



BIBLE & LITERATURE
TRANSLATION ASSOCIATION
(BILTA)



1st EDITION
2nd May, 2025

BILTA

Magazine



**Completion of the
Senga Oral New Testament
& it's Effects on the Community**





Rev Fr. Jackson Jones Katete

Dear friends,

Today we are celebrating the results of faith in action, turning the impossible into victorious moments of possibilities. The nature of God which makes the ordinary people being empowered by the Holy Spirit to do extraordinary things.

We are grateful to God for the great milestone achieved by a team of Senga Translators, Community Reviewers from all the seven Senga chiefdoms in Chama, the Consultant - Rev Gift Nyirenda of the Bible Society of Zambia and the BiLTA Executive team which worked tirelessly against all odds and be part of a great production of the New Testament.

Just after finishing translating the gospel of Luke, BiLTA became like bush fire igniting the passion of Bible translation for minority groups in their neighbourhood such as the Fungwe, Tambo and Lambya of Mafinga and Isoka. The third wave of translation works extended to the Mwenyi in Kalabo, Bisa in Lavushimanda, Kabende in Samfya before bringing on board the Kundas in Mfuwe, the Chikundas in Luangwa (Feira), the Shila in Chiengi and Lungu in Mpulungu. Currently, 13 languages are being translated with 17 project sites with close to 200 members of full-time staff, close to 500 community reviewers and 130 Church leaders providing spiritual support to the

translation sites.

The story of BiLTA translation works is a collaborative work with Faith Comes By Hearing who embarked on a journey of Faith and empowered the local team when it was not fashionable to do so. BiLTA is passionate about translating the Bible and essential literature materials into languages that connect with people's hearts and cultures. Our mission is to ensure that these texts inspire faith, foster understanding, and empower communities by making knowledge and truth accessible to all.

Through collaboration and dedication, we strive to ensure that no one is left without access to the transformative power of these texts (God's Word). Thank you for your interest and support as we work together to bring light, understanding, and unity through translation.

Blessings

Our Vision:

To make available the word of God and essential literature in local languages.

Our Mission:

To build capacity of the local people to translate the bible and essential literature into their heart languages for effective evangelism and discipleship.

WHO ARE WE?

The Bible and Literature Translation Association (BiLTA) was initiated in 2012 but was registered in 2019. It is a dedicated translation association committed to advancing the translation of the Bible and other essential literature works into local languages.

Our mission is to ensure that sacred texts and culturally significant literature become accessible to communities in their heart languages, promoting understanding, faith, and cultural appreciation.

Objectives:

- To translate the word of God and essential literature
- To build capacity for management and program implementation teams.
- To mobilize resources for management and programs
- To develop new programs for community transformation
- Provide translation services for public and private use (Health, Education, Worship, Business, cultural, etc)



INTRODUCTION

The month of April 2025 marked a momentous occasion for the faithful and the community at large, as the Dedication Service of the Senga Oral New Testament and the Celebration of the Launch brought together a diverse and vibrant gathering which included the Senga Community, International guests from various Translation Agencies, Traditional Leaders, Government Officials, Church Mother Bodies and the Christain Family. Held on the 8th of April at the Cathedral of the Holy Cross in Lusaka was the Dedication Service and on the 12th of April in Chama District was the Celebration iof the Launch. The two events were a testament to unity and shared purpose. Representatives from church mother bodies, the Senga community, government officials, and many others graced the celebrations, highlighting the broad reach and significance of these occasions.

These ceremonies not only stood as symbols of spiritual dedication but also as bridges between communities, fostering a spirit of collaboration and hope. The convergence of individuals from all walks of life underscored a shared commitment to both faith and societal progress. Join us as we reflect on the highlights, key moments, and profound impact of these unforgettable celebrations.

“THE WORD HAS COME HOME” – A NEW DAWN FOR THE SENGA PEOPLE

Chama District, Eastern Province – April 12, 2025. A gentle breeze swept across the plains of Chama as elders, children, mothers, and pastors gathered in joyful anticipation. It was not just another community event. This was history in the making; **the launch of the Senga Oral New Testament Bible**. For the first time ever, the Senga people would hear the Scriptures in the language of their hearts. A language spoken in the intimacy of their homes: whispered in prayer, and sung in lullabies. On

this day, **the Word of God had finally come home.**

But this moment did not happen overnight.

THE POWER OF PRAYER AND PERSEVERANCE

Months before the first voice played through an audio device in Chama, something powerful was already stirring. Across Zambia, BiLTA staff members were on their knees; **praying every Wednesday and Friday during nationwide online intercession sessions**. Each morning, BiLTA offices turned their attention to heaven during devotion time, lifting the Senga project before the Lord. These weren't just routine prayers; they were **bold petitions** for impact, for hearts to be touched, and for God to go ahead of the team.

CHURCH MOTHER BODIES REPRESENTATIVES
IN ZAMBIA, LED BY REV. ACKSON BANDA THE CCZ
PRESIDENT. DEDICATING THE SENGA ORAL NEW TESTAMENT
AT THE CATHEDRAL OF THE HOLY CROSS IN LUSAKA



REV. Fr. Jackson Katete (Chairman BiLTA) and Alexander Mathew (FCBH Vice President) handing over the proclaimer and acclaimer to Hon. Mrs. W.K. Mutale Nalumango Vice President of Zambia



Behind the scenes, translators, team administrators and consultants pressed on with passion, pouring their efforts into every syllable, ensuring that the meaning of Scripture rang true in the Senga tongue. At last, in early 2025, **the translation of the Senga New Testament Bible was completed**, the result of years of sacrifice, linguistic skill, and unwavering faith.

BUILDING THE MOMENT: ACTIVITIES LEADING TO THE DEDICATION

Before the cathedral filled with praise, before Chama echoed with Scripture, a quiet but powerful groundwork was being laid. **BiLTA's preparation for the Senga Oral New Testament dedication was both strategic and deeply relational**; centered on community, music, and church leadership.

ENGAGING THE SENGAL COMMUNITY IN LUSAKA

Recognizing that language is not just a tool of communication but a vessel of identity, BiLTA initiated a **community engagement campaign among the Sengal-speaking people in Lusaka**. The goal was more than logistical support; it was about igniting local pride, strengthening unity, and reminding the community that this Scripture was **theirs**.

As word spread, excitement grew. Men and women shared stories of how they had longed to hear God's Word in their own language. Their enthusiasm became the fuel that energized every rehearsal, every prayer, and every plan.

THE BIRTH OF THE BILTA SENGAL CHOIR

From this community, **a choir was born**; a vibrant, spirited group of Sengal speakers based in Lusaka who felt called to be part of something bigger than themselves. They rehearsed tirelessly, perfecting songs of worship in Sengal, blending rich harmonies with heartfelt devotion.

When they finally sang during the dedication at the Cathedral of the Holy Cross, it wasn't just music; it was a declaration. A declaration that the Sengal language, long overlooked in formal worship spaces, was not only beautiful but holy.

FAITH LEADERS AT THE CORE

Equally vital to the preparation was the collaboration with local church leaders, particularly those in the Local Pastors' Fellowship. BiLTA formed a committee of pastors whose insights, prayers, and presence helped shape the spiritual atmosphere surrounding the entire launch.

Their involvement reminded everyone that this wasn't just a cultural milestone; it was a deeply spiritual moment. Through sermons, prayers, and community mobilization, these pastors anchored the dedication in faith and ensured that Christ remained the center of it all.



Training of Faith Leaders and hand over of Proclaimers and acclaimers during the Scripture Engagement in Chama District by Mrs. Catherine Katete and Team

A SACRED DEDICATION IN THE CAPITAL

To honor and commit this sacred work to God, a national dedication was held on **8th April, 2025** at the **Anglican Cathedral of the Holy Cross in Lusaka**. It was a majestic sight. Choirs sang, hands were lifted in praise, and voices echoed with thanksgiving.

Gracing the event was **Her Honour, the Vice President of the Republic of Zambia, Mrs. W.K. Mutale Nalumango**, whose presence underscored the national significance of the occasion. In her speech, she celebrated the power of Scripture in transforming lives and applauded BiLTA for bringing God's Word closer to the people.

She was joined by **Father Katete Jackson Jones**, BiLTA Chairman, who reminded the gathering that every verse translated was a bridge between heaven and earth. **Church mother bodies, partners from Faith Comes By Hearing (FCBH)**, and leaders from various denominations echoed a single message: this was God's work, and it was marvelous in our eyes.

SENGA ORAL BIBLE UNVEILED: GOD'S WORD NOW SPEAKS IN THE HEART LANGUAGE OF THE PEOPLE

From the grand Anglican Cathedral of the Holy Cross in Lusaka to the vibrant school hall of Chama Boarding School, history was made with the dedication and launch of the Senga Oral New Testament Bible, a spiritual milestone and a celebration of language, identity, and faith. *(photo of the Cathedral)*

At the dedication in Lusaka, Alex, Vice President of Faith Comes By Hearing FCBH, shared an inspiring message:

"This is not just a project completed; it's the Word of God now alive in the hearts of the Senga people. For those who cannot read, for the elderly, for children, this Oral Bible is a treasure beyond words."

He gave special honor to **BiLTA**, through its

Chairperson **Father Katete**, applauding the team's commitment and perseverance:

"Many organizations begin Bible translation but never finish. Today, we celebrate BiLTA for finishing strong."

Then came the emotional launch in Chama, held at Chama Boarding School, right in the heart of the Senga community. For the first time, families heard Jesus speak in their mother tongue.

Romans 10:17 came to life:

"Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ."

This is more than a translation; it's a revival; a tool for evangelism, discipleship, and cultural preservation, a light that will shine in homes, churches, and communities for generations.

PROCLAIMING THE GOSPEL IN EVERY TONGUE (photo of Rev Ackson Banda)

At the heart of the Senga Oral New Testament Bible dedication was a powerful message from the Church Mother Body, a moving tribute to the life-changing impact of hearing God's Word in one's own language.

Referencing **Romans 10:17**, the speaker emphasized that faith truly comes by hearing, especially for oral communities like the Senga. This audio Bible marks a turning point: no longer is literacy a barrier, everyone can now hear, believe, and respond to the Gospel.

The message highlighted four blessings:

- **Accessibility for all**, regardless of education
- **Stronger evangelism and discipleship**
- **Cultural pride and language preservation**
- **Deeper worship and community fellowship**

With **Isaiah 55:11** as a final encouragement, the Church Mother Body affirmed that God's Word in Senga will not return void, it will bear fruit.

“NOW GOD SPEAKS SENGAI!” — TESTIMONY FROM REV. FRANCKSON NDHLOVU (Photo of Frackson)

At the moving dedication of the Senga Oral New Testament Bible held at the Anglican Cathedral of the Holy Cross in Lusaka, Rev. Franckson Ndhlovu shared a powerful testimony on the transformation unfolding in the Senga community:

“Wherever we go, we carry the Scriptures with us, because the Senga Oral Bible is portable and alive!”

He emphasized that through the Senga Audio Scriptures, the Senga people now walk with a Savior who doesn't just visit but lives among them, speaks their language, and interacts with them personally.

Quoting from the previous Sunday's service on Jonah chapter one, Rev. Ndhlovu shared how people are becoming bold witnesses for Christ:

“One young man told me, 'Now I have been given Scriptures to be an evangelist to my family, friends, and neighbors!’”

He called the project a sign that the Senga people have been remembered by God, a fulfillment of long-held prayer. And he passionately appealed to the Republic of Zambia to ensure all learners across the nation are considered in Bible access, just as the Senga have now received the Word in their own language.

“This is not just a dedication, it's the beginning of a

movement!”

THE LAUNCH IN CHAMA DISTRICT: A CELEBRATION OF IDENTITY AND FAITH (Map of Chama)

On **April 12, 2025**, the celebrations journeyed eastward to the heartland of the Senga people; **Chama District** in Eastern Province. What unfolded that day was far more than a public event; it was **a homecoming for the Gospel**, a powerful fusion of language, culture, and faith.

From the early morning hours, the atmosphere buzzed with anticipation. The aroma of traditional food drifted through the air as colorful choirs lined up in their finest BiLTA regalia. **Church bells rang out**, and the sounds of drums, song, and praise echoed across the district. The people had gathered; **young and old, clergy and villagers, chiefs and children**; for one divine purpose: **to witness the official launch of the Senga Oral New Testament.**

(photo of the match past)



Match past during the Celebration of the Launch of the Senga Oral New Testament by the United Church of Zambia Boys Brigade

SCRIPTURE COMES ALIVE

As the program began, worship resounded in the Senga language, and for the first time, **Jesus spoke Senga**. Audio devices loaded with the New Testament were distributed and played aloud. The Gospel of Luke was no longer a distant story in a foreign tongue; it was spoken in the rhythm and melody of the people's own language.

Children leaned in, wide-eyed with wonder. Elders nodded in deep appreciation, some closing their eyes, others lifting their hands in praise. Many were moved to tears as they heard the Scriptures in a language they could fully understand. For them, this was **not just the arrival of a book; it was the arrival of God Himself, speaking directly to their hearts**.

COMMUNITY-WIDE CELEBRATION

The **Chama Boarding School Hall** became the epicenter of the celebration. Transformed for the occasion, it welcomed **local leaders, traditional chiefs, pastors, government officials**, and hundreds of community members who filled every seat with eager anticipation. **Scripture banners in Senga**, traditional crafts, and vibrant decorations adorned the hall, infusing the atmosphere with both cultural richness and spiritual depth.

Powerful testimonies from local believers underscored the significance of this moment. They shared how the translated Word had already begun to transform hearts and homes—rekindling hope, inspiring unity, and deepening understanding of the Gospel.

PARTNERSHIP IN MISSION

The success of the launch was a testament to partnership. BiLTA's **collaboration with the local pastors' fellowship in Chama** had been critical. Their leadership, wisdom, and pastoral care ensured the

event reached every corner of the community. **This wasn't just BiLTA's victory; it was a shared celebration of a people reclaiming their voice in God's grand narrative.**

Support from global partners like **Faith Comes By Hearing, FCBH**, and other Scripture engagement organizations demonstrated what unity in mission can achieve. Traditional authorities gave their full blessing, recognizing the value of preserving the Senga language while uplifting the spiritual lives of their people.

A NEW CHAPTER BEGINS

As the sun set on that unforgettable day, the joy lingered. In homes, churches, schools, and under trees where small groups gather to pray, **the Word is now alive in Senga**.

For BiLTA, this marks another step in a wider vision: to ensure that **every Zambian hears the Word of God in their own language**. For the Senga people, it's a sacred beginning; **a new chapter in faith, rooted in language, culture, and identity**.

BECAUSE WHEN THE WORD COMES HOME, EVERYTHING CHANGES BECAUSE THE WORD BRINGS TRANSFORMATION.



Mr. Yobe Goma. Chama District Commissioner

This programme of translating the Bible into Senga has come at right time when the people of Chama District did not have our own Bible to use and understand the word of God. Now that you people have brought us a gift, that gives life to everyone, it is really something that we will be forever be grateful about.

The Senga Oral Bible Translation has really transformed the lives of people. People from all the seven chiefdoms in the district attended. Establishment of the Senga bible on that day will forever remain. It was so colorful and so touching, reaching man in totality. It was an experience that we never had before. We can see this from the number of people that were in attendance. There

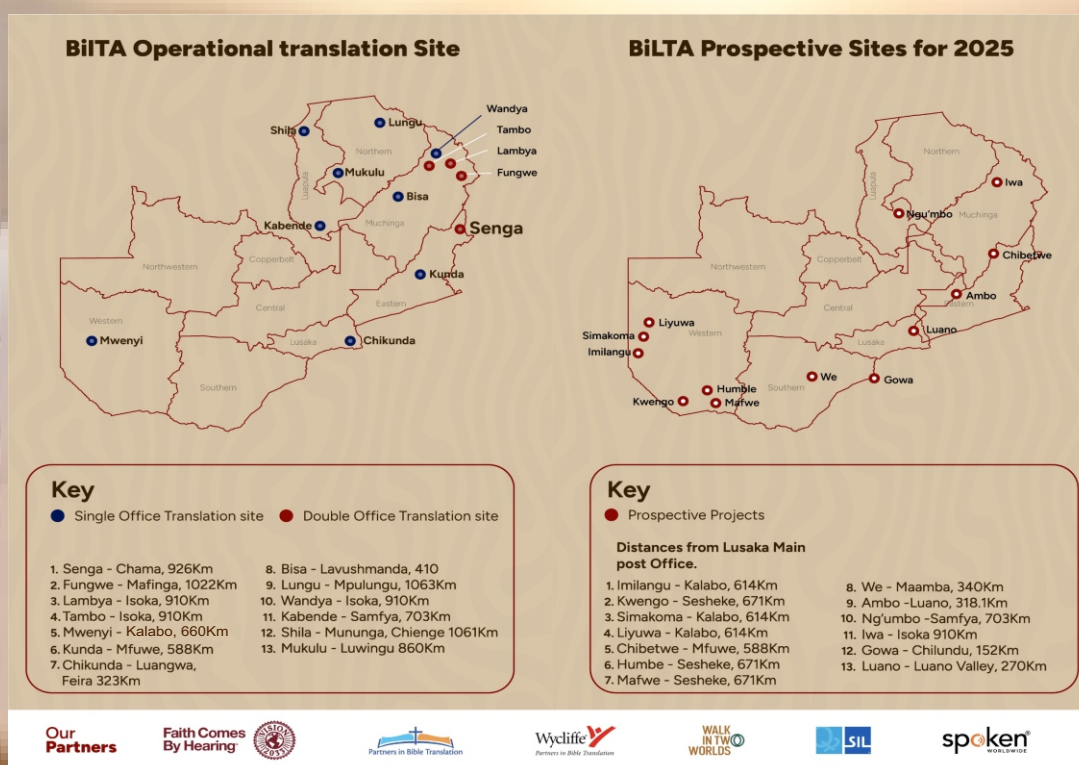
were many people that came such that the space was just too small to accommodate everyone who was outside the hall who needed to see the live proceedings. This needed an open space.

Nevertheless, that was not very important because the important thing is what you gave out on that day, the proclaimers, which will continue impacting people's lives. The Senga people are therefore, encouraged to support the translation organization as they have brought us the word of God which we cannot live without. I believe that all the churches in Chama district will support the organization because it continues to bring us with a lot of literature in Senga.

Even as the government, we will continue support this organization because it is helping us a lot. You can imagine, for the very first time, we sung the national anthem in our own language, Senga, for the very first time. Whenever you need us, we are there because you deserve our help. We will continue to work together including the activities you have so that we contribute more.

Testimony from the District Commissioner for Chama

ZAMBIA REGIONAL MAP



SENGA TRANSLATION OFFICE STAFF



REV. GOLIATH MUNTALI
TEAM ADMINISTRATOR



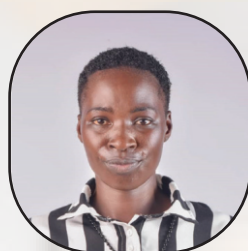
BERTHA CHILEMBO
TEAM ADMINISTRATOR



FRANCIS MILANZI
DEPUTY TEAM ADMINISTRATOR



REV. JOHN KUMWENDA
DEPUTY TEAM ADMINISTRATOR



ESTHER KALUBA BANDA
TRANSLATOR



ANGELA CHONDOKA
TRANSLATOR



JOHN KUMWENDA
TRANSLATOR



NTHEYE NYIRENDA
TRANSLATOR



PASTOR GIBSON MTONGA
TRANSLATOR



AARON MBUZY
TRANSLATOR



THANDIWE MUKHALIPE
TRANSLATOR



BYDON NYIRENDA
TRANSLATOR



KOMANI GOMA
SECURITY



YOTUM NYIRENDA
SECURITY



JOSEPH CHIKOMAZGA
SECURITY



REV. GIFT NYIRENDA
LEAD CONSULTANT



DANIEL GREEN GOMA
CONSULTANT IN TRAINING

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERS



REV. FR. JACKSON JONES KATETE
NATIONAL EXECUTIVE CHAIRMAN - BILTA



REV. EZEKIA NGULUBE
NATIONAL EXECUTIVE VICE CHAIRMAN



APOSTLE VINCENT R. CHIBESA
NATIONAL EXECUTIVE SECRETARY



MTUMBI GOMA
NATIONAL EXECUTIVE TREASURER



BISHOP CHACKSON KANGO
NATIONAL EXECUTIVE VICE SECRETARY



REV. ANDREW CHIPETA
COMMITTEE MEMBER



REV. SAIWEL MVULA
COMMITTEE MEMBER



PASTOR ISAAC LUNGU
COMMITTEE MEMBER



CONTACT US:



+260 977 539 067/ +260 965 540 313



infor@bilta.org



www.bilta.org



Plot 324, Flat No. 2, Bauhinia
Avenue off Great-East Road,
Cheltone-LUSAKA, ZAMBIA

