



LUTHERAN BIBLE TRANSLATORS

Messenger

A New Opportunity to Share God's Word

LBT IN ETHIOPIA

What do the Konso, Zayse, and Dirayta people have in common?

They all live in Ethiopia, LBT's newest mission field.

LBT missionary Jim Kaiser spent five weeks in Ethiopia late last year, marking the official beginning of LBT's work in this east-central African country. His mission: serving as a translation consultant for the Zayse Language Development and Translation Project, the Konso Old Testament Translation Project, and the Dirayta Bible Translation and Literacy Project.

Ethiopia is the second most populous nation in Africa (after Nigeria) with over 84,000,000 inhabitants. It was a monarchy for most of its history, until Haile Selassie was deposed in 1974. One of the great world powers of the 3rd and 4th centuries, it was the first major empire in the world to officially adopt Christianity as the state religion. Starting in 1634, various Protestant mission groups began sending missionaries in an attempt to influence the existing Ethiopian Orthodox Church



A Dirayta compound.



The Zayse people are known for raising cattle.

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.



and plant churches in rural Ethiopia where the Ethiopian Orthodox lacked a presence. Today, Ethiopian Evangelical Church Makane Yesus, the largest Lutheran church in Africa, estimates its membership to be six million.

Well over 50% of the Ethiopian population is Christian. But with 88 languages, many people are still without Scripture in their mother tongues. And there are places where God's Word has not penetrated, where the practice of traditional beliefs is still prevalent.

The potential for LBT involvement in Ethiopia goes beyond the Konso, Zayse, and Dirayta projects. "We have already identified several prospective areas where LBT missionaries could serve in translation, literacy or Scripture Engagement programs," said David Snyder, LBT Director of Program Ministries. "With God's help, we hope to expand LBT's work in Ethiopia over the next few years. It is a great fit for Lutherans who want to be involved in high-impact global ministry."

This exciting opportunity for LBT to serve in Ethiopia came about through the dedication and determination of Rev. Bernahu Kambro Gando, a pastor and synod Bible translation coordinator with Ethiopian Evangelical Church Makane Yesus. Turn to page 6 to read his remarkable story.

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a heart
for missions

Fifty Years and Going Strong!

Two items stand out vividly in this issue of *The Messenger*.

The first item is Ethiopia. One of the largest countries with one of the largest Lutheran church bodies. One of the greatest diversities of language in all of Africa. And one of the most exciting opportunities! As one of my friends told me recently, “If I were starting my missionary career over, I would want to start in Ethiopia!”

One of the factors that influenced such rapid growth of the church in Ethiopia is the emphasis on worship in the mother tongue. Rather than insist on church-wide use of Amharic, the national language, Makane Yesus understands the value of Scripture and worship in the local languages. Of course, that is exactly how and why LBT fits in Ethiopia.

Over the next several years, you’ll hear about Ethiopia often. We will be talking about the need for missionaries and their funding. We’ll be talking about the launch of many new translation and Scripture Engagement programs. And we’ll be talking about God’s blessings as He guides us into this new field of opportunity as the mission of LBT is carried out in the languages and lives of Ethiopians.

As I said, there are two items of note in this *Messenger*. The second is celebration. Beginning with this issue, you’ll be hearing more and more about the fabulous 50! It’s not that we’ve managed to endure for 50 years. It’s that we were birthed by the Spirit of God and have been sustained by the Spirit of God. Literally millions who now have access to God’s Word in their heart language may still have been without it—but God intervened through LBT!

Think about it. Liberia and Sierra Leone were key mission fields as the first 50 years were launched. Perhaps Ethiopia will be the key mission field as the second 50 years are launched! And God is using your prayers and your gifts to bring it to pass. ☺

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Dr. Marshall R. Gillam, CFRE
Executive Director



Back to Brazil



Jaime served as both technician and translator.

by Kay Finley

In 2011 Dan and I traveled to Brazil to record the Canela audio Bible for *Faith Comes By Hearing* (FCBH). We were able to complete 53% of the project.

Shortly after the first of last year it became apparent that we would not be able to return to Brazil to continue the recording. Preliminary plans came together over summer 2012, and by August it had been determined that FCBH would send a team from Brazil to Ponto village to finish the project.

In mid-October, Dan traveled to Barra do Corda to transfer the project to the new recording team. When he arrived he learned that the team actually consisted of a Brazilian woman, Dionara, who only spoke Portuguese and a young man from Mexico, Jaime, who spoke Portuguese and Spanish.

Dan quickly realized that he would need to rely on the Spanish he had learned during our 10½ years in Guatemala to transfer the project and do any necessary training. Between Dan’s rusty Spanish and Jaime’s bilingual ability to translate everything from Spanish to Portuguese for Dionara, the training and transfer were successfully completed.

The recording resumed and nearly 90% of the New Testament was completed by the end of 2012.

In retrospect, it is fascinating to see how God brought together the Lutheran missionary from Germany who organized the recording project and two recording teams—the first from the United States and the second from Brazil and Mexico—to make His Word available in the heart language of the Canela Indians of Brazil.

Dan and Kay Finley serve in Vernacular Media ministry with LBT.

Lutheran Bible Translators

In the beginning... 1964-1974



There was a **Cold War**, a **Space Race**, and a **Great Blackout**. **Riots** and **wars** took place around the world. Many countries were granted **independence** while others were plagued by **dissent** that continues to the present day. **Civil Rights** were established in the U.S. while **apartheid** ruled in southern Africa.

There were no personal computers or cell phones. The **audio cassette** player was in its infancy—most people were still using turntables and vinyl records. The first **microwave ovens** were too large and too expensive for popular use. The **Marlboro Man** and his peers were welcome in the home, office, and restaurants everywhere.

But through all the turmoil, God's Word was reaching people in their mother tongue languages through a new organization called Messengers of Christ — Lutheran Bible Translators. From 1964-1974, LBT missionaries would begin **translation** and literacy programs in several languages, including **Vai, Gola, Krahn, Kisi, Kono, and Yessan-Mayo**. Modern modes of transport over bad roads and thick jungle included four-wheel drive vehicles, motorcycles and even boats. Two-way radios were essential for communication. Translated Scripture was painstakingly recorded via **typewriter**.

The mission of LBT was to **share the life giving Gospel of Jesus Christ** with all people everywhere in the languages of their hearts and minds. That mission has stood the test of time and is as compelling today as it was in 1964.

As we approach our **50th anniversary**, it's good to look back at where we were and how far we've come. If you have photos, memories, or stories about LBT you'd like to share, please send them to Jubilee@LBT.org. And be sure to visit www.LBT.org/jubilee where we'll be posting the latest anniversary celebration information. ☺



1964

- + Lutheran Bible Translators incorporated
- + Dr. Martin Luther King receives Nobel Prize
- + Lyndon Johnson becomes president after JFK assassination

1965

- + The Great Blackout of 1965 causes power systems throughout the Northeast to fail
- + War escalates in Vietnam

1966

- + Bechuanaland gains independence from Great Britain, renamed Botswana

1967

- + World's first heart transplant performed in South Africa

1968

- + Martin Luther King, Jr. and Robert Kennedy assassinated
- + Richard Nixon elected president

1969

- + First LBT missionaries arrive in Liberia
- + First flight of a 747
- + Apollo 11 moon landing

1970

- + Average cost for gas is \$.36, average house \$26,000, and average hourly wage \$1.65

1971

- + Voting age in U.S. lowered from 21 to 18
- + Unemployment rate is 6.1%

1972

- + The Institute for Liberian Languages (TILL) formed by LBT workers

1973

- + Cat Scan developed

1974

- + President Nixon resigns, Gerald Ford becomes president
- + UN orders South Africa to turn over Protectorate of Namibia to the Namibian people
- + LBT work begins in Sierra Leone, The Institute for Sierra Leonean Languages is formed
- + LBT Canada established as separate organization



Spirit-World Realities

by Mike Butterfield



Mike Butterfield

Do you think much about the dark spirit-world? By God's grace, the sanctified child of God is likely to reflect far more frequently upon our blessings and the joys we experience each day of our lives. Within our culture, we most typically only read about periodic human encounters with the devil's power.

There is most surely another reality—"the roaring devil prowling about"—just as Peter warns us in chapter 5 of his first epistle. In late November of 2012, one of my co-workers requested prayer on behalf of colleagues of his missionary daughter and her husband. These individuals, located in Cameroon, West Africa, awoke one morning to find "hexes" (symbols of black magic) placed around their home, indicating that someone was working satanic spells against them.

Shortly after this request, another missionary shared with me an account of a time during his childhood when his missionary family of six had three "voodoo death threats" placed upon them. One threat came in the form of a lethal snake placed in their rafters, another was the multiple-day presence of a panther and the third was a sharp bolt of lightning that struck their porch. The satanic nature of these threats was indicated in the face of the reality that this type of snake and panther had never been known to live in their area and the thunderous lightning strike occurred during the dry season of the year in West Africa.



In the face of such powers of evil, we Christians have all we need to resist such forces—just as Peter declares when he instructs us to "stand firm in the faith." Do you need more evidence of the truth of God's Word? Consider this. Two years following the lightning strike in that West African village, an older woman identified herself to this missionary family as the village's "chief sorcerer." She said, "I stopped trying to have you killed because I learned that your God is more powerful than mine."

Who among us cannot spend even a brief moment of reflection before we are led to be amazed and inspired by the truly incredible faith commitment and lives of service carried out by LBT missionaries worldwide? Their ministry is surely only properly understood as a calling from God. Who but the Holy Spirit Himself can move such gifted, capable men and women to respond affirmatively to such lives of Christian service? Who but the Holy Spirit can produce the fruits so visible from their labors year after year, decade after decade? Who but a loving Triune God could offer them the

Continued on page 7

Need More Information?

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Gnashing of Teeth

by Chris Pluger

Then the king said to the attendants, “Bind him hand and foot and cast him into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.” (Matthew 22:13, ESV)

What do you understand by the phrase “gnashing of teeth”? *Easton’s Bible Dictionary* says that “gnashing” is equivalent to “grating,” and is a gesture denoting rage or despair. Another commentator calls it an “aggressive expression of hostility and anger.” Most English speakers see it as an uncommon, though understandable, gesture of frustration, anger, and/or pain.

However, I heard a sermon from an African preacher who assumed “gnashing of teeth” was referring to biting and eating—in this case, by wild animals. In his version of events, this man without wedding clothes was thrown outside of the wedding hall. Since it was night and he had nowhere to go, he was set upon by wild animals and eaten. It is the wild animals’ teeth that were “gnashing” as they tore the man apart.

All of this weighs heavily on the Bible translator. I’m sure “gnashing of teeth” is a perfectly defensible way of rendering the Greek phrase in this verse of Matthew. The question is, though, “what does this *mean*?” You can translate a set of Greek words with a given set of agreed-upon English words, but unless you really communicate *meaning*, all you’ve done is replace one set of incomprehensible syllables with a different set of incomprehensible syllables.

In fact, you’re actually lucky if your rendering is “incomprehensible.” If there is zero meaning in a given Bible verse, your reader will likely look for some assistance—a footnote, a glossary, a pastor, a commentary—to help him/her understand what s/he just read. Zero meaning might not be the worst thing, since it might create a need to study further to find the meaning.

Zero meaning is usually better than *wrong* meaning. If the passage is “perfectly misunderstood,” the reader thinks he has figured out what is meant—without the tell-tale gap



Accurate meaning is crucial if God’s Word is to be clearly understood.

of incomprehensibility that would drive him to find the (real) meaning. If a wrong meaning is communicated, there is no need to find the right meaning—since the first, and most relevant, meaning will be assumed to be correct.

It’s like your keys are always in the last place you look, because after you find them you quit looking. The meaning you get out of a passage is usually the *first* meaning you find, because after you find one relevant interpretation you quit looking for more.

Wild animals tearing apart a helpless man trapped outside at night is a perfectly relevant reading in an African context—unfortunately, it is also a perfectly misunderstood reading in this particular case.

Just some food for thought... (pun intended)

Chris, Janine and Sean Pluger serve among the Nsenga people of Zambia.



LBT Names New Director of Advancement

Mike Ferguson was named Director of Advancement for LBT effective December 1, 2012. He has a decade of experience in development work in faith-based, not-for-profit organizations.

“I see this role as a calling,” said Ferguson. “I look forward to advancing the work of LBT by raising awareness and support for LBT’s missionaries and projects.”

Ferguson grew up in Arthur, Illinois. He received a BA in Business from Eastern Illinois University and a Masters in Social Work from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. He and wife, Ann, and their two children live in Darien, Illinois. They are members of St. John’s Lutheran Church in Darien where Ferguson serves on the Board of Elders.

“Mike comes to LBT at a significant time,” said Marshall Gillam, LBT Executive Director. “His experience and skills will make a valuable contribution to the growth of our advancement initiatives. More importantly, he has a great heart for our mission.”

“I’m glad to be part of the Advancement Team,” said Ferguson. “It’s a privilege to serve God through an organization that brings His Word to people who might otherwise never come to know Jesus Christ.”



The Macedonian Call

by Rev. Berhanu Kambro Gando



Rev. Kambro and his wife, Berhane.

Rev. Berhanu Kambro Gando was born in 1968 to a Christian family from Konso, Ethiopia. His grandfather was among the first who accepted Jesus Christ after being introduced to the Lord by Icelandic Lutheran Missionaries in 1957.

Ethiopia was under communist rule from 1974-1991. Rev. Kambro's father left the Christian faith at this time, but sent his son to live with his Christian grandfather, who nurtured the young boy's faith. From childhood Rev. Kambro felt the burden to serve God when he grew up. Though he graduated with a diploma in Auto Mechanics from Arba Minch Mekane Yesus Technical school in 1990, the Lord had other plans. Rev. Kambro attended Mekane Yesus Theological Seminary, graduating with a Diploma in Theology in 1997, and a Bachelor's in Theology in 2005. Since then he has served as a full time minister in different positions with the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus. From 1998-1999 he was the Konso district leader, then Konso district Bible school director from 2000-2004 and again in 2006, and synod executive secretary from 2007-2010. He has been synod Bible translation coordinator since September 2010. He and his wife of 19 years, Berhane, serve the Lord together.

Before I was assigned as a synod Bible translation coordinator I translated some small books such as "Growing in Faith" from Amharic to Konso and a children's book "Come to Me" from Amharic to Konso. I also helped to edit some translated materials to Konso language. These books are in use in the Konso Mekane Yesus Church. This was before I came to the synod centre in Arba Minch town. Then when I came to the position of the Bible translation coordinator I started to realize the great need we have for the Bible translation and literacy work in our synod. I started to pray to the merciful God to open the doors to reach this huge need. I started to look on the internet for the Lutheran organizations who could join us and work with us to help our people to have the word of God in their mother tongue so that they deeply know the love of their Father God and come close to their savior and grow in their faith.

In January, 2011, I got the web site of LBT. I had no information about LBT before but when I saw the web page I was so happy and was sure that this was the answer of

my prayer. Then I wrote the following words on the guest book of LBT as a comment, "I am working in the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus South West Synod as the coordinator for the Bible translations. I am happy when I saw you on the web site and want to make contact with you for the support of translation works we are doing." The next day I got a reply from David Snyder, Director of Program Ministries for LBT. Then LBT personnel visited us twice: in 2011 (David and Paul Kinney); and in 2012 (Paul Kinney). LBT translation consultant James Kaiser helped our projects for a month in late 2012 which became a great blessing for us.

This is how I came to contact LBT. God hears the prayers of His children and guides them in His ways. Our contact is the will of the Lord as answer of a prayer. "During the night Paul had a vision of a man of Macedonia standing and begging him, 'Come over to Macedonia and help us.'" (Acts 16:9) God answered my prayer for someone to "Come over to southwest Ethiopia and help us!!". ☒

LBT Partnership Support

October 1 — December 31, 2012

	Unaudited 4th Quarter	Unaudited Year-to-date
INCOME		
Designated	\$ 531,034	\$ 1,703,118
General (Undesignated)	537,116	1,198,250
Restricted Funds	78,106	250,969
Bequests	264,151	593,831
Endowments	29,589	229,317
Total Income	\$1,439,996	\$ 3,975,484
4th Quarter Income		
General (Undesignated) 37%		
Restricted Funds 6%		
Bequests 18%		
Designated 37%		
Endowments 2%		
4th Quarter Expenses		
Program 81%		
Administration 12%		
Fundraising 7%		

EXPENSES

Program	\$ 766,923	\$ 3,049,577
Administration	115,426	546,812
Fundraising	63,959	221,123
Total Expenses	946,308	3,817,512
Net Total	\$ 493,688	\$ 157,972

NOTE: During the last quarter of 2012, LBT was able to purchase a missionary vehicle and lap top and make missionary home improvements at a total cost of \$32,217.94. These costs are not reflected above.

CUT HERE

Birthdays

MARCH

- 1 Lisa Beckendorf Botswana
- 2 Levi Federwitz (2008) Ghana
- 4 Asher McCall (2008) Pre-field
- 8 Maila Davies Papua New Guinea
- 9 Peter Slayton Service Center Staff
- 11 Sheri Larsen United States
- 12 Jonathan McCall Pre-field
- 22 Hannah Federwitz (2006) Ghana
- 24 Danny DeLoach United States
- 26 Kory Fay Service Center Staff
- 26 Kay Finley United States
- 28 Mae Johnson United States
- 29 Dana McCall Pre-field
- 30 Janine Pluger Zambia

APRIL

- 13 Jonathan Burmeister United States
- 13 Tim Beckendorf Botswana
- 17 Annaka Esala (2004) United States
- 20 Dennis Malone Asia
- 22 Carol Bunge United States
- 25 Tom Holman Ghana
- 26 Nancy Burmeister United States
- 29 Sean Pluger (2002) Zambia

MAY

- 1 Peter Larsen (2001) United States
- 2 John Strasen Botswana
- 12 Tobias Kuhn (2010) Pre-field
- 13 Nathan Federwitz (1998) Papua New Guinea
- 13 Julia Federwitz (1998) Papua New Guinea
- 15 Janet Borchard Papua New Guinea
- 15 Chris LaBoube Ghana
- 15 Michelle Miller Thailand
- 17 Ali Federwitz Ghana
- 19 Wesley DeLoach (2011) United States
- 21 Kendra Larsen (1996) United States
- 25 Mike Kuhn Pre-field
- 28 Ken Bunge United States
- 28 Ellyn Miller (1993) Thailand

FOLD

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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 wisdom in the process of selecting and training translators for the **Shekgalagari** and **Shiyeyi Bible Translation** projects. Pray for the Rudowske family as they begin a second term of service in translation ministry among the Bakgalagari people.

CAMEROON

- Give praise for **Peg Seitz**'s improving health and pray for continued good health as she returns to Cameroon after successful cancer treatments.
- Pray for **Martin and Joan Weber** as they begin new roles in helping to coordinate translation and literacy efforts sponsored by LBT and the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Cameroon.

Spirit-World Realities

Continued from page 4

protection needed from illness, discouragement, evil powers and cultural forces that is capable of sustaining them, often for an entire professional lifetime, in this ministry?

As inspired as we are as we consider their Christian ministry, our missionaries would rather that we all join to focus upon the One Thing Needful, not their service. Indeed, they fervently seek our prayers and our financial support so that God's Word, in all of its beauty, is translated into the peoples' heart language. They strive to establish and retain among us a true partnership in their ministry so that they can continue to move among people in distant lands, ministering, serving and encouraging them in Christian love. May we each renew our pledge to be active in the Spirit-world of Light in support of faithful servants who seek to make Jesus Christ known to all people and nations. ☒

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.



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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 fully 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.

Executive Director:
Dr. Marshall R. Gillam



ETHIOPIA

- Pray for wisdom for LBT staff as they develop relationships with national partners in **Ethiopia** and explore what roles LBT can fill in the advancement of **Scripture Engagement** and translation.

GHANA

- Pray for wisdom for **David Federwitz** as he begins serving as the regional supervisor for LBT projects in Ghana and Cameroon.
- Pray that the **Anufo Old Testament** translation project will be fully funded so that the three national translators can work full time.

- Pray for **Rob and Mical Hilbert, Rachael Nielsen, and Josh and Ruthie Wagner** as they participate in LBT's first Africa Training Course, a three month practical training taking place in Ghana.

LIBERIA

- Pray for good progress in the process of manuscript and proofreading of the **Kisi** and **Kpelle Bibles**. Pray also for efforts to prepare the community to receive the completed Bibles through various Scripture Engagement activities.



NAMIBIA

- Pray for God's provision for the **Dhimba language project**, so that the completed New Testament will soon be ready for dedication.

NIGERIA

- Praise God for **Rev. Kieren Ayuga** as he continues his studies and **Rev. Linus Otronyi** as he finishes studies and begins coordinating efforts in translation, **Scripture Engagement**, and survey in the **Ogoja area**.

SIERRA LEONE

- Pray for effective initiatives in literacy in **Krio** as the community anticipates the

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**Did you know
we're on Facebook?**



publication of the full **Krio Bible** in the coming months.

UNITED STATES

- Pray for **Jim Kaiser** as he finishes his doctoral studies in Bible translation at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary.
- Pray for LBT Staff member **Karen Benesh** as she struggles with serious health concerns.
- Pray for the **Esala family** as they re-acclimate to life in the United States and for **Nathan** as he prepares for his doctoral studies.

ZAMBIA

- Pray for the **Nsenga** speaking community as they facilitate fund raising efforts to support the work of the Nsenga Bible Translation committee.