

# LBT the messenger

lutheran bible translators  
**GOD'S WORD**  
for every language

## Flexibility

[Dr. Mike Rodewald, LBT Executive Director]

**FOR** Lutheran Bible Translator (LBT) missionaries serving abroad, flexibility as a trait is constantly taxed. It seems we are always on the move and the rules are always changing. New problems surface, and new solutions and even adjusted expectations are sometimes necessary.

For example, when I first arrived in northern Liberia to serve, LBT supporters enabled me to purchase a new 4X4 pickup for the jungle roads. It was the only vehicle in my village, which only had one dirt road in and out from the main road (which was also dirt). Whenever anyone needed to go to another village, they would come and ask me if I could drive them rather than walk the shorter paths through the jungle.

I couldn't blame them for asking, but I had to learn new rules of engagement to judiciously and appropriately excuse myself (or the truck). Otherwise, I would have used all my time and gas as a free taxi.

When a primary student proudly used his newly formed writing skills to scratch his name on the side of my new truck with a rock, I went through the roof. No one else in the village could understand my reaction. There was little value in shiny paint. Now, my truck was starting to look like all of the others in the area with dings, dents and scratches. I reluctantly adjusted my expectation.

Just when I started getting comfortable with all of the new rules, it was time to return back home, where change had occurred while I was gone. With my first visit to a gas station, I sat for several minutes wondering when the attendant was going to come out. During my term abroad, all of the pumps had switched over to self-service. I felt foolish and out of touch after I observed what others were doing.

Changing with the context isn't always a simple process and flexibility is the key. While we often don't particularly enjoy change, it is a necessary and frequent part of any cross-cultural mission journey.

Today's paradigm of foreign mission is changing more rapidly than at any time in the recent past. Yet the need remains the same—many are still without



Mike and Liberian colleagues at devotions in the 1980s.

God's Word in a language that they can understand. The changes require flexibility and our future methods of implementation shall be different from the past.

That is why after analysis accompanied with prayer, Lutheran Bible Translators is moving its international offices. The decision to relocate was based upon LBT's strategic vision for the future: to maximize our impact overseas and nimbly respond to changes in the United States. Relocation is to a former college campus in Concordia, Missouri, and current campus of Saint Paul Lutheran High School, a natural partner for the future. Similar to LBT, the high school is an independent Lutheran organization serving the international Lutheran community. The high school hosts boarding students and visiting families from twenty different nations as well as the U.S. and is a caring place for LBT missionary families on home service.

Shared facilities and reduced operating costs make it an ideal place, most especially as the implementation of LBT's vision overseas meets new opportunity. There

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# Five Reasons Why We Value Continuing Education

[Rev. Rich Rudowske]

**Lutheran Bible Translators** works in a specialized field in God's mission. The tasks of translation and Scripture engagement require expertise in linguistics, language and culture, theology, hermeneutics, cross-cultural teaching skills, literacy development, vernacular media production...and that's really just the tip of the iceberg.

New LBT missionaries undergo substantial training before beginning their assignments. All told, our new missionaries spend at least one year in full-time technical training.

However, we don't stop there. We highly value continuing education for our missionaries and their national coworkers. Here are some of the reasons why:

**1. Our national partners are highly trained.** The leaders of church bodies, publishing organizations and other national partners with whom we work are often educated at the master's or doctorate level. Our personnel having a higher level of education communicates to our partners that we respect them as colleagues; we desire to come alongside and work with them in a spirit of mutual respect and dialogue.

**2. The task is becoming more specialized.** The field of translation studies is emerging as a discipline that is not limited to Scripture translation. We have a lot to offer in the field due to our experience in minority languages, which are often in remote settings. But we also have a lot to learn. There is a proliferation of tools and approaches to community engagement being developed that require specialized training, such as contextualized video, oral translation and performance, and various ethno-art disciplines.

**3. This is God's Word we're talking about here.** Why wouldn't we want to have the best, most highly trained and skilled people on the job? As Lutherans, we believe that God works through His Word to call people to faith by the Holy Spirit. There are eternal implications to this work and we need to do it well.

**4. We have the potential to multiply our efforts.** Christianity (in general) and the Lutheran church (specifically) are growing exponentially in Africa and Asia, an area sometimes referred to as the "Global South". There is a significant call from partner churches there for us to help train their workers in translation theory and principles. In order to teach in their

seminaries, we need to send doctorate and master's level personnel to teach in their programs. We have the opportunity to share our skills and resources to equip them for future generations.

**5. Education matures passion.** Many missionaries, myself included, get into this work because we feel a burning passion, a call from God, to step out in faith and go—to participate in His mission. Raw passion can only take us so far. Continuing education combined with experience helps to refine and focus that passion and make it more effective.

How can you be involved? In order to meet the needs of our national partners and encourage continuing education for our missionaries and national coworkers, LBT has established a continuing education scholarship fund. Gifts may be sent to LBT at P.O. Box 789 Concordia, Missouri 64020 or **lbt.org**, designated 'Continuing Education Scholarship'. Contact Rev. Richard Rudowske, director of international program ministries for more information at **rich@LBT.org**. 

## Service Center Staff Recognition

Not all LBT staff will be accompanying the organization to Concordia, Missouri. Some will be retiring, others will be moving on to new opportunities. Please join us in thanking them for their service.

**Judi Behrens**—Executive Assistant, 24 years

**Mike Buhrke**—Facility and Purchasing Manager, 30 years

**Mike Ferguson**—Director of Advancement, 3 years

**Ron Hornyak**—Administrative Assistant for International Program Ministries, 1 year

**Chris Johnson**—Communications Assistant, 1 year

**Mark Konrad**—Information Technology Manager, 30 years

**Dean Mehl**—Human Resources Manager/Accounting Assistant, 10 years

**Sharon Vega**—Advancement and Missionary Partnerships, 24 years

**Taylor Wilson**—Gift Records Supervisor, 3 years

## Wanted: Laborers for God (Part III)

[based on an interview with Rob Hilbert,  
written by Emily Wilson]

**LET'S** set the scene. It was LWML weekend at Messiah Lutheran Church in Tampa, Florida, in October 2009. Mical and I (Rob) were thoroughly enjoying the mission-focused service with songs like, "Hark the Voice of Jesus Calling," and a reading and sermon on Matthew 19:16-30. As we listened to the sermon's message, we reflected on the voice of Jesus calling in our own lives. Walking out to the car after the service, I turned to Mical and expressed my desire to apply for missionary service with Lutheran Bible Translators. With tears in her eyes, she said that she had wanted to express the same sentiment to me.

Mical was not a stranger to missionary service or LBT. She grew up in Guatemala, where her parents served as missionaries with LCMS—World Mission. While there, they had the opportunity to meet LBT missionaries, and her father established a relationship with the organization. Years later, he served as chairman of the LBT board of directors. Our church also supported Paul and Ali Federwitz, who had come to speak for partnership development purposes. We were familiar with Bible translation and thought it was a wonderful ministry to support.

But to become missionaries ourselves?

Even though Mical grew up as a missionary kid, and I was in the Peace Corps in Africa, neither of us expected missionary life to be part of our calling. We both had successful careers in Florida and were new to married life. How could God be calling us to the mission field?

He could, and He did. We applied for service, and we never looked back.

Mical's parents, especially her father, were thrilled, and my own parents came to see it as an adventure. Some of our friends were less enthusiastic or just didn't understand why we were giving up the life we had just built up for ourselves. Any of the comments that tugged at our hearts to stay, however, were silenced by the amazing support we received from our church and Christian friends and family.

When considering service on the mission field, support is invaluable. It not only acts as confirmation of your calling, but it also outweighs the doubt that might creep into your mind. Between our prayer partners, financial partners and LBT, we did not have to worry from month to month and wonder why we were even headed to the field. The support made all of the difference.



The Hilbert family with congregation outside of church in Sierra Leone.

Managing our time, talents and treasures is a practice of good stewardship for the gifts that God has given. Practicality should keep you level as you consider balancing raising support, education and other costs that you may have from day to day. Don't let it extinguish your passion though! There are ways in which financial challenges, such as student loans or car payments, can be forgiven or relieved. A closed door does not always mean a loss of opportunity. Other options might just need to be explored.

Less than a year into our missionary service in Sierra Leone, we had to be evacuated due to the Ebola outbreak. It was a door closed. We remained confident, though, that God had a plan for us. We now have the opportunity to serve in Botswana, where LBT missionary John Strasen served before his retirement this year. So, the story isn't over yet!

Missionary service requires flexibility, patience, sacrifice and most importantly, faith. God has called each of us to participate in His mission in different ways. It might not always be easy, and the answers to our questions might not come quickly, but we can always be confident that He will provide.

Please, keep LBT in your prayers that God would provide laborers for the field. Bible translation is not an easy or a quick task to undertake, but we know that God's Word in Scripture is for all people. **Will you help us to make it accessible in the language of their hearts?**

Contact [recruiter@lbt.org](mailto:recruiter@lbt.org) for more information about the missionary application process. 

# And Two Shall Become One

## Perspective One: Rev. Chris LaBoube

**THE** worst thing about being a single was “acting like a girl.”

Let me explain exactly what I mean by this. Ghanaian culture includes strict traditional roles for men and women. So when the day watchman at my house would see me sweeping the floors, doing laundry and cooking, he wondered why I was doing “women’s work.”

Once while carrying a large bowl of tomatoes through the market, a man stopped me and asked why I was carrying tomatoes. He asked because in Ghana women buy food, cook meals and clean the house, and men have other responsibilities outside of the kitchen.

Knowing this, I said, “In my culture, men carry the tomatoes.” The man was dumbfounded, contemplating such an absurd cultural practice.

When I began dating Christina in Ghana, I changed my practices a little bit. If I needed a new broom, I would give her money and stand at a distance while she bought it. She would carry the broom back to my truck so I would not have to “act like a girl.” She even haggled over tomatoes for me and then carried them on her head, delighting everyone we passed.

After we were married, we went shopping in the market for a coal pot—the common “stove” used by local women, just a step up from cooking over a fire. While technically a kitchen tool, the coal pot works just like a grill—and that’s how we wanted to use it.

I had no problem picking up our newly-purchased coal pot “grill”, wrapping my arm around it and carrying it through the market. What man doesn’t want a grill?! My counter-cultural actions amused every woman we passed.

Christina suggested that if I carried the coal pot on my head—which would be culturally appropriate for a woman—then no one would laugh. I simply said that I wasn’t going to follow the cultural norms this time around and confidently carried our new grill back to our truck.

As a married man, I can still buy food or a broom in the market, but now I simply “blame” my actions on my wife. Such an excuse is readily accepted by Ghanaian women.



Chris and Christina LaBoube

## Perspective Two: Christina (nee Riddle) LaBoube

**THERE** I was, perched on the lid of my pit toilet, mop handle in hand as my weapon, waiting for my nemesis—a rather meaty scorpion—to show itself.

I got the idea to jump up onto the safety of the toilet from one of my colleagues, who had leapt to the toilet herself just a few weeks prior in response to a small but fearsome snake in her bathroom. She waited on the toilet lid for her husband to come home and save her. Since he had only stepped outside for a

minute, she barely felt a pause in her evening.

I, however, was single, and no husband was coming to rescue me.

When people in America would learn that I was a single lady serving in Ghana as a missionary, their knee-jerk response was generally either: “*You’re young and single. This is such a great time in your life to do exciting, adventurous things like live in Africa before you get tied down with the obligations of a husband and family.*” Or: “*But...you’re so young and beautiful. How is it possible that you’re living all alone in deepest, darkest Africa without any chance of finding a husband? Are you sure that’s the best idea?*”

The problem with the first statement is that mission work is not just for the young and single. We have more married missionaries than single ones, and some of them are even older (but I won’t tell you who; “age and treachery,” you know).

Also, mission work is not always adventurous. True, I was battling a scorpion from atop my toilet perch, and I had deliberately purchased a mop with a sturdy, wooden handle in case I might need it as a weapon in an instance such as this. The main reason I bought a mop, however, was to clean the floor. Missionary life involves a good deal more housework than is often reported, with only the occasional scorpion here and there to spice things up.

The problem with the second statement is that I was never alone, even as a single lady. Sure, I had my own house, but I also had all of my colleagues on speed dial. If I had hopped down off of that toilet and given one of them a call, one of them would have come over, even in the middle of the night. In fact, I was in a bit of trouble because I didn’t ask for help when I needed it.

*Continued on page 7*

# Wittenberg and Beyond

[Emily Wilson]

**MARTIN** Luther held that God's Word in Scripture was for all people. He wrote, "Would that this one book were in every language, in every hand, before the eyes, and in the ears and hearts of all men." As his German translation of the Bible became accessible to the German community, there was deeper understanding and growth of faith within the Church. The result was the Reformation. The availability of the Bible in the heart language of ordinary people helped to fuel change and brought meaning and spiritual vibrancy to those within the Church.

Almost 500 years later, Bible translation is still changing lives.

LBT executive director, Dr. Mike Rodewald, presented a paper at the LCMS International Conference on Confessional Lutheran Leadership held in Wittenberg, Germany, this past May. Representatives from 41 countries gathered in this historic city, representing 23 million Lutherans. Mike spoke about the growth of the Lutheran Church in Africa, a subject in which he is well versed after spending thirty years on the mission field in Africa. He has witnessed the Holy Spirit at work as people read and hear Scripture in their heart languages. Church leaders throughout Africa recognize that the spread of Christianity occurs most rapidly where the mother tongue is used. There are tremendous

opportunities for LBT to partner with Lutheran church bodies and other translation organizations throughout the world to promote the translation and use of Scripture through the mother tongue.

According to the history books, the Reformation ended in 1648. But reformation—to make changes with the intention of finding the right path, to improve something or someone by removing or correcting faults and problems—continues to this day in the secular, and more importantly, spiritual sense. Luther's vision is reflected in every Bible translation and Scripture engagement program when hearts and lives are changed because people have come to know Jesus Christ.

As Lutheran Christians, we honor our Reformation heritage and rejoice that God's Word continues to reach the ends of the earth, bringing reformation, renewal, and rebirth. **LBT**

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## Flexibility

*Continued from page 1*

are now over twenty million Lutheran Christians in Africa and almost eleven million in Asia. God's Word faithfully proclaimed has come back with fruit. By selling current property, our relocation allows for expansion abroad and increases our ability to respond to the challenges of the future.

The services needed to support missionaries abroad is changing—technology streamlines processes that in the past required intensive labor. Varied media mediums are becoming rapidly available. In Africa and Asia, cellphone technology is in use even in many remote areas, making it possible to put Scripture on SD cards or on smartphones in both audio and visual form. This makes God's Word, once translated, quickly available for distribution in hard to reach places.

It is a great time of mission and vision for Lutheran Bible Translators. Challenges remain but what a privilege that God involves us in the mission task. He has called us by the gospel, enlightened us with His gifts and continues to keep us in the one true faith. That is a message for all people no matter what language they speak and hear. We trust that the Holy Spirit will guide us through the challenges of the future even as He has done so in the past. **LBT**

## save THE dates!

**October 25, 2015**

Dedication of the new Service Center  
in Concordia, Missouri

**November 8, 2015**

Recruitment Mission Awareness Dinner  
at Concordia University—Irvine

**November 9, 2015**

LBT Luncheon at Knott's Berry Farm

For more information call  
**800-532-4253** or visit **www.LBT.org**.

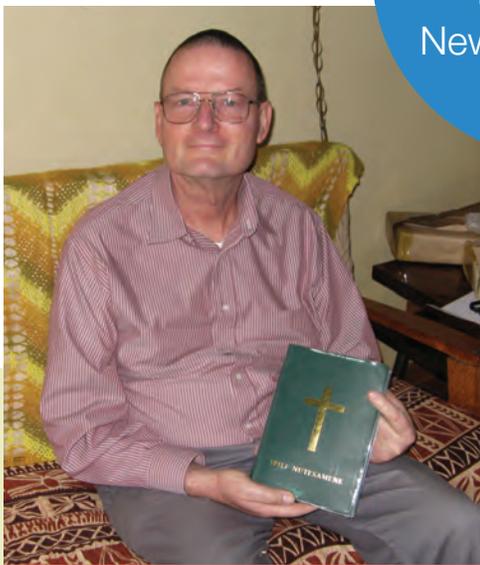
# Even from a Distance

[Janet Borchard]

**I**N January 2007, we were four days into the typesetting process for the Ipili New Testament in Papua New Guinea when my husband Terry was evacuated to Australia with a life-threatening infection. Eventually, he was diagnosed with cancer, and we had to return to the United States, wondering whether we would ever see the New Testament finished.

Typesetting a complex book like the Bible is such a tedious and collaborative process. How could it be completed with us in the United States, and Ipili Pastor Mandita Kunuma and the typesetter in Papua New Guinea?

Computer technology and the internet made it possible to complete the process. We went through the manuscript and emailed needed corrections to the typesetter, and a year and a half later Terry held a copy of the newly published Ipili New Testament in his hands. What was possible in 2007 was not possible back on the early 1980s when I first started working in Bible translation. Back then, computers were just coming into translation work.



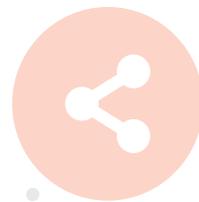
Terry Borchard with the Ipili New Testament.

Now, we have programs like Paratext which is designed specifically for Bible translation. It allows people in different locations to work on the same translation. Pastor Mandita can work on the Ipili translation of the book of Genesis in Papua New Guinea, and the program sends his work through the internet to me in the United States. I can use this same program to comment on his work and then send that information to him.

Other programs, such as Skype, make it possible for people in separate locations to speak to each other about their translation work. For instance, Skype can be used to allow a translation consultant to check the work without being in the same location as the people translating the Scriptures. This enables work to progress even when some members of the translation team cannot be in the country where the language is spoken.

Bible translation work is not a “one size fits all” endeavor. The relationships we build between the organization, international partners, and supporters require various tools for communicating and accomplishing our goals. As technology advances to enable more effective communication while working remotely, missionaries like myself adapt along with it. The future promises to bring more innovation to translators, enhancing the process of making God’s Word accessible to people in their own languages. **LBT**

[we were left]...  
**wondering**  
whether we **would**  
**ever see** the  
New Testament  
finished.”

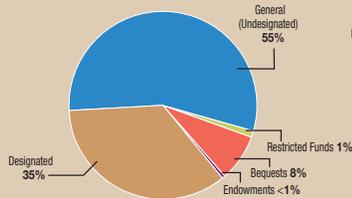


## LBT PARTNERSHIP SUPPORT

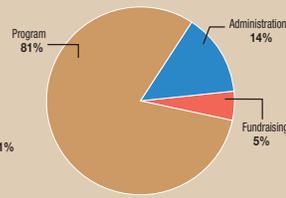
April 1—June 30, 2015

	Unaudited 1st Quarter	Unaudited Year-to-date
<b>INCOME</b>		
Designated	\$ 328,133	\$ 769,530
General (Undesignated)	514,612	828,251
Restricted Funds	16,175	39,709
Bequests	83,579	147,604
Endowments	75	250
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$ 942,575</b>	<b>\$ 1,785,345</b>

**2nd Quarter Income**



**2nd Quarter Expenses**



### EXPENSES

	1st Quarter	Year-to-date
Program	\$ 815,806	\$ 1,615,406
Administration	139,999	284,820
Fundraising	55,372	106,823
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>1,011,177</b>	<b>2,007,049</b>
<b>Net Total</b>	<b>\$ (68,602)</b>	<b>\$ (221,704)</b>

NOTE: During the second quarter of 2015, LBT purchased one vehicle for use in Ethiopia at a cost of \$28,000. These costs are not reflected above.

## And Two Shall Become One

*Continued from page 4*

The second problem with the second statement is that Ghana is neither deep nor dark. This close to the equator, we get quite a lot of sun.

And the third (and happiest) problem is that I met my husband, Rev. Chris LaBoube, while serving in Ghana. He was another single missionary, living out his calling to serve God's kingdom, just like I was. We were both very happy to be single, and now we are both very happy to be married, living and serving on the same mission field where we met.

In case you're wondering, once I gathered enough courage to get down off the toilet lid, I wielded that mop handle and vanquished that scorpion all by myself, and my colleagues cheered supportively at all the right parts when I told the story the next day. **LBT**

**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

### September

- 2 Marshall Schultz, United States
- 3 Eden Federwitz, Ghana
- 4 Karissa Esala (1999), United States
- 7 Mike Ferguson, United States
- 7 Mark Konrad, United States
- 11 Carrie Federwitz, Papua New Guinea
- 17 David Snyder, U.S. Staff
- 27 Rebecca DeLoach, Papua New Guinea

### October

- 3 Joel Miller (1994), Thailand
- 8 Jim Laesch, U.S. Staff
- 10 Chuck Speck, United States
- 11 Martin Weber, Cameroon
- 12 Sharon Vega, United States
- 14 Rob Veith, Botswana
- 14 Jonathan Federwitz, Papua New Guinea

- 18 Bill Eckermann, Papua New Guinea
- 25 Becky Grossmann, United States
- 26 Linda Gari, U.S. Staff
- 29 Chris Johnson, United States
- 30 Chuck Tessaro, Nigeria

### November

- 2 Rebecca Rudowske (2004), United States
- 13 Michaela Federwitz, Ghana
- 14 Dianne Eckermann, Papua New Guinea
- 22 Leah Federwitz, Papua New Guinea
- 22 Rob Hilbert, Botswana
- 23 Christopher Rudowske (1995), United States
- 29 Sarah Esala, 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 for **Rev. Gabriel Tsuaneng**, general secretary of the Bible Society of Botswana.
- Pray for final preparation to go well for the printing of the **Gospel of Luke in Shekgalagari**.
- Pray for **Moses Johane** and **Splash Moronga** on the Khwe translation project as they work with **Rev. Tim Beckendorf** to print and record their consultant approved translations.

### CAMEROON

- Pray for missionary Intern **Rosemary Selking** as she begins her internship.
- Thank God for the partners He raised up for the **Kuhn family's work** in Cameroon and pray that He will continue to provide.
- Pray that the Lord would bless and guide the **Kuhns'** plans and efforts to prepare for their return to Cameroon by the New Year.



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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.

Executive Director:  
Dr. Mike Rodewald




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

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

**ETHIOPIA**

- Pray for the Lord to provide personnel for the **Hamer people** in Ethiopia.
- Pray for **Jim and Susan Kaiser** as they continue learning the Amharic language.

**PAPUA NEW GUINEA**

- Pray for **Janet Borchard** as she works on the Ipili translation in preparation for returning to Papua New Guinea next year.



- Pray for the **Wagners**, who are working remotely from Minnesota with the Themne translation team, as they press on to complete the Old Testament.

- Give thanks for the **Service Center staff** who faithfully served in Aurora, Illinois, and for those who will be relocating to Concordia, Missouri, that there may be a smooth transition.

**GHANA**

- Pray for **Paul and Ali Federwitz** as they plan their return to Ghana at the beginning of October. They will be immediately moving from Tamale in northern Ghana to the capital city of Accra.

**SIERRA LEONE**

- Give thanks for improvement in the Ebola situation in Sierra Leone, which allowed regional director **Jim Laesch** and missionary **Josh Wagner** to visit this summer and assess the feasibility of LBT's return to in-country work there.
- Pray for a healthy pregnancy for **Ruthie Wagner**.

**UNITED STATES**

- Pray for missionary candidate **Amy Formella** as she trains at the Graduate Institute of Applied Linguistics (GIAL).

