



God's word is inspired even in mother tongue

by Onesmus Kamwara – project leader Tharaka

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All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right.

The Tharaka team is currently involved in translating different books within the Old Testament. Recently, together with some members of the community, the team was involved in a reviewing session of the book of Leviticus. A reviewing session is a time when some members of the community are presented with a draft of a translation in order to ensure that its natural and clear to the community that will receive the translated work; they comment on the translation and give suggestion on improvement. The reviewers commented that they felt that the book sounded like it was written by a Tharaka elder for Tharaka people. The sections dealing with clean and unclean foods, purification after child birth and things that make one ritually unclean are very much like Tharaka traditional laws. The reviewers identified with the text and believe the Church will identify with it too.

There was however a challenge when it came to getting the names of birds in chapter 11 of Leviticus. Translators had a hard time in this section. The Tharaka team members are considering to get pictures of the birds mentioned and show them to the reviewers, they may recognize the birds and give them their names.



one of the kenyan birds flying over a homestead.



A reviewers session

The team confesses witnessing the role of the Holy Spirit in inspiring Scripture in translation. They would work at translating a passage of Scripture, refer to resources available for their use and ask around for suggestions on how to translate some concepts. After praying and going to rest, one of the team members would just remember the right expression. They took this as an inspiration by the Holy Spirit. The team also at one point encountered difficulties in translating the concept of the various skin diseases which run through Leviticus 13 and 14. After struggling with the passages, an inspired thought came to one of the translators and he then had an idea of the right way to translate them e.g. the passage on the cleansing ceremony after one was healed of a skin disease. Expressing the elaborate details of how the priest would cleanse a healed man was a challenge but one translator remembered a traditional cleansing ceremony he had heard of and it was easy to borrow the expressions and the names of items like twigs. (These twigs were used in both the Tharaka and the Jewish cleansing ceremonies). With the newly remembered expressions, the team got a break.. These experiences confirmed to them that God was working with them in their work of translation.

WORD FROM THE GENERAL SECRETARY

"Great is Thy Faithfulness" remains one of the old hymns loved and sang by many, not only in the present generation but also over the past centuries. As I reflect over the year 2011, I cannot fail to sing that song again and again!

To many of us, the year 2011 was a challenging one. As a country, we went through an economic down turn; coupled with very high inflation which increased our 'cost of doing business' significantly. At the same time, many of the communities we serve suffered from severe drought and famine which was closely followed by floods. Many people lost their livelihood in these economic and natural tragedies.

During such times, the natural thing to do is to focus our attention on the difficulties and lose sight on what God is doing beyond those difficulties. Friends, I praise the Lord that despite the changing times, as an organisation our God remained faithful and work continued throughout the year. Seasons might have changed, BTL as an organisation can attest to the fact that our God does not change and because of His great love we were not consumed by the changing times of 2011. He says in Malachi 3:6 *"For I am the Lord, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed..."* Allow me to walk you through a few areas of God's faithfulness to us and the impact BTL is making in the communities we are serving:

Scriptures Come Alive: 2011 marked a culmination of 19 years of hard work, prayer and waiting for the Suba New Testament. 15th of April 2011 will remain a memorable day to many Suba speakers. They turned up in large numbers and not even the hot sun of Mfangano Island could dampen their spirits as they gathered to mark such a memorable day and give thanks to God for the 19 years of His faithfulness. The hunger for the Word of God was evident later when many people walked away after the ceremony with more than one copy of the New Testament in their hands. Again, 2011 remains a memorable year for the Samburu community. For the first time since the creation of the world, the Samburu people received with great joy the Gospel of Luke in their language on 6th August 2011. I am also delighted to know that soon the Sabaot community will receive the complete Bible. This will be such a milestone both for the Sabaot community and for BTL, being the first complete Bible to be translated by BTL. Friends, there is something that the Word of God does when it is received in communities; the church in Suba and Samburu has become more vibrant and my prayer is that more lives will be transformed to the glory of God.



Rev. Peter Munguti

More Ministry Opportunities: I'm grateful to God that despite the challenges experienced in the year, He presented us with opportunities to minister to the communities we serve. Following drought and famine in the country, our 'Famine Relief Appeal' to our partners raised about KShs. 4 million which we used to purchase relief food for Daasanach, Aweer, Ilwana and Orma communities. Thank you partners for touching lives in these communities through your act of love.

Our Territories Expand! This reminds me of the prayer that Jabez made in 1Chronicles 4:10 *"Ofi, that you would bless me and enlarge my territory...and God granted his request!"* In an effort to see work begin in every language group which needs a translation before the year 2025, we saw the Lord answer a similar prayer for us. We began Old Testament translation work in Duruma language group and language development work among the Waata people. I am happy to note that soon Marakwet Old Testament translation will start. Our prayer is that we will be able to begin work in the remaining languages in Kenya by the year 2017. Pray with us that the Lord will make it possible.

As you read this *Call of Kenya*, I pray that it will not only inform you about the lives God is touching through the Ministry of BTL, but that it will also lead you to celebrate God's faithfulness with us and continue praying for the ministry. As we face the year 2012, I am confident that the Lord shall do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to His power that is at work within us. I wish you a fruitful year in the Lord.

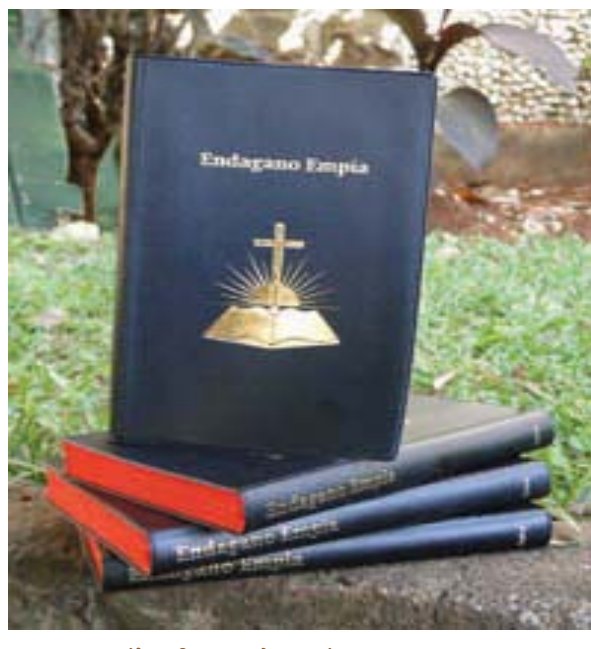
THE COMPLETE SUBA NEW TESTAMENT

In a very colorful ceremony, on 15th April 2011, BTL launched and dedicated the complete Suba New testament. About 2,000 people, young and old, men and women, youth and children all gathered to witness the event. The Chief Guest at the function was Pastor Paul Muasya, Executive Director, Seventh Day Adventist Church, East Africa Region. Other guests, who attended the occasion include Edwyn Kiptinness, BTL Board Chairman, Mike Toupin, Vice President for Development at The Seed Company, Bill Lineberger from Calvary Church, Marvin Hyde, BTL Board and Staff members and partners from Kenya, USA, UK and other countries. The guests were treated to song and dance as young and old danced and sang joyfully to welcome their New Testament.

It was significant that the new Scriptures were brought into the arena in a boat - symbolizing the rich culture of the Suba people. According to Naphtali Mattah, the Suba Project Leader - the boat is very symbolic to the Suba people; it represents their means of transport from the various islands where the Suba people are situated,



The boat, the islands' means of transport & livelihood; used to bring in the new Scriptures.



The Suba New Testament

its their connection to the mainland, it is also their source of livelihood. Tobias Otsunga the Master of Ceremony and a one-time literacy worker for the project, was excited when stating that the boat was now bringing a very special guest, the Scriptures in the Suba language with the power to change the spiritual lives of the people. Pastor Paul Muasya encouraged the community to develop a habit of reading the Bible in their homes. He narrated how one of his children had asked him why it was just the Suba New Testament and not the entire Bible and his response was "half a loaf is better than none."

We praise God for the availability of the New Testament to the approximately 150,000 Suba speaking people. Before the day of the launch, close to 700 people had already pledged to buy a copy of the New Testament. Pray that the lives of the Suba people will continue to be transformed as they read the Scriptures in their own language, happy that Katonda (God) speaks Suba.

KANDE'S STORY – AN INITIATIVE THAT IS CHANGING LIVES

Kande's Story is a HIV/AIDS initiative to sensitise community members on HIV and AIDS in schools, religious gatherings and social forums. BTL hopes to increase awareness of the facts about AIDS, the Biblical perspectives of responding to the HIV/AIDS challenge, increase testing for HIV, increase abstinence and faithfulness, increase use of protection, and more programmes to be launched to care for those affected and infected. In one of BTL'S Literacy projects in the coast, a HIV/AIDS workshop was held last year and some people were attending such a workshop for the first time. They were happy to learn how to take care of both the infected and affected members of their community. It was exciting for the facilitators to help the participants get over the stigma they had for the HIV/AIDS affected people. *'We feared the sick just like one fears death itself... I am glad we can take care of them without the fear of contracting the disease,'* said one of them. Most members of the community believed that HIV/AIDS was as a result of witchcraft. With the help of culturally relevant skits and songs, the participants got equipped to help their community members get rid of this belief which was a contributing factor to the high rate of spreading HIV/AIDS in the community. It was good to see attitude change in this area.

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Inset: participants having a group discussion

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Participants praised the workshop's ability to break the very hard scientific concepts to a very pleasant language that they best understood. The few who had attended other HIV/AIDS seminars had a lot of praise for this particular one because of its simplified nature. However, amidst the excitement, there were challenging issues as well. It was very sad for the facilitators to realize that they could not change some of the participant's attitudes; for instance, they all could not agree to Voluntary Counseling and Testing. They believed that knowing their status would weaken them and hence cause them to die earlier than they anticipated. The men in the meeting could also not change their attitude towards wife inheritance. They believed that this was a cultural obligation and thus could not run away from it.

UPCOMING EVENTS

1. **Dedication of the Sabaot complete Bible on 10th June 2012.**

2. **Run for the Bibleless on Saturday 10th March, 2012 at Nairobi Primary School starting from 7:00am. The Chief Guest will be Dr. Isaac Kalua, Chairperson and Founder of Green Africa foundation. The registration charges are Kshs 1000 / USD 12.60. You can register and get your free T-shirts at the following outlets:-**

- Biblea Bookshop-Re-insurance Plaza.
- Wakestar Bookshop NPC Valley Road and Rehani House
- Keswick Books and Gifts Shops:- Sarit Center-Westlands, Prestige Plaza-Ngong Road and Nkruma Road-Mombasa.

3. **Open Day- during the Run for the Bibleless on 10th March 2012 at Nairobi Primary School, BTL will have display stands of the various projects that are underway throughout Kenya.**

After the workshop the facilitators saw the need for more effort to be put in talking to these participants on a one on one basis; perhaps they could change their attitudes regarding wife inheritance and start getting tested to know their status.

In another one of the Kande projects, a pastor recounted how one pregnant mother experienced difficulties when giving birth. The people who were nearby could not touch her as they assumed that she was infected by HIV/AIDS; they believed that it was the condition that was causing her to have complications. The pastor reminisced of how the lady almost lost her life because of misinformation about HIV/AIDS and the related stigma. He therefore appreciated BTL for organizing a workshop and promised to help in fighting the spread of HIV/AIDS by sharing the information he had learnt in the workshop with the community.

Written by: Jacob Njagi, Ilwana Project Leader and Christine Wafula

QUOTABLE QUOTES:

"I heard a man preaching in Kigiryama, reading from the New Testament and I said that God must be real. He knows our language!...what wasted years!" She says, staring into the horizon. "Life without Kigiry! How vain! I wish I could live again. But I thank God that he has saved me before I die". **An old lady - Giryama project**

"I have read all these Scripture portions! It has been very exciting to read the word of God in my language. I understand the message more clearly than when I read it in other languages. Reading these Scripture portions has made me thirst for God's Word more than ever before. When will the complete Suba Bible be available?" **Zabulon Muloga a middle-aged Suba man living in Mfangano Island.**

"The more I read, the more I discover God's will for me and it keeps me spiritually young despite my white hair! And now that God has shown me this great treasure of salvation, I am now ready to go to my Father in Heaven. I can also say like Simion, "Now Lord, let your servant die in peace" **Etuish Enos Pokomo lady.**

"My grand children should not miss the message I am hearing from our Sabaot Speaking Radio. If children can hear the good news being preached through this radio in our language today, I think good changes will be experienced in our community". **Lady from the Sabaot Project**

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