

## LUTHERAN BIBLE TRANSLATORS TALKING POINTS

### **The Problem:**

6 Billion people in the world speak 6,909 languages.

Of those 6,909 spoken languages, only 2,479 have all or a portion of the Bible

451 languages.....complete Bible  
1,185 languages.....complete New Testament only  
843 languages.....only some portion of Scripture

4,430 spoken languages in the world have no Scripture.

Worldwide, an estimated 350 million people claim one of these 4,430 languages as their mother tongue. That's more than the population of the U.S. and Canada.

### **Lutheran Bible Translators Solution:**

*"The mission of LBT is to help bring people to faith in Jesus Christ by making the Word of God available to those who do not yet have it in the language of their hearts."*

LBT missionaries work with churches and individuals in host countries. Together we translate the Word of God into the heart language of the people. We are heavily involved in literacy and Scripture Engagement efforts, and seek to communicate the Gospel using appropriate local media.

To LBT Bible Translation, Scripture Engagement and Literacy efforts are vital. God's message works best, and is understood the easiest when it is communicated in the mother tongue of the people we are attempting to reach. You should not have to learn another language to read and understand the Word of God.

LBT recruits people who want to become missionaries. We train, equip, supply and help support these missionaries

47 LBT missionaries + 33 LBT associate missionaries = 80 Total missionaries

LBT's missionaries are working on 22 Bible translations, 59 Scripture Engagement programs and four Language Development programs covering 51 languages in 15 countries on five continents.

LBT missionaries serve or manage projects in: Australia, Asia, Thailand, Papua New Guinea, Liberia, Ghana, Cameroon, Botswana, Namibia, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Côte d'Ivoire, Brazil, Ecuador, Guatemala, Mexico, and the United States.

Since its founding in 1964. LBT missionaries, working with partner churches and national partners in host countries have translated 32 New Testaments.

Because of those 32 translations, 7 million more people have or had access to the Good News of Salvation in their mother tongue.... their heart language.

We expect that LBT missionaries will have helped translate at least one New Testament by the end of 2010... bringing our total to 33.

Three new missionary teams were appointed and started partnership development early this year.

In 2010, 36 individuals interested in becoming missionaries attend free two-and-a-half day workshop (I.D.I.O.M. – In Depth Investigation of Missions) at LBT in Aurora. Two I.D.I.O.M. workshops are being planned for June and August of 2011.

The period from 2006 through 2010 is the most productive period in the history of LBT. 10 New Testaments have been or will be translated and dedicated.

Koban	Papua New Guinea	2006
Kwanja	Cameroon	2006
Anufo	Ghana	2007
Kriol	Australia	2007
Ayta Mag-anchi	Philippines	2007
Vuté	Cameroon	2007
Moba	Togo	2008
Kono	Sierra Leone	2008
Ipili	Papua New Guinea	2008
Khoekhoegowab	Namibia	2010
Dhimba	Namibia	2011

### **LBT is Not Resting on its Laurels:**

By 2014, our 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary, LBT is striving to increase the number of missionaries we have in the field and to start a substantial number of new language projects

### **How Can People Help?**

- Pray for LBT, for LBT missionaries, and for our international colleagues.
- Help support LBT with your offerings, gifts and donations as well as with your prayers.
- Consider serving your congregation as its LBT representative.
- Consider becoming a missionary, or, if you know of someone who has expressed an interest, or who you think might make a good missionary, have them contact LBT.

### **What Does It Take to Become a Missionary?**

Individuals with a heart to serve as a long term overseas missionary can serve in a number of areas:

- Sociolinguistic Survey
- Translation Advisor
- Scripture Engagement
- Vernacular Media
- Ethnomusicologist
- Missionary Child Tutor

### **What are the Basic Requirements?**

College Graduate/Bachelor's Degree

Member in Good Standing, Lutheran Church

U.S. or Canadian Citizen

A heart for missions and a willingness to live and work overseas for extended time periods

## **Where do most Missionary Candidates come from?**

Individuals and couples interested in becoming LBT missionaries can come from almost any walk of life. At LBT, we've found that most recent successful candidates are:

- graduates of the Concordia University system,
- from other Lutheran colleges,
- Lutheran seminarians who chose to go into mission work rather than becoming pastors in North American congregations,
- Individuals choosing missionary work as a second career (i.e. teachers or DCEs become missionaries)

## **Are Missionaries Required/Expected to take any Additional Courses or Pursue an Advanced Degree?**

LBT works with the Graduate Institute of Applied Linguistics (GIAL) in Dallas Texas, as one source to provide the training necessary to prepare LBT missionaries for their overseas ministry. Initial work for those pursuing the Certificate of Applied Linguistics track includes anthropology, linguistics, language and culture acquisition, phonetics and phonology.

In addition to the Certificate, advanced training is required before overseas assignment and is tailored to your area of ministry interest

## **How Do I Find out More?**

I.D.I.O.M. (In Depth Investigation of Missions) is an annual free, two-and-a-half day interactive workshop in Aurora, IL. Once interested individuals or couples get to Chicago, LBT provides for transportation, food and housing during the sessions. Depending on class size IDIOMs are usually held at the beginning and end of the summer, in early June and August. As soon as dates are determined, you can confirm them on our website.

Contact LBT through our website: [www.LBT.org/contact](http://www.LBT.org/contact).

Our email is [Info@LBT.org](mailto:Info@LBT.org), or call us toll free at 800-532-4253.

## **10 MOST COMMONLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT LBT**

Q. Who are Lutheran Bible Translators and what do you do?

**A. *LBT is an independent Lutheran mission agency. It is the only Lutheran agency solely dedicated to long term missionary work in Bible Translation, Literacy and Scripture Engagement.***

Q. Why not teach these people groups English and give them an English Bible?

**A. *Language communicates best, and is comprehended the easiest and most completely, when it's the mother tongue, the heart language of the person reading it.***

Q. How is the translation done and how long does it take?

**A. *The average New Testament translation can take 12 years if there are no serious delays. However, it has taken as long as 30 years. Translation times vary depending on a number of factors such as the complexity of the language, civil war, sickness, availability and education level of local national partners, and other unforeseen obstacles.***

***Working through the national church bodies and Bible Societies, LBT is invited to come and work with unwritten language groups. The missionary***

***then develops friendships and partnerships with the local people, building relationships, learning the language and culture, and working with local experts in the writing and development of the written language structure. With the partnership of the national Christian church, Scripture translation then begins. The message is promoted through audio and other non-print media, as well as through community based literacy programs.***

Q. How many missionaries does LBT have and where are they?

***A. As of April 2010 there are 47 LBT missionaries and 33 associate missionaries. They are working on 22 Bible translations, 59 Scripture Engagement projects, and four Language Development programs in 52 different languages, in 15 countries on five continents.***

Q. What training do the missionaries go through?

***A. Usually LBT missionaries are trained at the Graduate Institute of Applied Linguistics, near Dallas Texas. Depending on their background, experience, previous education and area of interest, they can also receive training at other institutes. The GIAL program, which can take up to a year, includes various graduate level courses in their chosen field, as well as in language and culture acquisition.***

Q. Who supports LBT's work?

***A. For more than 45 years, LBT has been supported solely by churches, church organizations and by individuals with a heart for missions. LBT does not receive any money from Lutheran synodical bodies.***

Q. What happens after the translation is completed?

***A. The work has just begun. Scripture Engagement and Literacy efforts that ideally started while the translation work is being done, continue as individuals who speak that language learn to read God's Word and are able to teach others how to read and better understand its truths.***

Q. How many people still need Bibles in their heart language?

***A. Of the nearly 7,000 spoken languages in the world, about two-thirds have no portion of Scripture available to them in their heart language. That's about 350 million people without any portion of God's Word in their mother tongue.***

Q. Do missionaries need to learn the languages first, before translating?

***A. Yes, in some cases, they need to create an alphabet for spoken languages. But missionaries don't actually do the translating. The missionary serves as a translation advisor, working with the national people who understand the language best.***

Q. What difficulties do the missionaries encounter?

***A. All sorts.... Sickness, culture stress, difficult living conditions, civil unrest, separation from family, friends, support groups and the familiarities of home.***

Q. What joys do the missionaries experience?

***A. All sorts...The joy of knowing they are helping to fulfill God's Mission and spread His Word, equipping the local church, helping to develop Christian leaders, making new friends, experiencing new environments, new foods, a new home, new languages, new adventures!***