history, said something about the vicissitudes of life. He then looked up from his notes and with the voice of experience said “and the vicissitudes of life *will* come.” I think he knew something!

I just checked my *Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary*—tenth edition (yes, it’s old!). Vicissitudes are not necessarily or always bad. But they do represent change—often change that is not anticipated.

This issue of the *Messenger* is filled with examples of vicissitudes! I’m thinking of Ed and Wilma Rupprecht. I suspect that they never expected to leave Nigeria when they did after their first term of service. And after they left that first time, they probably did not expect to ever return. During their second time in Nigeria, God used them to help several language communities in the Ogoja region of Nigeria develop a much keener sense of ownership of the Scripture in their language—some even beginning to organize Old Testament translation committees. For Ed and Wilma, the vicissitudes of life have been quite remarkable.

At the other end of that spectrum we find Chris and Janine Pluger (and Sean, of course). Where the Rupprechts are just wrapping up a missionary career (or, perhaps, two), the Plugers are just launching one. For them, the vicissitudes of life really are about life—life in a new culture, life in a new town, life in a new language, life surrounded by new people.

The vicissitudes of life may ebb and flow, bring about changes that are profoundly surprising, or even leave us with some distress at times. However, there is an absolute, profound constant in the lives of these two missionary families—and for us. That constant is “Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and today, and forever.” 📖

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Dr. Marshall R. Gillam, CFRE
Executive Director



Do You Understand?

by Maya Rudowske

Over the past few months, Rich worked with fellow LBT missionary Eshinee Veith in developing our ability to speak Setswana (Botswana’s national language) and also to develop a text and method of helping future LBT missionaries assigned to Botswana learn Setswana. We worked through a text called *Lesa go bua Sekgoa* (leave speaking English) that Eshinee compiled from out-of-print resources and with some recordings she previously made. We also worked with local speaker Mma Grace Thau Bontle to check the text and to practice speaking.



Maya greeting friends after church.

Rich and I increased our capacity to speak the language but discovered that we still have a long way to go to be fluent. One of the interesting words we have learned is *utlwa*. It has a huge range of meaning. *Go utlwa monate wa nama* means ‘to **taste** the goodness of meat’ while *go utlwa monko* is ‘to **smell** a stench’. *Go utlwa boroko* is ‘to **feel** sleepy’ while *go utlwa dipalo* is ‘to **understand** math’ and *go utlwa bana ba tshameka* is to **hear** children playing.

This one word is used to taste, smell, feel, hear, and understand. It is common for someone speaking to me to periodically ask *A o utlwa?* ‘do you hear/understand?’ If we could try to narrow these ideas to one English word it might be ‘to perceive’. In our language and culture we use different words to express perception based on the sense or feeling, but in Setswana it is all the same word. I think this gives insight into the culture – the fact that one *is* perceiving is more important than *how* one is perceiving.

Setswana is a fascinating language. Its grammatical structure is similar to Shekgalagari, so it has been a bonus to have done some work in it. Thank you for your continued prayers as *Ke leka go ithuta Setswana* ‘I try to learn Setswana’ (the language/culture of the Tswana).

Rev. Rich and Maya Rudowske and family serve in translation ministry among the Bakalagari people of Botswana.

Starting in the Middle?

The mission of Lutheran Bible Translators is to help bring people to faith in Jesus Christ. As you know, we do that by translating the New Testament into the mother tongue languages of people around the world, providing them the opportunity to read and hear about the life, death and resurrection of our Lord.

But why did God send His Son to redeem us? How did the Jewish people come to live in Israel, and how and why had things changed so much by Jesus' time? What does it mean when Matthew states that the words or actions of Jesus fulfill a prophesy?

The answers, of course, can be found in the Old Testament. From the creation to Chronicles, from the Psalms to the prophets, the Old Testament tells of a living, majestic, vibrant God who worked in and through history to bring justification through His grace to fallen mankind.

Although New Testament translation is generally the focus of a language project, Old Testament portions are often translated as well. As one African gentleman said, "The story is incomplete if you start in the middle." Translating a selection of Old Testament books helps complete the story, providing insights into New Testament imagery and history.

There are additional, compelling reasons for Old Testament translation. Virtually every culture agrees that there is a god, the giver of life. Genesis gives a name to that God, showing His active involvement with humanity. The stories of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob provide common ground with Muslim groups. Old Testament culture is in many ways parallel to that of African and other countries. The importance of ancestors, the celebration of harvest festivals, the practice of the priesthood and sacrifices – all make the people and events of the Old Testament more relatable.

Rev. Tim Beckendorf, serving with the Khwe people of northern Botswana, reported the following.

As the team and I were working through Genesis 12 and the call of Abraham, someone asked where Abraham was when God called him and told him to go to Canaan (and where in the world was Canaan?). So, I brought out a map that showed the travels of Abraham. Someone else noticed Egypt on the map and asked, "Is that Egypt in the Bible the same one that is in Africa?" I assured him that yes, it was. The response: "Now I can believe in God! I thought that all those places in the Bible were a different world, not a real one."

The book of Psalms, with its entreaties for help, praise for blessings granted, and its lyrical style, also speaks to peoples' hearts. Bea Kun, a Klao woman of Liberia, told LBT missionary Alvina Federwitz she has always liked hearing the Psalms read in English because it sounded like music to her ears, but now, when she reads Psalms in Klao,




Moses, one of the Khwe translators, working on a passage from Genesis.

her mother tongue, "the music has words of encouragement." For the first time in her life she can understand the many words that made no sense to her in English.

Other Old Testament books, like Jonah, can serve multiple purposes. Written in narrative style, Jonah is easy to translate. The story has a mission message, as God sends Jonah to Ninevah to preach repentance. The subsequent events – Jonah in the belly of the whale – can be transcribed into a memorable live dramatic performance that can also be filmed for presentation to groups, congregations or Sunday school classes.

Of course, Old Testament passages are also used in the lectionary and are published for church use.

Since the mission of LBT is to share Jesus Christ, the initial focus of translation may well be the New Testament. This is especially true in communities with an existing Christian church presence. People want the Gospel in their language to better understand it. But there is no denying the importance of the Old Testament and the influence it can have as people learn about their Creator and the relationship He has always desired to have with us. In fact, half of LBT's current translation projects include all or portions of the Old Testament.

So as you can see, Lutheran Bible Translators is not a misnomer. The story starts in the Old Testament and is fulfilled in the New Testament in the person of Jesus Christ. From "In the beginning" to the last "Amen", God's Word spans the centuries and is still relevant for all people today, fortifying their understanding and faith. 



“I Only Wish That I Could Give More”

by Mike Butterfield



Mike Butterfield

What do you think is the most common response that most fund-raisers hear as they ask supporters to consider a gift in support of their mission? Intuitively most would think that the answer is, “No.” It’s not so with LBT supporters. In fact, in my experience nearly 90% of our faithful supporters commit additional, dedicated prayer and financial gifts when asked.

More commonly, Christians dedicated to support the Gospel-advancement work of “heart language” translation respond, “Yes, but I only wish that I could give more.”

Is that your desire as well? Is it your desire to be able to give more in support of the mission of Lutheran Bible Translators? Does it also follow logically that you would like to give more in support of other missions you believe in and are important to you? Would you like to enhance your “joy of giving” by gifting dollars or possessions that you can see making a difference in ministry while you are living rather than after you are in heaven? If this is your heart’s desire, I would like to offer you the following suggestions.

First, **prioritize your giving to those causes most important to you.** Friends of LBT often show me multiple pages of organizations they support with their financial gifts. One precious lady recently told me that she tries to give something to everyone who asks her — either by mail or by

phone. Just imagine! Often these folks share with me that their children urge them to give more to fewer organizations. While I would urge you to make those decisions prayerfully and reflectively, in concept I’m with the kids. Obviously this will require a time of reflective, values-based, and perhaps challenging prioritization of your interests.

Secondly, **consider ways to give besides cash gifts.** Giving exclusively from available cash resources usually severely limits one’s ability to contribute. Remember, with the stroke of a pen creating your signature, you can make a generous gift of a life insurance policy for which you really have no current nor future need. You may also give more and save tax payments by transferring the ownership of appreciated stock certificates you may have owned for many years. Appreciated property could be gifted similarly. You may also possess annuity products or appreciated retirement accounts which can be used as charitable gifts up to restricted levels based upon one’s age.

Finally, **include your favored charities in your estate plan.** It is likely that your greatest ability to give larger gifts to your favored charities rests in the personal assets you accumulate during your lifetime. While you may not immediately see the results of your charitable intentions, you will be uplifted in simply knowing that your Christian stewardship will be meaningful even beyond your lifetime. 📖

Need More Information?

Return this coupon to:

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Lutheran Bible Translators, 303 N Lake Street, PO Box 2050,
Aurora, IL 60507-2050
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E-mail: mbutterfield@lbt.org

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Additional on-line giving opportunities and information about LBT are available on our web site: www.LBT.org

To Hear the Wonders of God

by Chris and Janine Pluger

The Nsenga (en-senga) are a group of almost two million people who live in south-central Africa in the countries of Zambia, Zimbabwe, and Mozambique. There are many Nsenga Christians, and many Christian groups are active in mission and evangelism among the Nsenga people.

However, Nsenga-speaking Christians have to worship, read or hear God's Word in their second or third language, because there is no Nsenga Bible that is written in their native language, the language of their hearts. This means that many Nsenga who do not know a second language do not have access to the Bible at all. In addition, the teachings of the Bible are not always clearly understood in a second language, leaving many Nsenga in confusion about their faith and susceptible to influence from traditional African religious beliefs, such as witchcraft, spiritism, and sorcery.


Because of this need, Nsenga church and community leaders formed a committee to begin an Nsenga Bible Translation. They are working to establish a team of mother-tongue translators, reviewers, and helpers from the Nsenga-speaking churches in their areas.



The Nsenga Bible Translation Committee.

Working through pastors from the Lutheran Church of Central Africa and Lutheran missionaries, the Nsenga Bible Translation Committee invited Lutheran Bible Translators to partner with them in their work. LBT appointed us to serve as Translation Advisors to the Nsenga project. Because of our training in translation, theology, and linguistics, and Chris' knowledge of the original languages of Scripture, we will be able to provide valuable guidance and assistance to the work.

We will first learn the Nsenga language, then work with mother-tongue speakers to produce a Bible that is both accurate and faithful to the original, as well as beautiful and clear in Nsenga. This project will be a team effort as we and the Nsenga translators receive technical support from the Bible Society of Zambia, logistical support from LBT and the Lutheran mission in Zambia, and financial and prayer support from many faithful mission-minded Christians across the United States.

This project will take many years to complete, but it is worth the effort. The goal is to not only put an Nsenga Bible in the people's hands, but to help put God's Word in the people's hearts, so that the miracle of the first Pentecost might be repeated: "We hear the wonders of God in our own tongue!" (Acts 2: 11). 

Chris, Janine, and Sean Pluger traveled to Zambia in August to begin their first translation assignment with LBT.

Fall Dinners Coming Soon

LBT will host several lunch and dinner events this Fall.

- November 8 **Phoenix, Arizona**
- November 10 **Knotts Berry Farm, Buena Park, California**
- November 12 **Seattle, Washington**
- November 14 **Denver, Colorado**

If you're in the area, please plan to join us.
For more details please call 1-800-532-4253.



God's Word — Making an Impression through MegaVoice

MegaVoice players were developed for use in remote places. They have a small solar powered battery system so they can be recharged many times. The players can be programmed to play recorded Scripture in any language.

A number of MegaVoice players have been distributed among the Kwanja people of Cameroon. According to Martin and Joan Weber, "Kwanjas listening to the Megavoice players are really excited about hearing Old Testament stories in their language."

The stories are making an impression. A village elder who was seldom at church and knew little of God's Word began listening to the MegaVoice stories. After hearing the stories of the Israelites in the wilderness, he came to realize that he was a sinner living only for himself. He publicly confessed his sins. Now he wants to live the rest of his life in communion with God.

Another young man left the church and began to do whatever felt good to him. On Sunday mornings he went fishing. When he came back with fish to sell, he thought that he was much better off than those who wasted their time at church. Then he got sick. He was still sick when the MegaVoice player arrived in his village but he came to hear the MegaVoice stories. He too was struck by the disobedience of the Israelites and recognized his own sin. He returned to church, telling other Christians that he no longer wanted to follow the example of the people of Israel, but wanted to serve the Lord. 📖



A Kwanja man listening to stories from the Old Testament.

Martin and Joan Weber serve among the Kwanja people of Cameroon in literacy and Scripture engagement ministry.

An Eventful Journey

Continued from page 1

ministry in the Ogoja area of Nigeria in what we like to refer to as our Second Missionary Journey.

You see, Wilma and I had been called to serve among three language groups in Nigeria some thirty years earlier when we served with the Lutheran Church — Missouri Synod, Board for Mission Services. These groups had already received the written, translated Scriptures and literacy materials. In 2004, while living and working in the U.S. and considering our retirement years, God called us back to Nigeria, to the very area where we had served before.

While the Bible had been translated and was available, the use of the Scriptures had faltered. Non-literate people failed to value the written word. English usage was becoming more dominant among minority peoples. Our mission was to encourage vernacular use of the Bible and other Bible aids since these communicate more effectively and naturally.

Our ministry started under an ominous note. Six weeks after arriving in Nigeria, we were involved in a horrific car accident. Three passengers in the other car died. Wilma suffered a crushed ankle and I some broken ribs — injuries that seemed so minor in comparison to that of the occupants of the other vehicle. Then, several years later, we encountered other health problems when Wilma was diagnosed with diabetes.

Physical problems? Yes. Problems enough to inhibit and stop ministry? NO! It would be as so many Nigerian friends

and coworkers said. "God has brought you and is keeping you in Nigeria for a purpose."

During our time in Nigeria, three language groups were challenged to take responsibility for their own translations and develop their own vernacular literature, including Transfer Primers, Old Testament Translations and Catechisms.

As a result, numerous seminars were conducted to encourage the reading of the vernacular in the home and during worship services. People were also encouraged to write and sing more vernacular songs while using their vernacular liturgies.

One Sunday, while worshipping with a congregation that was meeting in the garage of an old mission house in Ekajuk, I noticed that while portions of a liturgy were being used, there was no written copy. Later, a tattered booklet was found. It was the only remaining copy of the Ekajuk liturgy! Further discussion led to a rewriting of the document, which led to that worship aid being published in an attractive booklet for the entire Ekajuk church to use.

We discovered similar situations in other areas as well. As a result, the Orders of Worship have been published in the Ukele, Yala, and Mbe languages.

With our help, and the help of LBT translator Rev. Charles Tessaro, work will continue to produce the 'Jesus



Ed and Wilma Rupprecht.

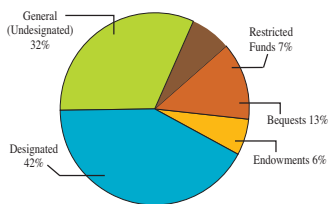
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LBT Partnership Support

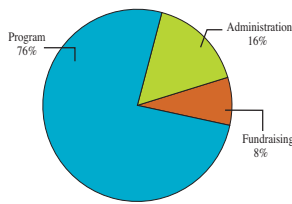
April 1 – June 30, 2011

	Unaudited 2nd Quarter	Unaudited Year-to-date
INCOME		
Designated	\$347,600	\$761,969
General (Undesignated)	263,586	511,316
Restricted Funds	64,218	112,672
Bequests	109,930	166,058
Endowments	<u>50,797</u>	<u>120,517</u>
Total Income	\$836,132	\$1,672,533

2nd Quarter Income



2nd Quarter Expenses



EXPENSES

Program	\$754,776	\$1,478,571
General & Administration	156,876	330,223
Fundraising	<u>74,744</u>	<u>150,685</u>
Total Expenses	\$986,396	\$1,959,479
Net Total	(\$150,264)	(\$286,946)

NOTE: During the second quarter of 2011, LBT was able to purchase one missionary vehicle and one missionary laptop computer. The total of these purchases was \$24,911 and is not reflected above.

CUT HERE

CUT HERE

Birthdays

SEPTEMBER

- 2 **Marshall Schultz**
United States
- 3 **Eden Federwitz**
(2010)
Ghana
- 3 **Peg Seitz**
Cameroon
- 4 **Karissa Esala**
(1999)
Ghana
- 7 **Mark Konrad**
Service Center Staff
- 11 **Carrie Federwitz**
Papua New Guinea
- 13 **Ethan Kinney**
(1992)
United States
- 17 **David Snyder**
United States
- 26 **Caleb Rodewald**
(1992)
South Africa
- 27 **Rebecca DeLoach**
Papua New Guinea
- 29 **Jacob Rodewald**
(1994)
South Africa

OCTOBER

- 3 **Joel Miller**
(1994)
Thailand
- 8 **Jim Laesch**
Service Center Staff
- 10 **Cara Fay**
Cameroon
- 10 **Chuck Speck**
United States
- 11 **Martin Weber**
Cameroon
- 12 **Sharon Vega**
Service Center Staff
- 14 **Rob Veith**
Botswana
- 14 **Jonathan Federwitz**
Papua New Guinea
- 15 **Dan Finley**
United States
- 18 **Paul Kinney**
Service Center Staff
- 18 **Bill Eckermann**
Papua New Guinea
- 26 **Linda Gari**
Service Center Staff
- 30 **Chuck Tessaro**
Nigeria

NOVEMBER

- 2 **Rebecca Rudowske**
(2004)
Botswana
- 13 **Michaela Federwitz** (2002)
Ghana
- 14 **Dianne Eckermann**
Papua New Guinea
- 21 **Marshall Gillam**
Service Center Staff
- 22 **Hezekiah Fay**
(2010)
Cameroon
- 22 **Leah Federwitz**
(1999)
Papua New Guinea
- 23 **Joel Kaiser** (1990)
United States
- 23 **Christopher Rudowske**
(1995)
Botswana
- 26 **Jim Pindras**
Service Center Staff
- 29 **Sarah Esala**
Ghana

FOLD

An Eventful Journey

Continued from page 6

Film'. This rendering of the story of Jesus on DVD will be in six languages. There will also be a joint translation project with Wycliffe Bible Translators and the Nigerian Bible Translation Trust that could lead to 12 new translation projects in the Ogoja area.

Our time in Nigeria has come to an end. But dedicated missionaries, national co-workers, and mission organizations will continue to proclaim God's Word to the Nigerian people. Please remember these faithful servants in your prayers as they make Scripture available to people in the languages of their hearts. 📖

Ed and Wilma Rupprecht returned to the U.S. from Nigeria earlier this year and retired from active missionary service in August.

Gift Designations

Your gifts in support of an LBT missionary are applied to the budget of the designated missionary. If the budget for that missionary is overfunded, surplus funds are used to assist other missionaries whose budgets are in deficit. If all missionary budgets are completely funded, surplus funds are applied to the General Fund.

LBT MISSIONARY Currents

Prayer partnership is the backbone of this ministry. Here are several prayer concerns for which we ask your support. May God bless you abundantly!

BOTSWANA

- Pray for **Rob Veith** as he makes plans to begin studying for his Master's Degree in Ethnomusicology in September.

NIGERIA

- Praise God that LBT International Scholarship recipient, **Rev. Sixtus Obok**, has completed his B.A. in Bible Translation coursework at the Theological College of Northern Nigeria. He has returned to his Kukele community to deepen their understanding of Scripture by effectively using God's Word in their own language.

CAMEROON

- Pray for the **Kory and Cara Fay** family. They have returned to the U.S. from Cameroon for medical reasons.



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Executive Director:
Dr. Marshall R. Gillam



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This mailing was assembled by volunteers!

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Lutheran Bible Translators is an independent mission group, founded in 1964, which is dedicated to helping bring people to faith in Jesus Christ by making the Word of God available to those who do not yet have it in the language of their hearts. It is the only Lutheran organization totally devoted to this specialized ministry. LBT actively recruits Lutherans to serve as Bible translators, literacy or vernacular media specialists and support missionaries. The LBT ministry is supported by the prayers and contributions of fellow Christians. It is not subsidized by any church body or sponsoring agency.

Want more information about translation, Scripture engagement, or LBT's ministry in a specific country?

Sign up to receive one or more prayer letters from LBT missionaries. Call Karen Campbell at **1-800-532-4253** for more details.



- Praise God that another LBT Scholarship student, **Eugène Kpengapsé**, has completed his Master's in Bible Translation coursework at the Faculte de Theologie Evangelique de l'Alliance Chretienne in Côte d'Ivoire. He has returned to his Doowayo community to work on translating Scripture with them.

PAPUA NEW GUINEA

- Praise God for the May 19th birth of **Wesley Robin DeLoach**, son of **Danny and Becca DeLoach** and brother to **Anna and Joshua**.

THAILAND

- Praise God that **Z leaders in Southeast Asia** were able to hold a teacher's training workshop without the assistance of missionaries.
- Pray for **Tim and Michelle Miller** as they complete their partnership development furlough and return to the field at the end of September.



UNITED STATES

- Praise God for the increased Social Media presence LBT is developing, and ask God to use this tool to introduce more people to LBT's work.
- Pray for God's guidance over the planning of **LBT's Fall Dinners**.
- Praise God that following the **June IDIOM event**, all five attendees have decided to pursue involvement with LBT.
- Pray for God's blessings on **Kedra Kinney**, who decided to resign from full-time missionary service to stay home with her infant daughter, Anastasia.

- Pray for God's guidance as LBT administrators consider working in countries where LBT does not have a presence.

ZAMBIA

- Pray for **Chris, Janine and Sean Pluger** as they begin their first field assignment in Zambia among the Nsenga people.

