



Joyful Celebration Devotion

[Please provide: musical accompaniment and LSB hymnals for attendees.]

This is the day that the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it (Psalm 118:24).

The first Bible to be translated into an indigenous language in Australia was the Kriol Bible. Their dedication ceremony was in May 2007. Cameron Townsend, founder of Wycliffe Bible Translators, first thought of going to Australia to translate the Bible into indigenous languages back in the 1940s. What better cause for celebration than to read the printed Bible in one's heart language for the first time – to think, “God speaks my language.”

The Bible is the supreme missionary. It never takes a furlough and does not need a visa or passport. The Bible, once translated, is always available to that people group. The work of missionaries is facilitated by the use of the Bible in the local language. Public teaching in the Church requires a man "rightfully called" whether it is by the locals who hear the Word of God in their own language, or those sent from the Church at large to translate and evangelize. *How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!” But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, “Lord, who has believed what he has heard from us?” So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ (Romans 10:14-17).*

Just think – God allows us to be a part of this joyous, life-long work of translating. *“For here the saying holds true, ‘One sows and another reaps.’ I sent you to reap that for which you did not labor. Others have labored, and you have entered into their labor” (John 4:37-38).* We often cannot personally go and translate but yet we, too, can celebrate with the people of Australia. We can celebrate with our brothers and sisters in Christ because we are all one body. *For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ (I Corinthians 12:12).*

The Bible has been available for most of us in our own language since before we were born, and we have grown up knowing the Bible, including hearing the Bible read when in our mother's womb. We are without excuse. A person living in a remote tribe whose language has never been written and who has never had access to the Word of God may never know of the sacrificial love of our heavenly Father, who, through His death and resurrection, guarantees eternal life with Him in heaven to all who believe. Having the Word in their own language can change this. This is something we can truly celebrate with our brothers and sisters in Christ.

There is a saying - JOY is putting Jesus first, others second, and yourself last. Being able to read and hear the Word of the Lord in our heart language supports our desire to put Jesus first in our life because He put us first in His life. As we meditate on the Word, we are filled with joy. As the Bible is translated into new languages, we joyfully celebrate the gift given to others that they might know Christ. May God grant it!

Close by joyfully singing “Listen, God Is Calling” LSB 833.

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