

LBT the messenger

lutheran bible translators
GOD'S WORD
for every language

New Places, New Opportunities

[Dr. Mike Rodewald, LBT Executive Director]

THE waters of Lake Victoria gently swished beneath our ferry. Rev. Rich Rudowske, LBT's director for international program ministries, and I were on the four hour journey to Kerewe Island in Tanzania to explore new opportunities for LBT missionaries to partner with Lutheran churches in Africa for Bible translation and Scripture engagement.

In Tanzania, we were hosted by Bishop Andrew Gulle of the East of Lake Victoria Diocese of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania. On Kerewe Island, local Lutheran pastors expressed that many of the local inhabitants, mainly fishermen, practiced traditional religion. Even though a translation of some Scripture portions had been accomplished many years ago by an order of Catholic priests, there were no longer any copies available. In addition, the quality of the old translation did not necessarily effectively communicate Scripture to today's readers.



Getting off the ferry in Lake Victoria after visiting Kerewe Island to explore translation opportunities.

around them. The leaders understand that if the church truly wants to take the Gospel to the marginalized people in their countries—those on the fringes who never hear the good news of Jesus Christ—the Gospel must be proclaimed in the languages of their hearts.

There is a great deal of opportunity.

Please, pray for laborers for the harvest and the people who will help in sending them. "If more teams were available, we could place five in Ethiopia right now to partner with Mekane Yesus in mother tongue translation or Scripture engagement efforts," notes Rich. "We will be recruiting and training new missionaries for the future so that these peoples may also have God's Word available to them."

Continued on page 5



Dr. Mike Rodewald, Rev. Rich Rudowske, and Bishop Andrew Gulle of the East of Lake Victoria Diocese of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania.

"Could Lutheran Bible Translators come and help?"

After spending several days in Tanzania, Rich and I traveled to Addis Ababa, Ethiopia to meet with church leaders from Mekane Yesus, a Lutheran church body which grew 8% in 2014. Their church body is now made up of 7.2 million members.

Mekane Yesus has formed a new translation

board to work with partners such as the Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL) based in Dallas, Texas, to facilitate translation not only of Scripture but also other mother tongue materials for evangelism and literacy. The general secretary, Dr. Berhanu Ofgaa, invited LBT to come and participate with SIL.

These two rapidly growing church bodies in Ethiopia and Tanzania together represent over thirteen million Lutheran Christians. They are reaching out to those

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Just in Time

[Becky Grossmann, Translation Advisor]

EBOLA. The very word strikes fear in people's hearts. The disease torments both the victims and the caregivers. I recently returned from Liberia, where Ebola has devastated the economic, social, and medical infrastructures.


Entire families—even entire communities—suffered great loss. While I was there, people shared their stories with me. A friend and coworker, Ngaima, lost his brother, who was a pastor. He contracted the disease because he prayed with a person who was sick. That person had Ebola. Being compassionate placed many people at risk of becoming infected.

As the epidemic spread throughout Guinea, Sierra Leone, and Liberia, people could not even go out for food without putting themselves at risk. Jobs and businesses were lost. Schools shut down for months. Prices rose on every commodity necessary for daily living; sometimes products more than doubled from the normal price. The epidemic, called the Ebola War by people living in Liberia, reminds them of the terrible civil war that ravaged the country less than a generation ago; Ebola was just as evil. Ngaima said, "Each moment one could believe it could be your time to die... It was a possibility to get the virus any second. So if you live the next second, it is just by God's grace. It's a terrible feeling. It is hard to describe. If you turn right, that direction might take you to death. If you turn left, the possibility [to become infected with Ebola] still exists."

Another friend, Mary, is already taking care of six children that are not her own. She would like to take in a little boy from the neighborhood; he and an older brother are the only ones who survived Ebola in their household of ten. She is afraid and does not want to run the risk of contagion. Mary received money from LBT's Ebola Crisis Assistance fund for rice to help feed these many mouths during a time when she could not earn a living due to the suppressed economy and curfews. Over and over, she said thank you and "the gift came just in time." She brought all of the children to see me, and they gave me a personal concert in thanksgiving.

...Over and over, she said **thank you** and "the gift came **just in time.**"

We created an Ebola Crisis Assistance fund to provide rice, safe transportation, clothing, and Bibles to people who work in the translation projects and others who had great need. LBT supporters responded to the appeal for aid to those in hardship, and these gifts made a huge difference. A recurring phrase by those who received the assistance was, "It came just in time. We are so grateful to God that he has saved us."

Even now, prices remain high and people are struggling to get back to normal life. Liberians are very resilient and are beginning to return to daily activities. Continued assistance will help keep people safe and help rebuild their lives. LBT intends to keep the assistance fund open to meet urgent needs of our national partners. Thank you for your gifts to the **Ebola Crisis Assistance** fund. 



People were able to buy rice and other supplies.



Join the 2:11 Project!

Your support of LBT and our audio Scripture recording programs can help make God's Word accessible to countless people.

They, too, will be able to hear about the wonderful things that God has done!

Visit lbt.org/acts to partner with us!

Wanted: Laborers for God (Part II)

[Emily Wilson, LBT Staff]

In the Winter 2015 edition of *The Messenger*, we asked a series of questions for self-reflection and appealed to our faithful readers to consider service with Lutheran Bible Translators on the mission field.

Maybe you read the article and began to prayerfully consider mission work. Maybe you do not feel God is calling you to serve in Bible translation, but upon reading the appeal for missionaries, you immediately thought of a relative, friend, or church family member that you could help send. Whatever the case may be, we want to connect with you and recommend next steps to help determine if service with LBT is the right fit!

Our recruitment coordinator, Kory Fay, urges individuals who are considering mission work with LBT to network with our current missionaries. Sign up to receive their prayer letters. Friend them and like LBT on Facebook. Subscribe to their blogs. Begin to support them financially in their work with LBT. As a potential missionary develops these connections, he or she can establish deeper insights and understanding about Bible translation and mission life.

IDIOM (In Depth Investigation of Missions) is a great way to learn more. Over the course of three days, LBT missionaries and staff members engage in a dialogue with individuals who are interested in mission service with us. These discussions serve as an opportunity to ask questions (we expect them—and in abundance!) and to determine if we are a good fit for each other. Participants are introduced to translation and cross-cultural situations that missionaries face. They also experience (through simulations) some of the challenges that our missionaries face in the task of Bible translation and Scripture engagement.


After attending IDIOM, the participants who decide that LBT is the right fit for them (and vice versa) take their next steps in training. Missionaries receive formal training in applied linguistics. There are also courses that provide very practical second language and culture acquisition training, giving pre-field missionaries the opportunity to develop effective language and culture learning techniques.

We want our missionaries to be well-equipped physically, emotionally, and spiritually to meet the challenges that may arise on the foreign mission field. Missionaries often give up many resources that they have in their home culture, including the luxuries of reliable electricity and internet, frequent family

interaction, and their church traditions. Because of the very nature of the work, missionaries will give up worshiping in their own heart language community. Knowing this, pre-field missionaries must prepare by finding resources to help them engage in the Scriptures even when they are absent from home.

As we give thanks for the past fifty years, we also look forward in hope for those who will serve in the future. Could you be one of them?

If you have questions or would like more information, contact missionary recruitment coordinator Kory Fay at recruiter@LBT.org.

If you would like to hear more from or would like to support a missionary who has just completed his training, contact Michael Ersland at mersland@lbt.org. 


IDIOMS: The Whole Nine Yards

DID you ever have a friend who had a **bone to pick with you** because you tried **to pull the wool over his eyes**? Did he then give you a **taste of your own medicine** by giving you the **cold shoulder**? Did you eventually **bury the hatchet** and once again become **like two peas in a pod**?

Would you understand what any of this means if you weren't very familiar with American English?

Every language has idioms, a word or phrase that means something different from its literal meaning. Knowledge of the language, and often the culture, is necessary in order to understand its idioms.

LBT's IDIOM workshop is so named in honor of the complexities and intricacies of language. Accurately conveying the meaning of Biblical idioms is just one of the many challenges a Bible translator has to face. (How *do* you say "gird up your loins" in Komba or Ipiil?)

To make a long story short, IDIOM might be **the best thing since sliced bread**. So **jump on the bandwagon**! Before you **call it a day** be sure to visit www.lbt.org to learn how you can participate in God's mission through LBT! 

Transitions

[Linda Gari, LBT Staff]

Missionary to Retire

For the past thirteen years, LBT has been blessed through the dedicated missionary service of John Strasen. A high school mathematics and computer programming teacher, John felt called to a second career in church related work. He joined Lutheran Bible Translators in 2002, beginning his first translation assignment in 2004 with the Dhimba Translation and Literacy Project in Namibia.

After the completion of the Dhimba New Testament, John went on to join the Shekgalagari New Testament translation team in Botswana. His service there helped to propel that project forward. Now John has returned to the U.S. and will officially retire from service with LBT in June.

"If someone were to ask me to list the high points and low points of the past thirteen years, I suppose I could put quite a few things in each column," said John. "But my highest high point would have to be all of my supporters. Over the years, I have seen their generosity and I have felt their prayers. God in His love and grace placed me in southern Africa, and their steadfastness kept me there. There are no words adequate enough to express my thanks either to Him or my many partners in ministry."

Please keep John in your prayers as he transitions back to life in the U.S.

Missionary Reassignment

Rob and Mical Hilbert and family are being assigned to the Shekgalagari Bible translation team in Botswana in early 2016, replacing the retiring John Strasen.



John Strasen (seated) village testing with the Shekgalagari team.

New Missionary

Michael Ersland was appointed to missionary service with LBT in January 2015. He has completed studies at the Graduate Institute of Applied Linguistics in Dallas, Texas, and will be spending the next several months developing a team of prayer and financial partners. Michael's first assignment will take him to Zambia in 2016. To learn more about Michael, visit lbt.org/project/michael-ersland.



Wedding Bells

Rev. Chris LaBoube and Christina Riddle, both serving with LBT in Ghana, were married in January 2015 in Ohio. They have since returned to Ghana, where Chris will continue as a Scripture Media Advisor and Christina as a missionary kid tutor. Read more about their story in the next issue of *The Messenger*.

Service Center Relocation

After thirty years in Aurora, Illinois, LBT is moving!

The rapidly changing paradigm of mission throughout the world means that our current service center doesn't allow us to provide the levels of service we would wish to give to our missionaries and international projects and partners. In consultation with the board of directors, our executive director has put our current facility on the market. We have received numerous invitations to collocate with other like-minded organizations. At the time of this writing, LBT's executive staff is carefully evaluating those invitations in anticipation of relocating to more suitable facilities.

LBT at the LWML

If you're going to be attending the National LWML convention in **Des Moines, Iowa**, be sure to stop by the LBT booth! Long-time missionaries Rev. Larry and Mae Johnson will be happy to bring you up to date on the latest LBT news. See you June 25-28!

Hearing the Wonders of God

[Emily Wilson, LBT Staff]

BY the grace of God, Lutheran Bible Translators has been at work on the field for fifty years to assist in the translation of 40 New Testaments and four complete Bibles, as well as a multitude of Scripture engagement materials. These printed translations of Scripture reach millions of people, and the Holy Spirit is at work in the hearts and minds of those who *read* the Word.

We also recognize the importance of *hearing* God's Word. At Pentecost, the Holy Spirit enabled the disciples to speak in the tongues of surrounding nations to preach the Gospel to the hearts of the people. The people gathered exclaimed, "we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues!" (Acts 2:11



A voice actor reads Scripture off of the screen in the recording booth.

NIV). God used the heart languages of the people to gather three thousand to Himself that day.

On November 1, the Komba New Testament was dedicated in Ghana, but the story did not end there! Lutheran Bible Translators and the Komba Literacy and Bible Translation Project partnered with OneWay Ministries (from Naperville, Illinois) and TheoVision

International (from Accra, Ghana) to bring the translated Scripture in an audio format.

The audio recording process is tedious. In order to have a quality recording, the voice actors, technicians, and translators are all conscious of their faithfulness to the text. Komba is a tonal language, so the translator carefully listened to make sure that the voice actor was correctly communicating the Scripture message. If there was a mistake, the translator alerted the technician in real-time, so that they could re-record the passage. Once the initial recording was done, the technician and translator examined the previous day's recordings for correct pronunciation and intonation.

The actual Komba recording was completed at the beginning of March, but there is still work to be done to polish the audio, appropriately segment the recordings into books, chapters, and verses, and place the many pieces in the correct order. OneWay Ministries has funded the project so that the partnering organizations (OneWay, TheoVision, KOLIBITRAP, the Bible Society of Ghana, and LBT) can distribute the recording for free

on any media device. It is hoped that this recording will act as an outreach will reach the entire Komba community.



The previous day's recording is being checked for quality control.

Komba was primarily an oral culture until 2005 when a writing system and alphabet were developed by LBT missionaries. Since it has only been a written language for a decade, the audio recording of the Komba translation of the New Testament will reach individuals who have not had the opportunity to learn to read, as well as those who find more value in spoken words. Overall, audio Scripture projects speak to the identities of minority groups. We know this work will be noticed by the Komba people as they hear the wonders of God in their own tongue. **LBT**

New Places...

Continued from page 1

It is an exciting time for Lutheran Bible Translators participating in the vision of God's Word for all languages, even as it is challenging. It takes time to train new missionaries how to work in cross-cultural situations with mother tongue translators and speakers. It takes time to learn the processes that assure excellence in translation and material production. Individual skills and talents need to be matched to the emerging opportunities. But the end result of our participation is that future generations will know Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior because God speaks their language too. Awesome!

For more information, contact Director of International Program Ministries, Rev. Rich Rudowski, at rich@lbt.org. **LBT**



Meeting with the board for Mekane Yesus Bible Translation Society.

KISI BIBLE TIMELINE

1973 Kisi Church leaders welcomed LBT missionaries Rev. Larry and Mae Johnson to begin linguistic and Bible translation work.

1974 LBT sent missionaries Norman and Shirley Jaschen to begin Kisi literacy development.

1976 The Gospel of Mark was the first Scripture material printed in Kisi.

1981 Book of Acts translated. Literacy volunteers trained; reading classes expanded into Sierra Leone.

1983 The Gospel of Luke was the first Scripture completed in Liberia using a computer.

1989 Liberian Civil War began. Kisi New Testament completed and sent for printing. Work on the Old Testament began.

1991 Because of the war, copies of the printed New Testament were shipped but lost en route; translation work was temporarily suspended.

1994 The Kisi New Testament was reprinted and officially dedicated both in Monrovia, Liberia and in Guinea, where most of the Kisi people were refugees. Translation work resumed, based in the refugee camp.

2002 Translators relocated to Kenema, Sierra Leone. Thousands of Kisi people participated in Scripture listening groups (Faith Comes by Hearing™) and literacy classes.

2005 The Kisi team moved back to Monrovia, now organized under the Bible Society in Liberia. The team persevered amidst post-war reconstruction and numerous economic and political challenges.

2012 The Old Testament and New Testament revision was completed, typeset, and sent for printing. The New Testament was revised.

2014 The complete Kisi Bible was made available and dedicated in Liberia.

New Bibles Dedicated in Liberia

[Jim Laesch, LBT Staff]

THE complete Bible is now available for the 750,000 speakers of two Liberian languages, Kpelle and Kisi. Up until now, Kpelle and Kisi speakers, including pastors, only had the New Testament available to them in their own language. They had to reference an English Bible to read about God creating the world, God's promise of a Savior, or the comfort of Psalm 23—a language few Kpelle or Kisi people speak well.

Bibles Arrive in Midst of Crisis

These new Bibles arrived during the height of the Ebola crisis in Liberia (August-October 2014). The deadly virus was out of control on the streets of Monrovia. Hundreds of people were dying weekly; dozens of health workers lost their lives trying to save others. Fear and panic gripped the nation. It wasn't possible to distribute the Bibles. They were in quarantine as much as the people were.

Gradually the threat of a widespread Ebola epidemic began to lessen. Mr. Paul Stevens, the CEO of the Bible Society in Liberia, began planning the Bible Launch programs with Christian leaders. "The Kpelle and Kisi people are asking us to get the Bibles out for sale. In our culture, it is very important that these new Bibles be officially dedicated and launched before they go on sale. Therefore, we moved as quickly as possible to organize these events. People need to hear the Word of God, especially during a time of crisis."

Ebola delayed but did not stop the Bible launching events. On November 20, the Kpelle Bible was dedicated at St. Mark's Lutheran Church in Gbarnga, Liberia, the center of the Kpelle homeland. Bishop D. Jensen Seyenkulo of the Lutheran Church in Liberia formally dedicated and blessed the Kpelle Bible. "They were so excited! Elated! People had been waiting for so many years for the complete Bible. People came from everywhere; some traveled miles and miles just so they could see and buy their own Kpelle Bible. It was really surprising."

After 40 Years—A Complete Kisi Bible

On November 30, the Kisi Bible was dedicated and launched in Monrovia. Hundreds of Christians and community leaders sang and danced with joy with the arrival of God's Word, from Genesis to Revelation, in their own Kisi language.

The Kisi Women's Choir, dressed in bright new outfits (made for this occasion) participated in a procession of singing, drumming, and clapping. Hundreds joined in praises to God because He now speaks to them directly in their own language.

Every good program in Liberia has formal speeches, acknowledgments and official remarks. These formal programs are always conducted in English, the national language of Liberia, which is considered prestigious. Not so in this Kisi Bible program! The printed program, the outline and choruses on the projected screen, the speeches, and the music were all in Kisi!

Lutheran Bible Translators was present from the beginning of the Kisi Bible project. LBT sent Rev. Larry and Mae Johnson in 1973 to establish linguistic work and organize the translation team. Missionaries Norman and Shirley Jaschen followed a year later to develop literacy materials and promote literacy in the Kisi language. Rev. Johnson served as the Bible translation consultant for the Old Testament from 1994-2012. (see Timeline)



The Kisi Women's Choir participating in the Kisi Bible dedication.



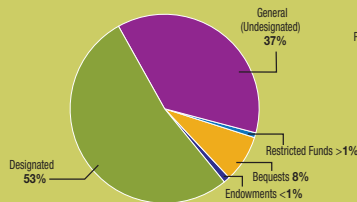
Rev. Reuben Kettor with his newly purchased copy of the Kisi Bible.

LBT PARTNERSHIP SUPPORT

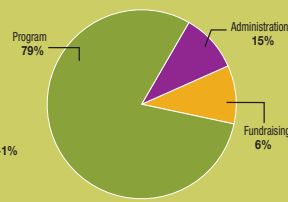
January 1 — March 31, 2015

	Unaudited 1st Quarter	Unaudited Year-to-date
INCOME		
Designated	\$ 441,038	\$ 441,038
General (Undesignated)	313,631	313,631
Restricted Funds	23,534	23,534
Bequests	64,025	64,025
Endowments	175	175
Total Income	\$ 842,403	\$ 842,403

1st Quarter Income



1st Quarter Expenses



EXPENSES

	Unaudited 1st Quarter	Unaudited Year-to-date
Program	\$ 765,529	\$ 765,529
Administration	143,179	143,179
Fundraising	56,809	56,809
Total Expenses	965,517	965,517
Net Total	\$ (123,114)	\$ (123,114)

NOTE: During the first quarter of 2015, LBT was able to purchase one laptop computer at a cost of \$1,000. This cost is not reflected above.

New Bibles

Continued from page 6

Throughout 40 years, God raised up and equipped Kisi pastors, lay persons, men and women to be Bible translators, text reviewers and editors, literacy teachers and project leaders to keep laboring together until the complete Bible was finished.

Rev. Reuben Kettor was the first person to purchase a copy of the Kisi Bible at the dedication. With much excitement, he started reading the Bible immediately. "I thank God for this opportunity to read God's Word after waiting for such a long time. God's Word in my mother tongue—I am truly happy and delighted to see this day!"

Copies of the Kisi and Kpelle Bibles are now available at the Bible House in Liberia (Tubman Blvd. b/w 11th and 12st Streets, Sinkor, Monrovia, contact: bsil1964@yahoo.com, +231-886-556-859). For readers in the United States, copies are available from LBT (info@lbt.org, 800-532-4253).

Gift Designations Your gifts in support of an LBT missionary or project are applied to the budget of that project or missionary. If the budget is overfunded, surplus funds are used to assist other missionaries or similar projects whose budgets are in deficit. Surplus funds are applied where needed most.

CUT HERE

CUT HERE

Birthdays

June

- 2 Eshinee Veith, Botswana
- 6 Seth Rodewald (1997), United States
- 12 Dean Mehl, Service Center Staff
- 16 Susan Malone, Southeast Asia
- 18 Maya Rudowske, United States
- 21 Elijah Wagner (2012), Sierra Leone
- 28 Joshua Rudowske (2003), United States
- 30 Jo Ann Megahan, Botswana
- 30 Chris Pluger, Zambia

July

- 1 Mary Holman, United States
- 5 Aili Esala (2006), United States
- 6 Judi Behrens, Service Center Staff
- 7 Jim Kaiser, Ethiopia
- 9 Isaiah Wagner (2014), Sierra Leone

- 10 Joshua DeLoach (2006), Papua New Guinea
- 11 Vanice Schultz, United States
- 12 Nathan Esala, United States
- 12 Josiah Federwitz (2004), Ghana
- 19 Grace Closius, United States
- 30 Andrew Beckendorf (2007), Botswana

August

- 1 Valerie Federwitz, Ghana
- 4 Tim Miller, Southeast Asia
- 6 Kara Kuhn, Cameroon
- 6 Ruthie Wagner, Sierra Leone
- 7 Annabelle Hilbert (2012), Botswana
- 8 Rachel Federwitz (2004), Papua New Guinea
- 8 Sarah Miller (1997), Southeast Asia
- 10 Rich Rudowske, Service Center Staff
- 14 Cheryl Jensen, Brazil
- 30 Paul Closius, United States

FOLD

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 that the **Kalanga Bible translation project team** would be able to make good progress toward the goal of completing work on the Old Testament this year.

would give them reliable connections during the meetings and that He would guide the plans made.

CAMEROON

- Pray for good planning for 2016 between **Mike Kuhn** and the **Nizaa translation team** as they meet via Skype this July. Pray that God

ETHIOPIA

- Praise God for granting a work permit for **Jim and Susan Kaiser**. Pray for effective learning of Amharic as they continue in language studies.



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Enhancing Trust

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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, dedicated to making God's Word 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.



Like 'Lutheran Bible Translators' on Facebook to see daily prayer requests, breaking news, links to blog updates!

To promote Bible translation, invite your friends to like us, too!

GHANA

- Pray that the newly recorded **Komba New Testament** would spur on more people in the language community to engage in the translated Scriptures.

LIBERIA

- Pray for good closure for **Alvina Federwitz** and her colleagues at **LIBTRALO** as she finishes her time in Liberia at the end of this summer. Pray for her smooth adjustment back to life in the United States.

NIGERIA

- Pray for peace in **Nigeria** and safety for her citizens as they face the threat of terrorism.

SIERRA LEONE

- Pray for the **Thembe translation project** in Sierra Leone as the team continues to work amid the threat of Ebola and for the **Wagner family** working with them remotely from Minnesota.

TANZANIA

- Pray for the continued development of the **Kerewe translation project**. Pray also that acceptable candidates would be found to help fill this translation need.



UNITED STATES

- God's blessings on **John Strasen** as he retires from service with LBT after 13 years in translation ministry in Namibia and Botswana.
- Pray for LBT's newest missionary, **Michael Ersland**, as he begins partnership development in preparation for translation ministry in Zambia.
- Pray that God will guide those attending **IDIOM August 5-8** as they hear and learn about what their place might be serving in God's mission through LBT.

ZAMBIA

- Pray for **Paul Federwitz** as he works this summer to transition everyone in LBT to a new e-mail system and the missionaries to using Sharepoint.
- Pray for **Chris, Janine, and Sean Pluger** as they transition back to life and ministry in Zambia. Pray that the Nsenga translation team would be able to continue work toward the completion of the New Testament in the coming year.

