

Broadcast 07 – Planning Translation to Completion

SAMMY:

Hello! This is Sammy and Mara with more on using the MAST method of translating Scripture into your own mother-tongue language.

MARA:

Hey Sammy! Have we not covered the subject thoroughly by now? We described the MAST workshop you went to two months ago, told our friends about the people from Wycliffe Associates that helped us and taught you the MAST method of Scripture translation. We described in detail the Eight Steps of MAST and even talked about the importance of disciplines of prayer and devotion in preparing for translation and during the actual translation process. There is more?

SAMMY:

There is much more to cover. I think we may be talking about doing translation for about a year. Most of what we have discussed up to now has been focused on the time at the workshop and the 8 translation steps. That was a wonderful experience and if our listeners get the opportunity to attend a workshop, I encourage them to go. If we hear of a workshop in our area, we will announce it here on our radio program, but the workshop is only the beginning of the process. At the workshop you begin to translate; you may even do a full book or two.

MARA:

As you did the Gospel of Mark which you brought home and read in church that Sunday?

SAMMY:

Correct, but the task was not finished with one book. There are twenty-seven books in the New Testament, and we want the whole thing in our mother-tongue language. My dream is that we will be able to translate the whole Bible for our people. That is going to take a long time and a lot of work and commitment.

MARA:

At the workshop you were working about eight hours every day for three weeks were you not? And only finished one book?

SAMMY:

You are beginning to understand what we need to discuss now. At the workshop we could give our time to translating. We started each day with breakfast and devotions, and then the teachers would talk for an hour about the process and we would break up into our translation teams and work for several hours on translation.

Here at home, we do not have the luxury of that much uninterrupted time. We arrived back home, and reality hit us. We had great plans for meeting at the church each day to

continue what we had started but I immediately learned my crops do not care for themselves and the ox ploughed nothing while I was gone. Jade had to leave immediately for business in the city. Every one of us had personal needs that could not be ignored. I struggled to do my own devotions and Bible reading I felt so overwhelmed. After a little bit of time and encouragement from Pastor Fin, I am back to my Bible reading, but I struggled for a couple weeks.

MARA:

Even as I learned the steps, I wondered if we could ever get together often enough to get the translation done.

SAMMY:

Now you know our topic for tonight. How do you get the important work of translation done when so many other things occupy your time? We are learning that it takes more than a desire to finish the work. You must have cooperation from the whole team and a plan, a schedule of how much you can do in a week or month and how to accomplish it.

MARA:

Cooperation? You told me one team at the workshop was made up of five translators from three different villages. You said the villages were about 3 hours walk from each other. That means some of them would be spending up to six hours a day just getting to and from the group meeting place. Did they just move to the central village for the duration of the work?

SAMMY:

No, just like Jade could not move here, they could not move their homes and families closer together. Besides, there were more than just the problems of travel. Like us, they went home to the needs and problems of life. The answer was to make translation a part of their busy lives.

MARA:

And that is what we are trying to do. Continue the work, care for our families and church, but also make time to translate on a regular basis.

SAMMY:

Correct. The key is to find a way to make time in your schedule. That is going to be a different problem for every translator and team. We have most of our translation team right here.

Maybe we will get new team members from the two villages nearby. If so, then we will be close enough to have time together. That would really help us. Then we could help and encourage each other regularly.

The team we talked about earlier had a much harder time. I have heard they can get together for about ten hours each month. A lot of their work must be done individually and the last two checks done in the group sessions. They also divide up the next chapters and books in those sessions.

MARA:

What about Steps Two and Six? Those need a partner. I have Siara most days for a few minutes. You and another member of the team work near each other and spend lunch time together most days.

SAMMY:

We have an easier time than many translation teams; that is why we need a plan.

MARA:

And you are about to propose a plan that will fit every team everywhere, right?

SAMMY:

How I wish I had such a plan! I am going to describe our plan and some ideas used by others I have heard about. However, no plan I have heard about will work for everyone. Each team and individual translator will have to find what works for them.

When whole days and weeks are not available to the team, you must first learn what time is reasonably available to you. At the start you will believe you can do four or five hours a day but when you have a ten hour work day or take care of several children and some other family member like you have with your father, soon you will get tired and become weary in the translation work, and become weary with your job and family.

Even with our team, we still do some work alone. The drafting steps and the first edit you do not need a partner. Even step two can be done with your spouse, parent, child, or even without a person since the idea of **VERBALIZE** is to say it out loud, and not discuss the chapter of Scripture. Then I look at the national language text and check myself. I am fortunate to have Siara to help me with the verbalize step.

Of course, Steps Three **CHUNK**, Four **BLIND DRAFT**, and Five **SELF-EDIT**, are easily done alone. This is especially helpful to those translators who are isolated. I have heard of translators who live in areas so hostile to Christ they must work in secret. They must keep their translation work secret even from family since family members opposed to their faith could betray them to authorities who would harass or even persecute, arrest, or and kill them.

Can you imagine if our village was opposed to Christ, refused to allow our church to stand, and put Pastor Fin in jail just for preaching Christ? We, who believe, would have to meet in secret and be extra careful about who we witnessed to. Those of us who

went to the workshop would have done so under some excuse and our translation meetings would be in secret in someone's home.

MARA:

Praise God we do not face that persecution here!

SAMMY:

So, let's get back to scheduling translation time. The first step in creating a schedule is the easiest and most obvious - pray! You would never try to do a translation without seeking the help and guidance of the Holy Spirit, so start with seeking His help. Ask God how to get the work done. Then, let Him show you time in your schedule where you can work. Then you should seek God's guidance on things that are obstacles or unnecessary tasks you could remove from your schedule.

Now you are ready to set up your translation work schedule. How quickly can you work? Some can move very quickly through several chunks while others, because of difficulty with the language or confusion in the text, might need to go slower. Determine how much you can do and how to do it. Because I have Siara available most evenings and another team member that I work close to I can get through the first few steps quickly. I have to be careful not to get too far ahead. Sometimes I can get caught up with what God is telling me in His word and forget I am preparing it for sharing.

MARA:

That is something I noticed in my translating. As I am putting the words into our language, I am also learning more about the Scripture and about myself. To make the words correct, I also make sure I understand and am following what I teach. What a wonderful benefit to the work of translating when I learn to love and follow Christ more!

SAMMY:

I believe we share that with all the members of our team.

So, we start by determining how much we can do in one setting. All four drafting steps are meant to be done at one time. We CONSUME and immediately after we should VERBALIZE and then CHUNK the text into smaller portions, and then BLIND DRAFT. The first three steps should be done right before the BLIND DRAFT and not done in separate parts.

MARA:

Did Siara help with **VERBALIZE**? She gets concerned sometimes with her difficulties with the national language.

SAMMY:

Yes, she did. She sometimes needs help with words in the national language but even her questions about meanings can help me think through what is being said. I feel so bad for translators that need to work alone. We never try to do the last three checking steps alone. They must be done with other people, so that the translation has at least four people that translate and check each chapter. We are also trying to bring people together as a community checking team. They will check the Scripture after we have finished the eight steps to make sure it reads smoothly and sounds natural in our language. I feel bad for teams that have to work in isolation except the checking steps.

MARA:

Some have cell phones or email they can use to contact other translators, right?

SAMMY:

Yes, they do, but even they must be careful not to be online too much. To complicate their problem, they have to get their translation out to a place where it can print out copies of the Scripture, they are translating so it can be smuggled back to them for distribution.

MARA:

I thought we were moving too slow. Can those in isolated situations ever finish?

SAMMY:

Yes, they do, but only through great effort. Many translators have paid with their lives or undergone beatings for the sake of the Gospel but still God's Word goes on.

MARA:

Which brings up a final point. Make a schedule and try your best to keep to it. You want to know how much you can finish in a week or how much you want to bring to the group at meetings, but the whole group needs to know what to expect of each other.

When our group got together the first time to discuss how long it should take, we looked at how many team members we had at the time and how long we wanted it to take to complete the New Testament. There are 7957 verses in the New Testament. If two translators translate 11 verses per day for a year, they will complete the New Testament in that one year! That is just two people. If ten people commit to work on 10 verses a day for three months, they will complete a New Testament. But we have families and jobs and eight members on our translation team, so our team decided that if each of us can translate and check 20 verses each week, we will be able to complete our New Testament in less than one year. We hope we can continue to add team members and teach them **MAST**, so the work will go even faster.

SAMMY:

A schedule gives us something to go after and a way to celebrate accomplishments along the way. It also helps you know if you are getting behind in the work. This is not a time for panic but may be a time to rethink or reset a schedule. Be positive but realistic as you discuss and create your translation plan. Keep each other accountable and be gracious when people face difficult times that may slow them down a bit. It takes a team to do this work and it can only be done through the grace of our Lord and the help of the Holy Spirit!

Next time we will talk to some people who will tell us ways they scheduled and planned their translation completion. That's all for this time. Goodbye for now and until next time, happy translating!

If you have any questions or want to start a project of your own, please send an email to reachingalldialects@gmail.com or radio@wycliffeassociates.org or call/text: