

ROBINSON FAMILY

TIM, ALI & DAN

6909

This is the number of languages in the world.

495

This is the number of Nigerian languages.

24

This is the number of Nigeria languages that have had the whole Bible translated into them.

52

This is the number of Nigeria languages that have only had the New Testament translated into them.

134

This is the number of Nigerian languages that have some sort of Bible Translation project going on.

230

This is the number of Nigerian languages that have not got a single word of scripture for the speakers to understand.



Called to Nigeria

During a short trip to Nigeria in 2010, Tim found out about just how many languages are spoken in Nigeria (7% of the world), and how many still needed the scriptures translated. About 30% of all the translation needs in Africa are located in Nigeria. When Tim asked Ian Hollman the director (who we happen to have known for many years) if there was anything we could get involved in, if we were to end up in Nigeria, the seed was sown. Four years after we first arrived in 2011 we are still fascinated and enthralled by Nigeria, its beauty, its diversity and all that God is doing here.

Nigeria is the most populous nation of Africa with 150 million people and it is probably as diverse as the whole of Europe. Every language group has unique cultures and customs of its own. The influence of British colonialism is still prevalent in certain places but it is swiftly being replaced by Hollywood. Nigeria even drives on the right these days! It has huge cities and rural villages - a place to suit everyone!





Who is the Church?

The longer we have been in Nigeria, the more settled we have become. Instead of trying to figure out how to survive day to day our minds have begun to turn to more theological and philosophical thoughts.

Who is the Church? If Bible translation is done in order to aid the Church in God's mission, we need to have a good understanding of the local expression of the Church that we are serving. Tim attended some meetings where there was a discussion about this topic and even though he wouldn't consider himself a theologian or a philosopher, it did provoke some thinking.

*The **Church** is the body of Christ, who is the head. It is all those who have placed their faith in Jesus Christ for salvation, exhibiting the fruit of the Spirit and expressed locally in a vast variety of different ways. The **Church** is a sign, a symbol and the tool used by God to reach the world.*

With that definition of Church, the ability to access and understand God's word is crucial to the Church's ability to fulfil its part of God's mission.

Why not teach them all English?

Or French, or Spanish or Chinese?



(1) Well, English isn't really that special in the first place. There are far more Mandarin speakers for example and they already have the Bible too, so why not teach them Mandarin?

(2) It is also simply impossible to teach the 340 million people that don't have a single word of the Bible. Governments with all the resources at their disposal often struggle to keep the standard school systems running let alone the extra burden this would produce!



(3) Even if people learnt English they wouldn't easily be able to understand some of the complex words and concepts contained in the Bible. Salvation, one of the core issues of the Bible is not a word that is often used. As a native English speaker it is very hard to understand - how sad if we assume that people who use English as a second or third or fourth language would be able to understand such things.

(4) The real reason is that God created all the languages and so as a result we know he loves and values all the languages of the world. He speaks to people in their language and so people should have access to the Bible in their language.

Do you know what it means?

The village of Gure takes pride in having had Christianity for over eighty years. Traditionally the church services, hymns and Bible readings were in Hausa, but more recently English has become popular as well.

The difficulty is that often English and Hausa do not communicate very well to the people. Sometimes a preacher will explain difficult English words to the congregation in Hausa. But even that doesn't help if the pastor himself doesn't understand. One Sunday a preacher explained the meaning of 'vineyard' in Hausa: "Ita ce babban gona wanda aka shuka abubuwa daban-daban a ciki" (it's a big field with all sorts of different crops planted in it). Sorry, that's not a vineyard. How can God's message have any impact on daily life when people only have a Bible in a language which neither they nor their pastor can understand?

However, a man in his 80s who is the son of the very first Christian in the village, is pushing for Bible translation in the mother tongue. He said, "My people are chasing after magic, trying to get protection from this and that. I want them to be able to read the story of Daniel in their own language and know who this God is that we claim to serve, and how powerful he is, and why we don't need to trust in all these charms we've been chasing."

A translation team has been working on the book of Luke. They test the translation by asking people to read the draft and give feedback. One pastor came to the team after reading a draft of Luke and exclaimed, "This is amazing! I have preached on this passage, but it's only now as I'm reading it in our language that I actually understand what it means!"



Praise and Prayer

- Praise God that we have been healthy enough and financed enough to be able to continue serving these past 2 years.
- Praise God that the elections held in March / April were conducted peacefully.
- Pray for God's guiding hand to be over the new government



- Praise God that 8 more Bibles in Nigerian languages were published over this last year.
- Pray for Dan to be able to develop good friendships next year in school especially with one of his good friends leaving for 18 months.
- Pray that we would make seeking God a habit in our daily lives.

From the director

Enabling the people engaging in 120 projects is no easy task. It takes a huge team of people. The work Tim and Ali contribute to the group is invaluable in achieving this high level of engagement.

Nigeria spends a lot of time in the news and often because of violence and trouble. The desire to see peace, true peace that can only come from God, is hugely motivating for our team serving this wonderful nation.

Thanks to your prayers and support Tim and Ali are able to continue to serve the many language communities of Nigeria.

Ian Hollman




How to Give

<http://www.robinsonta.org/give/>

For those in the UK, send a cheque made payable to 'Wycliffe UK' with a note saying 'For Tim + Ali Robinson (286029)' to Wycliffe UK, The Clare Charity Centre, Wycombe Road, Saunderton, High Wycombe, Bucks HP14 4BF

Or if you are associated with Elim: send a cheque made payable to 'Elim International Missions' with a note saying it is for Tim & Ali Robinson (MS-PR0021) Elim International Missions, Elim International Centre, De Walden Road West Malvern, WR14 4DF



What does the future hold?

The needs in Nigeria are vast and varied. Our work as part of the Bible Translation movement is only a small part of the national need. No matter how you view the many needs, church life and every other Bible based ministry is more effective in serving the people of Nigeria when they make use of what we call mother tongue scripture. Reading or hearing the Bible in the language you understand best has been proven time and time again to increase the Word's impact on individual lives and communities.

Tim will be returning to the office as the Operations Director pending whatever decisions the incoming director makes about the leadership structure of the group. Ali will continue working as the Data Archivist aiding all the organisations involved in Bible Translation related ministries and keeping track of various statistics related to the languages of Nigeria. Dan will enter Middle school, grade 6 which will be a change of type of schooling. Probably a lot more work but also moving between classrooms and having different teachers for each subject. He is looking forward to the extra freedom but not the extra homework!