

CALL OF KENYA

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SAMBURU: A DIFFERENT CHRISTMAS!

Inoto e Yesu to Nkutuk ee Sampurr

It is a different Christmas for the Samburu community! For the first time, the Christmas story will be told in the Samburu language. The translation team has been working tirelessly to make it special—a Christmas to remember. They will hear the Christmas story in their hearts' language.

For a long time the Samburu people used a Bible from a neighbouring language, said to be related to their own. Apart from a few church leaders, most Samburu people have found it difficult to read and understand. In addition, there is a difference in meanings of similar words between the two languages, some words are said to have acquired a derogative, even vulgar meaning in Samburu language. It is against this backdrop that the Samburu Bible Translation Project was begun in 2004.

Today, the team's selfless efforts are bearing fruit. *Inoto e Yesu to Nkutuk ee Sampurr*, a Christmas

booklet with scripture portions drawn from Luke chapters 1 and 2 is being published. This is also the first ever Scriptural material in the Samburu language.

The first batch is expected to reach at least eighty congregations. This will



be approximately three thousand people. All in one Christmas season! Burdened by high insecurity and episodes of famine for most part of this year, we can only pray that the Christmas story will flood the Samburu community with God's love and peace. The team is currently

focusing on the translation of the Gospel of Luke in readiness for the production of the Jesus film in Samburu language. **BT**

Pray that this shall be indeed a different Christmas that will bring such a transformation amongst the Samburu people.

MOUNT ELGON: Taking Pain to the Cross

³⁵*Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword?*
³⁷*No, in all these things we are*

more than conquerors through him who loved us.

Romans 8:35, 37 (NIV)

This verse bore a lot of meaning as they provided an answer to a question that many people in Mount Elgon had so often asked: "If God loves us, why do we suffer?" For a period of time, the area had been uninhabitable. The residents had become homeless, loved

ones died, living in fear was a reality, and the area was covered by a blanket of unsettlement. Life was no longer the same. But this is changing.

In a recent **trauma healing workshop**, organized by **SIL (a sister organization of BTL)** the participants drawing from biblical



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truths, spent some time together getting rid of a painful past and heart wounds. The above verse set the floor for the participants' discussions. One by one, they recounted their bitter ordeals. Rape, death of loved ones, loved ones who they never got an opportunity to bury, chopped off body parts, homelessness, children born out of rape ... the list was endless. Sadness filled the room, tears flowed freely and some were choked by emotions.

Symbolic illustrations drawn by the hurting participants were even more moving. One man drew an illustration of huge men versus a small boy. The huge men represented

his tormenters while the small boy was him. He had felt small in the hands of his tormentors despite him being a grown up man.

After sharing the bitterness, the rage, the pain and the hatred, it was time to do something about it. They held group prayers and took their pains to the cross. A symbolic wooden handmade cross was placed in front of the seminar hall. Participants then walked forward, nailed papers on which they had written down their pains onto this cross and later on buried them. There was a great sense of relief! One person said, "I feel like I have offloaded all the baggage that has been weighing me down". Another

said, "I came full of bitterness, hate and doubt of God's love and goodness in my life, but going through this session, I feel healed ... I'm free."

As they partook of the Holy Communion, living together in unity was emphasized. Each participant promised to spread the great message; the message of forgiveness and taking the pains to the cross as individuals and as a community. **✠**

Please pray for healing for the people of Mount Elgon; for those who are hurting and for those who are guilty as individuals and as members of a community.

From the General Secretary's Desk

“If you read through the entire Bible, you die! If you read through the whole Bible, you lose your mind!” This is what I learnt from conversations with people during the Bible Reading Marathon. I was surprised to learn that there is a myth out there which insinuates that one cannot read the Bible from Genesis to Revelations and live or retain sanity! This is obviously one of the deceiver's schemes to discourage people from reading the Word of God.



John Ommani reading a portion in his language during the Bible Reading Marathon

The Bible Reading Marathon, organized by the Forum of Bible Agencies in Kenya (FOBA) took place from 7th to 12th September. People took turns to read word by word, verse by verse, book by book every day; morning, noon, evening and night. In a country where people are more familiar with overnight prayers, it was good to have overnights also dedicated to Scripture reading during the Bible Reading Marathon.

The reading was open to the public, and different people read in different languages. In all, over 27 languages were used in the course of the week. These included among others portions from *Āraruut nyoo Rēēl*, (the newly dedicated Marakwet New Testament), *Kirũkanĩro Kĩyerũ* (the Tharaka New Testament) and *Kilagane Kisha* (the Giryama New Testament).

Among many lessons learnt, this was a good reminder for me that the Bible is indeed a book for everyone! Regardless of one's social status or educational background. No matter one's prowess in reading, or lack of it! We had people from all walks of life participate in the reading. From the very well educated, who came from offices in various sectors, to some who came straight from a nearby construction site. All these read

the Scriptures in their own style, a language of their choice and at their own pace.

This issue of the *Call of Kenya* focuses on Scripture Use. Apart from translation, BTL seeks to promote access and use of Scripture for all people. BTL ensures accessibility of Scriptures by making it available in various languages as well as empowering speakers of these languages to be able to read. But, the Bible is not only meant to be read and understood but also to be applied in our daily lives. It should not only be used in church services but also applied in our homes and in the market place.

As you read this column, how is your Bible reading habit? Just as we need food for our physical bodies, we must also feed on God's Word every day. It is a very important Christian discipline. I invite you to pray with BTL as we work with communities to promote the use of Scriptures in every sphere of their lives.

Lastly, several people have asked how they can do a Bible Reading Marathon in their churches and towns. Please write to us, and we will be happy to assist you **✠**

Mundara Muturi
General Secretary BTL

MARAKWET: The Youth get a Taste of Ārāruut nyoo Rēēl!

August 4th to 9th was a special week for youths in Marakwet: Sports Action Ministry. Led by a team of eight young people from **Athletes in Action Holland**, all the young people did was sports. They grouped, re-grouped, trained and played volleyball, soccer and other ball games. It was time to have fun. Some came because curiosity got the better of them while for others the fun was too much to miss.

The crowds of young people grew daily. Seizing the opportunity, break times were turned into wonderful moments of sharing God's Word. Scripture readings were done from the Marakwet New Testament, *Ārāruut nyoo Rēēl*. One could tell by how they listened attentively, that the Word was ministering to them.

The grand finale was a competition between all the participating teams formed earlier in the week. The top three winners were awarded. In addition, each player was



given a copy of the Marakwet New Testament. What would be a better gift especially when Christmas is approaching? Many young people gave their lives to the Lord in the big crusade hosted on the same day. Glory to God and thanks to the Athletes in Action Sports Ministry for their efforts to reach the youth through sports. [eth](#)

Please pray for the Marakwet Community especially the youth for proficiency to read and write in their language.

THARAKA: Telling the OneStory of the Bible Kîitharaka

OneStory Global Vision

Approximately two-thirds of the world's population processes information orally. Some of them are oral communicators out of necessity in that they cannot process information from print. Others may have some level of literacy but may not use these skills to process more complex information such as is in the Bible. For these oral communities, life lessons are processed by observation, participation and oral communication. It is against this backdrop of rich folklore that the one OneStory of the Bible was birthed, seeking to communicate God's Word through story telling.

The global vision of the OneStory initiative is to spark a global revolution in the availability of God's Word to oral cultures by the year 2020. Through this initiative, all unreached and Bibleless people groups will hear

and respond to the gospel, resulting in vibrant, indigenous and fast multiplying churches.

OneStory of the Bible in Kîitharaka

We can reach more Tharaka people. We can tell the Bible stories in Kîitharaka. We all love to hear stories. We love to tell stories. Stories can reach all people – young, old and even those who do not know how to read or write.

This is why the OneStory project began in Tharaka. Two years later, the team can only marvel at God's goodness. "It has been a time well spent", says the two OneStory BTL staff members – Wairison Mbuthia and Geoffrey Gikunda.

"When we began, we had to learn Kitharaka. Most of the time, we got the intonations wrong, but we were


determined. Nothing could stop what we believed will be our contribution in the Kingdom of God among the Tharaka people. Today, we can engage in conversations fairly well. This has really been helpful in our work", they add.

Besides learning the language, the team has made such progress in crafting Bible stories in Kîitharaka. We can count twenty two stories so far. Most of these have gone through the rigorous process of preparing the story, recording with Tharaka speakers telling the story, back translating, anchoring, transcribing and consultant checking. Some of these processes are time consuming and laborious. For instance, anchoring involves supporting every line in the story with a relevant Bible verse. This ensures the story remains Biblically sound. Mbuthia says, "We are committed to a glorious end-Tharaka people being transformed

by God's Word presented to them through Bible stories”.

***“We are committed to a glorious end
– Tharaka people being transformed
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through Bible stories”***

He continues to narrate that, “As we craft stories, we have found it more meaningful to train people to come up with Bible stories and use them on their own. The results are amazing. The over thirty two youths trained are enthusiastic to use the stories for evangelism and as

great opportunities to share God's Word. They all have promised to start small fellowships in their churches out of these trainings. We thank God for this development. Our immediate plans are to continue training the youths and show them some of the avenues that would be suitable for them to share the stories. This will be in their churches, schools, home fellowships and all over Tharaka! 

“We will sincerely appreciate your prayers as we labour for a huge harvest in Tharaka through OneStory project.”

Mbuthia and Geoffrey

Upcoming Events

1. The Journey programme on February 13th, 2010 at NPC Buruburu.
2. The Open Day and the official opening of BTL's new office block, March 6th, 2010.
3. Run for the Bibleless on 5th, June 2010.

*Merry
Christmas
&
Happy New
Year 2010*

CALL OF KENYA is a quarterly publication of the *Bible Translation & Literacy, East Africa*. It seeks to encourage the involvement of the Christian public in vital ministry of getting God's Word to the smaller language groups of Kenya.



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