



Bible Translation & Literacy (BTL)

Ilchamus New Testament A NEW BEGINNING FOR THE ILCHAMUS PEOPLE



AFTER 16 YEARS OF TRANSLATION



It was the morning of Saturday, 8th October 2022 at Loitip Primary School in Marigat, Baringo County; the dedication venue of the Ilchamus New Testament. As is the custom in any African setting when people are preparing to receive important guests; a beehive of activities could be seen all around. Smoke billowed from one corner of the venue, where food was being prepared. The Ilchamus old men were seen slaughtering a goat that would later be used as the crowning “cake” to be cut as part of the ceremony. One of the old men chopped sticks, which I was made to understand are the special forks that would be used to serve the “cake” after the cake cutting ceremony. The roads leading to the venue were busy as guests made their entrance to the event. The young children also arrived, dressed in the Ilchamus regalia fit for their age, the women were seen assembling and adorning their neck chains and the men moving around with their signature walking stick at hand.

This quickly phased out and there was a shift in the atmosphere, as shouts of praise and joy filled the air. The choirs and children came in, dancing from different directions and soon the first

procession got into the venue. This was the day that the Lord had made, a day that we had all been eagerly waiting for.

The different aspects of the journey of the translation of the Ilchamus New Testament were narrated in various speeches. BTL’s National Director, Rev. Peter Munguti took time to highlight the long journey of 16 years that this translation had taken, having been dotted with various challenges of insecurity in the region and incidences of drought and displacement that the community was at times faced with. In spite of all this, he appreciated and commended the community for making it possible to have the Bible translated into their language. In addition, he acknowledged the tireless efforts of

the translation team who had weathered through the long and winding road of translation. Rev. Dr. Robert Lang’at, Bishop of Africa Gospel Church of Kenya and who was the presiding Bishop at the dedication ceremony also took time to appreciate BTL for a work well done in providing the Scriptures. He later reminisced about a journey that he had made to the community 8 years before, saying, “In 2014, on this hill, I prayed over stones but today here stands a great school for girls on top of this Ilchamus ground overlooking Lake Baringo. As the community receives the word of God in their language today, may it become a light to their feet for a great spiritual, social and economic transformation.” He stated.

At the point of the first public reading of the Ilchamus Scriptures, shouts of ‘amen,’ rend the air; an affirmation of the sense of belonging, setting and a new dawn for the community. The New Testament copies were also received with so much joy; some community members holding them on their chests and one key highlight was one of an Ilchamus lady who kissed her copy upon receiving it.

Professionals from the community led by Dr. Solomon Letangule appreciated the impact that the Scriptures would bring to the community. “The launch of these Scriptures is historic. The word of God

will help in preserving culture and weed out negative practices and vices that are hindering the community from prospering and progressing.”

As we were about to conclude the event, torrents of rain fell from the skies. It had not rained in that region for several months and while we drove away, it became apparent that the rains had only seemingly fallen on the dedication grounds, possibly an indication of God’s covenant to the Ilchamus people, as written in His word, “I will be with you always, even until the end of this age (the world).” Indeed, the entrance of God’s Word was a symbol of life-giving water!

We praise God that beyond this New Testament, the Old Testament translation work which already commenced last year is continuing and we are hopeful that the Ilchamus community will soon have a complete Bible in their Language! Till then, the New Testament will continue to minister to the lives of the community. May this word of God go forth in power in the Ilchamus land.

We wish to greatly appreciate all our partners who have supported the translation of this New Testament. It would not have been possible on our own, but through your help, we can testify of God’s faithfulness among the Ilchamus community. To God be the glory!

Written by Daisy Kilel, BTL Communications Officer and Executive Assistant to the National Director