

Messenger

Translating the Bible into a People’s Heart Language Making a Clouded Message Clear

“The Bible’s message is clouded until it is translated into the people’s language,” the bishop said. “So until then, God is clouded... distant... foreign to us... not clear.”

That’s why Bishop Rev. Dr. David Tswaedi of the Lutheran Church in Southern Africa thinks Bible Translation and Scripture Engagement efforts are so important. Rev. Tswaedi was in the U.S. recently, coordinating arrangements and operations with the Southern Illinois District of the LCMS and others.

It All Started at Pentecost

Talking about translation, the bishop said, “It all started at Pentecost. The disciples preached in many tongues. The people understood God’s purpose and promise for them, and His mighty works.”

Bishop Tswaedi’s responsibilities include operations in South Africa, Botswana and Swaziland. At present, the Lutheran Church in Southern Africa encompasses 20,000 members who worship with more than 200 congregations in 21 parishes.



Bishop Tswaedi asks for prayer for the people of southern Africa.

“We all face challenges,” the bishop said, responding to questions about how Americans can help further Christ’s kingdom in southern Africa. “We ask that you continue to pray for us and our ministry so we can remain faithful witnesses to Christ... to be focused on making disciples and rejoice with us on baptizing new Christians.”

He commented that Christians in southern Africa are gradually changing; becoming less dependent and taking ownership of their lives and faith, thanks to the availability of new translations as well

as to their increased political independence and sense of identity.

Bible Translation and Literacy Benefits Locals in Earthly, as Well as Spiritual Ways

“There are benefits to having a Bible translation in one’s heart language that go beyond saving souls and bringing people to faith,” the bishop said. He believes that independence and a sense of identity are also important results of the translation process. “At the beginning of the process you have ‘orthography,’ the study and development of an alphabet,” he said. “Once that is established, literate people develop - they can read. Translating the Bible so people can read and understand it in their own language helps a people become more than ‘creatures.’ We become a people with our own sense of identity...with human rights.”

“If our language is not recognized, we are nobodies,” Bishop Tswaedi said.

Commenting on the importance of having the Word of God in the language of the people as a vital aid in worship and understanding, Bishop Tswaedi gave the following example.

In the parable of the sower, Jesus talks about some of the sown seed springing up but then being choked by weeds. Previously, the word we heard and used for choked, based on English translations, was the equivalent of saying “electrocuted”. What sense did that make?

With our own translation, we now understand that the person who is represented by the seed is being pressed from all sides... is breathless... is being strangled. This is much more understandable and accurate and the people relate much better to this story, understanding it more readily. Translation matters!

Continued on page 6



Bishop Tswaedi oversees church operations in South Africa, Botswana, and Swaziland.

The mission of Lutheran Bible Translators [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.

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a heart for missions

The Fact Is...

“The facts, ma’am — just the facts!” This phrase was made famous on radio and later television in the 1950’s — approximately 60 years ago. And for Joe Friday, his world-view was apparently about as black-and-white as the TV screens then in use.

Has our perspective changed that much over the decades? I think it’s still pretty black-and-white. We want “the truth” or “the facts”. We tend to be happier with analysis, scores, grades and metrics.

Not that the facts aren’t important — they certainly are. But for many (if not all) LBT missionaries, the cultures in which they live and work have very different views of the world. These cultures certainly have a place for facts. But traditional communication of history, myth and important truths involve stories. Passed down through the generations, these stories are more than just the dry facts. They educate, inspire and entertain; are amusing, sobering or life-changing.

The Bible, the Old Testament in particular, has many stories that convey significant truths. When Biblical stories are told in traditional oral styles they can have a substantial impact. LBT missionaries and their national co-workers are well aware of this process and many Bible stories have already been translated.

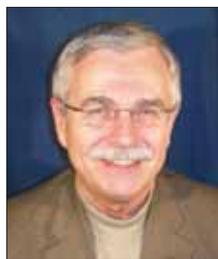
In Botswana, for instance, the Khwe are responding enthusiastically to the story of Jonah. The Prodigal Son is teaching about love, forgiveness and redemption in Sierra Leone. Stories are a powerful tool for communicating Biblical truths in Cameroon among the Kwanja and in Botswana among the Kalanga. In Liberia, morality stories (traditional stories viewed through a Biblical lens) have proven to be a significant medium for carrying the message of Scripture. And the production of these stories in video and audio formats removes the literacy barrier so that people can hear and understand the Gospel.

We thank you for your continued prayers and donations in support of LBT missionaries serving worldwide. Your support helps us to make God’s Word available and accessible so that through the Holy Spirit, people draw closer to God.

As Bishop David Tswaedi of the Lutheran Church in South Africa recently said, “If our language is not respected, we are nobody!” So the Word of God, well translated into local languages, gives the people God’s precious Word in their heart language, affirming His love for all cultures and nations. And the Word of God, in the form of stories, communicates God’s truths to the hearts of the people. 📖

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Dr. Marshall R. Gillam, CFRE
Executive Director



ICCT is the Place to Be!

by Rev. Tim Beckendorf

At least that was the consensus of the participants of the Introductory Course on Communication and Translation (ICCT) held in D’Kar, Botswana, in December 2008.

The course included instructors from the U.S., Germany, Kenya, and Botswana. Participants were from Botswana, Namibia, and Mozambique. We learned all about wonderful translation stuff like cognitive benefits, relevance, meaning resemblance, and — most important of all — CONTEXT. The course was an intensive three weeks designed to give mother tongue translators the skills and tools to begin translating the Bible.

Aside from learning communication and translation theories, we had a lot of hands-on work in our respective languages. For instance, we learned how to make rules for how our language will spell names from the Bible. This is something most people wouldn’t think about, but given that there are over 1,000 names in the New Testament and over 6,000 in the Old Testament, it is important to have a consistent system for spelling. During the last week of the course, we got to practice what we learned and translated several sections from the New Testament and the first seven verses of Jonah.

Since we got a start on Jonah during the workshop, we decided to forge ahead and complete the book. Moses, my translation assistant, drafted the book in about three weeks and then our Namibia team checked the draft. Once changes were agreed upon and the translators were happy with what we had, we took it to a Khwe community in Namibia. We read it to individuals, asked them comprehension questions, and received their feedback. This village checking took two days.

After the first day’s reading the 12 participants couldn’t stop talking about Jonah and “forced” the guys to come home with them so that they could ask them more questions. Word got around about what was going on and we had 21 people the next day. Most said that they had heard the story of Jonah before but only in Afrikaans (the language used by many people in Namibia) and never understood what it was about. This tremendous experience gave us a lot of encouragement.

Rev. Tim and Lisa Beckendorf are translation advisors to the Khwe Translation project in Botswana.

Two New Missionary Teams Take the Field

Three New Translations Will Change Lives

In 2009, Lutheran Bible Translators is striving to place two new missionary teams on the field. We will also celebrate the dedication and launching of three new translations.

“Because of the Holy Spirit, and the prayers and financial donations of people who know, value and support LBT’s work, we’re optimistic about expanding the number of our missionary teams, as well as our Bible translation and Scripture Engagement efforts in 2009,” Dr. Marshall Gillam, LBT Executive Director said.

“The developed world and most of us who live in it are understandably pre-occupied with the economy and its impact on us, our families, our lives and our plans,” Dr. Gillam said. “That’s also true of us at LBT. But it’s heartening that, even in times like these, God’s people faithfully rise to the Great Commission’s challenge, and support LBT’s missionaries and mission.”

Kory and Cara Fay grew up at opposite ends of the midwest and first met at a servant event during their junior year in high school. The acquaintance blossomed into a friendship and then a life long commitment when they both attended and graduated from Valparaiso University.

Both feel called to overseas missions. Kory has a love of Greek and Hebrew while Cara feels pulled to Africa. Married in 2006, their son Sam was born in 2007. Their daughter, Lucy Jo, arrived on March 31, 2009.

Once sufficient prayer and financial support is developed, Kory, Cara and the children will more deeply immerse themselves in French language study in Chambréy, France. This is in preparation for a field assignment in Cameroon, West Africa, where French is one of the state languages.

Rev. Richard Rudowske, along with his wife Maya, and their children Christopher, Katherine, Matthew, Joshua, and Rebecca, will be serving God as LBT missionaries in Botswana, Africa.

Rich and Maya, who organizes and manages the family, are in the final stages of partner and financial development before heading overseas. Rich formerly served as a pastor in Dayton, Ohio. He graduated from Eastern Michigan University in 1996 before entering Concordia Seminary and graduating with his M.Div. in 2005.

In Botswana, the Rudowskes will be working with a local Lutheran church, serving as consultants and Bible translators. “We’re on an adventure together as we share the love of Jesus,” Rich said.

When launched later this year, the **Khoekhoegowab New Testament** will help make the Word of God available in



The Khoekhoegowab translation benefited from the help of local people as well as three mother tongue translators.

their mother tongue to almost 250,000 individuals. The language is spoken in parts of Namibia, Botswana and South Africa.

Rev. Shawn Boylan and his wife Jill have been instrumental in bringing this project to completion. Rev. Boylan served as the project coordinator/exegete for the New Testament. “We’ve benefited from local people helping in translation as well as from having three skilled mother tongue translators working full time. These factors had a huge impact on the project,” Rev. Boylan said.

This is the Boylans’ third LBT assignment since becoming missionaries in 1988.

The Kalanga New Testament revision of the original 1999 New Testament and the book of Psalms are tentatively scheduled for dedication in August. More than 150,000 people in northeast and central Botswana speak the Kalanga language.

Initially an LCMS project, the New Testament translation became a joint effort of a German mission, the Bible Society and LBT. LBT missionaries Mike and Cindy Rodewald and Carl and Melody Knight helped facilitate literacy efforts among the Kalanga.

LBT missionary Rev. Dr. Michael Megahan became the exegete for the project in 2005, revising and refining the New Testament translation and adding Psalms.

The **Minimib New Testament** was presented to the Minimib people of Papua New Guinea earlier this year. LBT Associate Missionaries Rev. John and Maila Davies, who have been working and teaching among various language groups in Papua New Guinea for over 30 years, were closely involved with the project. They also served with the Kobon translation team (the New Testament was dedicated in 2006) and are very instrumental in Christian education efforts among the Haruai and other language groups. 📖



reflections

Racing for the Finish

by John Strasen

I've been thinking lately that I would rather try to run a race than finish a translation. I doubt I could win many races, but at least I could see the finish line.

Finding the finish line at the end of a translation is not as easy. For one thing, there are too many loose ends. It's amazing how many things get put off for the moment but never get attended to after that. That is why much of 2009 will be spent checking the Dhimba New Testament for consistency in translation.

Recently we finished looking at all of the Old Testament quotations that are found in the New Testament. There are many, and they often occur in more than one passage. For example, there are numerous places in the New Testament where you find, "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord," a quotation from Psalm 118:26. There are two in Matthew and one each in Mark, Luke, and John. There is

also a second one in Luke if you count Luke 19:38 which reads, "Blessed is **the king** who comes in the name of the Lord," a slight variation from the others. So there are at least six occurrences that have to be checked against each other to make sure they all read the same way in the Dhimba language.

Believe it or not, when we looked through these, only two of them read the same way. The others had different word choices or different word orders. "How does that happen?" you ask. Well, how many different ways can you find to say the same thing in English? And when you first draft your translation, you are always too busy to check your earlier work to see what you already did. It is too tempting to sweep a little dirt under the rug and say, "We'll look at it later." Later has now come! 📖

John Strasen serves as the translation advisor to the Dhimba Translation Project in Namibia.

Helping Hands

by Rick Allmon



Rick Allmon

Partnerships are both important and essential to LBT. They enable and encourage the work of our missionaries. These relationships with those who share our passion for ministry and heart for missions helped propel LBT through 45 years of service to those who do not have God's Word in their language.

We are profoundly grateful to all those who help our mission in various ways: LBT board members; the volunteers who come to the Service Center in Aurora to assist with various tasks; the churches and church organizations that give generously to LBT, investing in the work of Bible translation and Scripture Engagement. And we are humbled by our individual donors... the backbone of LBT. You provide prayer and financial strength that so far has resulted in the 32 completed New Testaments that are now in the hearts and hands of people around the world.

There are other partnerships as well, less obvious, but no less important. There are partnerships with church bodies in other countries. There are national co-workers, men and

women who are part of translation teams and literacy programs, working to bring Scripture to their people in mother tongue languages.

And then there are the students at Concordia University in Mequon, Wisconsin. They have assisted LBT by phoning donors and talking to people firsthand about LBT. Their youthfulness and high energy remind us how important it is to utilize all the resources we have available when telling the LBT story and inviting people's prayer and financial support.

Help comes from all kinds, all ages, and from many places. We have been truly blessed with so many partners who make succeeding at our ministry possible and exciting. Thank *you* for the part you play in bringing the Good News to people worldwide. 📖



Students at Concordia Mequon talked to donors about LBT's ministry.

Botswana: A Major LBT Missionary Focus

Four Teams on the Field — Fifth Team on the Way

The countries of Botswana, Swaziland, and Zimbabwe are located in southern Africa. Four out of the dozens of languages found in the area — Kalanga, Khwedam, Setswana, and Shiyeyi — are the mother tongue of more than 2.3 million people.

Botswana is a major LBT missionary translation and Scripture Engagement focal point. Four teams are currently on the field with a fifth poised to join later this year.

The teams and their initiatives are:

Rev. Tim and Lisa Beckendorf: The Beckendorfs live near the northern border of Botswana in the Okavango Delta region. Tim is the translation advisor to the Khwe language program. Lisa manages their home and cares for their two boys.

Carl and Melody Knight: The Knights are Scripture Engagement facilitators and trainers for several language groups in Botswana. During their 24 years of ministry with LBT, they have used traditional methods such as training literacy teachers and promoting literature development. They also reach out with the Gospel by using creative methods such as drama and puppet plays.

Rev. Dr. Michael and Jo Ann Megahan: Michael is the Biblical language advisor (exegete) on the Kalanga Bible translation initiative. Kalanga is the mother tongue of more than 850,000 people who primarily live in Botswana and Zimbabwe. The revision of the 1999 New



Puppet plays are an innovative way to reach out with the Gospel message.

Testament and the book of Psalms will be dedicated later this year. The Megahans live in Francistown, where Jo Ann involves herself in many aspects of the community.

Rob and Eshinee Veith: Eshinee is the Biblical language exegete on the Yeyi language translation initiative. Rob focuses on Vernacular Media and Ethnomusicology, helping southern Africans develop their own culturally compatible ways to understand the Bible and share its message.

Rev. Richard and Maya Rudowske: The Rudowskes and their five children will be leaving for Botswana in late summer. Once settled, they'll focus on helping to translate God's Word into the heart language of the Kgalagari people.

Need More Information?

Return this coupon to:

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Literacy Gaining Importance Among the Kwanja

by Joan Weber

It has been several years since we began offering courses for Kwanjas to learn to read and write in their language. Until now, these have been transition courses for those who already learned the basics of reading in French (the language of government and education in this part of Cameroon). Most who learn to read well in Kwanja have at least a 6th grade education in school. But where motivation is high, there are exceptions to this rule. In one village, although few had much schooling in French, several young men were determined to learn to read their own language, and they repeated the courses three times until they could successfully read and write!

Recently I have been investing a lot of my time and energy into a first class of “pre-literate adults”. These women, many in their 50s, are meeting together in a classroom after school hours to learn to read and write for the first time in their lives. Before beginning classes, they didn’t know how to hold a pencil. With much concentration and effort they are learning to form the letters of the alphabet, pronounce them phonetically, listen to and recognize the tone differences in their words, and begin to read simple words in their own language.

I have found myself excited, hopeful, frustrated, and wondering at times, “Is it worth it to try to teach these women to learn to read?” What is remarkable to me is their motivation. They decided to continue coming four afternoons a week, so they can make progress in learning to read, even during their busy field work time. They pray at the beginning

and end of each class, often asking God that their teachers (Abraham and I) won’t give up on them, but will keep on teaching them.

We begin each class with verses that I read from the Kwanja New Testament. I heard one of my friends sharing with another woman today the blessings that she gets from hearing God’s Word. The women are slowly developing visual skills to recognize and distinguish letters. We take so much for granted! When I see the effort that it takes them to learn what seems simple to me, I am thankful for the education I was given when I was young.

Our hopes aren’t just for these six women to learn to read, but that this course will be my opportunity to improve Kwanja primer materials. We would like to train other teachers to use these materials, and hope that some would be sent out to the Kwanja bush villages where most of the people are still illiterate. Our hopes are to get the primers into the schools so that young children learn to read first in their own language before reading in French, which they don’t understand.



Kwanja women learning to form the letters of the alphabet.

Continued on page 7

Making a Clouded Message Clear

Continued from page 1

The Importance of Local Development and Ownership

While southern Africans deeply appreciate the missionaries, prayers, and support the church body receives from the U.S., Bishop Tswaedi said ideally the best results can be realized when the work of translation and evangelizing is the responsibility and mission of local, indigenous people.

“Frequently missionaries come and do their work. When they leave, the work can slow down or stop. Without meaning to, the missionaries have designed their work around themselves. The faith they teach becomes a missionary faith that does not belong to the people and stay with us.”

He says translation and evangelizing efforts are most successful and endure when local people and foreign missionaries literally work alongside each other so skills and knowledge can be honed, shared and transferred.

One of his major concerns and challenges for the future is assuring that the people take ownership of their faith, “... that it belongs to us, dwells in our hearts and becomes a bigger and bigger part of our lives,” he said. “We have to own it ourselves, we have to be serious enough about it that we develop a spirit of understanding, of giving, of loving each other and those who bring the Scripture to us — our pastors. A critical challenge is loving and taking care of our pastors physically and financially so the pastors can be happy and concentrate on God’s Word and not be “strangled” — distracted, by the understandable and very immediate concerns about food, money, housing for wife and family, school for children.” 📖



Understanding the Bible’s message can be difficult unless Scripture is translated.

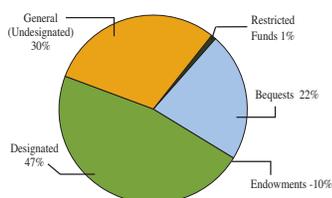
LBT Partnership Support

January 1, 2009 — March 31, 2009

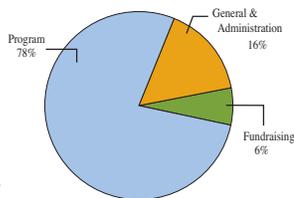
INCOME

	Unaudited 1st Quarter	Unaudited Year-to-date
Designated	\$367,095	\$367,095
General (Undesignated)	240,672	240,672
Restricted Funds	77,458	77,458
Bequests	171,575	171,575
<u>Endowments</u>	<u>(79,954)</u>	<u>(79,954)</u>
Total Income	\$776,846	\$776,846

1st Quarter Income



1st Quarter Expenses



EXPENSES

Program	\$755,317	\$755,317
General & Administration	152,603	152,603
<u>Fundraising</u>	<u>59,867</u>	<u>59,867</u>
Total Expenses	\$967,787	\$967,787
Net Total	\$(190,941)	\$(190,941)

NOTE: During the first quarter of 2009, LBT was able to purchase two missionary computers and a vehicle. The total of these purchases was \$28,468. These costs are not reflected above.

Literacy Gaining Importance Among the Kwanja

Continued from page 6

At the same time that we are encouraging Kwanjas to learn to read God's Word in their language, we realize that many will never learn to read. They don't know the value of reading God's Word, or they find it too difficult to learn. God is providing for them in another way. Dan and Kay Finley, LBT vernacular media specialists, are planning to come in September to help us record the whole Kwanja New Testament. The Finleys are working with a Scripture recording ministry called "Faith Comes by Hearing". Through LBT and Faith Comes by Hearing, these recordings will be duplicated and made available to listening groups in all of the Kwanja villages. ☺

Martin and Joan Weber serve with the Kwanja Translation and Literacy project. The Kwanja New Testament was dedicated in 2006.

Gift Designations

Your gifts in support of Mission Projects and Programs are applied to the designated project or program. When a designated project is fully funded, surplus funds are applied to comparable projects. When a designated program is fully funded, surplus funds are applied to the general fund.

CUT HERE

CUT HERE

Birthdays

JUNE

- 2 **Eshinee Veith**
Botswana
- 6 **Margot McMillen**
United States/Guatemala
- 6 **Seth Rodewald**
(1997)
South Africa
- 8 **Ed Rupprecht**
Nigeria
- 12 **Dean Mehl**
Service Center Staff
- 16 **Susan Malone**
Southeast Asia
- 18 **Maya Rudowske**
Prefield (Botswana)
- 28 **Amanda Speck**
(2006)
Mexico
- 28 **Joshua Rudowske**
(2003)
Prefield (Botswana)
- 30 **Jo Ann Megahan**
Botswana

JULY

- 1 **Mary Holman**
Ghana
- 5 **Mary Blake**
Service Center Staff
- 5 **Aili Esala** (2006)
Ghana
- 6 **Judi Behrens**
Service Center Staff
- 7 **Jim Kaiser**
United States
- 10 **Joshua DeLoach**
(2006)
Papua New Guinea
- 10 **JoAnn Hanson**
Service Center Staff
- 11 **Vanice Schultz**
United States
- 11 **Peter Megahan**
(1992)
Botswana
- 12 **Nathan Esala**
Ghana
- 12 **Josiah Federwitz**
(2004)
Ghana
- 19 **Grace Closius**
United States

AUGUST

- 1 **Valerie Federwitz**
Ghana
- 4 **Tim Miller**
Thailand
- 8 **Rachel Federwitz**
(2004)
Papua New Guinea
- 8 **Sarah Miller**
(1997)
Thailand
- 10 **Rich Rudowske**
Prefield (Botswana)
- 14 **Cheryl Jensen**
United States
- 30 **Paul Closius**
United States

FOLD

LBT MISSIONARY Currents

Prayer partnership is the backbone of this ministry. Here are several prayer concerns for which we ask your support. May God bless you abundantly!

BOTSWANA

- Pray that the revised **Kalanga New Testament** and Psalms, to be introduced in August, will be accepted and used among the Kalanga people.
- Give praise that **Rob and Eshinee Veith** have found permanent housing in Maun, Botswana.
- Pray that **Melody Knight** will be able to successfully control her high blood pressure.

ECUADOR

- Pray for **Cañari translators** as they near completion of the whole Bible.

GHANA

- Praise God for the graduations of two LBT International Scholarship Students; **Mr. Samuel Cooper** in Ghana and a young woman living in Asia. Pray that they will use their educations to advance the Gospel message in their home communities.



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Executive Director:
Dr. Marshall R. Gillam



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This mailing was assembled by volunteers!

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Lutheran Bible Translators is an independent mission group, founded in 1964, which is dedicated to helping 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. It is the only Lutheran organization totally devoted to this specialized ministry. LBT actively recruits Lutherans to serve as Bible translators, literacy or vernacular media specialists and support missionaries. The LBT ministry is supported by the prayers and contributions of fellow Christians. It is not subsidized by any church body or sponsoring agency.

Want more information about translation, Scripture Engagement, or LBT's ministry in a specific country? Sign up to receive one or more prayer letters from LBT missionaries.

Call Karen Campbell at 1-800-532-4253 for more details.



GUATEMALA

■ Join **Ed and Mary Fox** and the K'iche' people of Guatemala in thanking God for nearly 15 years of partnership with LBT.

■ Pray for **Margot McMillen** as she retires on June 30.

LIBERIA

■ Pray for **Alvina Federwitz** and the staff of LIBTRALO as they work to complete Mother Tongue educational materials in 16 Liberian languages by the end of July. The materials will be used in Liberian schools beginning this fall.

NIGERIA

■ Pray that **Wilma Rupprecht** will find a way to manage her newly diagnosed diabetes without leaving Nigeria.

SIERRA LEONE

■ Praise God that recent unrest in **Freetown, Sierra Leone** did not become too severe. Pray that peace will be maintained.

UNITED STATES

■ Pray for **Jonathan Burmeister** during his hospitalization and recovery from a blood stem cell transplant.



■ Pray for **Dan and Kay Finley** as they travel to Papua New Guinea and Cameroon to record the Ipili and Kwanja New Testaments as a part of LBT's partnership with Faith Comes by Hearing.

■ Pray for **Kory and Cara Fay** and family as they prepare to move to France to begin intensive French study, for **Rev. Rich and Maya Rudowske** and family as they prepare to begin their assignment in Botswana, and for **Greg Meier** (LBT intern) as he prepares for internship in Ghana.

■ Pray for LBT's upcoming **I.D.I.O.M. recruitment event** for prospective missionaries August 12-15th.

■ Praise God for the successful launch of the revamped LBT web site, www.LBT.org.

