



the messenger

lutheran bible translators
GOD'S WORD
for every language

“We’re Having Twins, Let’s Move to Africa!”

[Staff Writers]

EVERYONE has a story to tell. LBT’s newest missionaries are no exception. Read on to see why Amy Formella changed from the medical field to the mission field, how prior missionary service led the Derricks to a deeper understanding of the need for mother tongue translation, and unexpected news about additions to the family led the Grulkes to change the focus of their ministry.

Amy Formella—God prepared my heart

Amy will finish her studies at the Graduate Institute of Applied Linguistics (GIAL) this summer. After building relationships with supporters across the country, she will serve as translation advisor to the Mende Bible translation project in Sierra Leone.



I first learned about LBT in 2011 while at Concordia University Wisconsin. I had just explained to the admissions counselor that I was no longer interested in entering the medical field. Biblical languages and missions had caught my interest, though to be honest, I didn’t know much about either. The counselor introduced me to Dr. Feiertag, the missions professor, who then told me about Lutheran Bible Translators.

That conversation changed my life. I saw a way to combine my interest in Biblical languages and missions. As I learned more about LBT and Bible translation, I grew to understand how important it is for everyone to have the Bible in their own language. I also witnessed how LBT cares for missionaries and how focused the organization is on Christ and what He wants for His people.

Believe it or not, I never really questioned whether I would apply for missionary service. Since I learned about LBT, I knew that it was what God had led me to do. I applied as soon as I could during my senior year of university. So I guess God prepared my heart for that decision five years ago, and I can’t imagine a more fulfilling path.

What excites me most about being a missionary? That’s a good question! There is just so much to consider—a new country, language, job, colleagues, friends, etc. I’m excited to have a new home—another place I don’t want to leave, with people I care about and who care about me. I’m also excited for the translation work because it will allow me to study Scripture in a new way and view Scripture through the eyes of another culture and language. Mostly I can’t wait to see how God works through His Word, as people read it in their heart language. Oh, and everybody who works with LBT is great—I couldn’t ask for better coworkers.

For those considering applying to LBT, I recommend talking your decision through with your friends, family, pastor, and mentors. Ask them the hard questions and then be prepared to hear their questions in return. After all, they may have questions you haven’t thought about yet. Also, make sure you have a friend or family member who can encourage you through this decision and application process, someone who will be honest and supportive. Don’t procrastinate on the application—it’s very thorough and challenges you in your thinking.

Elliot and Serena Derricks—Excited and humbled

Elliot and Serena Derricks joined LBT this March after completing service with LCMS International in South Korea. They will begin their pre-field training at GIAL this July.



We learned about LBT and the need for Bible translation

Continued on page 4

inside

- The Wait is Over!.....2
- Six Years in the Making!3
- Forget Your Fears!4
- Preacher to Teacher to Writer5
- A Funny Thing Happened...5
- Meeting the Need: LBT and LWML.....6
- Building a Better Songbook.....6

The Wait is Over!

[Staff Writers]

AFTER months of prayer, waiting, and anticipation, missionaries Rob and Mical Hilbert and Josh and Ruthie Wagner and their families are back serving through LBT in Africa.

In 2014, as the Ebola virus spread further into Sierra Leone, LBT made the decision to bring the Hilbert and Wagner families back to the U.S. It was hoped they would be able to return within six months to a year. But the health situation in Sierra Leone remained precarious well into 2015.

“As the Ebola outbreak in Sierra Leone continued, we were in regular conversation with both the Wagners and Hilberts to assess the situation and propose alternative ministry contexts,” said Rev. Rich Rudowski, LBT director of international program ministries. “While the Wagners prayerfully decided to continue to wait until conditions in Sierra Leone would allow them to return, the Hilberts prayerfully decided to fill a critical need in Botswana.”

Staffing changes left the Shekgalagari project in Botswana without an LBT translation advisor. In January, the Hilberts—Rob, Mical and their three children—moved to their new home in Kang, in the Kalahari desert.

“Shekgalagari speakers do the initial drafts. A large amount of work still follows the first phase,” said Rob. “Mical will assist with back translation during which the text will be checked for consistency and readability. This will be followed by community testing and further editing. After being checked by a linguistics expert, the texts will be tested in the church. There will be more changes before a final draft is completed.”

“We are also hoping to help with various literacy projects,” said Mical. “These may include a Shekgalagari lexicon, a transitional literacy primer, various healthcare books and Sunday school materials.”



Local electrician Musa making repairs on the Wagners' home in Makeni, Sierra Leone.



The Hilberts have made their new home in Kang, Botswana.

The Wagners' long wait for conditions to improve in Sierra Leone ended in March as Josh, Ruthie, and their three sons returned to continue their ministry with the Themne people. Evacuated from Sierra Leone in 2014 shortly after the birth of their second child, they settled in Minnesota, working remotely with the Themne project and assisting the LBT communications staff. Their third son was born in December 2015.

“We are nervous about the added challenges with three boys instead of one, but this all pales in comparison to the excitement we feel,” said the Wagners. “We are thrilled to be with Sierra Leonean friends and colleagues again, continuing the work of Bible Translation and Scripture engagement.”

The Themne team is also excited. During the peak of the Ebola crisis people were required to stay in their homes to prevent the further spread of the contagion. The team was unable to meet together to work, slowing the translation process. Now, Ruthie is able to work directly with the three part-time translators as they review the entire draft of the Old Testament, making revisions and running computer checks. The goal is to have the whole Bible completed by the end of this year.

Josh is exploring opportunities to expand Scripture use, discovering what types of media and materials are being requested by the local churches.

Josh and Ruthie will be able to focus more of their time on ministry thanks to volunteer Hannah Brown, who is providing child care and home schooling. **LBT**

To learn more about the Wagners, the Hilberts, and Hannah, visit <http://us.lbt.org/about/missionaries/>

Six Years in the Making!

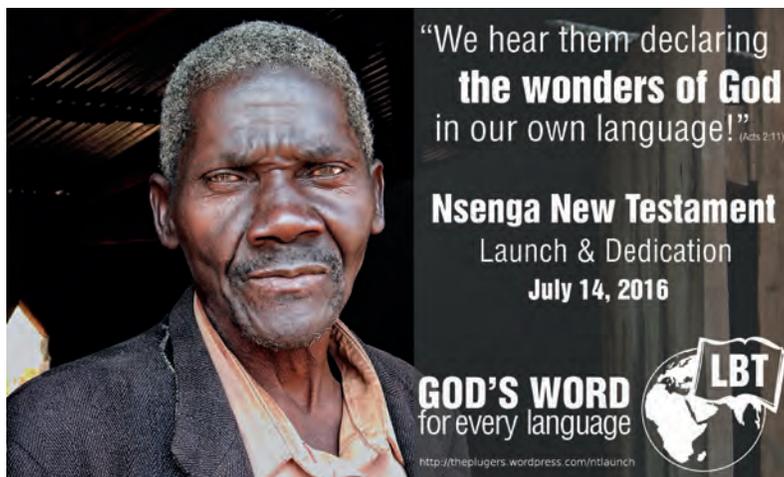
[based on an article by Chris Pluger]

In May, 2010, in Petauke, Zambia, local pastors, business people, community leaders, traditional chiefs, government officials, representatives of the Bible Society of Zambia, and Lutheran Bible Translators came together for the first time and formed the partnership called the Nsenga Bible Translation Project Committee (NBTP).

LBT missionaries Chris and Janine Pluger, with son, Sean, began their translation assignment with the NBTP in August 2011. Four years later Chris reported, “On July 1, 2015, the Nsenga Bible Translation Project team made their last upload of data to the United Bible Societies servers. This marks the end of local office work on the Nsenga New Testament! This final upload happened three years to the day after the beginning of translation work with the team. Praise God!”

Now, in 2016, the NBTP is working with a large group of local pastors in the Petauke area to plan the dedication of the completed Nsenga New Testament.

It took hard work by the NBTP these past six years to bring God's Word to the Nsenga people. First they hired and trained heart language translators. With Chris' help, the translators drafted, studied, checked, corrected, edited, and shared their efforts with teams of Nsenga-speaking reviewers. Together they dedicated and published the book of Mark. They evaluated comments and suggestions. They collected words and idiomatic phrases and involved more pastors and churches in the



review process. Finally the nitty-gritty end parts: Word spacing. Punctuation. Spell-check. Cross-references. Parallel passages. Illustrations.

The final proofs have been sent for typesetting and printing. One can feel the excitement and expectation within the Nsenga community waiting for the “Launch and Dedication Service” on July 14, and “Nsenga Bible Sunday” in all Petauke churches on the following Sunday. The festivities will include a joint choir, VIP speeches, Nsenga traditional ceremony, and prayers, ending with a symbolic and special procession to present the newly-printed New Testaments to the entire community.

Dr. Mike Rodewald, LBT's executive director, and Jim Laesch, associate director of international programs, are attending the dedication. The event will be covered through LBT social media.

Please mark your calendars and remember to give praise and thanks on July 14. Celebrate with the Nsenga people as they declare the wonders of God in their heart language.

Look for more information on the Nsenga New Testament Launch and Dedication in upcoming issues of *The Messenger*. **LBT**



The first meeting of the Nsenga Bible Translation Project Committee in 2010.

Forget Your Fears!

LBT is playing a prominent role at this year's **LCMS National Youth Gathering (NYG) in New Orleans July 16-20**. LBT will help run an experiential learning center that will provide an interactive experience of Bible translation. Participants will be introduced to cross-cultural language learning, utilizing many of the Scripture translations completed with the assistance of LBT missionaries.

Rev. Rich Rudowske, LBT's director of international programs, looks forward to the opportunity. "With the 500th anniversary of the Reformation coming next year, NYG organizers wanted to highlight Luther's activities, including Bible translation. Luther's translation of Scripture into German was fundamental to the reform of the church as well as laying the foundation for future translation work, including that of LBT."

In addition to the experiential center, LBT will staff an exhibition table and host an interest center session that will highlight the NYG theme of "In Christ Alone."

"LBT has been at work in some of the most remote

ends-of-the-earth contexts for more than 50 years," explains Rich. "We have seen how God works to draw us closer to Him and strengthen our faith when everything that we are used to—home, language, cultural norms have been stripped away and we are left with Christ alone to lean into as the source of our identity, our source of strength and the only sure thing."

"We really see this as an opportunity to give something back to the church," said LBT translation coordinator Rev. Nathan Esala. "We want to share how we've seen God at work in our lives in the contexts in which we've served and invite the youth of our church to find ways to step out of their cultural box and experience God at work in a bigger world."

Along with Rich and Nathan, LBT missionary Sarah Esala, new recruitment coordinator Tim Bain, Emily Wilson and Cindy Rodewald from the international programs staff will be representing LBT.

The NYG is held every three years. More than 25,000 people are expected to be in attendance this summer. 

We're Having Twins

Continued from page 1

when LBT's recruiter and other staff visited our college campuses at Concordia Mequon and Portland a number of years ago.

Being a missionary with LBT is something that you dedicate your life's work to do. And we absolutely loved that. It's what interested us and made us wait until later in life to apply. We wanted to make sure that we were prepared and—more importantly—truly felt God leading us to serve.

We are excited to partner with LBT because of their focus on empowering local people wherever they work. While serving in different mission fields with the LCMS since 2010, we began to understand how important it is to learn about Christ in your heart language. We feel so excited and humbled to serve in this work for which He has called us.

**Rev. Carl and Kelsey Grulke—
We're having twins, let's move
to Africa!**



Rev. Carl and Kelsey joined LBT in May, making them LBT's newest missionaries. The Grulke crew of seven will be relocating to Texas, where Carl and Kelsey will begin training at GIAL this summer.

We first heard about LBT while we were in seminary. We had been invited to the house of friends who were interested in missions, and the LBT recruiter was there. During the evening, we heard about LBT's ministry over pizza, while trying to prevent our then seven month old daughter from destroying our friends' non-childproof house.

We loved the model of LBT's ministry. We think that working alongside churches and partnering with them to accomplish their goals is such an awesome way of doing ministry cross-culturally. We were also excited for the opportunity for both of us to work in ministry as a team, which we found challenging to do in a typical church setting with kids.

That's why we decided to apply when we found out we were having twins! This giant news really made us evaluate what we wanted our family life to look like and where both of us wanted to serve in ministry. We realize that this is not exactly a common reaction ("We're having twins, let's move to Africa!"), but we think that

Continued on page 7

Preacher to Teacher to Writer

[Lamin Kargbo with Jim Laesch (LBT staff)]

MOMODU Sesay of Kamagbeu village had no formal education of any kind. Yet when he heard the Gospel message, by God's grace, he responded by believing in Jesus Christ. He enrolled in the Vernacular Bible Training School run by the one of the national churches in Sierra Leone.

He acquired the skills of reading and writing, first in his own language, Limba, then in English, the national language of Sierra Leone. Being instructed in his own language and using the Limba New Testament gave him a solid foundation of the Gospel message. (The Limba New Testament was translated with the assistance of LBT missionaries and dedicated in 1983. The Bible Society in Sierra Leone completed a revision in 2011.) Momodu graduated and was sent out by the mission arm of his church to preach the Gospel as an evangelist.

The mission transferred him from village to village. He preached the Good News to the Limba people, who are traditionally Muslim. He explained to them what Christ has done and that forgiveness and salvation are freely given to those who believe in Jesus.

I had the privilege to meet Momodu soon after he began his ministry. I trained him how to teach others to read in Limba, first at his church in Kamagbeu village, then Kabasa town, then Kamasasa and now Kabanakeh, where he presently resides.



Momodou Sesay is passionate about increasing literacy among the Limba people of Sierra Leone.

Momodou is full of passion to make people literate. In addition to his pastoral duties, he volunteers to teach Limba in the village primary school. Furthermore, he conducts evening literacy classes in the church three times a week. These classes attract people from the community, many who are Muslims or followers of traditional religion.

This preacher turned teacher is now a writer. Recently he gave me his hand written manuscript of moral stories which will be keyboarded and edited for small scale publishing. He read the stories to me clearly and with enthusiasm.

He concluded our visit by saying: "I am always grateful to teach people to read. At one time I was like them, but now I have been changed. By

God's grace my life is much greater because of literacy in my own language." **LBT**

Lamin Kargbo is the Program Manager for literacy programs at The Institute for Sierra Leonean Languages (TISLL), a partner of LBT in Sierra Leone.

Mr. Kargbo is a Limba speaker. He loves his language, previously serving as the Limba Literacy Coordinator.



Lamin Kargbo

A Funny Thing Happened...

[Rev. Chuck Tessaro (translation advisor/Nigeria)]

HEARING the Word of God in your own language does make an impact. The Gworog translation team related the following to me during a translation session.

A guest speaker was invited to preach at Sunday services. He did not know Hausa, the major trade language in the area. So he preached in English, the national language used by people with higher education. However, one of the Gworog Bible translators read a

passage from Philippians in the local Gworog language. As the passage was being read, the congregation began chuckling and laughing a bit. A visitor's first guess would be that there were a few odd expressions which caused the laughter. What actually was happening was that the laughter was a sign of happiness that they were hearing God's Word in their own language. Before now, they hadn't been sure this was possible. They'd never had God's speak their language before! **LBT**

To learn more about the Tessaro ministry visit <http://us.lbt.org/project/rev-chuck-karen-tessaro/>

Meeting the Need: LBT and LWML

KRISTI Roegner, chairman of the LWML's Church Workers in Mission Task Force, and Rev. Dr. Robert Roegner, senior pastoral councilor for the LWML and former LBT executive director, both had big smiles on their faces as they visited LBT's international offices in Concordia, Missouri. They came to award a \$50,000 grant from the national LWML to be used for printing and distribution of Scripture in mother tongue languages where Lutheran Bible Translator supported translation projects are ongoing or have recently been completed in Botswana, Ethiopia, and Namibia.



Kristi Roegner, Rev. Robert Roegner, Dr. Mike Rodewald, Cindy Rodewald.

"LBT addresses the specific needs of people," said Dr. Roegner, "whether it be translation of God's Word, literacy, or the development of audio Scripture. LWML looks to support organizations that share Jesus Christ around the world."

The grant is just the latest from the LWML, which has been a generous partner throughout LBT's five decades of ministry.

"The LWML has a long vibrant history of mobilizing and sending resources to enable God's Word to go forth to the ends of the earth. It's thrilling to think that this grant has the potential to engage over a million people with the Word of God in their heart language," said Rev. Rich Rudowski, LBT's director of international program ministries.

LBT will be represented at many LWML district conventions this year. "LWML members are always excited to visit LBT displays at conventions to learn about missionaries and projects," said Kristi Roegner. "They often remark about the uniqueness of LBT's mission and how it speaks directly to the hearts of people."

LBT will be represented at a number of conventions this summer. Here's a partial list. Be sure to stop by and visit the LBT booth!

Jun 3 -5	Missouri District LWML, Cape Girardeau, MO
Jun 10-12	Mid-South District LWML, Dorado, AR
Jun 17-18	Iowa East District LWML, Oskaloosa, IA
Jun 23-25	Iowa West District LWML, Milford, IA
Jul 29-31	Michigan District LWML, Boyne Mountain, MI
Aug 5-7	New Jersey District LWML, Morristown, NJ
Sep 16-17	Carolinas District LWML, Summerville, SC
Sep 23-25	Chesapeake District LWML, Timonium, MD
Sep 30- Oct 1	Florida-Georgia District LWML, Palm Beach Gardens, FL

Building a Better Songbook

[Tim and Michelle Miller (literacy specialists/ Southeast Asia)]

THE 'Khon' are an ethnic minority group in Southeast Asia, working towards Bible translation in their language. In 2015, in coordination with the 'Khon' church, the 'Khon' Bible translation and literacy team completed a revision of the 'Khon' Praise and Worship songbook. About 7,000 copies were printed.

This third songbook revision in 12 years is dearly loved. Quite a few 'Khon' have become interested in the Christian faith through the witness of the songs.

Because there are 60 new songs in this version, we have been getting many requests for an audio recording of the songbook. So late last year, while we were in the U.S. on furlough, the 'Khon' team took it upon

themselves to build a make-shift recording studio in one of their rooms. About 100 songs were recorded.

There has been a growing need for a place to make audio recordings of Scripture portions for use in community testing, so in February the team began construction on a simple studio that is a little sturdier! Please pray for the continued efforts to record the rest of the songbook. **LBT**



One hundred songs were recorded in this "studio".

To learn more about the Millers visit <http://us.lbt.org/project/tim-michelle-miller/>

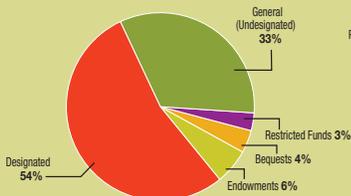
LBT PARTNERSHIP SUPPORT

January 1 — March 31, 2016

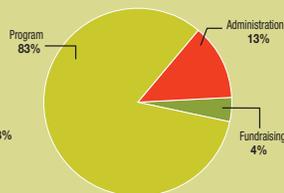
INCOME

	Unaudited 1st Quarter	Unaudited Year-to-date
Designated	\$ 482,098	\$ 482,098
General (Undesignated)	296,031	296,031
Restricted Funds	29,392	29,392
Bequests	33,472	33,472
Endowments	50,006	50,006
Total Income	\$ 890,999	\$ 890,999

1st Quarter Income



1st Quarter Expenses



EXPENSES

	Unaudited 1st Quarter	Unaudited Year-to-date
Program	\$ 738,123	\$ 738,123
Administration	117,964	117,964
Fundraising	30,977	30,977
Total Expenses	887,064	887,064
Net Total	\$ 3,935	\$ 3,935

NOTE: During the first quarter of 2016 LBT paid off the cost of the International Offices improvements at a cost of \$85,634. This cost is not reflected above.

We're Having Twins

Continued from page 4

God used this event to change the course of our lives and service to Him.

We are thrilled to be working where there is such a huge need in the church! It's hard for English-speaking Christians in the United States to understand what it would be like to not have the Bible in your heart language. We are looking forward to sharing the huge need for Bible translation with them. And then helping people to hear the wonderful things that God has done in the language of their hearts is such an incredible opportunity to serve in the Kingdom.

God's timing is everything! We were led back to LBT seven years after we first heard about the incredible ministry of Bible translation. Even if it seems like the timing isn't right or that it will be really hard to make the transition, if you're interested in missionary service, pray and seek God's will. You never know where or when He might be calling you. **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

June

- 2 Eshinee Veith, Botswana
- 6 Seth Rodewald*, United States
- 16 Susan Malone, Southeast Asia
- 17 Audrey Grulke*, United States
- 18 Maya Rudowske International Offices
- 21 Elijah Wagner*, Sierra Leone
- 28 Joshua Rudowske*, United States
- 30 Jo Ann Megahan, Botswana
- 30 Chris Pluger, Zambia

July

- 1 Mary Holman, United States
- 5 Aili Esala*, United States
- 7 Jim Kaiser, Ethiopia
- 9 Isaiah Wagner*, Sierra Leone
- 10 Joshua DeLoach*, Papua New Guinea
- 11 Vanice Schultz, United States
- 12 Nathan Esala, United States

July

- 12 Josiah Federwitz*, Ghana
- 19 Grace Closius, United States
- 30 Andrew Beckendorf*, Botswana

August

- 1 Valerie Federwitz, Ghana
- 4 Tim Miller, Southeast Asia
- 6 Kara Kuhn, Cameroon
- 6 Ruthie Wagner, Sierra Leone
- 7 Annabelle Hilbert*, Botswana
- 8 Rachel Federwitz*, Papua New Guinea
- 8 Sarah Miller*, Southeast Asia
- 10 Rich Rudowske, International Offices
- 14 Cheryl Jensen, Brazil
- 30 Paul Closius, United States

*missionary kid

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

- Give thanks for the strong interest in literacy shown among the **Khwedam people**.

GHANA

- Pray for **Rev. David and Valerie Federwitz** as they travel to Cameroon to meet with **Martin and Joan Weber** and **Rev. Mike and Kara Kuhn**.

CAMEROON

- Praise God for the publication of the first **Kwanja Lectionary book, Series C**, and for the dedication ceremony for the Kwanja lectionary series in March.

LIBERIA

- Pray that God will guide **LIBTRALO's** (Liberian Translation and Literacy Organization) staff as they relocate and transition to their new headquarters, scheduled for this May.



Lutheran Bible Translators PO Box 789 Concordia, MO 64020

Non-Profit Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit No. 437
Aurora, IL

the messenger
Volume 43, Number 2
SPRING 2016

Dr. Mike Rodewald, Editor
Editorial management by Linda Gari
Printed at Kelmscott Communications, Aurora, IL

The Messenger is the official quarterly periodical of Lutheran Bible Translators, 205 S. Main St, Bldg 5, PO Box 789, Concordia MO 64020. 1-800-532-4253.

Website: www.us.lbt.org **E-mail:** info@LBT.org
Standard A Non-Profit postage paid at Aurora, Illinois. Printed in the U.S.A.

Comments and inquiries are invited. Correspondence may be directed to *The Messenger* Editor.

©2016 Lutheran Bible Translators, Inc. Permission is granted to excerpt from this publication. Please send a copy of your use of material to the editor. Thank you!
Volunteers assisted with the assembly of this mailing!

A Canadian edition of this newspaper is published by Lutheran Bible Translators of Canada, 137 Queen St. S., Kitchener, ON N2B 1W2.

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




Visit **lbt.org/contact** for pdf versions of our bulletin insert, monthly prayer calendar, 2016 Daily Bible Reading Guide, and *The Messenger*.

Subscribe to the LBT blog at **lbt.org/blog**.

NIGERIA

- Pray for continued blessings upon the **Ikwerre translation team** and **Rev. Chuck Tessaro** as they begin work on the book of Psalms.

SIERRA LEONE

- Praise God for the safe arrival of the **Wagner family** and **Hannah Brown**. Pray that they will continue to be blessed as they resettle in Makeni.

UNITED STATES

- Pray for the **Derricks and Grulke families** as they relocate to Texas to begin training at the Graduate Institute of Applied Linguistics this summer.

ZAMBIA

- Praise God for the dedication of the **Nsenga New Testament** this July.



please note!

LBT's mailing address is:

Lutheran Bible Translators
PO Box 789, Concordia MO 64020

If your bank or financial institution is sending donations to LBT, please be sure to have them update our address.

