

BROADCAST #3

Steps 5-8

LIAM:

Greetings again. This is Liam and Sofia sharing the story of how God's Word came to our people.

SOFIA:

This story began with our great concern for having God's message in our mother tongue language. Even though Liam and I can speak and read in our mother tongue language and in our national language, this is not the case for most of our family and people. It is a struggle for our people to understand God's message of love when it is in a language they do not know or know well.

LIAM:

This has caused sadness and sometimes confusion. We have heard of people that finally received the Word in their language and they were very surprised by some of what they read. They had a misunderstanding from only having the Bible in a language that they didn't completely understand. This led them to understand that Christ had died for his own sins! Now they understood the truth that He never sinned and had died for all our sins! That was a very big mistake!

SOFIA:

We learned from our cousin about a new method called MAST that uses people that are fluent in their mother tongue language and their national language to translate scripture into their mother tongue language in a much short time than has been the case with many other methods. **MAST** stands for **Mobilized Assistance Supporting Translation** and is a new translation process developed by Wycliffe Associates. We got a team together and have been working on the book of Mark. Last week we shared that there are several passages that talk about translation and the benefits of having God's Word in an understandable language. Liam, tell us about the passage you read just last week.

LIAM:

This past week I was reading in Acts 8 about Phillip and his ministry to the man from Ethiopia. As I read the story, I came to realize that one of the problems that the Ethiopian had was language. He was reading from the scroll of Isaiah, which was either in Hebrew or Greek, but both would have been foreign languages to this man. He struggled to understand the passage that spoke of a lamb being led to the slaughter. Not only was the passage in a foreign language, but it was using a figure of speech that he may not have been familiar with.

SOFIA:

Phillip explained this passage and went on to preach about Jesus. His explanation was clear as we see that the man from Ethiopia responded to Jesus by asking to be baptized. He now understood God's Word.

LIAM:

Last time we talked about Steps 1-4 in the **Eight Steps** of MAST, so let us review the steps.

SOFIA:

I was assigned several chapters of the book of Mark. **Step One** is called **Consume**. I took the first chapter and read it through a few times in the source text which is in the Unlocked Literal Bible version, or ULB, to understand what was being said. This took about 8 minutes.

LIAM:

Step **Two** is called **Verbalize**. After Sofia reviewed the chapter in the source language in Step One, she then spoke it out loud in her mother tongue language. She shared all the details from the story while I listened. This took only 2 or 3 minutes.

SOFIA:

That's right Liam; you listened well and did not comment or discuss the passage. Next is **Step Three - Chunk** which is to break the passage into small parts. I went through the chapter and divided it into smaller pieces by just marking the source text with a pencil. Most chunks were 1-3 verses long.

LIAM:

Once Sofia divided the passage into smaller pieces, she started **Step Four**, the Blind Draft. She read the first chunk several times, turned the source text over and wrote the chunk out on our lined paper. Then she moved on to the second chunk, then the third until she complete the chapter. She spent about 5-8 minutes on each chunk.

SOFIA:

This step was hard at first. I wanted to look back at the source text for each word. Liam watched and kept me from looking while I drafted. I was careful to skip one or two lines so there would be room for corrections and, I did not add the verse numbers. We each drafted a whole chapter before going on to the next steps, 5-8.

LIAM:

We now have a portion or chapter of scripture that is drafted. What do we do to make sure that it is good? We do not want to just hurry through and create something that God would not be happy with. The next four steps are called edits or checks. These steps will help to make sure that the material is accurate, clear and sounds natural.

SOFIA:

Step **Five** is called **Self-Edit**.

LIAM:

This is done by the person who did the first four steps on the portion or chapter of scripture. When I finished **the Blind Draft** for my first chapter in Mark, I then went back and began **Step Five**.

SOFIA:

I read what I had drafted, one verse or chunk at a time while looking back at the source text. My first concern was to make sure I left nothing out or added something that should not be there. I also wanted to make sure it sounded natural in my mother tongue language. At times, if I got confused with the source text, I also looked at other versions of the passage which helped me to understand it better.

LIAM:

So, let's look at a chunk that we translated. It is from Mark 1:9-11.
The source text said:

SOFIA:

"It happened in those days that Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee, and he was baptized by John in the Jordan River. As Jesus came up out of the water, he saw the heavens split open and the Spirit coming down on him like a dove. And a voice came out of the heavens, 'You are my beloved Son. I am very pleased with you.'"

LIAM:

I drafted:

SOFIA:

"At the time that John was baptizing and preaching, Jesus came from Nazareth to the Jordan and was baptized. When He came out of the river, the clouds opened, and God's Spirit came to them like a bird and they heard Someone from the clouds say, 'You are My special Son; I am happy with You and You will do great and mighty things.'"

LIAM:

Sofia, I found that I had left a few things out. Did you notice what I left out and needed to edit?

SOFIA:

You mentioned Nazareth but you left out it was in Galilee. It was not clear that it was Jesus who came up out of the river.

LIAM:

I also found that I had added a couple things and needed to remove them. Did you notice those as well?

SOFIA:

It sounded like you added something about preaching and doing great and mighty things that I did not see in the source text.

LIAM:

During this step, I wrote out edits on the blank line above the draft. Then I circled or marked each word that is important or might need further discussion. For example, in my first chapter, I marked: heavens, Spirit and baptize. These get discussed in Step Seven. This is when I added the verse numbers.

SOFIA:

Step Five, the **Self-Edit** took about 20-30 minutes for each portion or chapter. Next is **Step Six** which is **Peer-Edit**.

LIAM:

This is an edit done with another member of the translation team, one of your peers. That is the meaning of the term “peer”, someone that is like me, one of my team members. The peer doing the edit will read a portion to themselves or out loud to another person. Is it natural and clear? Was anything confusing? If something is confusing or is unclear, then change it. So, I did this check with, Sofia.

SOFIA:

I read the drafted chapter, one chunk at a time in our mother tongue language.

LIAM:

Sofia listened to me read while looking along in the source text, but mostly listening. This reminds us of the times that we shared newspaper stories with our friends and family. We try very hard to make it clear and sounding good but that does not always happen. Sometimes what we translated is not clear but broken and awkward. It is usually obvious that when that happens the listener gets this look on his face that makes it clear that he does not understand something that was said.

SOFIA:

When this happens, we discuss what is not clear and quickly change the text. This is not an in-depth or complete evaluation and should only take 15-20 minutes per chapter.

LIAM:

When I read Mark 1: 7, Sofia got that look on her face that something did not make sense. John uses a figure of speech or idiom that was clear to those who were listening to John, but not to us.

SOFIA:

In chapter one, verse seven, John says that he is not worthy to even kneel down and untie the strap of Jesus’ sandals. This must mean something, but what? Our sandals do

not have anything that ties; they just slip on. If we translate it word for word, people will be very confused.

LIAM:

Fortunately, we learned about figures of speech and how to translate them in a way that stays accurate, but the verse or meaning becomes clear.

SOFIA:

First, we need to understand that God did not intend for everything in scripture to be clear.

LIAM:

For example, 1 John 5:16 is where the “sin unto death” is mentioned. This sin is *not* defined. In fact, it is unclear whether this is a physical or spiritual death, or even what the sin is. If the scripture is unclear, then the translation should remain unclear.

SOFIA:

The key is to try and understand the meaning. In this case, Jesus was much greater in importance than John. Even though John was receiving a lot of honor as a teacher, he was stating that Jesus was greater. John was not even worthy to do a simple, low task of helping to remove Jesus’ sandals.

LIAM:

We discussed this figure of speech and wondered if we had a similar one that communicated the same meaning. We could not think of one. Our choice was to keep it word for word and trust that our preachers and teachers can instruct our people on the meaning or to translate the meaning. We decided to ask our pastor for his advice.

SOFIA:

Another example is with Pharaoh in the story of Exodus. It says that God hardened Pharaoh’s heart. We can see that his actual heart did not become like a stone, but it is telling us that God caused Pharaoh to become stubborn. Does your language have the same figure of speech or another that indicates becoming stubborn or do you just say, “God caused Pharaoh to become stubborn?”

LIAM:

Ok, back to the lesson.

SOFIA:

Step **Seven** is the **Keyword Check**

LIAM:

We often do this in two parts, once with two people and then again with the whole team.

SOFIA:

We look at all the words that were circled in **Step Five** to make sure they are present in the draft. Then we discuss their meaning in the source text and the word choices that were made in our language. We make sure the choices are accurate, clear, natural and consistent.

LIAM:

Having a discussion with the whole team at some point is very important for consistency. We wanted to make sure that we are all using the same words in our language in all areas of scripture and not having different translations used by each member of the team.

SOFIA:

We really struggled over some of the terms. Some terms in the national language are common even in the mother tongue language and can be used in the translation adding a footnote, and some terms you will have to write out what it means. That is why we decided to ask our pastor for his counsel.

Step Eight is the Verse-by-Verse Check**LIAM:**

This checking can be done with 2-4 people. The purpose is to go over the translated material, verse by verse to ensure that it is high quality. It is important that we treat God's Word with honor and respect, doing all we can to make our new translation a powerful tool for God to use with your people. There are several ways this check can be done. One way is to translate it from the mother tongue back into the national language and checking to make sure they match up well, that all the points are represented. You can do this by saying to aloud or writing it down. Another way is to get together as a group and review the text together.

SOFIA:

We chose to do this at a special time devoted to this step. We waited till we had several consecutive chapters ready for this step as it helped to hear the flow from one chapter to another.

LIAM:

Our part of the team had completed the entire book of Mark through **Step Seven** the **Keyword Check**, then our whole team got together. I started with my completed chapters and read what I had drafted, verse by verse pausing after each verse.

SOFIA:

While I read, Liam listened to the flow and clarity. James read along in the source text and Caleb had his English bible and commentary notes. They each made brief comments

if something was not accurate or sounded unclear. A whole chapter took about 30 minutes. It is not intended to be a time to debate and argue every word choice.

LIAM:

After I finished my chapters, we switched roles and Sofia began reading her chapters. It took several meetings to complete the entire book.

SOFIA:

The translation of the book of Mark was translated!! There were shouts of praise and singing and dancing among the team. We could not believe that God had enabled us to complete this task! What is next?

LIAM:

The whole book of Mark was handwritten on paper with many comments written between lines and on the side. After the eight steps were completed, we had our team member who has the best handwriting to rewrite Mark on fresh paper. We also connected to our sponsoring church and they connected us to the proper website to input the translated book with our laptops and tablets.

SOFIA:

We wanted to have some printed copies to share with our church and for people to read. At first, we just copied the handwritten pages but later we were able to get a flash drive with the book that was typed and formatted nicely that we could take to our local printer to make copies. We asked everyone who read or listened to the translation to share with us their comments about its accuracy, clarity and naturalness. Now, we have started to work on the book of Acts.

LIAM:

Oh, I almost forgot! What is going on with our friend Sani? We left him on the phone with people that could be Militants that wish Sani harm. As Sani refused their invitation for the second time, the caller begged him to listen to their story.

SOFIA:

The caller admitted that he and his friends were indeed from a well-known Militant organization and these five were leaders over 2500 militants.

LIAM:

One day, they were leading their forces thru the bush to launch an attack on a nearby community. As they walked down a path, suddenly there was a huge man, dressed in white, whose feet touched the ground and his head reached to the clouds. He blocked the way. All five of the leaders and most of the troops saw the vision.

SOFIA:

They retreated. Not to be refused, they wondered if they had stumbled upon a sacred path and decided to try a different pathway the next day.

LIAM:

As they went along a new path, they were blocked by this same vision. This happened five times! They retreated to their camp to figure out what was going on. But it was about to get even crazier. What happens next? How will God's Word speak to them?

SOFIA:

Our next broadcast will discuss getting your church and community involved in the project and what to do with your translated works. Until then, keep up the work of translation, making sure to follow the steps the best that you can.