

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

## 500 Years Later

### A non-historian's view of the open Bible

[David Snyder, Director for Development]

**THERE'S** a lot I don't know about Luther and the Reformation. What I do know is this: Luther's new understanding of God radically changed his life and the world around him. And the same thing still happens to people today.

Luther initially tried to get God to act kindly toward him by doing favors for God. When he thought he was going to die, he bargained with God and promised to become a monk if God would let him live. Eventually he realized that people could only be made right with God one way—by faith in what Jesus did for our benefit.

Remember, the Bible was not accessible in Luther's own German language. He wrestled with Scripture in foreign languages to come to grips with this new understanding of justification by faith alone. It challenged everything he had been taught. His life, and ultimately the lives of many in Germany and beyond, was changed.

During Luther's time there was no unified German language. People from different regions spoke different dialects. Luther translated the Word of God in such a way that no one was excluded. He said, "I have always tried to translate in a pure and clear German." and "I wanted to speak German, not Latin or Greek...we must ask the mother in the home, the children on the street, the common man in the marketplace. We must be guided by their language, by the way they speak, and do our translating accordingly. Then they will understand it..." Luther's Bible was so widely used it led to the standardized form of the modern German language.

This Good News tells us how God makes us **right in his sight**. This is accomplished from **start to finish by faith**. As the Scriptures say, "It is through faith that a righteous person **has life**." Romans 1:17 (NLT)

Momodou Sesay's life was changed when he heard the Word of God. See the Spring 2016 edition of *The Messenger* for the full story.



Luther—and subsequent translators who were greatly influenced by him—opened a closed book. The Bible in the language of the people fueled the Reformation. It was more than words. The now open Bible reshaped political and religious values throughout Europe. It shifted power from religious leaders to civil leaders. It led to the demise of the power of feudal lords and a preference for government by the people (toward modern democracy). It empowered the lower classes of society to become a strong, working middle class.

The same thing still happens 500 years after the Reformation. Loren Cunningham, author of *The Book that Transforms Nations*, writes, "when a critical mass of people have the Bible and apply what it teaches in their lives, a nation is transformed." He illustrates his book with stories of transformation such as William Carey in India, Abraham Kuyper in Holland, Hans Hauge in Norway, Martin Luther in Germany, John Calvin in Switzerland, and more. Just like you've read in previous issues of *The Messenger*, the open Bible does transform individuals, communities and even whole nations.

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# Learning Literacy

[Serena Derricks]

“**I LOVED** too many things about this project to list them all here, but helping these women learn to read is the at the top of my list,” said Serena Derricks.

Serena and her husband, Elliot, have completed training at the Graduate Institute of Applied Linguistics (GIAL) in Dallas, Texas. They are preparing for their first assignment with Lutheran Bible Translators in Cameroon. Elliot will help with the revision of the Fali New Testament and translation of the Old Testament. Serena will assist the community to develop literacy programs and materials.

“The MegaLiteracy Course at GIAL has been an incredibly educational but challenging introduction in the field of literacy development. I’ve learned how to create books (primers, graded readers), run seminars/workshops, encourage local people to produce their own literature, and design adult literacy classes.



Serena and her class developed literacy materials for Karenni speakers who wished to learn English.

All of this with the goal in mind of implementing it for the people group we will work with in Cameroon,” Serena explained.

The main class project centered on refugees from Myanmar who have relocated to Dallas. These individuals wished to learn English, but many of them were not literate in their own language, Karenni. Because it is easier to learn to read in a language we already speak, Serena and her class helped to develop a new way to write Karenni that enabled the students to learn English at the same time. “We matched the sounds in their language to the ones in English, devised an alphabet for them and created a book to teach it,” said Serena.

“Literacy is so important and I’m so grateful for this course to teach me such a useful skill! How can I engage the Fali community in the Scripture if they don’t have a comfortable level of reading?” she said. “Bible translation needs Scripture engagement and literacy programs to help the community to better access God’s Word.” **LBT**

*Elliot and Serena Derricks will be serving in Cameroon with the Fali Translation Project. For more information visit [lbt.org/project/elliott-serena-derricks/](http://lbt.org/project/elliott-serena-derricks/).*

## Interested in Charitable Bequests?

For more information, return this coupon to David Snyder, Lutheran Bible Translators, PO Box 789, Concordia, MO 64020 or visit [www.lbt.org/legacy](http://www.lbt.org/legacy).

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## Making a Gift?

Your tax-deductible gift can be made by check or credit card.

To send a check, please use the enclosed self-addressed envelope, or address your own envelope to Lutheran Bible Translators, PO Box 789, Concordia, MO 64020.

To make a secure credit card gift, go to **LBT.org/donate** or call us at 800-532-4253.

Additional on-line giving opportunities are available at **[lbt.org/donate/giving-options](http://lbt.org/donate/giving-options)**.

# New Technology Brings Timeless Message

**“YOU** have the Jesus Film in Themne!  
Can I put it on my phone?”

Reverend Kelvin Koroma was speaking with Josh Wagner, Scripture engagement advisor for the Themne translation project in Makeni, Sierra Leone. “As he watched the film, Reverend Koroma told me how happy he was. That he could have the film on his phone was such a wonderful blessing, and he soon shared it with several others,” says Josh.

Media-capable cell phones are becoming less expensive in Sierra Leone and are gaining in popularity. When people find out there is content available in their language—content such as the Jesus Film—they are thrilled.

Josh often participates as church and local leaders gather to discuss how to encourage the use of Themne in their communities. Language choice is always a complex issue in contexts of bilingualism, and this holds true for churches in Sierra Leone. Songs, Scripture readings, and preaching are often in English or Krio, the trade language in Sierra

Leone. This means that the majority of churchgoers don't hear God's Word in the language they understand best. Even worse, people outside the church do not feel comfortable attending services they don't understand. Although English is important in business as a means of wider communication, Reverend Koroma is one of the growing number who recognize the need to use the Themne language in churches.

Pastors recognize several barriers to Themne Scripture use, not the least of which is the increase of bilingualism that occurred when many fled their villages



Pastor Koroma shared the Jesus Film with other Themne speakers.



Josh demonstrates how to use devices and apps to access Scripture and educational materials.

during the decade-long rebel war. Josh says, “Although fantastic work is being done, Themne literacy remains very low. Many Themne pastors desire to have literacy classes in their communities.”

While Josh's wife, Ruthie, works with the Themne translation team to produce a written Old Testament, Josh is creatively training people to access Scripture, Biblical content, and educational materials through technology. Two devices that provide a free wifi signal—RACHEL and BIBLEBOX—have gotten a tremendous response. RACHEL is packed with free educational materials for all academic levels. BIBLEBOX provides local language Scripture materials that people can watch, listen to, or download for free. “You should see people's faces when Josh tells them to take out their phones or tablets, connect to BIBLEBOX, and immediately watch the Jesus Film or listen to the New Testament in Themne on their device!” says Ruthie.

*Continued on page 4*

# New Missionaries Join Lutheran Bible Translators

“**PSALM 145** so beautifully expresses the purpose of life, which is to bring praise to the Lord and tell all peoples of His wonderful goodness,” says Rev. Andrew Olson.

Andrew and his wife, Alexis, are the newest missionaries appointed to serve with Lutheran Bible Translators. They are currently training at the Graduate Institute of Applied Linguistics in Dallas, Texas.

Andrew grew up in the Minneapolis area. At age 13, he spent several months in Tanzania while his father taught at a Bible College. Andrew felt the call to serve in Bible translation ministry after seeing numerous people brought into God’s kingdom as a result of viewing the Jesus Film.

When Alexis was 17, she and her family moved from North Carolina to Uganda to serve as missionaries. She



The Olson family

worked in several different orphanages and saw the great need for the soul-saving Gospel of Jesus Christ to spread across the world. She also met Andrew, who was in Uganda helping translate curricula for the Ambassador Institute following his graduation from Northwestern College in St. Paul, Minnesota. After a year in Africa, Alexis returned to the U.S., keeping in contact with Andrew long distance. With Andrew’s encouragement, she moved to Minnesota and attended Bible college.

Andrew and Alexis were married in 2015. They have one child, Mariah. They are eagerly anticipating serving in translation ministry saying, “We believe that we are placed by God here on the earth, to bring honor and glory to His name by using our gifts to serve Him and His church.” **LBT**

## Timeless Message

*Continued from page 3*

Josh has also been exploring Reading App Builder to address the need for distribution on cell-phones. He notes, “It’s so easy to build apps for stories, songbooks, training materials, and even dictionaries.” His wife is quick to add that apps could also support literacy efforts and facilitate deeper community engagement with the translation effort. Josh’s first app was a proof-of-concept for the Bible Society in Sierra Leone. It presented text and audio of the recently drafted book of *Jonah* in Themne. “Apps are great in Sierra Leone because people engage with the audio. And apps can be shared phone-to-phone without using the internet, which is so expensive here. Tools like these give our partners new options for Scripture engagement in the digital world.”

Josh cautions that wifi devices and app builders are only tools. “Exciting as they are, it is a big oversight to think that the tool is the solution. In my experience, the tool is 10% of the equation, and relationships are the 90%,” he says. “Sierra Leoneans have an invaluable sense of what is necessary and effective, and we rely on this heavily. Having known our neighbors and colleagues for over three years, we are finding that our relationships are stronger, conversations are more meaningful, and work is more productive. The foundation of relationship makes technology powerful.” **LBT**

*Josh and Ruthie Wagner and their children serve with Lutheran Bible Translators in Sierra Leone. For more information visit [lbt.org/project/josh-ruthie-wagner/](http://lbt.org/project/josh-ruthie-wagner/), [biblebox.org](http://biblebox.org), and [racheloffline.org](http://racheloffline.org).*

## One Lost Lamb

[Rev. Michael Megahan]

**I WAS** ready to return to the U.S. following a workshop with the Kerewe people of Tanzania. Then one of the risks of air travel struck: I was bumped from my flight and had no certainty of getting a seat on the next one.

I was sitting, dejected, over an empty cup of coffee at a local eatery when a Tanzanian came to my table and sat down, greeting me in the typical Tanzanian manner of respect. Then he sat silently for a moment, staring at me. Finally he commented, "You don't remember me do you?"

I stared back for a moment and answered, "No. Sorry."

He remarked, "In 1993, you brought me to Christ. I left the Islamic faith, was baptized and started following Jesus. In 1994, you did the marriage ceremony for my wife and me. We have two beautiful children and all of us love Jesus."

I stared again and soon a face that I had not seen for over 20 years became familiar to me. We laughed and shared coffee and news. I was no longer dejected and, yes, made the evening flight and traveled on.



Rev. Megahan met with Kerewe speakers at a workshop on Ukwere island.

Too often many think of missions in terms of great numbers of saved souls. In reality, it is often a manner of seeking and finding one lost lamb at a time: but what a wonderful find when one is brought into the fold! Even the angels in heaven rejoice (Luke 15:7). **LBT**

*Rev. Michael Megahan serves as an LBT adjunct missionary. He is assisting with the development of the Kerewe Translation Project on Ukwere Island in Lake Victoria, Tanzania.*

## A Great Light

**MRS.** Hawa Conteh is a respected leader in the village of Mambala and the surrounding communities in the Bombali district of northern Sierra Leone.

But it wasn't always so.

Several years ago, Mrs. Conteh, a speaker of the Loko language, was selected to represent her community at a meeting in the district head quarter town of Makeni. At the beginning of the meeting, an announcement was made. "If you cannot read and write, please excuse yourself."

"Shamefully, I had to collect my bag and walk out," said Mrs. Conteh.

This experience prompted Mrs. Conteh to join a Loko literacy class. She can now read and write in Loko and is serving the community in various ways, including acting as representative at district meetings.

"The life of this woman has encouraged many women and children to join the literacy classes in their community," said Momoh S. Kanu, coordinator of the Loko Literacy and Scripture Engagement Project. "Her meaningful contribution and work in the church has made many women to grow spiritually through her teachings. Mrs. Conteh is a great light in the village." **LBT**

*The Loko New Testament was completed in 1983 with the assistance of LBT missionaries. Today, the Loko Literacy and Scripture Engagement Project promotes literacy programs throughout the Loko community with the support of local individuals, churches and organizations. You can also help support literacy programs. Visit [lbt.org/project/literacy-for-life/](http://lbt.org/project/literacy-for-life/) to learn more.*

# Concordia 2017 Mission Event

## National Leader is Featured Speaker

This article includes excerpts from two feature articles in *The Concordian*, published May 10, written by Bob G. Stewart, used by permission.

**A NEAR-CAPACITY** crowd packed the Concordia Community Center on the evening of May 3 in support of Lutheran Bible Translators.

The event featured presentations about the ministry of LBT as well as a catered meal. Saint Paul Lutheran High School provided the music, both vocal and orchestral. Speakers included Director for Development David Snyder, LBT Executive Director Dr. Mike Rodewald and Mart Green, owner of Mardel Christian and Educational Supply and former chairman of the board of Hobby Lobby.

Mart Green shared a short history of both Hobby Lobby and Mardel Christian bookstores before launching into a presentation about why he feels getting the Bible translated into all languages is so very important.

When he started Mardel, Green says he did so thinking it would be a good move from a retail standpoint as well as being a business that could actually change lives. “Then it occurred to us that we could do even more, so we started partnering with the translators to help get the Bibles printed once they were translated,” he said.

“I soon found out that the Bible we were distributing had taken 40 years to translate,” he said. “Not only that, but out of the 30,000 people in the language group it had been translated for, only 1,000 were Christians, and only 400 of those could read. From a business standpoint, that’s not a very good return on investment.

How could I tell the people who worked for us, the people that were giving of their own increase to help translate Bibles in new languages, that it might take 40 years for their giving to come to fruition? Why is this a good thing? Why are we spending money and time doing this?”

When the time came for the distribution ceremony in Guatemala, Green was still thinking about the numbers. That’s when he noticed a man named Gaspar who had waited patiently to receive a copy of the Scriptures. When he was handed the Scriptures, Gaspar did something Green had not seen before or ever expected.

“Gaspar wept,” Green said. “And as I was standing there watching this grown man weep because he now had the Bible in his own language, something unexpected happened to me. I don’t think God has ever spoken to me in an audible voice. But from somewhere inside me—and I know it wasn’t me because I would never be so hard on myself - I heard this question: Why don’t you go over there and tell Gaspar that he’s not a good return on investment?”

“I was thinking about all we had been blessed with,” he said. “Numerous Bibles and Christian bookstores and movies and access to the Word in so many ways. And again a question came: ‘What kind of a return on investment is Mart Green.’”

He said right then and there he made a fresh commitment to spend more time in the study of God’s Word and in prayer on a regular basis. And he became one of the founding members of Every Tribe Every Nation, an alliance of the largest Bible agencies in the world, that enhances and accelerates translation efforts through cooperation.

At the end of the evening, Dr. Rodewald shared a short video of the Nsenga New Testament dedication in Zambia. “It was a joyful and moving occasion, but the need for God’s Word remains great,” he said. “God uses His people to share His Word. Like Mart, we each need to think about where we fit to do the work of God to make sure His mission is accomplished.” 

“...as I was standing there watching this grown man weep...**something unexpected happened to me.**”



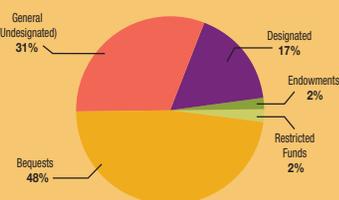
Gaspar wept when he received the Bible in his own language.

## LBT PARTNERSHIP SUPPORT

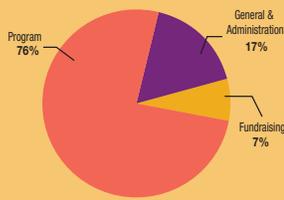
April 1—June 30, 2017

	Unaudited 2nd Quarter	Unaudited Year-to-date
<b>INCOME</b>		
Designated	\$ 286,392	\$ 704,923
General (Undesignated)	521,999	773,089
Restricted Funds	34,882	49,433
Bequests	794,852	1,842,346
Endowments	33,766	127,209
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$ 1,671,892</b>	<b>\$ 3,497,000</b>

**2nd Quarter Income**



**2nd Quarter Expenses**



### EXPENSES

	2nd Quarter	Year-to-date
Program	\$ 660,503	\$ 1,489,802
Administration	144,418	238,587
Fundraising	62,353	130,770
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>867,274</b>	<b>1,859,159</b>
<b>Net Total</b>	<b>\$ 804,618</b>	<b>\$ 1,637,841</b>

NOTE: During the second quarter of 2017, LBT purchased three computers at a cost of \$4,332. These costs are not reflected above.

## 500 Years Later

Continued from page 1

I love being a part of Bible translation. My own understanding of God grows each time I'm exposed to another language and another way to describe God's greatness. As the Folopa people of Papua New Guinea say, "We are dying of the deliciousness of these words!"

It's not just my growing understanding of God that motivates me. I'm proud to be part of the movement that builds a deep sense of value among some of the most devalued peoples of the world. I'm happy when I hear of women who, because they have learned to read the Bible, are no longer misled by false preachers who try to take advantage of them. I feel good when I hear of a person who can confidently know they gave the right change to a buyer in the market because they now are literate, having attended church literacy classes.

500 years later and the Bible continues to bring about good. We will be welcomed into heaven by people who will thank us for making the Bible an open book for them. **LBT**

**Gift Designations** LBT makes every effort to honor donor designation preferences, however, all gifts are subject to the discretion and control of Lutheran Bible Translators.

CUT HERE

## Birthdays

### September

- 2 Marshall Schultz, United States
- 3 Eden Federwitz\*, Ghana
- 4 Kelsey Grulke, Botswana
- 4 Karissa Esala\*, United States
- 11 Carrie Federwitz, Papua New Guinea
- 17 David Snyder, International Offices
- 27 Rebecca DeLoach, United States
- 29 Gideon Grulke\*, Botswana
- 29 Isaac Grulke\*, Botswana

### October

- 8 Jim Laesch, International Offices
- 11 Martin Weber, Cameroon
- 14 Rob Veith, North America

- 14 Jonathan Federwitz, Papua New Guinea
- 25 Becky Grossmann, Liberia
- 26 Linda Gari, International Offices
- 28 Charlotte Brandt, International Offices
- 30 Chuck Tessaro, Nigeria

### November

- 2 Rebecca Rudowske\*, United States
- 13 Michaela Federwitz\*, Ghana
- 22 Leah Federwitz\*, Papua New Guinea
- 22 Rob Hilbert, Botswana
- 28 Andrew Olson, Pre-field
- 29 Sarah Esala, United States

\*missionary kid

CUT HERE

## 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 the **Kalanga Bible translation program** as they work towards the final stages of publication of the complete Bible.
- Pray for the **Shekgalagari translation team** (Pontsho Mosweu, Tshwari Kgomotso, Mical and Rob Hilbert) as they work to translate the New Testament.
- Pray for **Rev. Tim and Lisa Beckendorf** as they connect with prayer and financial partners on a brief furlough in the U.S.

### CAMEROON

- Pray for **Rev. Mike and Kara Kuhn** as they continue to work on the Nizaa New Testament. Pray that God will raise up an individual to serve as a nanny for the Kuhn family in 2018.
- Pray that God would continue to be with the **Nizaa translation team** as the Nizaa Literature Center is being constructed. Pray that it will be a blessing to the Nizaa community with its centralized location.



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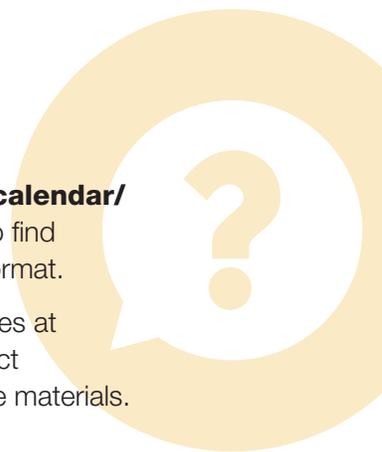
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Executive Director:  
Dr. Mike Rodewald

## DID YOU KNOW...

You can **print your own copy** of the Monthly Prayer Calendar. Visit **[us.lbt.org/contact/prayer-calendar/](http://us.lbt.org/contact/prayer-calendar/)** around the middle of each month to find the next month's calendar in PDF format.

You can also find additional resources at **[lbt.org/contact/](http://lbt.org/contact/)**. Click on "Contact and Resources" for a list of available materials.



### ETHIOPIA

- Pray for the **Konso, Dirayta, Zayse, Ts'amakko, and Ale translation programs** in southwestern Ethiopia. Pray that God would continue to guide and strengthen the teams as they work to translate God's Word into their own languages.

### GHANA

- Pray that God will bless the **Komba Bible translation team**, including **Michael Ersland**, as they continue working on the Old Testament.

### LIBERIA

- Praise God for **Rev. Rich Rudowski** and **Rev. David Federwitz's** recent visit to partners in Liberia.

- Continue to pray that the **Dan, Maan, and Gola Bible translation teams** will work together with perseverance.

### NIGERIA

- Praise God for the success of the **Ikom language cluster's workshop** earlier this year. Pray that they might continue in their collaborative work of translating God's Word.
- Pray that God will continue to bless LBT's international associates **Rev. Kierien Ekpang Ayugha** and **Rev. Linus Otronyi** in their work.



### SIERRA LEONE

- Pray that God would bless **Amy Formella** as she continues in her language and cultural acquisition in the Mende language community.
- Pray for the **Themne translation team** and various church and community leaders as they work together to encourage use and understanding of God's Word in their heart language.
- Pray for a healthy pregnancy for **Ruthie Wagner** and her baby, who is due to be born in October.

### UNITED STATES

- Pray for **Rob and Eshinee Veith** as they continue to transition to living in the U.S. Pray that God will grant His wisdom to Eshinee as she begins her role as LBT's Training Coordinator on October 1st.
- Pray for **Rev. Andrew and Alexis Olson** as they continue their training at the Graduate Institute of Applied Linguistics.
- Pray for **Rev. Carl and Kelsey Grulke** and **Elliot and Serena Derricks** as they meet with prayer and financial partners to prepare for their first field assignments.
- Pray for **Dr. Jim and Susan Kaiser** and **Rev. David and Valerie Federwitz** as they continue in their partnership development in the U.S. while on furlough.

