

# Amazwi

June 2011



[Click on one of the links below to navigate around this letter](#)

[Forthcoming events to Diarise](#)

[What do you do with good news?](#)

[Time to pray](#)

[Editorial](#)

[How to contact us](#)



## Come over and help us

In Acts 16:4-10 we read the story of Paul and his missionary companions being directed by the Holy Spirit as to where they should take the good news of Jesus.

This is the story of what happened. During the night, Paul had a vision of someone from across the sea in Macedonia who was standing there and begging him, "Come over to Macedonia and help us!" After Paul had

seen the vision, he and his companions were sure that God had called them to preach the good news of Jesus there. They began looking for a way to go to Macedonia, which they were able to do. So from Troas they sailed across to Neapolis and from there went on to Philippi, where they planted the first Christian church in Europe. The days of the Spirit of Jesus leading so clearly are not at all something of the past. He remains the same

yesterday, today, and tomorrow. Listen to this true story. For years now Wycliffe has been trying to get into Angola to help bring God's Word to the Bibleless peoples of that needy country. We followed up on several leads, none of which really yielded the right opportunity. Then the Lord surprised us!

About 18 years ago YWAM, a mission discipling young people and making them into missionaries, started work in Angola. They had a special vision for the unreached peoples of that country, and in 1995 a young man and his wife started work among the Kwandu, a small people group who centuries earlier had fled from enslavement and settled on top of a high mountain plateau in south-western Angola. Until today the only way to reach them is by an arduous 8-hour climb.

God blessed the ministry of this Angolan couple and a church was established among the Kwandu. When the missionaries wanted to introduce the Bible to them, they brought along Bibles of a neighbouring group. The Kwandu reacted very negatively saying, "These are the people who wanted to make us their slaves! There's no way that we are going to read the Bible in their language!" In simple school exercise books, they started to translate some Scriptures into their own language. They soon realised that they needed help because this kind of work requires a lot of technical know-how. Word got out, and through others Wycliffe got to hear of this a few months ago. The "Man from



Macedonia” calls for the first time.

As if this was not enough, I recently received an email from a Wycliffe colleague with a link to a YWAM online newsletter. As I read the article I was surprised by another striking example of a “Macedonian call”, once again from Angola. The article describes an Angolan YWAMer’s work among the unreached Mukubal people, also in south-western Angola, how he learned their language and after many years started to win their trust.


To my astonishment I read that they are hoping that one day Wycliffe will come and help them to write their language and translate the Bible into Mukubal. I had never before heard of the Mukubal people. They do not appear on any of our lists of languages for Angola, nor have we heard of any attempts by anyone to reach out to them. You can imagine my surprise, maybe not unlike that of Paul that night in Troas. By means of a link on the Internet, the “Man from Macedonia” calls us a second time.

Paul and his friends left the very next morning. We, too, should not delay!

Sebastian Floor

## Forthcoming Events to Diarise

Wycliffe Bible Translators of South Africa  
invites you and your circle of friends to a dinner  
event and touring performance of  
*The Chained Book*  
by Kreator Artz



Johannesburg  
28 and 29 May  
Pietermaritzburg  
11 June  
Cape Town  
20 June

This promises to be a special evening with a fresh vision of the power of God’s Word.

Tickets are available on an RSVP basis.  
Please follow the link for more details, or call us on 073 1919 915.

Wycliffe\_sa@wycliffe.org

**Wycliffe Bible Translators of South Africa  
invites you and your circle of friends to the theatre  
performance of**

### *The Chained Book* by Kreator Artz

**Sat. 28 May, Johannesburg – Pro Musica Theatre,  
Florida Park at 7pm**

**Sun. 29 May, Johannesburg – Pro Musica Theatre,  
Florida Park at 3pm**

**Sat. 11 June, Pietermaritzburg – Cowan House,  
Hilton at 7pm**

**Mon. 20 June, Cape Town – Nassau Theatre,  
Groote Schuur High School, Newlands at 7:30pm**

**For more details contact [Wycliffe\\_sa@wycliffe.org](mailto:Wycliffe_sa@wycliffe.org) or call us on 073 191 9915**

## Culture meets Scripture

Discovering the key to community transformation



LOOKING for KEYS? Come and join us!  
Involved in ministry where cultural issues prevent growth in new believers?  
Need answers to the daily struggles presented by critical events like, marriage, birth, sickness, and death?  
Then this workshop has dynamic relevance for you!

WHEN? 13–15 June 2011

WHERE? African Enterprise 

Presented by Wycliffe Bible Translators of South Africa

REGISTER SOON!  
By email [registrar@ae.org.za](mailto:registrar@ae.org.za)  
or phone: (033) 347-7050

  
Wycliffe SA  
[wycliffe.org.za](http://wycliffe.org.za)

**Culture meets Scripture workshops:  
13-15 June, Pietermaritzburg – African Enterprise.  
17-18 June, Cape Town – the Bible Institute of SA,**

## Time to pray

Mary Gardner will long be remembered for her devotion to Bible translation.

She served with Wycliffe Bible Translators in Togo, Africa, working on the New Testament translation project for the Ife people. She was in Jerusalem on a six-month programme given by the Home for Bible Translators, which includes courses in Hebrew and Bible Translation at the Hebrew University. Her desire was to return to Togo to help with the translation

of the Tanakh (Old Testament) for the Ife people who received the New Testament in 2009. Sadly, but by divine appointment, she lost her life this year in a bomb explosion near the Central Bus Station in Jerusalem.

In the 1950s when five young men gave their lives to reach the Huaorani group in Ecuador, it prompted many people in the direction of serving God in challenging parts of the world. The five were multiplied like the loaves and the fish. Perhaps God will use the death of Mary

Gardner to give a shot in the arm to the entire Bible translation movement.

It is unsettling (or should be) that some 2400 languages have no Scripture at all, but it is also a shame that so many languages (1700) that have the New Testament still do not have all the Old Testament translated. There are only 457 languages with a complete translation of the Bible out of 6,900 languages in the world. God has given airplanes, computers, solar power, and many other helps, but it will take believers called by

God to complete the task. I believe that the church and all believers with a written copy of the Scriptures in their own language will now have a renewed concern for getting the job completed of making sure that every people group has the entire Bible in their own language. So now is the time to pray and believe that it will be done!

With permission of Frank Mecklenburg, retired Wycliffe member

## What do you do with good news?

It was the closing ceremony of an introductory taster course offered by the newly established Wycliffe South Africa at Rosebank Bible College, including a glimpse into phonetics and basic Bible translation principles. John Bendor-Samuel, instrumental in initiating the Wycliffe office in South Africa, was the speaker. His message denoted the end of a week that made such a deep impression on me that my husband and I went on to join a team of Bible translators in Mozambique.

Those of us who knew John Bendor-Samuel can say with Wikipedia that “Few others saw with such clarity and felt with such passion the challenge to render the Word of God into the heart language of the world’s people groups.” It was he who started the work of Bible translation and language research in Ghana in 1961. Over the next 15 years work began in Nigeria, Togo, Cameroon, Ivory Coast, Ethiopia, Sudan, Kenya, Burkina Faso, Senegal, Mali, Niger, Chad, Zaire, Congo Brazzaville, Central African Republic, and Mozambique.

This year marks the death of John Bendor-Samuel at the age of 81. It is also the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the work of Wycliffe

in Africa. From time to time it is a good thing to look back and take stock of what God has done. Samuel did this after subduing the Philistines at Mizpah. The result was a stone monument, called Ebenezer, meaning “Thus far the Lord has helped us.” Looking back in this way strengthens our trust in God for what still remains to be done!

In the Ashanti language of Ghana, there’s a proverb that announces the death of a king, nobleman or great man: *Odupu Atutu*, meaning “A mighty tree has fallen.” In the words of Paul Opoku-Mensah, director of GILLBT (the national Bible translation and literacy organisation of Ghana): “What is needed (now that John Bendor-Samuel is no longer with us) is not another mighty tree, but rather a flourishing forest in which a thousand flowers bloom” – signifying a mass

movement to complete the work of making God’s Word accessible to the remaining language groups of Africa. Will you join us in sharing the Good News we so freely enjoy?

Karen Floor



John Bendor-Samuel

You could hear a pin drop as the guest speaker explained what four lepers did when they realised they had the monopoly of good news and weren’t sharing it. As needy as they were, in that year of famine, it suddenly dawned on them that keeping the good news of available food from others was not right (2 Kings 7:9). I don’t remember many messages of nearly 30 years ago, but this one I will never forget!



## Editorial

In this month's edition the theme that unfolds is one of God's sovereign intervention in the lives of those He calls to make His Word accessible through Bible translation.

While God permits Mary Gardner to lose her life in a bomb explosion just outside Jerusalem, He chooses to spare the life of John Bendor-Samuel for 50 years of work in some life-threatening situations in Africa, including the time he became critically ill in Togo. Their stories remind us of God's sovereignty when five men died as martyrs in their desire to reach out with the love of Christ to the Huaorani of Equador. It was no ordinary Bible translation project that started when the widow of Jim Elliot and sister of Nate Saint (two of the five men who died) returned to live among the Huaorani in the spirit of reconciliation.

Still today, Wycliffe cares very deeply about the people who don't have any access to God's transforming Word. So much so, that we are looking to God for new strategies to make Scripture accessible to all people. On our very borders, here in southern Africa, we have the example of a modern day Macedonian Call coming to us from Angola. There are others calling too, if we would but pause to listen.

How do we respond to the call? Who will go? Who will send them?

We hope you find this a really inspirational and challenging edition. Consider it an invitation to join us in looking to God for the response. Otherwise, how will they hear?

Karen Floor



**“He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose.” - Jim Elliot**



## Announcement – To All Readers

Please help us update our database with a short email, a letter to our postal address, or even a quick SMS.

Help Wycliffe to become more planet friendly: receive **Amazwi** by email.

***Staying in touch with you is important to us – thank you!***



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