

Broadcast 05 – Workshop Experience

MARA:

Hello. This is Mara. Today, we are going to talk with Ben, who was one of the members of the translation team. Welcome Ben! We are interested to hear about your experience as part of the translation team for our language.

BEN:

Thank you, Mara. I am happy to be with you today.

MARA:

We would like to hear about your experience as part of the translation team. Sharing about this will help those who are translators to compare their own feelings and experiences.

BEN:

I hope I can encourage others by talking about my experience at the workshop and what has happened after returning home. What would you like to know?

MARA:

I thought we would start at the beginning. How did you feel hearing Scripture only in the national language?

BEN:

It was difficult for me. I was not always sure that I understood the message well enough to join in discussions or to ask questions. It discouraged me from reading Scripture on my own because it is difficult for me to read in the national language. Probably the most important was that it made me feel that the Scripture was not meant for me.

In the book of Acts, chapter 2, it talks about everyone hearing the message in their own language. I wondered why that was not the case for us. Why are we hearing God's message in the national language instead of the language that speaks to our hearts? I even wondered if God could understand me if I spoke to him in our mother-tongue language.

MARA:

Those are difficult thoughts keeping you from a close relationship with God. How did you first find out about the translation workshop?

BEN:

I first heard about it at church when they were trying to recruit translators. They explained it as a way that ordinary people like me can help translate Scripture. They also said that the Church, not just our church but the local churches that speak in our mother-tongue language would be responsible for the translation and have the authority to make decisions about it.

MARA:

What did you think about MAST when you first heard about it?

BEN:

I was very excited about it. It was as though God had heard my difficulties with reading in the national language and was providing an answer. At the same time, I was doubtful. I was always told that translation had to be done by scholars who can read Greek and Hebrew and are trained in theology, not by ordinary people. I was not sure that I would be able to do it.

MARA:

How did you proceed? What were the first things you did?

BEN:

Well, first I prayed about it. I asked God if this was something that He wanted me to do. I talked with my pastor about it. He shared with me that he had been unsure when he first learned about MAST as well. He knew a couple of pastors from other communities that have started Bible translation in their mother-tongue language. They have found that it is a wonderful encouragement to their people. He assured me that people like me are involved in this and encouraged me to go. That helped a lot.

MARA:

I understand how that would provide reassurance. What else did you do?

BEN:

The next thing I needed to do was talk with my family. I shared my excitement about the possibility of having Scripture in our mother-tongue language. I asked how they would feel if I went to the translation event. It meant that I would be away from our home for a couple of weeks. I would not be there to help at home, and I would have to take time away from my job. Would they be willing to manage without me for that time?

My wife was so excited. She wanted to attend the event as well. We decided that we could not both be gone, so she stayed home and supported the translation event with her prayers. My brother and father are not believers, but they knew how important this was to me. They said they would help my wife while I was away. I pray that hearing Scripture in our mother-tongue language will bring them closer to God and that they will become believers.

MARA:

So, then you said yes and agreed to go to the translation event?

BEN:

Yes, I told my pastor that I was ready to join the team going. I told him that I still was very nervous and not sure that I would be able to do it. I was not sure what the translation event would be like and that made me nervous. The Pastor reassured me with a verse from scripture. He chose second Corinthians 9:8 – “And God is able to make all grace overflow for you, so that, always, in all things, you may have all you need. This will be so that you may multiply every good deed.”

MARA:

That is a good verse for all of us to keep in mind. What was the translation event like for you? Tell us about the first day of the workshop. What was that like?

BEN:

There was a small team from our church. Then there were a lot of other people from other communities. It was more people than I expected and the whole situation was very new to me. I was excited, but this made me nervous again and concerned about whether I would be able to do the translating work. I reminded myself of the Bible verse Pastor had given me – that God is able and will give me all I need.

MARA:

What happened throughout your time at the translation event? How did things move forward?

BEN:

The first thing they did was teach us the eight steps of MAST. I know you have been talking about those. The people that came to train us told us that each step is very important and that we needed to know those steps before we could start translating.

MARA:

Once you understood the eight steps of the process, what happened next?

BEN:

It felt a little bit scary but good once we started translating. We were working on the book of Mark. As we worked together, I started to get to know and trust the other volunteers. We could start seeing that we were making progress, and that was exciting. It took a little bit of time but after some practice I gained confidence that we would be able to have the book of Mark finished by the time the event was over, so we could go home with that gospel ready to share with a wider audience.

MARA:

By the end of the translation event, what was it like? How were you feeling?

BEN:

There was a close bond that was built among the team. I was excited to have Scripture in our mother-tongue language to bring back to our church. I felt successful and proud of what we had accomplished – although I know it was not really us, but God working through us, who made this important work possible.

MARA:

What parts of the translation work did you like best?

BEN:

There were many parts of being at the event that I liked. This was different than anything that I had done before, and I liked that. I liked being closely involved with Scripture passages and the challenges of making the translation as good as possible. I liked that God was using me in such a powerful way. I had never felt that way before.

MARA:

How about the other people who were there? What did you like about working with them?

BEN:

There were so many kinds of people – men and women, different ages, and different occupations. God had brought us all together with the same purpose. Everyone was very dedicated. We recognized that each person had different strengths to contribute, just like it talks about in the Bible. People helped each other and were not critical of each other.

MARA:

That all sounds wonderful. I imagine that there were some difficulties, as well. What difficulties did you or the team face with the work at the translation event?

BEN:

There were challenges. There were ideas that were difficult to translate, and it took a lot of discussion. Sometimes we were not sure that we were translating the meaning of the passage correctly. We overcame these difficulties by working together as a team and getting help from the resources. The people who came to train us also helped us work through questions.

MARA:

Tell us how you felt after the translation event.

BEN:

After working so hard together on such an important project, it was difficult to say good-bye. It was a very special time. One of the translators compared it to the kind of special experience that Peter, James and John had when they saw Jesus, Moses, and Elijah on the Mount of Transfiguration. Peter felt it was so special that he wanted to stay there. Jesus explained they needed to go back into the world, and we needed to go back into the world, too. It would not be the end of our translation work, but we needed to share what we had learned and the Scripture we already had translated.

MARA:

What have been the high points since you have come back from the translation event?

BEN:

One high point for me was hearing the Scripture that we had translated from Mark read aloud in the church. It made the passage much more meaningful. It seemed like it was written just for us. Seeing my father and brother read Mark was a dream of mine fulfilled. They are asking more questions and I continue to pray that they will accept Jesus as their Savior.

MARA:

I know that the translation team has continued to work and soon we will have a New Testament and even a complete Bible in our mother-tongue language. I understand that you are working on translating the book of Romans now. Do you find it difficult to keep working at translation now that you are back home?

BEN:

Yes, that is true. When we were at the translation event, we had nothing but translating to think about. Now that we are back home, it is more difficult. We have obligations with work and family and just the challenges of everyday life.

MARA:

What have you found to help overcome those challenges? Maybe those ideas will help our listeners who are working on translation.

BEN:

It helps me stay motivated when I hear or see how important the translated Scripture is to others. That encourages me to go on. I have found that trying to set a certain amount of time aside each day to work on translation is important. Also, we have added church members to the translation team, like you.

MARA:

To sum up, I would like to ask you to look back over your experience with translating Scripture so far and tell us how you would describe it.

BEN:

Summarizing the experience is difficult. It has meant so much to me and continues to have great meaning. I think the best way to describe it so far is the amazement that God has used ordinary people like me so that we can have Scripture in our mother-tongue language. It has been such a blessing to me, my family, my church, and my community. It has brought me closer to God and increased my faith.

MARA:

Ben, it has been so good to hear about your experiences with translating Scripture. I am sure it has been helpful to others who are working on translation to hear about your experiences. We look forward to sharing with you again next time. God bless you!

If you have questions about your current project or want to start a project in your own mother-tongue language, please call or text (local country partner info) or send an email to reachingalldialects@gmail.com or radio@wycliffeassociates.org.