

We'd like to share an inspiring story of Bible Translation at work . . .

'Store'ies

Here's a translation story that was recently passed on to us by Bob Creson (the president of Wycliffe USA) about a translator in Cameroon who was searching for a way to connect the Hdi people with God's truth. Through a dream, God prompted this man, Lee Bramlet, to look again at the Hdi word for "love." Almost every verb in Hdi ends in "a", "i" and "u", but the word for "love" only ended in "a" and "i". The following is taken from Bob Creson's letter and explains what happened to the "u".

Lee asked the Hdi translation committee, which included the most influential leaders in the community, "Could you 'dvi' your wife?" "Yes," they said. That would mean that the wife had been loved but the love was gone.

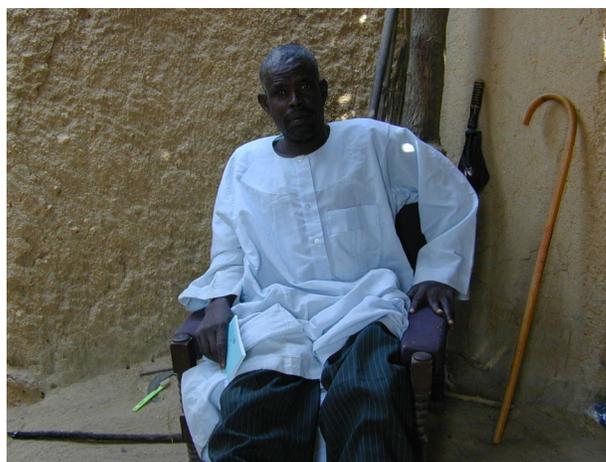
"Could you 'dva' your wife?" "Yes," they said. That kind of love depended on the wife's actions. She would be loved as long as she remained faithful and cared for her husband well.

"Could you 'dvu' your wife?" Everyone laughed. "Of course not! If you said that, you would have to keep loving your wife no matter what she did, even if she never got you water, never made you meals. Even if she committed adultery, you would be compelled to just keep on loving her. No, we would never say 'dvu.' It just doesn't exist."



Lee Bramlet and Dangwa Pierre, the current president of the Hdi Translation committee. At right: Abraham, who guided the majority of the work until he passed away last year..

Lee sat quietly for a while, thinking about John 3:16, and then he asked, "Could God 'dvu' people?"



There was complete silence for three or four minutes; then tears started to trickle down the weathered faces of these elderly men. Finally they responded. "Do you know what this would mean? This would mean that God kept loving us over and over, millennia after millennia, while all that time we rejected His great love. He is compelled to love us, even though we have sinned more than any people."

One simple vowel and the meaning was changed from "I love you based on what you do and who you are," to "I love you, based on Who I am. I love you because of Me and NOT because of you."

God had encoded the story of His unconditional love right into their language. For centuries, the little word was there—unused but available, grammatically correct and quite understandable. When the word was finally spoken, it called into question their entire belief system. If God was like that, and not a mean and scary spirit, did they need the spirits of the ancestors to intercede for them? Did they need sorcery to relate to the spirits? Many decided the answer was no, and the number of Christ-followers quickly grew from a few hundred to several thousand.

The New Testament in Hdi is ready to be printed now, and 29,000 speakers will soon be able to feel the impact of

passages like Ephesians 5:25, “Husbands, ‘dvu’ your wives, just as Christ ‘dvu’-d the church...” I invite you to pray for them as they absorb and seek to model the amazing, unconditional love they have received.

Around the world, community by community, as God’s Word is translated, people are gaining access to this great love story about how God ‘dvu’-d us enough to sacrifice his unique Son for us, so that our relationship with Him can be ordered and oriented correctly. The cross changes everything! Someday, the last word of the last bit of Scripture for the last community will be done, and everyone will be able to understand the story of God’s unconditional love.



At left: Hdi translation committee – Some of these men were present when the committee originally discussed “dvu”; others joined a couple of years later.

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We hope this story blessed you as much as it did us! What a great reminder of how God’s Word changes everything! Thank you for being a part of the Bible Translation Process!

- Todd & Cathy Lindley

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