

Chapter 4: Church Owned Bible Translation (COBT)—Six Behaviors

Objective: *Participants will understand and value the complete vision of Church-Owned Bible Translation and will take ownership of their part within that. They will have a clear understanding of the full commitment this vision requires.*

Core Concepts:

- When the local Church recognizes that they have the ability, authority, responsibility, and accountability for translating Scripture, they will take certain steps.
- These steps, or behaviors, include:
 - Accept responsibility.
 - Make Bible translation accessible.
 - Refine and revise the translation.
 - Engage the community.
 - Share Church-Owned Bible Translation with others.
 - Encourage generational ownership.

Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it spring the issues of life (Prov. 4:23).
Walk in wisdom toward those who are outside, redeeming the time (Col. 4:5).

Intro:

We've talked about the local church's ability, authority, responsibility, and accountability for translating Scripture. We now want to consider the actions that a church will take because of those beliefs.

Time: 60 minutes
discussion,
20 minutes
exercise,
15 minutes review

Materials:

- ✓ Slide Deck: T3.
Slides_04_COBT.6
.Behaviors
- ✓ White board
- ✓ Bible with place
markers

Teacher's Notes:



**Church
Owned Bible
Translation
Six Behaviors**

Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it spring the issues of life (Prov. 4:23).
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Ask:

- **What steps will the local church take if it believes in Church Owned Bible Translation (COBT)?**

The 6 Behaviors of Church-Owned Bible Translation

1. **Accept Responsibility**

Mother-tongue speakers, under the authority of their local church, **take responsibility for translating** the Bible into the heart language of their local community.

- What are some ways you can share the vision of Church-Owned Bible Translation with other believers in your language community?

Notes:

Invite a participant to come to write on the whiteboard.



You may get suggestions that will work with the Quality Assessment. Make note of these, perhaps in a separate list, and try to steer toward the Behaviors conversation.

Write or show all 6 Behaviors to them, relating them to those they suggested.

1. Accept the responsibility to do a Bible translation



So they read distinctly from the book, in the Law of God; and they gave the sense, and helped them to understand the reading (Nehemiah 8:8)

Nehemiah 8:8
The leaders in Nehemiah made sure those in the crowd understood the meaning of the words in the book of the law.

- What might be difficult for your local church in truly owning their translation?

2. Make Bible Translation Accessible

The local church **manages community accessibility** to the translated Scripture.

- How could your church help your community get access to the Scripture in your language once it's translated?

3. Refine and Revise the Translation.

Refinement and revision will continuously take place within the community, with mother-tongue speakers.

- Who would be interested in helping with ongoing revisions in your community?

4. Engage The Community

The church **involves** the local community **in reading and studying Scripture**.

- How does your community engage with Scripture right now?
- How can you and your church involve the community with Scripture in your language?

Notes:

2. Make Bible translation accessible



And daily in the temple, and in every house, they did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ (Acts 5:42).

Acts 5:42

3. Refine and revise the translation



And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart (Galatians 6:9).

Galatians 6:9

4. Engage community in Scripture usage



All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness,¹⁷ that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

2 Timothy 3:16–17

5. Share COBT with Others

The local church **shares** the opportunity of Church-Owned Bible Translation with other language communities.

- How can you share the vision of COBT with believers outside your own language community?

6. Encourage Generational Ownership

The local church leads future generations to update and revise and takes responsibility for these **generational revisions and updates** to the Scripture.

- Why would future generations need to take ownership for updates and revisions?
- What are some steps you could take to make sure this happens?

Impact Story:

The Navajo people completed their New Testament in 1975, and their Old Testament in 2000. Unfortunately, they never considered generational revisions and ownerships.

They recently reached out to us to help with a new translation. The current version is no longer available in print due to copyright issues, and many of the local people cannot read it due to language changes. Also, as with many American Indian groups, one of

Notes:

5. Share COBT with others



He answered and said to them, "He who has two tunics, let him give to him who has none; and he who has food, let him do likewise." (Luke 3:11)

Luke 3:11

6. Lead future generations to update and revise.



"And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up (Deuteronomy 6:6-7). So they read distinctly from the book, in the Law of God; and they gave the sense, and helped them to understand the reading (Nehemiah 8:8).

Deuteronomy 6:6–7
Nehemiah 8:8

their concerns is the loss of their cultural heart language. Their older generation knows little to no English; their younger generation knows very little Navajo.

We are helping them address their concerns by setting up a dual language translation that can be used by all generations. They have also appointed people within their community to lead future revisions. The new translation using MAST will also guarantee continued access and availability.

Discuss:

- **How can you see this process working in your community?**
- **What challenges do you see for your local church in truly owning translation?**
- **What is your role in sharing the vision of COBT with others?**

Exercise: **COBT 6 Behaviors Scenario Match**

(Participant Workbook pp. 18-20)

Example:

A young pastor gathers other pastors and members of his community to be trained in Bible translation. They translate portions of Scripture during the day and gather in the evenings to check each other's work.

Notes:

The full Exercise is on pp. 182-83 if copies are needed.

For a large group, divide participants into smaller groups led by a facilitator.

Do the example together, then allow groups to complete the exercise. When all have finished (or time is up), discuss answers together.

- Which Behavior best matches the experience of this pastor and members of his community?

Teach Back:

- What do you think is the most important of the six behaviors? And why?
- What does it mean for a translation project to be “church-owned?”
- How does church ownership of translation contribute to the Great Commission?
- How does your church need to prepare for the steps involved in a translation project?
- How can you share this vision with others in your faith community?

Notes:

This is a good example of **Behavior #1**.

Translation into the heart language of the local community is the responsibility of mother tongue speakers in fellowship with their local church.

Exercise answer key:

1. 4
2. 2
3. 3
4. 6
5. 5

Confirm: Participants understand the full vision of COBT and the 6 behaviors that naturally follow the 4 beliefs about COBT. They have begun to consider their own role, as well as their community’s role, in enacting these behaviors for their language group. They understand they will need to plan and prepare—not only for the completion of their own translation, but also for sharing this with others.