



LAUNCHING BIBLE READING SHEETS AT AN UNUSUAL TIME

10 June 2017

Greetings from Hands Across Nations in Lira, N. Uganda! The Adult Literacy Program is continuing to expand beyond our wildest imaginations!

At almost every class follow-up and graduation, the learners want to know, “What is next?” Several months ago, an idea for starting “Reading Groups” came to Keith. Our focus and energy at Hands Across Nations (HAN) has been implementing “Learning to Read to Read the Bible.” However, soon we realized most learners and teachers do not even own a Bible. The full LebLango Bible with a mixture of other languages, is too expensive for most of the poor people learning to read. In addition, very little published material is available in the Lango Language, due to 20 plus years of war. What a huge challenge we face and yet a wonderful opportunity!

READING GROUPS! Literacy learners are being encouraged to join together with 5 to 10 people, several times a week, to practice their reading skills and invite their non-reading neighbors to listen in with them. The hope is that while learners improve their reading skills, others would want to learn to read and would join new classes.



In February, in a place where witchcraft, superstitions and knowledge of how to make poisons to harm others remain in the culture, learners were divided, for the first time into small groups. As they began reading out loud together, a whirlwind moved powerfully through the groups of people! Many wondered if it was the Holy Spirit moving through in a powerful way.

To address the lack of reading materials, well over a year ago, the “Little Bible”, called “Baibul Atidi” was written and published, in easy-to-read LebLango, by our HAN team as a companion to

Primer 1. Recently, the books of James and 1 John have been translated, transcribed (typed), printed and are being sold at class follow-up visits for an affordable 6 cents. Over 2,000 Bible verses have been selected and translated for the “Learner’s Bible,” using higher-level common LebLango words. This is to be a companion to Primer 2 and will be printed after completion of transcribing. Our translators have also completed all the manuals for the “Farming God’s Way” program, but transcribers are needed to put them into a publishable format. We have hundreds of graduating readers and the need is urgent to have a “what is next” for them.

READING SHEETS! Keith’s next bright idea was to publish “Reading Sheets” – one page covering either Biblical topics and scriptures or various topics of interest for the learners in the Reading Groups. Keith read about Alexander MacKay, a British missionary to Uganda, who developed a written form of the language and translated some of the Bible. He printed “Reading Sheets” containing scriptures and then taught the natives to read. MacKay brought the scriptures to thousands of natives in the late 1800’s. So why not now in the early 20th century to the Lango people?

One of the realities of living among the Lango people, is that there are frequent deaths and burials, attended by everyone connected with the family. With thousands of teachers and learners in classes, our team members attend burials on a regular basis. Two weeks ago, one of our learners, Mary Otim, an 83 year old, highly respected mother of a church Reverend, died suddenly. Peter, our head teacher trainer attended her burial along with many teachers and learners from the area.



Mourners putting flowers on the grave of their loved one is a common tradition and gives them a sense of sending off the deceased person with honor.

The morning before Mary’s burial, it came to Keith that it was the perfect opportunity for the learners to read some Scriptures at the burial to honor their fellow learner. Within 24 hours, our team had assembled appropriate Scriptures into the very first “Reading Sheet” which focused on the comfort of Jesus when we mourn, and what awaits those who die believing in Christ as their Savior. Scriptures were written in both English and LebLango, as those who have attended school can read English, but not their native language.

Peter carried 550 copies to the burial. He reported back: At least 60 fellow-learners from Mary Otim’s class came to honor her. Three were willing to individually read scriptures from the Reading Sheet. Bear in mind, there were over 500 people at the burial, and the literacy class had only completed the 30 lessons in Primer 1, with 42 left to go in Primer 2! There were more learners with



the courage to read as well, but the rain started coming, so 20 learners read the other scriptures aloud together. Attendees gratefully received all the extra sheets. The launching of the HAN Reading Sheets took place in a very public and positive way!

This past week one of our original teachers, Adoko Alfred, died suddenly as well. He had been instrumental in helping our newly formed teacher trainer team to gain experience by having them practice teaching the learners in his class, way back in early 2014. His learners were devastated by Alfred's death as were thousands in the Lango Sub-Region who came to his burial, including a member of parliament, an Ambassador to the East African Union (not sure the name is right), and all the elected local and county leaders.



Peter (taking the photo) and I were privileged to be able to join Alfred's class of learners in presenting a wreath for the grave, and handing out the comforting Burial Scripture Reading Sheet to the people attending his service. They all say they will press on to finish their primer 2 and graduate to honor Alfred.

Below is an example of the first page of the Reading Sheet for Mary Otim's burial. The one for Alfred was personalized with his name on it.

<p>=Papara me Kwanno Kop Acego Cego Oyero I Baibul Ikare Me Yik.</p>		<p>Bible Reading Sheet for Burial</p>
<p>Amin-wa onwongo tye apwonnyo kwan, me atong ya erom kwanno Baibul. Wek atong ya tyenge magi ame en okwano bino miyo-wa kwee-cuny.</p>	<p>Our Sister was learning to Read so she could Read the Bible. Perhaps these few verses she would have read, will bring us all comfort</p>	
		
<p>YOWANA / LAKANA 14:1-7, 1 "Pe iweku cuny wu poti, yee wunu Obanga, yee wunu dang i koma. 2 Kabedo tye apol i ot a Pappa, man en gin omao akobo ni awot yikko kabedo pi wun emuno. 3 Ka dong awoto ayubbi-wu kabedo, abino dwogo ate omno-wu banga, me kan ame abedo iye, wun dang i beda wunu iye. 4 Wun dang ingeo yoo kan ame an awot iye." 5 Tomaso-Tomaci openye ni: "Rwot, wan pe ongeo kan ame iwot iye, kara otwero ngeeyo yoo mere ningo?" 6 Yesu ogamme ni: "An abedo yoo, kede ateni kede kwoo, yoo moro dong pe me Wot bang Papo ka pe obeo i banga. 7 Kono ingea wunu, kono ingeo wunu Papo dang. Aman dong ingee wunu dok dang inene wunu."</p>	<p>JOHN 14:1-7, 1 "Do not let your hearts be distressed. You believe in God, believe also in me. 2 There are many dwelling places in my Father's house. Otherwise, I would have told you, because I am going away to make ready a place for you. 3 And if I go and make ready a place for you, I will come again and take you to be with me, so that where I am you may be too. 4 And you know the way where I am going." 5 Thomas said, "Lord, we don't know where you are going. How can we know the way?" 6 Jesus replied, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. 7 If you have known me, you will know my Father too. And from now on you do know him and have seen him."</p>	
<p>1 THESSALONIKA / TECALONIKA 4:13-18, 13 Omegena kede amegena, wan pe omitti ibedu wunu abongo ngec i kom jo adong otoo oko wek pe ibedu wunu i kumu i kom-gi bala jo ape i gen. 14 Kit ame wan eyee ni Yesu otoo kede ocer, amannono dang bino timere i kom jo ame otoo i bad Yesu; Obanga bino kello-gi karacei kede. 15 Alubere i kop a Rwot i kome, wan ame pwod okwoo, pe obino tello yoo i jo otoo i nno me dwogo a Rwot. 16 Pien Rwot ikokome bino yitto piny i malo, dwon malaika aditere kede dwon buriji Obanga bino kok, jo ame yam otoo con i bad Kristo, gin en ame bino kwonggo cer, 17 inge mannono wan</p>	<p>1 THESSALONIANS 4:13-18, 13 Now we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers and sisters, about those who are asleep, so that you will not grieve like the rest who have no hope. 14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, so also we believe that God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep as Christians. 15 For we tell you this by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will surely not go ahead of those who have fallen asleep. 16 For the Lord himself will come down from heaven with a shout of command, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. 17</p>	



We should have brought 1,500 Reading Sheets to Alfred's burial, instead of 500! Close to 2,000 people attended.



Alfred's wife, Sofia, in the black dress, was one of the learner's in his class. Her family is large so they will be a great comfort to her.

We continue to be amazed at what God is doing in the Lango people's lives as they learn to read so they can read the Bible. They are being changed right before our eyes, as they read the truth of the Bible for themselves.

Thank you for supporting this exciting and critical mission. It doesn't happen without your helpful and loving donations. We are indebted to you and can't tell you often enough how strongly we appreciate you.

May God Bless You All!

Sharing the love of Christ in Practical Ways,

Keith and Carolyn Jones

Please use our emails when writing to us, instead of "replying" to this email.
keith.jones@handsacrossnations.com, Carolyn.jones@handsacrossnations.com, and my most reliable email – ckurowski@inwi.net We love hearing from you!

Donations can be sent to: Hands Across Nations, PO Box 9048, Spokane, WA 99209