



LUTHERAN BIBLE TRANSLATORS

Messenger

IT'S OFFICIAL. LBT IS FIFTY!



For the First Time!

by Rev. Rich Rudowski

***“Ondaka ya ninga omuntu ngwaa kala mokati ketu.”
Johannes 1:14 Etestamende Epe (Dhimba NT)***

***“The word became flesh and dwelt among us...”
John 1:14.***

On Saturday, January 25, 2014, these words became true in a new and exciting way for the Dhimba people as they received the New Testament in their language for the first time. The Dhimba, an estimated 30,000 people living along the Namibia/Angola border, have anxiously awaited this day for many years.

With literacy levels very low and the language being previously unwritten, work proceeded slowly in orthography development, and a literacy program aided by LBT was launched alongside the translation work. Even today, only about 40 percent of Dhimba speakers can read their own language. Much work was done by LBT personnel and the Bible society consultant to improve the transfer of meaning in the text as well as deal with issues of consistency in vocabulary choices and basic things like spelling and word division in the text.

The morning of the dedication was cloudy but pleasant. We arrived at the town hall of Ruacana, a small village

located in Namibia near the Angola border. As events kicked off, folks from Bible Society of Namibia quietly brought in a few boxes of the New Testament that would be available for sale following the service. A few watchful eyes spied them and before we knew what was happening a large part of the assembled group was moving toward the tables to buy their copy. They had been waiting many years for this day! Pastor Johannes Tolu, who had worked with LBT on the translation, asked people to please refrain from buying Bibles until the service was over, but it was all to no avail. The crowd would not be denied and Bible society staff scrambled to unload more boxes. I have not personally witnessed such hunger to have the Scriptures before.

Selling the Bibles early turned out to be a good move as several speakers and choirs referenced or used the new Dhimba New Testament in their songs and speeches. Watching people follow along as the speaker read and preached from the New Testament was astounding. I kept thinking to myself, ‘This is the first time people have ever been able to do this!’ It is remarkable to be a part of something that changes the history of a people.

Bishop Dr. Dumeni, a longtime supporter of the project from Namibia, exhorted the assembly to be sure to open this book and read it, not just let it sit on their shelves. “Receive the master key that unlocks the door to eternal life — this book is that key!”

Continued on page 6

The mission of Lutheran Bible Translators [LBT] is to make the Word of God accessible to those who do not yet have it in the language of their hearts.

Inside this issue...

Forty Years in Liberia!	2	Dark Places Made Bright.....	4
2014 – And Beyond	2	An Anniversary Request.....	5
Praying for Alvin: What Happened After an LBT Missionary Spoke at Our Church	3	Great Opportunities	6



Forty Years in Liberia!



Alvina and her family were officially welcomed to Fassama by the chief, elders, and other officials.

Alvina Federwitz is among those missionaries who have been with LBT for an impressive number of years. She recently celebrated her 40th anniversary of missionary service to Liberia. Her four children, also missionaries, joined her for a week of reminiscence as they revisited the country of their childhood.

Alvina, her late husband, Rev. Dale Federwitz, and their two oldest children, Jonathan and Rebecca, first arrived in Liberia on February 14, 1974. Younger sons David and Paul were later born there. There have been family reunions over the years, but never on Liberian soil.

The family spent a week visiting places that held significant memories, including the village of Fassama, once home to the Federwitzes. A service of thanksgiving was conducted by family friend Rev. Isaac Dowah. And they visited and worked with The Liberian Translation and Literacy Organization (LIBTRALO) where Alvina serves as advisor to literacy and mother tongue education programs.

“I thoroughly enjoyed having my children here for this special celebration. Their ability to use Liberian English connected them to everyone we met in Liberia and laughter echoed from the walls everywhere we went,” said Alvina.

Jonathan Federwitz, who serves as a missionary pilot, and Becca DeLoach, who along with her husband, Danny, serves with the Wantoat people, are all LBT associate missionaries living in Papua New Guinea. David and Paul



Jonathan, Becca, Alvina, David, and Paul.

Federwitz and their families serve in Ghana. David is LBT’s Regional Director for Ghana and Cameroon. Paul is an Information Technology Consultant. 

2014 — And Beyond

LBT’s official birthday was May 19, but the celebration is just beginning! We will be hosting anniversary dinners around the country, and you, your family, friends and congregation are invited. Whether you’re a prayer or financial partner, long time supporter or just learning about translation ministry, it will be an honor to share this time and special occasion with you.

We have come a long way in 50 years, but our work is far from over. Bringing God’s Word to people in an ever changing and volatile world continues to be a challenge. Advances in transportation, technology and communications means we can reach more people in new, innovative ways that our first missionaries could never have envisioned. Imagine going from a culture with no written language to a people with access to the entire audio Bible at the touch of a button! Yet there are still physical, political, and ideological barriers that impede the Word of God from reaching every nation and people, as our Lord commanded.

Please review the list of dinner events and plan to join us if you can. Missionary speakers will share about LBT’s current work while new Executive Director Dr. Mike Rodewald gives us a glimpse into the future.

Everyone should have the opportunity to learn about Jesus Christ. Join us as we give thanks for the many lives changed because of His Word and the many opportunities to share the Good News that still lie ahead.

June 12, 2014

Sheraton Westport Hotel
191 Westport Plaza
St. Louis, Missouri

August 16, 2014

Goeglein’s Homestead
7311 Maysville Rd.
Ft. Wayne, Indiana

June 14, 2014

Concordia University
Buenger Education Center
1282 Concordia Ave.
St. Paul, Minnesota

September 5, 2014

Weber’s Inn
3050 Jackson Rd.
Ann Arbor, Michigan

September 7, 2014

Bavarian Inn Restaurant
713 S Main St.
Frankenmuth, Michigan

Praying for Alvina: What Happened After an LBT Missionary Spoke at Our Church

by Carolyn Bolz

Back in the spring of 2010, Alvina Federwitz, a missionary from Lutheran Bible Translators, spoke at our church (Immanuel Lutheran in Riverside, California). I was mesmerized as she described how she had been working in Liberia, a country in Africa, for nearly forty years.

“When I was four years old,” Alvina explained in our church’s Fellowship Lounge, “I heard a missionary from India speak.” From that young age, she knew that God had something special in store for her. After college, Alvina married Dale Federwitz, and they joined LBT. Soon after that, Alvina and Dale were sent to Africa. Many years later, their four grown children — two of whom were born in Liberia — all ended up as missionaries as well, both in Papua New Guinea and Ghana, West Africa. Alvina lost her husband to cancer back in 2002. As the only LBT missionary now living in the country of Liberia, she continues to carry on the work that they began. “The ultimate goal in my life,” she told us during her presentation, “is that Liberians can read and hear God’s Word in their language...and it will change their hearts.”

When Alvina asked our congregation to pray for her, I began doing so. For the past four years, I’ve kept Alvina in my prayers daily, and also sent her an e-mail message or e-card every month. One night before turning off my

computer, I went to the Lutherans Online website, selected an e-card, chose a hymn for the accompanying music, and typed the following message:

Dear Alvina:

Just a note to say I’m thinking of you...

Have a wonderful week!

Carolyn

The next morning I was surprised to see an e-mail from Alvina. She had written:

Dear Carolyn:

I received your lovely message and music this morning. It was just what I needed as I had to get up at 4 a.m. so I could take my Liberian friend to the airport... It was a frustrating day so your card and music soothed my heart and soul.

*Thanks so much,
Alvina*

As I sat in front of my computer that morning, I marveled that my short message and e-card had encouraged a missionary all the way in Africa. I felt grateful that my words had come at just the right time to let Alvina know that she is being thought of and prayed for. Four years ago, she told our congregation that her task as a Bible translator “is bigger than I am, but it is not bigger than God.” As long as Alvina continues working in Liberia, I’ll be keeping her in my prayers and asking God to bless her work. Of course, I’ll keep sending those e-mails and e-cards, too. 📖

“When I was four years old,” Alvina explained in our church’s Fellowship Lounge, “I heard a missionary from India speak.”

LBT thanks Carolyn for sharing her story with us and invites you to do the same. E-mail your text to info@lbt.org or mail it to PO Box 2050, Aurora, Illinois 60507-2050. We’d love to hear from you.



Dark Places Made Bright

Our Lord Jesus said to the Pharisees in John 8:12, even as He speaks to us today, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.” Do we need to be reminded that we are both sinners and saints? We all experience dark places. Residents of the Upper Midwest may have been wondering if this past dark winter with record snow and cold would ever end. Beyond the weather, surely even God’s children experience their own dark places filled with the emotional distress and pain of job loss, financial challenge, death, illness or bad decision-making.

Partnership Development is the beginning of the long and challenging road down which new LBT missionaries journey as they seek to establish a base of financial and prayer support. The task of discovering interested congregations, scheduling speaking engagements and traveling is arduous. It requires countless phone calls and Spirit-driven patience filled with a measure of continual hope. Often these new missionaries are carrying out these duties while engaged in intensive academic study and caring for small children. They undoubtedly experience moments of darkness as they deal with so many tasks and priorities.

Kory Fay currently serves at the LBT Service Center as a Missionary Formation Advisor. In 2009, he and his wife, Cara, were among those new LBT missionaries with two small children scheduling, traveling distances and speaking to interested congregations. Their goal was to begin mission service to the people of Cameroon. Surely it was the Lord who guided them to Immanuel Lutheran Church of Brandon, Florida, shepherded by Pastors Farnsworth and Brammeier.

The Spirit had also been preparing a charitable member of Immanuel for inspirational service in behalf of the Fays. Pat Cook was particularly moved by the message and the clear passion for service. She and her husband, Steve, became immediate supporters. However, as

the months passed, Pat’s desire was to increase Kory and Cara’s partnership support from within the congregation and beyond. In order to achieve that end, Pat created and promoted a plan she called, “**The Immanuel Challenge.**” It provided a beacon of light upon the path toward missionary partnership funding success.

It couldn’t have been more straight-forward. Pat began promoting the concept of “**ONE DOLLAR PER PERSON PER MONTH.**” Her promotional efforts began within her Immanuel congregation and a sign-up success level of 61 members. It then extended by letter and personal contact with the other seven nearby Lutheran churches. She urged the contributions of children through allowances, through income from chores carried out or school mission offerings. She advocated for the affordability feature of this plan from among adult members, even those with modest incomes. She continues to promote the cause by distributing newsletter updates, personal contacts and words of encouragement. The current result: over \$4,700 has been contributed with a continuing flow of charitable gifts.

Kory, Cara and all of LBT remain so grateful and touched by the Christian concern and faith-in-action demonstrated by Pat and the Immanuel congregation. We lift it up as a possible new action of mission-support within your congregation.

God’s servant, Job, knew dark places. Flocks, herds, hired hands and even children—all gone—followed by the affliction of painful, full-body sores and poor counsel of friends and family. But Christ’s body of believers on earth has once again recently celebrated our Lord’s resurrection. We can take our dark times to our glowing Lord in prayer and always be able to declare along with Job, “I know that my redeemer lives and that in the end He will stand on the earth.” Amen! 📖



An Anniversary Request

Many of you choose to send a gift to LBT in the enclosed envelope. We thank you for your generosity. We could not have reached this milestone in our ministry without you, or the faithful support of all of our donors. Every gift – large and small – is important, appreciated, and used to bring God’s Word to people in the language that clearly communicates to their hearts and their minds.

If you have never given a gift in response to the *Messenger* before, would you consider doing so now in honor of our 50th anniversary? Every article in every *Messenger* is about the work we do together – a draft copy of a Gospel, new literacy classes being attended by eager students, progress in recording worship songs or audio Scripture, the dedication of a long anticipated New Testament.

Rev. Larry Johnson expressed it best in a recent prayer letter.

LBT is celebrating their 50th year of ministry. During those 50 years, 37 translations of the New Testament and/or the Old Testament have been translated into the heart language of these people. Through your support you have impacted lives in 18 countries around the world! Over 8 million people have God’s Word in their heart language who never had it before.

As Paul tells us in Corinthians, we are all part of the body of Christ, working together to accomplish God’s work here on earth. Thank you for partnering with LBT and all those who have been touched by the translation, literacy and Scripture Engagement work we have done all these years. Together, through God’s grace and power, we can accomplish so much more!



Need More Information?

Return this coupon to:

Mike Ferguson
Lutheran Bible Translators, 303 N Lake Street, PO Box 2050,
Aurora, IL 60507-2050
Phone: 1-800-532-4253 or 630-897-0660 Fax: 630-897-3567
E-mail: mferguson@lbt.org

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



Great Opportunities

by David Snyder

“Come be equal partners and co-stewards with us in God’s project”. So said the church leadership of Mekane Yesus to me as I visited with them in Ethiopia. They were not looking for funders, but for people who have a similar level of ownership to achieve results in the harvest fields. They recognize that the phenomenal growth they have experienced in their church is directly linked to the fact that they make God’s Word available to ordinary people so that they can understand the Good News of Jesus and respond to it. They clearly said that if we join in this, we need to do it because the work is important and we desire to see it through – not because we simply want to help them in “their” ministry. Wow! No sense of building a personal kingdom there.

It took a long time to complete the New Testament in Dhimba. That became available in printed form just a few months ago for the first time ever. But work there isn’t over. We are planning work with the Bible Society to create an audio version for those who are unable to read.

Work in Botswana has been happening for quite a few years. Our relationship with the Bible Society of Botswana has grown to the point where we are talking about ways to reach out to the several remaining languages where no translation has started.

Our work in Zambia is progressing very well. In fact, it has stirred a request. There is one language that still needs translation work, and we have been asked to help.

Two new missionary families are working in Sierra Leone with the Bible Society. As we help complete ongoing

projects, we are also talking about other languages in Sierra Leone. We want to be sure that all people groups have access to God’s Word and none are left out before we consider our involvement complete.

In both Nigeria and Cameroon we are helping reach out to people who are still without access to the Word of God in their languages. Both countries have large numbers of people groups yet without the Scriptures. In both places we work under the invitation of the local Lutheran church, but our work involves partnership with many different organizations that want to see God’s Word translated and in the hands and hearts of people from every language. The largest concentration of unreached languages in Africa reside in Nigeria and Cameroon.

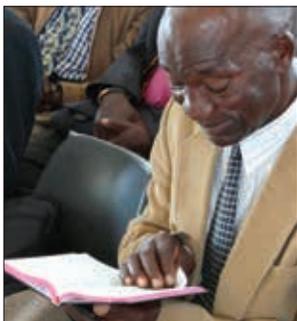
Have you ever thought much about Indonesia? It is one of the most populous countries in the world. Only a minority of people are Christians. There is a strong Lutheran presence; over 4 million people align with Lutheran fellowships. And about a quarter of all remaining translation needs are within that country. LBT, representing Lutherans in the USA who are involved in Bible translation, has been asked to seriously consider whether we should work there as well.

Should we? Will you be part of the team that can make the Word of God available to people who happen to be born in a culture where a minority language is spoken? Is God calling you to be a partner and co-steward in His projects in Indonesia, Cameroon, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Zambia, Botswana, Ethiopia and elsewhere around the world? 

For the First Time!

Continued from page 1

Immediately after the celebration events, leaders from the Lutheran church asked us when work on an Old Testament would be possible. They said that for many Dhimba, the Old Testament is more understandable culturally because it depicts a culture similar in many ways to their own. It will

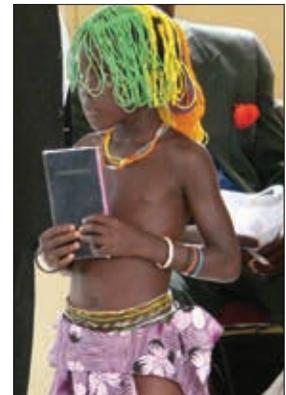


A Dhimba man follows along as the lessons are read in his language.

help them to better explain the New Testament if they have access to the Old Testament. Bible Society of Namibia also approached us with a request to help them produce an audio New Testament. Various church and mission organizations working among the Dhimba have requested this, as the literacy levels are so low. We will continue conversations

with these important partners to see how we can work together with the Dhimba churches.

It was an honor to represent LBT at this event as the newly named Regional Director for this area. LBT missionaries John Strasen, Judy Olson, and Rev. Hal and Joyce Toenjes did significant work that led to the completion of the task. When I felt the Lord leading me into mission work, the reason I joined LBT was the clarity of our mission and the focus of our vision. We play a small but important part in the growth of Christianity where we serve. We are not public faces or the people who will be easily identified on the

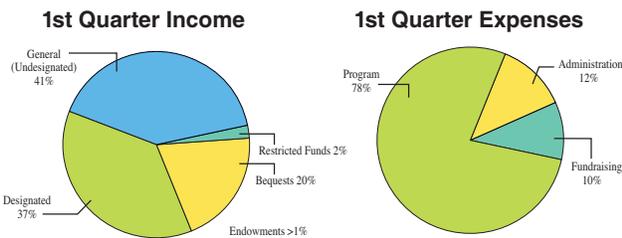


Many who attended the dedication wore traditional dress.

LBT Partnership Support

January 1, 2014—March 31, 2014

	Unaudited 1st Quarter	Unaudited Year-to-date
INCOME		
Designated	\$ 420,196	\$ 420,196
General (Undesignated)	467,732	467,732
Restricted Funds	26,758	26,758
Bequests	230,428	230,428
Endowments	75	75
Total Income	\$ 1,145,188	\$ 1,145,188



EXPENSES		
Program	\$ 743,410	\$ 743,410
Administration	113,016	113,016
Fundraising	93,093	93,093
Total Expenses	949,519	949,519
Net Total	\$ 195,669	\$ 195,669

NOTE: During the first quarter of 2014 LBT was able to purchase one missionary vehicle for Sierra Leone missionaries at a cost of \$44,243. These costs are not reflected above.

CUT HERE

Birthdays

JUNE	JULY	AUGUST
2 Eshinee Veith Botswana	1 Mary Holman Ghana	1 Valerie Federwitz Ghana
12 Dean Mehl United States	5 Aili Esala (2006) United States	4 Tim Miller Thailand
16 Susan Malone Southeast Asia	6 Judi Behrens Service Center Staff	6 Kara Kuhn Cameroon
18 Maya Rudowske Botswana	7 Jim Kaiser United States	6 Ruthie Wagner Sierra Leone
28 Amanda Speck (2006) Mexico	10 Joshua DeLoach (2006) Papua New Guinea	8 Rachel Federwitz (2004) Papua New Guinea
28 Joshua Rudowske (2003) Botswana	11 Vanice Schultz United States	8 Sarah Miller (1997) Thailand
30 Jo Ann Megahan Botswana	12 Nathan Esala United States	10 Rich Rudowske Botswana
30 Chris Pluger Zambia	12 Josiah Federwitz (2004) Ghana	14 Mike Butterfield Service Center Staff
	19 Grace Closius United States	14 Cheryl Jensen Brazil
	30 Andrew Beckendorf (2007) Botswana	30 Paul Closius United States

FOLD

For the First Time!

Continued from page 6

streets of the villages and towns where we work. Rather, we work quietly behind the scenes hand in hand with like minded church and mission organizations to help produce a Scriptural text that we then hand over and pray that the Lord will use to His glory. Christ has promised that He will be found in His word.

“Iya eitavelo li dha mokutyaa, nokutyaa ku dha modhondaka dkaKristus” Ovaroma 10:17

“Faith comes by hearing, and hearing of the Word of God.” Romans 10:17.

May the Holy Spirit move mightily among the Dhimba people through the reading and reflection of the Word – the Word in their language – the Word that has become flesh and dwelt among them in this text. 📖

Gift Designations

Your gifts in support of Mission Projects and Programs are applied to the designated project or program. When a designated project is fully funded, surplus funds are applied to comparable projects. When a designated program is fully funded, surplus funds are applied to the general fund.

CUT HERE

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!

CAMEROON

- Pray for continued progress in Nizaa language learning for **Rev. Mike and Kara Kuhn**. Progress has been slow and it is important that they make good headway this year.
- Give praise for God’s blessing on efforts to re-launch the **Nizaa literacy program**. Pray that the primer can be re-drafted and ways can be found to fund the work from local sources.

LIBERIA

- Give praise to God with **Alvina Federwitz** for Liberians committed to Scripture Engagement. Pray that God’s Word will be proclaimed to those who have not heard His Word in their language, so that many will come to a living faith in Christ.



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Interim Executive Director:
David Snyder



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Lutheran Bible Translators is an independent mission group, founded in 1964, dedicated to making the Word of God accessible 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.

Did you know we're on Facebook?



NAMIBIA

- Pray that the **Dhimba New Testament** will be used by Dhimba people everywhere in their homes and in their churches.

SIERRA LEONE

- Please pray for the translation and Scripture Engagement efforts among the **Themne people** in Sierra Leone. Pray that Ruthie Wagner would thrive and grow in her roles as wife, mother, and translation advisor for the Themne project.
- Give thanks for **Elijah Wagner's** 2nd birthday. Pray that delivery of baby Wagner, due in July, would go well.

UNITED STATES

- LBT gives praise for **50 years of ministry** and all of the wonderful partners who have participated with us to make God's Word accessible to people in their mother tongues!
- Give praise that **Jonathan Burmeister** was able to teach at the Wycliffe recruitment program *Taste of Translation and Linguistics (TOTAL-It-UP)* in Elgin, Illinois, from June 2-6, and that wife, Nancy, was able to help with the food preparation for about 20 students and six staff members who participated.



- Pray for the participants in **Crossroads-Botswana** as they seek discernment regarding future service with LBT.
- Pray for **Dr. Mike Rodewald** as he begins his new role as Executive Director of LBT.
- Pray that **IDIOM**, LBT's recruitment event in August, will be well attended. Pray that participants will find the experience beneficial as they seek to learn more about translation and Scripture Engagement ministry.

ZAMBIA

- Pray for the **Pluger family** as they begin furlough in July. Pray for safe travels to the States, a productive and restful furlough, and for the continuation of work in Zambia.
- Pray for **Chris Plugger** as he travels to Dallas to attend class at the Graduate Institute of Linguistics and begins writing his Master's Thesis. Pray for son, Sean, who will begin 7th grade in a U.S. school in September.

