



SIL Translation Services (STS) 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.

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The Next Big Thing

Drew Maust - *Translation Domain Leader Francophone Africa*

For the next few months our newsletter will begin with members of the Global Translation Community of Leadership team sharing what motivates them to be involved in Bible translation. This month we hear from Drew Maust.



What’s the next big thing in Bible translation (BT)? A new tool? New technology? New methods? New organizations?

While checking a translation of the book of Proverbs recently with a team in Africa, we lingered over Proverbs 21:9: “Better to live on the corner of a roof than to share a house with a nagging wife” (CSB). The roofs of the traditional homes of this community are cone-shaped, not flat, and have no corners. How then to translate this verse meaningfully, in a way consistent with the goals of the project? After exploring the ancient and contemporary contexts, we landed on a cultural transcreation. The verse was reworked and then read aloud. Upon hearing the new wording, one of the translators exclaimed, “*Yes! That’s how it would have been said if the Bible had been written in our language!*”

Earlier this year, researchers published “Humanity’s Last Exam” in *Nature*, a benchmark of 2,500 questions designed to find the limits of artificial intelligence. Among the tasks that stumped leading AI models was translating low resource languages and parsing the intricacies of Biblical Hebrew. Conclusion: BT is the final boss. The poetics and particularities of BT—not to mention the uniqueness of human “yes!” intuition—remain for now beyond the machine’s reach. Tools and technologies can participate in the *process* of Bible translation, but not in its *prize*. They are not capable of joy. They do not celebrate. They will never exclaim “yes!” for Scripture access nor “yes!” for the fruit of intuition. *Our* prize is joy. Knowing God. Japheth living in the tents of Shem, God’s word making its home among every people.

This year marks the 500th anniversary of one of history’s “next big things”: William Tyndale’s 1526 New Testament, the first printed English translation and the first made directly from Greek. I have a printed “pocket” facsimile that I have resolved to carry to church (successfully to date) all year long. Its calligraphic flourishes of quill-flicked blackletter script and non-standardized English contrast with the many enduring turns of phrase that read as if written today. Tyndale’s groundbreaking legacy combined with his ultimate sacrifice spark joy, even if surpassed by the “joye unspeakable and glorious” of his pen: a sacred voice attuned to local idiom.

What’s the next big thing in Bible translation? It’s **new joy**. It’s the human in the loop celebrating and feasting on God’s word in ways that give rise to heartfelt acclamations of “Yes!” Joy made full. So, let us strive for joy rather than zero.

Oral Translation Services

Kris Toler

The next CoP session will be on Tuesday, April 14th at 14:00 UTC - 9:00am Dallas, 14:00 UK, 20:30 India, 22:00 Thailand. Heather Beal and Virginia Peterson will be sharing “*Effective Scripture Engagement Strategies for Oral Bible Translation*”

Projects.” What drives strong, sustainable Scripture use in oral-preference communities?



In this session, we'll share emerging findings from Dallas International University's Scripture Engagement Research Initiative (SERI) on effective Scripture Engagement (SE) strategies currently being employed by Oral Bible Translation (OBT) projects around the world. We'll highlight observations from communities that demonstrate robust use of OBT Scriptures across multiple domains (e.g., family, small groups, worship, radio/WhatsApp, community events, etc.). Additionally, we'll brainstorm SE strategies suited to the variety of cultural contexts in which we serve.

If you have not yet signed up for the EMDC Academy platform you can do so by visiting the following link <https://emdc.academy/landing/30> and clicking the "subscribe to this series" button.

The **OBT Reading Group** met on March 31st to discuss “Community Participation in OBT Quality Assurance” by Bayamy Tchandle Awakde. The recording of the discussion is available on the [OBT Reading Group](#) YouTube Channel. If you know someone who would like to participate in the reading group send them my way and I can add them to the list.

The April OBT Reading Group meeting will be held on April 24th at 09:00 Dallas, 14:00 UTC, 20:30 India, 22:00 Thailand. We will be reading “*Developing Quality Assurance Practices in Moving Oral Translations to Print*” by Robin Green Ulibarri and Swapna Alexander.

Brazil OBT Consultation

I recently had the exciting opportunity to participate in the ETEN regional consultation for Oral Bible Translation (OBT) held in São Paulo, Brazil, organized by FCBH in partnership with ETEN, the Seed Company and the Pro-Translation Alliance of Brazil.

There were 180 participants including representatives from 18 different indigenous groups from the Lusophone world. It was a time of learning, working and celebrating OBT and its use in Brazil. It was an encouragement to me to see people engaging with oral translation and exploring what it could look like in their contexts. At the culmination of the event, CONPLEI (Conselho Nacional de Pastores e Líderes Evangélicos Indígenas) announced that they will be working with Spoken Worldwide to support a 12 language cluster project for OBT in Brazil.

The participants spent time hearing from speakers on topics related to oral translation and working in groups to process what they were learning. These groups then laid out a framework for how they would use OBT within the context of the ministry of Bible Translation in Brazil. The working groups recognized the importance of multimodality in projects. The consultation ended in a wonderful evening of cultural celebration through presentations of songs, dances, poetry and other art forms.



The Manifold Grace of God and Multimodality

Luis Garabito

On March 11th was the second meeting of the Spanish Multimodal Bible Translation Community of Practice (CoP). Luis R. Garabito from the Bible Society of Guatemala presented on the “Manifold Grace of God”. A study from Psalm 19 and multimodality in the communication between God and his creation. It was a fascinating topic that was well received. If you would like to view the presentation, it is available on our [YouTube Channel](#).

The next session will be held on Wednesday, May 13, 2026 at 10:00 Dallas, 15:00 UK, 20:30 India, 22:00 Thailand. Dr. Bryan Harmelink from the Wycliffe Global Alliance will be presenting. An announcement email will be sent when the title and description of the topic are finalized. If you are interested in participating, please feel free to email [Kris Toler](#).



La Multiforme Gracia de Dios y la Multimodalidad

El 11 de marzo tuvimos la segunda reunión de la Comunidad de Práctica de la Traducción Multimodal de la Biblia en español (CoP). Luis R. Garabito de la Sociedad Bíblica de Guatemala presentó en “La Multiforme Gracia de Dios”. Un estudio desde el Salmo 19 y la multimodalidad en la comunicación entre Dios y su creación. Era un tema fascinante que fue bien recibido. Si quieres ver la presentación, está disponible en nuestro [canal de YouTube](#).

La próxima sesión se llevará a cabo el miércoles 13 de mayo de 2026 a las 10:00 en Dallas, 15:00 en Reino Unido, 20:30 en India y 22:00 en Tailandia. El Dr. Bryan Harmelink de la Alianza Global de Wycliffe estará presentando. Se enviará un correo electrónico de anuncio cuando se finalice el título y la descripción del tema. Si usted está interesado en participar, por favor no dude en enviar un correo electrónico a [Kris Toler](#).

Report on Global CoP for BT Practitioners

Viji Mathew

The Global Consultant Pool (GCP) launched its first Global Community of Practice (CoP) for Bible translation practitioners (Consultants, CiTs, and TAs) on March 24, 2026, strengthening collaboration and ongoing professional development across the global Bible Translation movement.

This inaugural session was led by Murray Salisbury, who facilitated a rich and engaging discussion on the theme:

“Tricky Verses in the Psalms: Seven Tips for Choosing between Exegetical Alternatives.”

A total of 97 participants joined the session from across multiple regions. The high level of interaction and engagement throughout the session highlighted the interest in having a meaningful space to engage with complex exegetical and translation issues and to encourage mutual support, encouragement, and professional growth.



Looking Ahead - This session is the first in a planned series of [Global CoPs](#) for 2026. Building on the strong participation and positive response, GCP looks forward to the next online session on 12 May 2026 UTC 15:00 UTC, featuring James Maxey and Peter Perry discussing *"Is Relevance Theory still Relevant?"*

The Global Consultant Pool remains committed to serving the Bible Translation movement by equipping consultants, strengthening capacity, and fostering unity across the global community.

Report on Asia Collaboration on Translation

Angie Foo

The *Asia Collaboration on Translation* (ACT) meeting was organised by the United Bible Societies and hosted by the Thailand Bible Society in Bangkok on 18-20 March 2026.

There were around 50 participants, mainly from Bible societies across Asia Pacific and including some representatives from SIL Global and other organisations like WGA, SC and Spoken Worldwide.



Each of the three days had a theme: (1) Intentionality in Collaboration, (2) Generosity in Collaboration and (3) Diversity in Collaboration. On the first two days, representatives shared their organisational translation plans and goals for the coming 5-12 years. The last day featured three collaborative efforts that have been going well: GaPAI (Indonesia), FOBAM (Malaysia)

and Tambuli (Philippines).

On the final day, the group also worked on a statement affirming our commitment to work together to make Scripture accessible in ways people can understand, and wherever possible, have the local churches and communities actively guide and shape the translation projects. The ACT prioritises collaboration that is based on mutual respect, shared value of quality translations, and a willingness to share resources, including developing and training translation consultants to meet local needs. Innovation and joint projects are encouraged, while competition is avoided, ensuring sustainable, community-driven translation and Scripture engagement.

Interviews with Translation Consultants

We asked an experienced Translation Consultant, [Bernie van der Louw](#), to share her thoughts concerning her work and philosophy of ministry. Bernie serves with the SIL Global Sign Languages Team (GSLT) as both a Sign Language Translation and Linguistics Consultant.

Experienced consultants have been a key organizational resource over the years, equipping and encouraging others to academic and professional excellence, while providing much needed leadership and service to many Bible translation organizations.

Bernie van der Louw - GSLT

How did you get interested in Bible translation? I got interested in Bible translation at age 14, when I watched a TV program about missionary kids in PNG. Their parents were Dutch SIL translators, and they told some stories about the work they were doing. I was fascinated and felt God call me to become a Bible translator. I decided to study linguistics as my major in university and ended up going to PNG for four months myself to do research for my MA thesis. This same family became a family away from home while I was there. At the time I was not thinking of sign languages at all, my MA thesis was on tone and pitch-accent.



The shift to sign language work came later, when I was invited to write a grammar book on a sign language in the Middle East.

As you are a dual translation and linguistics consultant, how has being a consultant in two areas shaped your work? As both a linguistics and translation consultant I feel it is important to look at naturalness as well as accuracy. In many parts of the world, Deaf people have never learned to read for meaning. If teachers sign at all, they sign word for word from the spoken language, especially when teaching grammar, and so many Deaf translators have only learned to translate words, not meaning, which means drafts often contain unnatural elements that makes the translation unclear. These kinds of unclear, unnatural translations are by definition not accurate, since they are not understood well.

What gets you excited when you work with others in Bible translation? I think that like most other consultants, I get most excited when I see the penny drop, when translators or a UNS suddenly understand what a verse or passage means. Last month I was on a consulting trip visiting a sign language project and I did a UNS check of John 18-21 with someone. It was his first time checking the translation. He told me he had never understood these chapters before when he tried to read them or even watch a movie with subtitles, but after going through them in sign language he had gone home and had read them in the national language and understood much more. Those are precious moments.

What is your consulting philosophy? I am not sure I have a very clear consulting philosophy. I think it is important to build relationships with the team, and take time to talk about personal things as well as work. This builds trust, and I think a relationship of trust between a consultant and a team is very important. I also think it is very important to look at the translation itself as much as possible, rather than just look at a back-translation. It helps that sign languages have a lot of similarities on the grammatical level. If I don't know a sign language, just having glosses of individual signs can give me a good impression of the translation.

What translation resources do you really value? The translation resources I use most are Translators' Notes and the Exegetical Summaries. But there is a real need for exegetical resources in sign language, or geared towards sign language. Because sign languages are visual, translators sometimes struggle with questions that are not dealt with in commentaries. For example, what was the size of the stones that were used to stone Stephen in Acts 7? We are hoping that exegetical resources for sign languages will be developed that can answer these kinds of visual questions.

How do you continue to grow as a consultant? I think what helps me grow as a consultant most is the interaction with different teams. It is also helpful to see comments made by other consultants or CiTs.

How do you share your translation discoveries with others? Within GSLT we have a consultant app group in which we can share questions and answers. Sometimes a consultant has a question about a specific passage or verse, and other consultants give their input. Sometimes people ask me directly how we translated a certain concept or verse in a language I work with. Last October at the BT conference I presented a paper on the ethics of hearing people working with sign languages, and I submitted a paper for the Bible Translator on challenges in sign language Bible Translation.

Can you share about a time when you realized you were wrong and what you learned from it? There is not one particular time that stands out, although I have definitely made mistakes. Having a good relationship with a team is helpful when you admit you have made a mistake.

What are your top tips for someone starting on a career path in Bible translation? If I can change this more specifically to starting a career path in sign language Bible translation I would say: start learning a sign language and start spending time with Deaf people socially. Knowing one sign language well will help tremendously when learning another sign language, and spending time with Deaf people will teach you a lot about Deaf culture, the issues Deaf people deal with, and it teaches you humility as a hearing person.

Share something that you learned from a mentor or from a mentee? I have mentored a few Deaf CiTs that are now consultants and I have seen how they function so much better internationally than hearing consultants working with sign languages. They are role models in a way hearing consultants cannot be. They can say things to Deaf people that would be unacceptable if a hearing person said it.

What do you see as the place of the church in Bible translation? This is always a tricky issue when it comes to sign languages, because it depends on the situation per country. How do we define what the church is when it comes to Deaf people? Are there Deaf churches with Deaf leadership, or at least leadership with good signing skills and a good understanding of Deaf culture? Or do Deaf people go to churches with a majority of hearing people and arrange for interpretation (if available). If pastors and church hierarchy know nothing of sign language, think of Deaf people just as disabled and in need of charity, and do not believe they can run a translation project, then what place can the church have in a project?

What would you say to young/aspiring translators? To Deaf translators I would say: translating the Bible into sign language is not an easy or fast job, but it is worthwhile. It will help you and other Deaf people grow in faith. Do not believe people that say it can be done in a few years with minimal training. Make sure you get proper training and guidance by experts along the way. It is important to learn more about how your own language works as well as exegesis and all the other skills focusing on accuracy.

Bible Translation Brief History - Italian

The *AITB* ([Associazione Italiana Traduttori della Bibbia](#)) website features a short history of Bible translation in the Italian language. What is known today as "Italian" is actually a standard based on the Florentine, Tuscan dialect, used in the 14th century by literary figures like Dante Alighieri, Petrarch, and Boccaccio.

In the 13th century the first versions of Jerome's Latin *Vulgate* began to be translated into various vernacular dialects of Italian. In 1471, in Venice, the German, Vandelino di Spira, published the first edition of the Bible in Italy, with the title *Bibbia degnamente vulgarizzata per il clarissimo religioso duon Nicolao Malermi*, known thereafter by the name *Bibbia d'Agosto*. Nicolò Malermi (a Camaldolese monk), partially translated from Latin and also included partially revised manuscript versions

centuries, this Bible met with great favor and had many successive editions. There were a number of other translations down through the years.

Giovanni Diodati (a professor of Hebrew at the University of Geneva) completed the principle Bible used by Italian Protestants. It was published in Geneva, Switzerland in 1607 with the title *La Bibbia. Cioè, i libri del Vecchio e del Nuovo Testamento. Nuovamente traslati in lingua italiana, da Giovanni Diodati, di nation Lucchese*. This was the first Bible in Italy to be translated directly from the original Greek and Hebrew texts. In addition his work is considered a stylistic masterpiece of 17th-century Italian. In 1924 the BFBS (British and Foreign Bible Society) commissioned a revision and update of Diodati's translation which became known as the *Riveduta*.

Catholic translations began in the late 18th century. In 1968 Mondadori published the *Bibbia Condordata*, a translation from the original languages, produced by the Italian Bible Society. It was a collaboration between Catholic, Protestant, Orthodox, and Jewish scholars.



AI & Translation Spot

Using AI for Exegetical Research

Josh Frost

- *AI didn't replace my thinking. It sharpened it.*
- *The measure of good AI use in exegesis isn't speed. It's whether you walk away thinking more carefully than you would have otherwise.*



Don't Use AI to Think Less. Use It to Think More - I was working through the concept of 'completion / perfection' in Hebrews, trying to trace how it develops across the letter. Even the most literal English translations render this word group in multiple ways, and I wanted to see whether a single root or repeated phrase could maintain the central motif through lexical linking. That kind of repetition matters everywhere in translation, but it's especially important in oral Bible translation, where listeners can't flip back and check.

I had my own ideas about the word group's development based on close reading. Three or four commentaries were open in Translator's Workplace in Logos, but none were giving me the coverage I needed.

So I turned to AI. Not to receive blender-versions of 10,000 blog entries on Hebrews, but to find respected biblical scholars who were asking the same questions I was. It turned me toward the foundational monograph on the topic and helped me see how the concept of perfection develops through the course of the book. Then it critiqued my own ideas about the lexical semantics of the τέλος word group by putting them in contrast to widely accepted scholarship.

Reading that AI-generated summary prompted me to rent the monograph for a few hours on Archive.org and start reading it myself. And the AI's critique of my ideas, framed from the perspective of that monograph's author, helped me see that I actually hadn't read the biblical Greek carefully enough.

That's the real point. AI didn't replace my thinking. It sharpened it.

Using AI to Deepen Your Engagement - When I hit a difficult exegetical issue that crosses disciplines, I use AI to generate a custom literature review. Given five minutes, it usually produces a better survey of the field than I used to manage in an hour or two. It won't replace close reading, and it sometimes fabricates sources, so you always verify. But it gives you a running start so you can spend your limited time engaging with the ideas rather than hunting for them.

Difficulty in finding information is a loss of time. Difficulty in thinking through information is where growth happens, and it's often how the Holy Spirit shapes our minds a little more into the mind of Christ. So the question we should ask ourselves is: how can we use AI to deepen our engagement with the Scriptures?

A Practical Approach - Start by teaching the AI what you already know. Tell it your current thinking, your specific questions, and the disciplines you suspect are relevant, then ask it to critique your list and suggest perspectives you've missed.

Ask it to work as a specialist. Request a literature review from each relevant discipline, contextualized for your role, tracking how foundational positions have developed and where current scholarship stands.

Build in honesty checks. Ask the AI to rate its own confidence on each claim. This won't give you a perfect gauge, but it flags where you should verify independently.

End with synthesis and sources. Ask for a summary that pulls the threads together, followed by a reference list with links where possible.

The Real Test - The measure of good AI use in exegesis isn't speed. It's whether you walk away thinking more carefully than you would have otherwise. I walked away from that Hebrews study reading more carefully, not less.

That's the standard.

[Stephen Payne](#) has been working on some PowerPoints to help teams who are newly using AI drafts, learn how best to edit them. You can access the training materials here: [Editing an AI Draft – Stephen Payne’s Training Materials](#).

The first PowerPoint covers a best-practice procedure for editing “zero-drafts,” and it points out the kinds of mistakes AI commonly makes in drafting Scripture, so that translators know what to focus their attention on.



The second PowerPoint provides practice for teams to work through different passages to identify and correct mistakes in the above-mentioned categories, and then to come together to discuss their findings in the larger group.

Although the PowerPoints are designed for training teams in a workshop setting, they can just as easily be used independently by individual teams.

The PowerPoints were built on the research presented by Mark Penny in last month’s Translation Newsletter, but they are aimed at a level that will be easy for mother-tongue translators to understand and implement. The materials were successfully used in a recent workshop in South Asia. The LWC examples in the second PowerPoint have been removed, but instructions are given on how to easily replace them with ones from the LWC in your language area. Seed Company distributed these training materials to all their translation consultants, and we would now like to make them more widely.

Memoriam

Lynell Marchese Zogbo

(1948-2026) Africa

Our beloved teacher, mentor, and friend Dr. Lynell Marchese Zogbo passed away on Saturday, March 7, age 78, following a battle with cancer. She will be deeply missed. We thank the Lord for her remarkable legacy and the many ways she has invested in us over the years. Lynell is an absolute towering figure in Bible translation who devoted her life to serving others in many ways.

Lynell joined SIL and served in Côte d'Ivoire (1972-1975) with Carol Gratrix (Brinneman) in the Godié language. Together they described the grammar, phonology, and discourse, translated the book of Mark, and produced some literacy materials. (See [Seven Years in Ivory Coast 1972–1979](#) by [Carol Brinneman](#)).



She later completed her PhD in Linguistics (1979) at UCLA with a dissertation on *Tense/aspect and the development of auxiliaries in Kru languages*. She served as a translation consultant for 28 years (1985–2013) with United Bible Societies (UBS), based out of Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire and also in Burkina Faso, Mali, Benin, and Togo.

She also served for many years as a lecturer at FATEAC (Faculté de Théologie Evangélique Alliance Chrétienne - now known as *Université de l'Alliance Chrétienne d'Abidjan*) and as Adjunct Lecturer and Research Associate, University of the Free State, South Africa.

In addition, she was a graduate supervisor at the South African Theological Seminary. She is a former editor of *Le Sycomore* (journal for francophone translators), *Commentaire exégétique et linguistique*, ABU, and *Lisons Nos Langues*, ABCI (linguistic notes on Ivoirian languages). She was an author and editor of the UBS Handbooks (English and French).

Lynell served as a part-time lecturer at:

- Jerusalem Center for Bible Translation: *Translation, Hebrew narrative, Hebrew poetry, Psalms*
- University of the Free State: *Linguistics for Bible Translation, Performance criticism*
- Faculté de Théologie Evangélique Alliance Chrétienne, Abidjan: *Translation, Hebrew discourse, Hebrew poetry, Translation of Old Testament books (Joel, Habakkuk, etc.), Exegesis (Psalms, Judges), and curriculum development*

Lynell was married to Georges Zogbo and lived in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire. They have a son and a daughter and five grandchildren. [Click here](#) to read the Lynell Obituary Pamphlet

Lynell Zogbo: A Bridge-BUILDER of the Bible Translation Movement in Africa

Michel Kenmogne

*Here lies a woman who lived, without reserve,
so that the Word of God might become accessible to all in French-speaking Africa.*

Every great human endeavour is rooted in a story—in a figure, in a life given for a cause greater than itself. In Greek mythology, Prometheus embodies this radical act of self-sacrifice: one who dares to cross boundaries to bring humanity the fire necessary for its progress.



From a very different perspective, yet with comparable strength, the Bible translation movement in French-speaking Africa has also known its own figures of sacrifice and transition. At a time when this movement was sorely lacking in resources and struggling to develop as it had in the English-speaking world, bridge-builders were needed. Lynell Zogbo was one of them.

Without exaggeration, but with deep conviction, I believe I can say that she was one of the great “Promethean” figures of Bible translation in French-speaking Africa—a woman who devoted her life to making possible what seemed out of reach. My companionship with her, spanning nearly thirty years, gives me that assurance.

A Life Dedicated to Training and Nurturing

When SIL International and the United Bible Societies, in partnership with FATEAC (Faculté de Théologie Evangélique Alliance Chrétienne - now known as *Université de l'Alliance Chrétienne d'Abidjan*), established a master's programme to train Bible translators, Lynell responded with generosity and steadfastness. Alongside her role as a translation consultant at UBS, she devoted herself to teaching—but went far beyond academic expectations.

For Lynell did not merely teach; she shaped lives.

Those who crossed her path remember a woman of brilliant intellect, but above all, a heart deeply moved by concern for others. To her students, she was at once a teacher, a mother, and a guide. She welcomed, accompanied, and supported—often far beyond the classroom—men and women from across French-speaking Africa, sometimes uprooted, and in search of a future.

She took the time—the time to listen, the time to encourage, the time to hold the hand of those who hesitated until they found their own path.

Her vision was clear, and she pursued it faithfully: to see a generation of Francophone African translators emerge—competent, rooted in their cultures, and capable of carrying the future of Bible translation on the continent themselves.

It was with this same vision that she taught at the Jerusalem Center for Bible Translation and at the University of the Free State in South Africa. There too, her aim was not academic recognition, but the transformation of people. She longed to see French-speaking scholars reach the highest levels of training, master the biblical languages, and enter the global Bible translation conversation with confidence.

Today, the many translators serving across French-speaking Africa are, each in their own way, living witnesses to her legacy.

A Builder of Resources and Hope

Lynell clearly perceived a painful reality: the lack of resources in French to support the work of translators. Where others might have seen only difficulty, she chose to act.

Through *Le Sycomore*, which she led with passion, she offered French-speaking translators a space for reflection, sharing, and growth. Like the biblical tree that enabled Zacchaeus to overcome the limitation of his short stature, this journal lifted up an entire community, giving it both voice and vision.

She also made a decisive contribution to the United Bible Societies' translators' handbooks—those invaluable tools that accompany, verse by verse, the patient and demanding work of translation.

Her intellectual commitment was never abstract; it was always in service of a mission. Her research into Hebrew poetry, a field as complex as it is fascinating, had a clear and practical aim: to help translators—especially French-speaking ones—render the richness of Scripture faithfully and beautifully into the languages of the world.

To the very end, she remained faithful to this calling. Even in the midst of illness, she never ceased to serve, to write, and to pass on her knowledge. Her own words, imbued with gratitude and faith, bear witness to a life fully given—and gratefully received.

A Shared Vision for the Church

Among the many legacies she leaves behind, one is particularly close to my heart. Together, we observed the tragic absence of Bible translation from the curriculum of theological seminaries.

We dreamed of a different world—and, with the support of other colleagues, that dream became a reality in the form of an introductory textbook on Bible translation, used since 2009 in many institutions across French-speaking Africa.

Since then, this initiative has continued to bear fruit. Teachers have been trained, generations of students have been reached, and Bible translation has gradually established itself as a true ministry of the Church.

What was once seen as a marginal and specialised field has, little by little, become a shared responsibility.

A Living Legacy

To speak of Lynell is to speak of a life given, a vocation fully embraced, and a faithfulness that endured through years and trials.

For me, knowing her was a blessing. Working alongside her was a privilege. Being her friend is an honour I cherish with deep gratitude.

She leaves behind far more than writings or institutions. She leaves transformed lives, awakened vocations, a strengthened movement, and a deeply rooted hope.

If one day we were to engrave a few words to sum up her time among us, they might be these:

“Here lies a woman who lived, without reserve, so that the Word of God might become accessible to all in French-speaking Africa.”

And that would be true—profoundly true.

Surprise! A Tribute to Lynell

Joyce Carlson

“From dying suddenly and unprepared,
Good Lord, Deliver us.”

We lost a friend this week. Not lost forever, but she’s gone from this world. It was a hard passing after years of medical attention and stress and finally agony. It was hard on her family, and grievous to us all. But she wasn’t unprepared.

Not really. Behind the effort to stay—to beat a relentless cancer; to stay with her family and do her work and cling to life in this world—there was still the latent knowledge that all this effort of living a short life on earth had to come to an end.



We all know it. But we keep pushing that knowledge away as long as we can. We pray for healing here and now, knowing that in fact, our real health will come to us when we leave our tortured bodies and return to the God who made us, and see face to face the one who died and came back to life. The one who has taken up his body again in the full glory of resurrection.

So she, Lynell Marchese Zogbo, wasn't completely unprepared. But she was *surprised*! She said so herself just last week. She was surprised at the sudden downturn in her health, and the speed at which the doctor said she needed to go into hospice.

I wonder if surprise isn't one of the most fundamental emotions we people here in this world experience. We are continually amazed. Whether things go well or badly, one way or another, we're not ready for what happens, and even the most hardened sceptics (I defy them to be calm in whatever state they happen to be) are above all surprised when they come to their final hour.

So we pray. "What! Prayer? Has it come to that?" Sarah Gudschinsky is said to have said. Yes, it comes to that. So we prayed. We crossed our fingers and hoped she wouldn't die.

But she is gone and I am raking over the memories left to me.

- The time Bob and I went with Lynell and a tall, dark, handsome guy to the San Diego Wild Animal Park in 1977 or '78. We were shoving our small daughter around in a stroller while Lynell walked ahead of us with —can you believe it?—Georges Zogbo. We contemplated the new arrangement and *weren't* surprised when they got married.
- The time when Bob and Lynell spent three days at a linguistic conference in Leiden while Georges and I looked after the kids. Personally, I think Georges and I had the better deal.
- The time we celebrated Thanksgiving with Georges and Lynell in Daloa, Ivory Coast. While Bob and I spent a couple of hours bucketing water up several flights of stairs to our hotel room (because wouldn't you know it, the water was cut off), Lynell maneuvered a relatively large bird in and out of her oven. Then we all spent the afternoon recovering with turkey and loads of pie. It's what we do. We celebrate and carry water—in Mali, Ivory Coast, Kenya—and as often as not, the lights go out.
- And our last visit together was in November 2023 when we spent the day by the sea in Grand Bassam, Ivory Coast. Avocado vinaigrette, pink shrimp dripping in butter, golden sand under our toes and the soft wind off the sea. We kept hoping it wasn't the last time.

And it won't be the last time. *There's more to come* when the heavens roll up like a scroll and all things are made new. We're waiting for that day with anticipation, and of course we're going to be surprised.

Lynell Zogbo : un bâtisseur de ponts au sein du mouvement de traduction de la Bible en Afrique

Michel Kenmogne

*Ici repose une femme qui a vécu, sans réserve,
afin que la Parole de Dieu devienne accessible à tous en Afrique francophone.*

Toute grande entreprise humaine trouve ses racines dans une histoire — dans une figure, dans une vie donnée pour une cause qui la dépasse. Dans la mythologie grecque, Prométhée incarne cet acte radical de sacrifice de soi : celui qui ose franchir les limites pour apporter à l'humanité le feu nécessaire à son progrès.



Dans une perspective très différente, mais avec une force comparable, le mouvement de traduction de la Bible en Afrique francophone a lui aussi connu ses propres figures de sacrifice et de transition. À une époque où ce mouvement manquait cruellement de ressources et peinait à se développer comme il l'avait fait dans le monde anglophone, il fallait des bâtisseurs de ponts. Lynell Zogbo était l'une d'entre eux.

Sans exagération, mais avec une profonde conviction, je crois pouvoir dire qu'elle fut l'une des grandes figures « prométhéennes » de la traduction de la Bible en Afrique francophone — une femme qui a consacré sa vie à rendre possible ce qui semblait hors de portée. Ma collaboration avec elle, qui s'étend sur près de trente ans, me donne cette certitude.

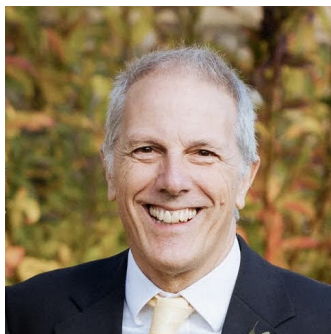
[Click here to read the full text of Michel's French homage to Lynell.](#)

News

Progress-Based Metric Funding

Richard Gravina

SIL receives various types of funding from ETEN. One of these is Progress-Based Metric (PBM) funding, where ETEN rewards organisations for work towards the All Access Goals (AAG). Funding is given for projects that have **completed** the AAG, and for projects that are making **progress** towards them.



SIL receives significant funds through PBM, but is also missing out on a lot. **Progress** is measured based on what appears in ProgressBible, which gets its data from SIL through Rev79 (often through a link with Paratext).

If progress isn't being recorded, then the funds won't come. Consultant-checking one chapter in a year is all that is required to qualify for funds. **Completion** funds are awarded when the translation is uploaded to the Digital Bible Library (DBL). There

is a [short guide](#) which gives more information on PBM funding. [Please get in touch](#) if you have any questions.

Translation teams should be encouraged to:

- **Make sure translation progress is being regularly recorded in Rev79** (or through a linked Paratext project plan) and
 - **Upload completed chapters to DBL.**
-

Basic Principles in EthnoArts: Online Course

Justin Randolph

[Justin Randolph](#) announced this Basic Principles in EthnoArts Online Certificate Course (20 April - 1 May 2026). [Click here](#) to apply. For further information, [email EthnoArts](#).

Students will be equipped with tools to explore culture, build relationships, ask meaningful questions, and empower communities to integrate local cultural elements into sustainable development initiatives.



This course is designed for national and expatriate field workers worldwide. Deepen your impact in the communities you serve by integrating EthnoArts into your field of work.

The course instructors are: Todd and Mary Beth Saurman, Justin Randolph, and Mina S.

Guatemala PhD Program (Spanish)

Fausto Liriano

[Fausto Liriano](#) (UBS Consultant) announced the opening of a new Spanish-language PhD program in Biblical Studies in Guatemala.

- (1) [Brochure - Doctorado en Ciencias Bíblicas](#)
- (2) [Program Outline - Doctorado en Ciencias Bíblicas](#)

El Seminario Teológico Centroamericano (SETECA) en Guatemala ha anunciado que ofrece un programa de doctorado en Ciencias Bíblicas.



Los candidatos ideales para el programa tendrán una sólida formación académica en el área bíblico-teológica. Piensan especialmente en quienes ya tienen experiencia enseñando temas bíblicos a nivel universitario o seminario. Un sólido conocimiento de las lenguas bíblicas es imprescindible para los candidatos que deseen acceder a este programa. Si está interesado en obtener más información sobre este programa, por favor contáctese admisiones@seteca.edu.

Coming Events

- 2026 - 12 May 15:00 UTC. [Global CoPs for BT Consultants](#). Online. *Is Relevance Theory still Relevant?* (James Maxey/Peter Perry)
- 2026 - 13-16 May. pre-EMDC [Scripture Forge training](#) Thailand
- 2026 - 18-21 May. [EMDC](#). Chiangmai, Thailand.
- 2026 - 15 Jun-24 July. Asia TCDW (Translation Consultant Development Workshop). Email [Angie Foo](#) for application.
- 2026 - 25 Aug 15:00 UTC. [Global CoPs for BT Consultants](#). Online. *"What is a word?" Anthropology insights into communication theory and what this means for Bible translation* (Johannes and Sharon Merz)
- 2026 - 14-25 Sep. Oral Bible Translation Consultant Workshop. Johannesburg, South Africa. [Contact Kris Toler](#) for further information.
- 2026 - 17 Nov 15:00 UTC. [Global CoPs for BT Consultants](#). Online. *Greek linguistics* (Michael and Rachel Aubrey)
- 2026 - 12-19 Nov. [Translation Development Event](#). EurAsia. For further information contact [Thomas Hemphill](#) or [Amber Jasa](#).
- 2026 - 21-24 Nov. Global Bible Translation Studies Consultation (GBTS) at [The Society of Biblical Literature](#) (SBL). Denver
- 2027 - Oct. Bible Translation Conference. Cape Town, South Africa. Theme: *Bible Translation and Humanity - the image of God in context*

Useful Links

- [Donate to SIL Translation Services](#) / [BT Glossary](#) / [Translation Development Event](#)
- [Bible Translation Consultant Competencies](#) / [YouTube channel for BT Competencies](#)
- [Linguistic Standards and Deliverables for Bible Translation](#) website
- SIL [Senior Translation Consultants](#) / [BT Communities of Practice](#)
- [Email the SIL International Translation Office](#) / [International Translation Services](#) ILS page
- Join/visit the SIL [Translation Resources Google Group](#) / Visit the public [SIL.org/Translation](#) site
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