

THE TESTIMONY

BTL's monthly brief of God's great deeds among His people



The dedication of the Gospel of Matthew in Chichonyi Language

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My thirst was quenched

by Baraka Lewa - Project Officer; Chonyi Language Project

Before the dedication of the gospel of Matthew in the Chichonyi language, Bishop Dickson Jembe had encountered a series of frustrations during his preaching due to the language barrier in his congregation. Many times he walked into homes expectant that lives would be transformed by the grace of God through sharing of God's Word, only to leave an empty and unfulfilled man. One day, in a visit to his home, he shared with me one of his lowest experiences while sharing God's word in the Chonyi villages.

"Prior to receiving my copy of the Scripture portion in the Chonyi language, preaching the word of God especially to those who could not speak either English or Swahili languages was very difficult. I vividly remember one day as I was engaging in door to door evangelism in my community, I met a family who hardly understood the Swahili language. After introducing myself and my agenda, I opened my Swahili Bible to share the message of salvation with them. It was at that time that I realized that I was communicating to a people who could not comprehend what I was saying.

I felt ashamed of myself and at some point I stopped preaching but God gave me courage and strength to conclude the message and to pray with them. When I left that family, I went back home with a heavy heart. Years later, when I heard that the Bible was being translated to the Chichonyi language, I was elated.



Bishop Dickson Jembe at his home making reference to the copy of the Gospel of Matthew in Chichonyi language

In 2016, I finally held the Gospel of Matthew in the Chichonyi language. I felt as if it were a drop of cold water on a thirsty tongue. My preaching changed, there was no more shame, I could boldly declare God's Word. I yearn for the New Testament which my community is about to receive and eventually the full Bible in the Chichonyi language. I often encourage members of my church and the Chonyi speakers to buy at least one copy of the gospel of Matthew so that they can taste the sweetness of God's Word."

*The Chonyi New Testament Final Checks commenced at the beginning of this month. This is the 6th year since the translation of the Bible began. We thank God for the good speed that He has granted to the team.

Jesus met with me at the Jesus Film Show

by Sarah Wario - Project Officer; Waata Language Project

Samuel Wario Yedi is a business man from the Waata community. During one of the Waata Jesus film shows we were airing in the villages, Samuel came to the show while drunk and began uttering some awful words to the viewers, not knowing that God had a reason for us to be showing the film in that particular village. After the show, Samuel went back to his bar and continued with his drinking spree.

When we finished showing the film, we packed our gadgets and went back to our homes. Meanwhile, God was silently speaking to Samuel. He suddenly stopped his drinking habit and even turned his bar to a shop. All this time, Samuel had not realized that God was seeking after him.

In June this year, Rev. Norman Musyuko, a preacher from Msambweni travelled to Samuel's village to evangelize to the Waata community. Due to the Corona virus pandemic, he opted for door to door evangelism and he happened to go to Samuel's home, where he was welcomed.

As Rev. Norman began preaching to Samuel and his family, Samuel opened up about the restless nights he had been experiencing since he watched the Jesus Film in his native language. He narrated the whole story to Rev. Norman, who then told him that God had saved him the very day he watched the film. After this preaching, Samuel decided to accept Jesus Christ as his personal Saviour together with his family.

Indeed we thank God that the Jesus Film in the local languages is a great tool for spreading God's word. Many Waata people have accepted Jesus as their personal Saviour through the Waata Jesus film and the translated gospel of Luke. We thank the Almighty God for them.



A conversation of hope

An interview with Bernard Shango by

Mildred Mmasaba, Project Officer,
Kabarasi Language Project

Mildred: Who is Bernard Shango...

Bernard: My name is Bernard Shango, I come from Lukala which is within the region of Kabarasi in Kakamega County. I grew up without parents, both of them having passed away while I was still young, at the age of 13 years. Being the first born in our family, I had to do whatever it took to fend for my two younger siblings. This made me drop out of school while in standard six. At my age, I do not have any educational certificate; I never sat for any examination to qualify me to have one. I remember the days I used to earn Ksh. 2,500 that I would use to cater for the needs of my two younger siblings. Life was hard, but at least we had our home.

Mildred: Did you have any relatives that would check on you?

Bernard: Yes, sometimes one of my uncles would visit us with food stuff, and really encouraged my siblings to go to school. With his help and my contribution, they managed to finish primary school.

Mildred: How many languages are you familiar with?

Bernard: I am not fluent in speaking English, in fact when I read any literature in the English language, I read it slowly but I do not understand the vocabularies and words. Some of the words I am familiar with and use in English include, immediately, red hundred?

Mildred: (interrupts), what's that?

Bernard: What? red hundred?

Mildred: Yes

Bernard: Oh! It is when you find someone doing something right there and you catch them.

Mildred: Ooh! You mean red handed? (Both laugh)

Bernard: Right now since I am a married man and I have children, whenever I get a text message or anything written in English, I usually ask my daughter to read it for me. The only language that I am familiar with, confident and sure is my language, the Kabarasi.

Mildred: Are you aware of the on-going Bible translation work, about the Bible being translated into Kabarasi?

Bernard: Yes. When I heard of the Bible translation programme into Kabarasi, I was happy. As I mentioned earlier, I am not fluent and I don't really understand the English language well even though I studied up to standard six. I was happy to hear that the word of God is being translated in a language that I can understand without struggle. What I know is, I am not alone, we have a boda boda Sacco (Motor Cycle taxi services) and majority of the people in that Sacco are only comfortable using the Kabarasi language. Some of us have lived our whole lives in Kabarasi, we have never even gone to other big towns like Nairobi, (laughs). We are just here, so I am personally waiting to have my Bible in Kabarasi, who knows I can even become a pastor one day (laughs).

Mildred: Your parting shot?

Bernard: Thank you for what you are doing, and I thank God for remembering the land of Kabarasi. In my church, we have been using the Maragoli Bible, which has got its challenges. We are truly looking forward to having the Kabarasi Bible.

As I end my interview with Bernard, I am truly inspired to continue working hard to ensure that my people get the Bible in our language soon.



This month's prayer points

Chonyi Project - Kilifi County

- Praise God for the Final Checks of the Chonyi New Testament which began early this month. Pray for wisdom, strength and good health as the translation team work together on this cause.
- Pray for Chonyi engagements with stakeholders towards raising local funds to begin Literacy classes.
- Pray for God's intervention for every Kabarasi to be aware of the existing translation work, so that they can be involved in one way or another and that we shall live to see the word of God finally in our language.

Waata Project - Tana River County

Kabarasi Project - Kakamega County

- Praise God for the progress that we have made since the initiation of translation work last year 2019. We have drafted all the four gospels including some of the letters of Paul which are awaiting other stages of translation.
- Praise God for the successful Consultant checking of the Gospel of Luke.
- Pray for God's wisdom as we plan on Consultant checking of the Book of Matthew this Month of October 2020.
- Praise God that the staff are doing well.
- Praise God for the successful drafting of all the New Testament Books with only four books remaining to go through the Consultant checking exercise.
- Praise God for the support that we receive from from the Waata community.
- We look forward to the publication of the Books of Acts, Philemon and Ruth. Pray for the logistics and preparation plans.

Help us give hope to the Unreached



PRAYER



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