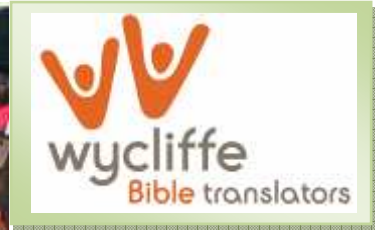


The Asikus' News May 2010



Entebbe, Uganda, May 2010.

Dear Friends,

“Words have power! And words from the Bible have extra power because they come from God.” These powerful words were spoken by Mr T K Mugoya, a Banyole elder in his 70’s, at the dedication of the book of Acts in the Lunyole language. In our last newsletter we wrote about this special event on 27 February in Eastern Uganda. The occasion went well and we were grateful to God that we were able to attend and for His protection during the travelling.

We began our journey in the dark, leaving home in Entebbe at 6am. As we drove towards Kampala, the rising sun turned the dawn sky to pink over Lake Victoria to our right. We travelled in the office vehicle with our Ugandan colleagues: Lydia, Esther and Josephine, and several boxes of Acts, while two other families travelled in separate cars. On our way to Jinja we passed large plantations of tea and sugar cane and the thick jungle-like Mabira forest. Esther had never been to the east of the country and was very excited to see the River Nile as we drove over the Owen Falls Dam at Jinja, where the Nile leaves Lake Victoria.



As we approached Mbale, a former British colonial district headquarters, the tarmac road crossed very flat land where we could see rice growing on the wetlands on either side. After Mbale, the condition of the road deteriorated and the width of the tarmac



strip grew narrower, eaten away unevenly on either side and pitted with pot holes. Soon we turned off onto a dirt track that wound between



people’s homes and plots of land. Very few vehicles use that route so a group of local people was busy cutting back grass and bushes and digging with their hoes to make the track passable for us. It was encouraging to see this evidence that people were expecting visitors and were literally preparing the way for us.

We arrived safely at Kajalaba Primary School at noon. This place is on the edge of the Banyole area where people feel marginalised and pushed out by the neighbouring larger people group. It was hoped that holding the dedication there would be an encouragement to the local people and help them feel they too can benefit from the development of their language and the Bible translation and literacy project.

School benches and desks had been arranged under large mango trees in the school grounds and a striped tent had been set up for the guest of honour and other VIPs. It was a hot day and we were glad of the shade. The celebrations began at about 1.30pm with a welcome song by the school children, followed by a short sermon from a pastor from the Seventh Day Adventist Church. He spoke about the Day of Pentecost described in Acts chapter 2, when the Holy Spirit enabled the apostles to

speak to people in languages they understood and many became Christians. He encouraged people to read the book of Acts in their own language and to allow it to change them.

The occasion continued with speeches interspersed with songs, a poem and readings from Acts by people who had learned to read in Lunyole literacy classes.



Finally, the guest of honour, the Minister for Ethics and Integrity, dedicated the books just as approaching rainclouds

in the darkening sky finally opened up to “bless” the day with a heavy downpour. People ran to the classrooms for shelter and the long-awaited lunch was served at 5.30pm.

Among the highlights of the day for us were the aforementioned speech by Mr T K Mugoya. He told us how he had started as a pupil in Primary 2 class at that school in 1938. In those days lessons were taught in Luganda and he didn’t understand anything. He commended the current government policy of teaching children in their mother tongue in classes from Primary 1 to 3. Books produced by the Lunyole language project with the help of Wycliffe Bible Translators are facilitating children’s learning in a language they can understand.

Our Uganda Director, Doug Wicks, also commented on this in his speech: “Going to school to learn in a foreign language is like going to the garden to dig but leaving your hoe at home.” He was referring to the disadvantage children face when they are not allowed to learn at school in the language they know. They cannot apply and develop their already-gained knowledge and understanding of the world around them if the tool of the language they know is not the one used in the classroom.

Other highlights were hearing how fluently and expressively the readers read publicly from the book of Acts in Lunyole, seeing people’s eagerness as they bought copies of Acts in their language and hearing a

government minister encouraging people to put their trust in God.

After the meal we set off in the rain to the guest house where we were booked in to spend the night. However, heavy rains had caused a drainage culvert to break and we were warned that the road ahead was flooded. This meant a change of plan, but by this time it was 7.30pm and already dark. Thankfully our colleagues knew of a guest house in Mbale and when we arrived there at 8pm there were just enough beds to accommodate us all. We were grateful to God for His provision and protection.

The journey home on Sunday seemed long and we came through a heavy shower at one point. However, we reached Entebbe safely at 6pm, tired but glad we went.

A neighbouring group to the Banyole people, the Bagwere people, also held a dedication event for the book of Acts in Lugwere last weekend, 24 April. Recently there has been a lot of interest among the Bagwere people in having the Bible in their own language, which is encouraging.

Two days after our trip, following heavy rains, there were very bad mudslides in Bududa, on the slopes of the foothills of Mount Elgon, not far from where we went for the dedication. Sadly, many people were killed and others were left orphaned and homeless when houses and other buildings were engulfed in mud. The TV news showed distressing pictures of people trying in vain to dig the remains of their family members out of the mud. Those villagers are currently in temporary encampments, waiting to be re-housed in safer places.

Two weeks after that, Uganda suffered a different kind of disaster when fire destroyed the Kasubi tombs, where the Buganda kings are buried, in Kampala. The tombs are a UNESCO World Heritage Site and an important tourist attraction. The Buganda king, the Kabaka, declared a week of mourning and many ordinary people as well as dignitaries visited the site, some tying strips of bark cloth around their waists as a traditional sign of mourning.

The Easter celebrations came as a welcome relief from recent disasters and mourning. St John’s church choir, of which we are members, performed Easter music on Palm Sunday, along with a visiting church choir. It was similar to a Christmas Carol service, with music interspersed with Bible readings. People brought pieces of palm branches to wave during the service, which James greatly enjoyed! On Easter Sunday the church was full and very colourful as many people came dressed in their best clothes as we joyfully celebrated Christ’s resurrection.

Since our last newsletter the Kwamba translators Wilson, Smith and Hannington have attended a course in Nairobi on translation

principles which will help them in their work. The team is already back in their home area and working on the final drafts of the Gospel of Mark. They also will translate the book of Jonah very soon.

Family news: We are pleased to announce that we are expecting a brother or sister for James in September. We are grateful to God that the pregnancy has gone very well so far and I have felt fine. We plan to have the baby in Kampala. I would appreciate your prayers for God's continued protection during this pregnancy, especially from malaria.

James is beginning to talk more and attempting to say all kinds of things, including words with three or four syllables such as "pineapple" and "peanut butter"! Some words are not yet recognisable but he is really trying hard. He can now put pieces of Lego Duplo together and knows the location of most parts of the body, his own and other people's, which provides great entertainment to visitors! James enjoyed his grandmother's attention during her recent three week stay and tired her out with the speed of his walking! Gift's Mum loved being with him and was a big help to us, looking after him and helping in the house.

Thank you for your continued support and prayers for us and the work,
with love from Gift, Kathryn and James

Praise points:

- For God's protection as we travelled to the Lunyole Acts dedication in February
- For the good progress of Kathryn's pregnancy
- For James' growth and development and the joy he brings us

Prayer Points:

- For continued good health for all of us, especially for Kathryn and our unborn baby
- For God's protection and safe travel to Arua in May
- For God's guidance for Gift and all those involved in the meetings in the Ma'di areas, 17-19 May, for unity among church leaders, co-operation, good communication and the right outcome for the people who want God's Word. Also pray for safe travel to those meetings (the roads are rough and the journey involves a ferry crossing over the Nile)
- For the Banyole and Bagwere people as they receive the book of Acts in their mother tongue for the first time, that they would understand and respond to what they read.

How to make a donation towards our work: In the UK, send a cheque made payable to Wycliffe Bible Translators, to Wycliffe Bible Translators, Horsleys Green, HIGH WYCOMBE, HP14 3XL. Please include a note to say it is for the support of Gift and Kathryn Asiku. If you would like to support us regularly and give by standing order, please download a form from the Wycliffe website or ring 01494 682268 for details. You can make your gift worth more by using Gift Aid if you are a UK taxpayer. Forms are available on the Wycliffe website or ring 01494 682268 for details. You can also make an on-line donation on the Wycliffe website: www.wycliffe.org.uk/memberfundraising

(Gift's mother Penina, James, Ella and Frankie our neighbour Grace's children)



Trip to Arua in May: We plan to be in Arua from 13-24 May to attend a wedding, a family event and meetings in Moyo, 4 hours NE of Arua. In his role in supporting new language projects, Gift will attend two important preliminary meetings in the Ma'di language area, North East of Arua, in Moyo and Adjumani towns. Gift and colleagues will meet with local church leaders and a representative of Uganda Bible Society to discuss a possible revision or new translation of the New Testament in Ma'di language.

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