ITS NEWS
International Translation Services

International Translation Services (ITS) works in collaboration with colleagues in SIL and other agencies to creatively steward and advance the translation practices, tools, methods, and training necessary to enable a supportive environment for individuals and communities to flourish and engage with Scripture.

We value: Interconnectedness. Capacity Building. Diversity. Innovation.

February 2024

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Acceleration versus Incarnation?

- Greg Dekker - *International Translation Services Director*

You might be asking, “Why did he say “versus”?” I think it's logical to assume that the less time spent by the Local team researching, exploring, and testing a draft translation with the speakers of the language, due to accelerated means of translating (e.g. machine translation), the less opportunities there are for mentoring, discipling, and incarnating the Word through time spent with translators, community members, and others (*oral/multi-modal translation approaches which involve larger segments of the community notwithstanding.)

I was asked recently by a colleague to join with others in looking ahead and answer the question, “What will the Bible translation movement look like 5 years from now?” and “What might you perceive to be X organization's role in it?” (Put your organization in place of the “X”!)

Coming out of the International Bible Translation Conference (BTC) in October 2023, I was struck (again) with the degree to which artificial intelligence (AI) is affecting and influencing Bible translation. So, in answer to the above questions, I thought things like, “In 5 years from now... All OT translations where an existing NT translation in the same language exists will be drafted using a tool like Scripture Forge.” and “AI will have radically reduced the time needed to draft the Bible in any language.” and “Local translation training will be heavily encumbered with learning AI computer tools for translation.” and “The numbers of Bible translations started each year will have drastically increased.” I think that AI will have a very significant impact on the BT landscape!

These changes will impose other changes as well. AI will change our ability and *availability* to incarnate the Word. The paper by Unger and Hayashi at the Bible Translation Conference 2023 titled *Lost in Translation: Navigating the intersection of humanity and technology in BT* made these limitations abundantly clear. There was a lot of agreement in response to their paper. And we found ourselves asking the question, “How will AI change our responsibility to incarnate the Word?” I was recently told by a leader in the BT community that incarnation can now be done from an office in another part of the world. Does that idea shock you?

A BTC participant attending the *Quality in Translation and AI* panel on Tuesday of the Conference asked the question, (and I summarize) “How can incarnation happen when/if Bible translations are accelerated to the point where so much less time is given to / available for interacting with local translators and community members around God's Word?” A panel member wisely responded with what I was already thinking, “*More time* can/should be spent in Scripture Use, Literacy (including literacy conducted within the auspices of the local body of believers, commonly called Church-based Literacy or CBL), and Scripture Engagement activities. Discipleship can naturally occur in these contexts of learning and utilizing the Word.” I agree. I think our success in incarnating the Word in the Bibleless community context will be measured by the level of Scripture Use, Scripture Engagement and Literacy-around-the-Word activities and impact.

So, is it really *acceleration* ***versus*** *incarnation?* Is it one or the other? For me the answer to that question, at least at this time and place is “no”. But if we focus solely on acceleration without putting commensurate attention *and funding* into Scripture Use, Scripture Engagement, and Scripture Literacy activities, we may find our incarnational responsibilities threatened and/or drastically weakened in Bible translation ministry. This is a call for all of us to look carefully at how our focus for engaging with the Word in the contexts where it is / has been translated needs to change alongside the focus on accelerating its provision. Let's continue to talk together about how this might happen.

*One example: in a multi-modal approach, engagement with Scripture can start in the translation process itself, and grow to a strong discipleship approach when the full Scriptures are available. And there are other possibilities as well. Let me know what you envision.

New Consultant

- Eva Sanches Silva *(Africa)*

Congratulations to Eva Sanches Silva (SIL Central African Republic) on completing all the requirements for certification as a Translation Consultant. Drew Maust (*Translation Domain Team Leader for Francophone Africa*) announced that the SIL Africa Area accreditation committee for translation consultants has examined the dossier submitted for Eva, and they are pleased to say that the committee formally recognize her as a Translation Consultant. Michael Jemphrey has been her supervisor and primary mentor since 2020. She has also been mentored by Derek Johnston, Graeme Lawson, Adam Huntley and Lee Higdon (among others).

Eva was born in the Cape Verde Islands, grew up in Portugal, and then moved to France at the age of 14. She completed a Bachelor's Degree in Portuguese, Foreign Languages and Civilizations at the Faculty of Letters of Aix-en-Provence. She felt the Lord calling her, when she heard about Bible translation from several colleagues and also several times at church. And because of her family and cultural background, she was very interested in translation, learning languages and getting to know other cultures.

In 2003 she completed the ETP (European Training Program) training in France and then in 2004 became a member of Wycliffe France. In 2007 she obtained a degree in Theology at the Faculty of Vaux-sur-Seine (Paris). In 2007 she went to Yaoundé to do the ATP (Africa Training Program) training, specializing in translation.

Eva went to Mali in 2008 and conducted linguistic research with the Malinké Ouest Kénieba project. Then in 2012 she went to Senegal and worked as an exegete in the Konyagui project, assisting with finishing the NT and Genesis and starting the exegesis of Exodus with the translator. The NT and Genesis was finished in 2019. In Senegal, Eva also helped with the beginning of the contemporary Wolof translation project, doing sociolinguistic research, interpretation workshops, exegesis workshops with other colleagues.

In 2018 Eva went to Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso for the Translation Advisors training and then began her Translation CiT training program, continuing that when she moved to France in 2020. Last year she also completed a Master of Theology with Honors, at the Jean-Calvin Faculty, in Aix-en-Provence.

How Anthropology Contributes to Good Bible Translation

- Siromatohou François Boco Tchoropa

François Boco has written a great article (in English and French) on How Anthropology Contributes to Good Bible Translation, which appeared in the December 2023 issue of Anthropology Allspice (edited by Sharon Merz & Philip Troutman). He is a translator with the Waama project in Benin.

Bible translation is an ancient craft that has been practiced for centuries. It is thanks to translation that peoples can access the word of God in their mother tongue. Translating Scripture from one language to another brings into play a number of linguistic and social parameters that need to be taken into account if the translation is to be accessible. Translation is an act of sociocultural mediation. Translating a biblical passage, a document or a book from a source language to a target language is not simply a matter of translating words but also concepts. Such concepts are specific to societies, communities or peoples, and each people has its own way of thinking and living. This calls for integrating anthropology into the translators' training.

He discusses some of the issues that the local translators had with these verses: 2 Samuel 14:2 “mourning clothes” / Song of Songs 1:2 “Your lips cover me with kisses” / Ecclesiastes 3:21 (animal spirits) / Ruth 2:20 (levirate marriage)

Throat Singing

- Psalm 23

From the SIL Eurasia website comes this story of local artists using time-honored art in Christian worship to powerfully communicate a message of joy and peace. You can read the full story at: Heroes and heritage: Discovering Altai throat singing.

Click here to hear Aidin Kurmanov performing Psalm 23 in traditional Altai throat singing style, wearing national costume - with English subtitles. In throat singing, also known as overtone singing, singers produce more than one pitch at a time. By employing the entire vocal tract – lips, tongue, jaw, velum and larynx – throat singers take full advantage of the throat's resonance capacity to produce a unique harmony.

Christian independent artist and throat singer, Aidin Kurmanov, takes the use of throat singing one step further. In 2003, he wrote and produced an Altai-style epic story outlining the message of the Bible from Creation to Revelation. It takes a total of 43 minutes to perform. Kurmanov has also presented this Bible epic at various throat singing festivals in Altai.

Translation Training and Development Updates

- Phil King - *ITS Training and Development*

Here are some updates in the training and development areas:

BT Training and Development Community of Practice - Last November, we heard from Joost Pikkert and Danny Foster about the MA in Translation of Scripture programme at CanIL, and particularly its innovative approach based on gaining academic credit for mentored competency development whilst in your normal workplace.

There was good discussion of some of the benefits and challenges of this approach, such as handling the ‘affirmative aspiration’ of competencies by students (‘I can do that’) or negotiating the language issues when working in a language other than that of the institution. Catch up with the session through the video on emdc.online.

For our next session on February 29th, we'll be thinking about the impact of AI on Bible Translation training. Given that AI is changing the workflows, skills and roles in Bible translation, how might this affect hiring practices in terms of what qualities we are looking for in translation personnel? How can we use AI in developing training events? How does certain types of work being done by AI impact the on-the-job skills development of translation personnel? We'll be hearing from Max, and spending time discussing these sorts of questions together with BT trainers from around the world. Sign up through EMDC.online.

BT Conference 2025 - The team have been working hard over the past few months to collate together all the final details and permissions for sharing the videos and papers from last October's Bible Translation conference (2023) on ‘Quality in Translation’. Hopefully, by the time this update is published they will be available on the https://btconference.org website. However, if they're not there yet, do not despair! The videos are available through this playlist on YouTube, and many are also listed directly on the BT Conference YouTube channel.

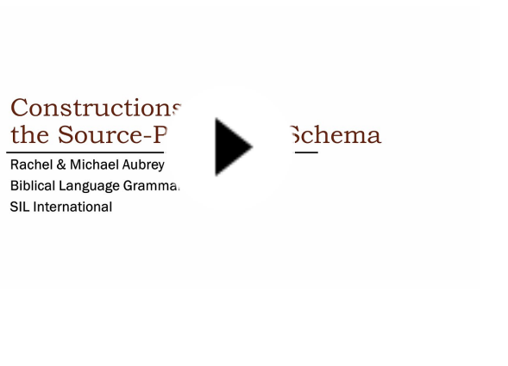
Meanwhile, a group has been dreaming together of future BT conferences outside Dallas, and talking about the possibility of the international Bible translation conference rotating between Asia, Africa and the Americas. It's very possible the 2025 conference will be in Thailand. We'd also like to broaden the steering committee to include other partners. If this direction excites you and you'd like to know more - get in touch! But also get in touch if you have concerns.

Digital Training Library - The certificate courses available in the Digital Training Library are continuing to expand. Recent additions include: ‘Foundations in Bible Translation’ in American Sign Language; the World of the New Testament (in English); and the World of the Old Testament (in English, Hindi, French, Indonesian and Spanish). These join the certificates in Orality, three levels of Hebrew and Greek, and the original Foundations in Bible Translation. I still have some scholarships available for participants connected to SIL, just let me know if you are interested.

News and Updates

Greek prepositional phrases

- Rachel & Michael Aubrey



Here is the online version of Rachel & Michael Aubrey's paper on Greek prepositional phrases that they presented at SBL (Society of Biblical Literature) in November 2023. You can also view the recording on YouTube.

Abstract - Greek prepositional phrases are understudied in traditional Greek grammar. And they are often difficult for students to understand, particularly within the grammar/translation model of education. In this video series we examine how cognitive linguistics can provide insight into the meaning of a specific family of prepositional constructions: "A certain man went down from Jerusalem [SOURCE] to Jericho [GOAL]."

We discuss relevant grammatical concepts and introduce the construction with a few of its metaphorical extensions, like change-of-state constructions and communication constructions. From there we examine the Source-Path-Goal schema that motivates iterative path constructions and range constructions. We conclude with a discussion of some specific case studies that translators and interpreters have historically struggled with and a summary of our grammatical description.

AQuA Updates

AI @ SIL Update
Augment Quality Assessment (AQuA)

If you would like to keep updated on AQuA (Augment Quality Assessment) you can subscribe to receive AI @ SIL Updates here. These monthly newsletters will outline new AQuA features, plans for opening up to new users, and stories from the field.

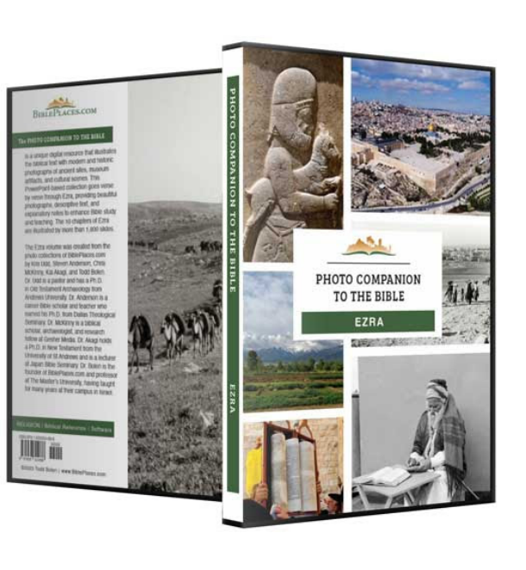
If you are a regular AQuA user and interested in joining the "AQuA Users' Sync," click here. They meet online every two months to present new features, conduct demonstrations, and gather input on what to include in future updates. Check out the AQuA team website for more detailed information, including a short intro video.

The AQuA presentation (including the algorithms and theory behind AQuA) at the 2023 Bible Translation Conference is available. You can download the BT conference paper here (just slide the dollar amount all the way down to $0 to download for free). The paper begins on page 330.

In September 2023, members of the AQuA team had the opportunity to help facilitate successful AI workshops with translation teams in South Asia and the Philippines. You can read more about the Philippines workshop here, in partnership with Wycliffe Philippines.

BiblePlaces Photos

- and three free books



The January 2024 BiblePlaces Newsletter announced a new photo set of Caesarea Maritima. You can subscribe here to get the newsletter each month.

David Ussishkin has made available (through Academia) the complete pdfs of three of his English books published by the Israel Exploration Society. The three books that Ussishkin is generously giving away are:

Biblical Lachish: A Tale of Construction, Destruction, Excavation and Restoration (2014; 446 pages; $73 used on Amazon).

Megiddo-Armageddon: The Story of the Canaanite and Israelite City (2018; 480 pages; $68 used on Amazon)

The Village of Silwan: The Necropolis from the Period of the Judean Kingdom (1993, 376 pages, $205 used on Amazon, but cheaper here)

Biblical Hebrew Online Classes

- Jochanan Löwenstein

ONLINE LANGUAGE CLASS
BIBLICAL HEBREW
AS A LIVING LANGUAGE
JERUSALEM SEMINARY
WITH ISRAELI TEACHERS
STARTS MARCH '24
Enroll Now!
WWW.JERUSALEMSEMINARY.ORG

Jochanan Löwenstein announces that Jerusalem Seminary is offering its most robust roster of online courses in Biblical Hebrew as a Living Language this spring semester!

Multiple time slots are available for Level 1 and Level 2 with the aim of serving the Eastern and Western hemispheres.

Classes start in March. Click on this link to sign up.

In addition we now have advanced Biblical Hebrew Reading Groups and one-on-one tutoring with our believing Israeli teachers. More and more Israelis from the local body are catching the vision to share our gift of native Hebrew in support of Bible Translation and we are so excited to be able to offer more options. The reading groups are a great option for those who have studied Hebrew and would like to maintain and improve reading fluency with one of our teachers as a guide.

All of our teachers have gone through a comprehensive training course to learn to teach Biblical Hebrew as a Living Language with the communicative method. Our goal is to get you reading the Bible fluently in the original language, but along the way you will find yourself surprised by the joy of writing, speaking, singing and even praying in Biblical Hebrew!

Mentors Wanted for CanIL MATS

- Doug Trick

Do you want to multiply your effectiveness in serving the King? Our biggest need at the moment is for Academic Mentors (see description) who may be in one of two situations:

(1) You are working with a CiT who would qualify for the program, and you and they would benefit from a comprehensive curriculum that's built on a set of BT-community-approved competencies expected of entry-level translation consultants.

Your CiT would benefit not only from your mentoring and their ministry-based education, but they would also receive a graduate degree which can open up doors for their ongoing professional development (e.g. Doctor of Ministry studies with a Bible Translation specialization).

(2) You have some room in your life to invest in a new CiT who is clearly qualified for this program, but who cannot enter because we are short of Academic Mentors. Typically you would be required to commit about 3-5 hours per week for each student; you'd serve on a team with two ministry mentors.

If either of these situations applies to you and you would like more information, please contact Joost Pikkert. If you do not have a doctoral degree but would consider working toward that while serving as a MATS mentor, we have extensive financial aid for that as well.

CanIL hosts a competency-based training program for Translation Consultants-in-Training, leading to an MA in Translation of Scripture. They currently are working with 13 CiTs in 8 countries. At present it is limited to CiTs who are fairly fluent in English, but will soon be available in French; plans are being made for Bahasa Indonesia, and the program can be adapted to other languages. Students must have direct experience in a translation program, and an undergrad degree or equivalent education and experience. There is generous financial aid available (in most cases, 100% of the tuition, as well as a stipend for mentors to help defray costs of workshops and other resources). Here you can download a complete program prospectus of the MA in Translation of Scripture.

Papua Translation Brief

- Angie Foo

For your information, here is the latest Papua Translation Brief. You might find this useful in designing or updating the brief that your region is using. For further information email Angie Foo.

One Book at a Time Courses

- JCBT

Jerusalem Center for Bible Translators
The Home for Bible Translators - an Accredited Hebrew University Program since 1995

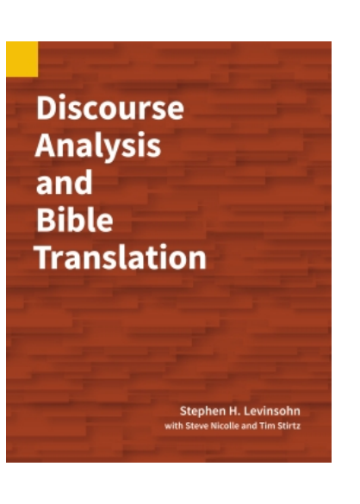
Jerusalem Center for Bible Translators (JCBT) periodically offers intensive 3-4 week courses that focus on one book of the Bible. These courses look at the structure and meaning of the Hebrew text in order to understand the best way to translate them. This series is designed to equip consultants and translators, focusing on a given book of the Bible – its text, context, genres, and message. See the Hebrew Programs Overview page for additional information. If interested in either upcoming course listed below, please email Wilma, the registrar.

Leviticus - Dr. Samy Tioye (UBS) will be leading an in-person class in Israel in French from 15 September to 05 October 2024.

Proverbs - Murray Salisbury (SIL) and Ronit Maoz will be leading a hybrid class (in Israel and by Zoom) in English from 25 November to 13 December 2024.

Discourse Analysis and Bible Translation

- Stephen Levinsohn, Steve Nicolle and Tim Stirtz


Discourse Analysis and Bible Translation
Stephen H. Levinsohn
with Steve Nicolle and Tim Stirtz

SIL Global Publishing Services has recently published this book, and the print version is now available for purchase on Amazon.

With simplified language and terminology, this coursebook assists Bible translators with limited linguistics training to recognize differences in natural structures of the target and source languages for both narrative and behavioral genres. Concepts are carefully introduced with illustrative examples from both the Old and New Testaments followed by questions, exercises, and applications that effectively engage translation teams and individual translators to improve their draft translations and provide reasons for their decisions. These exercises and assignments promote careful scholarship by empowering translators to confidently present biblical truth in natural and accurate ways in the target language. As relevant, sections are addressed specifically to speakers of verb-initial, verb-medial, and verb-final languages.

Coming Events

- 2024 - 04-15 March. SILTEC 4 (*SIL Taller de Entrenamiento en Consultoría*) Consultant Training program in Spanish, Lima, Peru. Contact Rick Floyd.
- 2024 - 09-11 April. Global Missional AI Summit. Orlando, Florida. Click here to register. Speakers: Spence Green, James Poulter, Daniel Whitenack.
- 2024 - 18-31 May. Anglo-Lusophone Africa TCDW (AFTRACT). CiT training, Ruiru, Nairobi Kenya. Contact Jonathan van den Broek. Jointly organised by SC, SIL and BTL.
- 2024 - 1-28 May. Francophone Grammar for Translation. Cameroon. Registration form.
- 2024 - 27-30 May. EMDC. Registration is Open. Chiangmai, Thailand.
- 2024 - 10 June - 19 July. TCDW (Translation Consultant Development Workshop). Hybrid. For information email Angeline Foo.
- 2024 - 01-05 July. Literacy and Education Global Gathering , Nairobi, Kenya. Registration information. Contact Diane Dekker or Elizabeth Roettele.
- 2024 - 24 June - 06 September. Indonesian TCDW (LPKP). For information email the Director.
- 2024 - 12-23 Aug: FLEx Parser Workshop, Dallas, Texas. The translation quality of any language is greatly improved when parsers are used, since they point out inconsistent writing, help determine word breaks, check words for grammatical consistencies, and contribute in many ways to the grammatical analysis of the language. When Paratext is integrated with FLEx, the quality of translation can dramatically increase through the rigorous application of these parsers.
- 2024 - 09-29 October. Narrative Discourse Analysis for Translation Workshop. Nairobi, Kenya.

Useful Links

- Bible Translation Consultant Competencies / YouTube channel for BT Competencies
- Journal of Translation
- SIL Senior Translation Consultants
- Email the SIL International Translation Office
- International Translation Services ILS Google page
- Join/visit the SIL Translation Resources Google Group
- Visit the public SIL.org/Translation site
- Find Translation Resources (both free download and for purchase) SIL.org/Resources/Publications
- Bamboo Project website
- Mentoring Matters website - Mentor Training Courses
- Consultant Development and Management Team
- Progress Bible Information
- Memoriam website

SIL Translation Services

International Leadership Team

- Greg Dekker - *ITS Director*
- Angeline Foo - *International Coordinator for Translation Research and Practice*
- Paul O'Rear - *International Coordinator for Translation Resources*
- Phil King - *International Coordinator for Translation Training and Development*
- Nathan Payne - *International Coordinator for Oral Translation Services*
- Viji Mathew - *Director, Global Consultant Pool*
- Brian Migliazza - *ITS Operations and Project Management*

Area Translation Coordinators

- Angeline Foo & Amber Jasa - *Asia*
- Greg Carlson - *Pacific*
- Drew Maust - *Francophone Africa*
- Jonathan van den Broek - *Anglo-Lusophone Africa*
- Tim Robinson - *Eurasia*
- Rick Floyd & Dwight Shaver - *Americas*
- Yuki Yamada - *Global Sign Languages Team (GSLT)*

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You are receiving this email because of your interest in translation updates.

This newsletter is produced by SIL International Translation Services. Tuula O'Rear and Brian Migliazza are the editors It contains items of interest for translation personnel within SIL and related organizations. It includes notices of upcoming conferences and workshops, announcements of recent dissertations and journal articles, and pointers to useful information related to translation.

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