



The Word For The World

BIBLE TRANSLATORS

*The **vision** of The Word for the World Bible Translators (TWFTW) is the glory of God through transformed lives by the power of his Word in everyone's heart language.*

*The **mission** of TWFTW is to enable persons, ministries and organizations from language communities that do not have the Bible in their own language yet to take responsibility for Bible translation and related activities and to ensure its availability and accessibility.*

2017 INTERNATIONAL PRESIDENT'S REPORT¹

It is my joy to share the 2017 highlights of God's work through *TWFTW* as we pursue our vision of translating the Bible for 500 Bible-less people groups by 2050.

BIBLE TRANSLATION PROJECTS²

Bible Translation

We are involved in 109 Bible translations in progress in Africa, Asia and Europe. Five of these translations began in 2017 for the Bhilali, Bhumiya, Mehra and Powari people groups of India and for the Maro people in Ethiopia. All 325 of our Bible translators are indigenous to the people groups for whom they are translating. *TWFTW* also assisted other agencies to make progress on many of their Bible translation projects.

Bible Translation Consultation

TWFTW now has ten full-time consultants – six international consultants, three national entity consultants, and one local consultant (a local consultant can work independently in checking translations against the Greek and/or Hebrew in a specific project, or project

¹ *TWFTW's* financial statements are available upon request.

² For details on the progress of *TWFTW's* Bible translations and our work in various countries and languages, please see our Status of *TWFTW* Bible Translation Projects Report or visit our website at twftw.org.

cluster, assigned by his or her supervisor). We also continue to save time and money by checking as many as ten translations at the same time.

PUBLICATION AND DISTRIBUTION

The Sakachep people of India now have the New Testament in their language! This was *TWFTW's* first New Testament translation in Asia. When we first entered the Sakachep villages in 2012, there was no standardized written language, no literature except for a songbook, and no one trained in the skills needed to translate Scripture. In October, 15,000 copies (printed in partnership with *New Life Literature* in Sri Lanka) were dedicated and distributed among the people. We rejoice that God's transforming Word has been made available to the Sakachep.

Additionally, in Ethiopia, our translations of the Bible into the Gamo and Gofa languages, as well as our New Testament translations for the Oyda people in Ethiopia, the Lambya language community in Malawi and the Taabua people in the Democratic Republic of Congo were recorded in audio format by *Davar Partners International (DPI)*.

TRAINING

Bible Translators

We praise God that in 2017, we were able to conduct 17 training events in Ethiopia, Sudan, Tanzania, Zambia, India and Slovakia. The 364 students enrolled in our Bible translator training programme are from 14 countries. With the addition of 9 Tanzanian students who graduated in September, we now have 190 graduates of *TWFTW's* Diploma in Bible Translation (DBT) programme.

This year, we had our first DBT training event in Sudan! The *Episcopal Church of Sudan* – Diocese of Khartoum – and *TWFTW* partnered together to assist 21 students representing 13 languages to learn Bible translation principles.

Bible Translation Consultants

Our consultant development plan includes post-graduate studies and internships especially designed to help indigenous leaders become Bible translation consultants. At present, we have 10 individuals enrolled for post-graduate studies with the *South African Theological Seminary (SATS)*. *TWFTW* provides academic supervision for the students pursuing Master's and Doctoral studies.

In addition, we have 19 consultants-in-training (CITs) from Africa and Asia. In November and December, we held a consultant training event in Bangalore, India for 23 CITs and candidate consultants from *TWFTW*, *North East Centre for Training And Research* (NECTAR), *New Life Computer Institute* and *Beulah Ministries*. All of our post-graduate

students and CITs are contributing to the work of Bible translation in various ways.

We also recognised Gudrun Rogler from Germany and Pierre van Vuuren working in Slovakia as national entity consultants, and Tessema Forsido (CIT with *TWFTW Ethiopia*) as a local consultant. It is exciting to see the Lord growing this facet of our work.

PROMOTIONS

We thank God for the makeover of the *TWFTW* website. This upgrade has made it easier for supporters to get photos and stories on the remarkable work being done in the field. We also produced our organizational newsletter more frequently and distributed it more widely in English, German and Polish. Additionally, due to the excellent work of two of our national communications officers, we have significantly increased our use of social media to reach more people with our vision for Bible translation.

SCRIPTURE ENGAGEMENT

In South India, Bible stories, developed from translated Scriptures, were used during summer school to reach out to over 300 children. Because the materials were in their own language, the attendance of the children increased day by day as the word spread. This effort allowed many families in the community to be introduced to Bible Scriptures. In North India, Sunday School classes and Vacation Bible School in the churches of the Asur, Birhor and Birjia people have resulted in an increase in the number of believers in all three communities.

In Slovakia, about 70 children and leaders from the towns of Hlinné and Lesiček are learning Bible stories and memorizing Scripture in their language of Eastern Slovak Romani. At these Bible clubs, they learn discipline, teamwork and honesty through games and activities that incorporate God's Word. Scripture engagement has also begun among the Roma in the village of Červenica using the Romani New Testament. Many outreaches have taken place and people listen as if they have never heard Bible stories. Several people thus far have responded to the Gospel message with saving faith in God.

LITERACY

TWFTW literacy work in Ethiopia (for the Dawro, Gofa, Guji and Maale people), Malawi (for the Lambya and Sena peoples) and India is going well.

In Ethiopia, we provided training to 206 church ministers and leaders of the Aari people on how to read the Scriptures in both Latin and Ethiopic script. Additionally, we had 6,364 people successfully complete our literacy classes in Ethiopia, of which 1,197 people accepted Jesus Christ as their personal saviour!

In Odisha State in India, we have initiated literacy work with the Gata/Dedai people who are 98% Hindu and very hostile towards Bible translation work. Despite this opposition, we met with community leaders and government officials in the area, and conducted a formal linguistic survey. The result has been the creation of a trial orthography and Pre-Primer and Primer textbooks for this language community. We anticipate recruiting teachers and enrolling students soon.

In North East India, much-awaited Primers have been printed in the Bugun and Tutsa languages. The people expressed their heartfelt gratitude to *NECTAR* and *TWFTW* for this major language development for both people groups. Also, eighteen members of the Bugun, Tutsa and Tagin tribes received training on how to teach the Primers to literacy students. These trainees will, in turn, train other teachers in their respective locations.

PARTNERSHIPS

We continued to work alongside many partners in the great work of bringing God's Word to all people. Our indigenous partners include churches, ministries, universities, Bible Societies, and numerous other organizations. Our international partners include the *Forum of Bible Agencies International* and regional Forums of Bible Agencies, *Every Tribe Every Nation (ETEN)*, *Illuminations*, *Seed Company*, *SIL*, *American Bible Society*, *United Bible Societies*, *Pioneer Bible Translators*, and organizations that make the Scriptures available in various formats such as *Digital Bible Library*, *Faith Comes By Hearing*, *Davar Partners International* and *The Jesus Film Project*.

Many of our partners are starting to recognize *TWFTW* as a global leader in indigenous Bible translation work. Gary Nelson, chairperson of *ETEN*, recently said, "I have had more positive comments about *TWFTW* in the last three months than ever before." And Samuel Chiang, CEO of *Seed Company*, also recently said to me, "Wherever your next horizon is, you will find me standing right next to you."

TESTIMONIES

A 90-year old man of the Matengo-speaking tribe of southern Tanzania, had lived alone with no one to care for him. Two *TWFTW* members helped him to get food and to get cleaned up. After hearing about the God's love from the book of Mark in Matengo, he prayed to accept Jesus Christ as his Saviour. The Project Leader for the Matengo Bible translation team continued to make sure the man had food, stayed healthy, and could understand the Gospel. Three months later, the man passed away and went to be with the Lord. We were told that, in the last few months of his life, he was full of joy such as he had never experienced before he found the love of Jesus. He said that he had seen Jesus through the Word of God, and also through those who brought him food and clothing.

At a funeral in the Dawro language community in Ethiopia, a non-believer (raised as a Christian, but who had walked away from the faith 15 years ago) heard a Dawro evangelist

read and preach from the Dawro New Testament. The unbelieving man said to the evangelist, “[T]oday, what I heard from the Scriptures in my heart language has made clear everything for me; it touched my heart.” [Sic] Then the man repented, and – along with his family of eight – committed his life to Christ!

The Zigua people of Tanzania continue to praise God for the New Testament (published in 2015) in their heart language. In the past, many people could not understand the Bible readings and preaching which were offered only in Swahili. A Zigua pastor said that, since the New Testament has become available in Zigua, the number of members of her church has risen from 15 to over 70 and counting! Muslims and Christians alike come together in her village to read the Scriptures in their own language.

ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGES

The organization's Executive Management Team recommended, and our International Board concurred with, the extension of my term of service as International President to at least July 2020. In addition to this change, the following appointments were made in 2017:

- Kobus van Aswegen is now serving as the Regional Director of Asia
- Dr Davies Malembeka was selected as the Southern Africa Regional Director
- Manoj Mathew has been appointed the South Asia Regional Director
- Jonathan van Aswegen is now serving as South East Asia Regional Director
- Pastor Isaac Sinkolongo was chosen to be the National Director of Zambia
- And we welcome Mikko Tassia to *TWFTW* as the National Director for Finland

These changes have allowed us to expand our organizational capacity and to explore new geographic locations for the work of Bible translation.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

We thank God and all who have partnered with us in the work of worldwide Bible translation. We also declare once again that we cannot do it alone, and that we are completely dependent upon God to do our part as a service organization working alongside others to fulfil the Great Commission. We believe it can be done!

Soli Deo Gloria!

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