

August 2018

Translation and Transformation

FOCUS SCRIPTURE

Acts 2:1-12

FOCUS MINISTRY

Bible Translation

fellowship!

“Translations and Transformations”

Summer 2018

https://issuu.com/fellowship/docs/summer18_fellowship/22

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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Can you imagine not having the bible in a language you understood? Can you imagine your cultural identity being threatened? Pastor Greg Long faces both of these situations as a minister among the Navajo people. His answer? Translating the Bible into the Navajo language. What would it be like to not have access to a bible in your own language? What if you had never heard the stories of the Old Testament because they weren't available in a way you could understand? Greg Long is working from the original Greek and Hebrew to provide an accurate translation for the Navajo to help preserve their language and culture. For Greg, there are two important reasons for the translation. One, to have an accurate translation of the bible in Navajo. The current Navajo translation is from a Braille version of the King James Bible that uses archaic language. This new version would be more up to date, and be more accurate coming from original Greek and Hebrew texts.

In this process of translation, Greg is also teaching others Greek and Hebrew to help with the workload. “Navajo Bible Translation Project breaks the stereotype of a monkish interpreter, poring over ancient manuscripts, laboriously producing a new Bible a line at a time. It’s a community endeavor. He plans to teach Hebrew, and then Greek, to members of Western Navajo churches, who will work in teams to translate sections of Scripture. He’s piloting the project at East Valley Baptist Church, a Southern Baptist congregation in Flagstaff. Navajo members of the mostly Anglo church are learning Hebrew as they go and combining that skill with Navajo fluency to produce a wholly new Bible.”

The other concern of Greg’s is to preserve the Navajo culture. The Navajo language is rapidly going out of use. The hope with this new translation of the Bible is that there would be a resurgence of the use of the Navajo language. “The Navajo language is holy and special. If we lose it, it will be a great tragedy”, Long says. He makes a comparison between the Navajo culture and the Jewish culture found in the Old Testament. His hope is that with this new understanding of Biblical languages and specifically Jewish culture, a renewal of the Navajo culture will occur.

- **ENGAGE:** Students will think about and discuss what it means to have a bible in a language they understand, and what it means to preserve a minority culture.
- **EQUIP:** Students will study the verses of the story of Pentecost and discuss what it means to have scripture in a language you understand.
- **EXTEND:** Students will consider and discuss why it is important for a language and a culture to be preserved.
- **MISSION PROJECT:** Students will look for ways how they can help with the Navajo Bible Translation Project, and also learn about cultures different than their own.



Translation and Transformation

LEARNING GOAL

Students will come to understand the importance of having access to a Bible in your own language and the importance of preserving a minority culture.

GETTING READY

1. Have an adult ready to receive youth
2. Find Bibles in a language different than the native one of your group. Ideally, you have someone who can read the Acts text in a language different than the majority of the youth. Perhaps, one of the youth can read the text in another language.
3. Have Bibles ready for scripture discussion study, and be prepared to lead on texts in Acts.
4. Write questions on whiteboard, chalkboard, or something similar.
 - Imagine if you couldn't read the bible. What would that be like?
 - What parts of your culture are important to you?
 - How do you preserve those parts?
5. Print out the blog story about Greg Long and his Navajo Bible Translation Project.
6. Gather *fellowship!* magazines so the youth can see Greg and his wife Sheila to read about their work.

ENGAGE

1. Welcome students to their normal meeting place. (Introduce your guest if you have one to read in another language)
2. Have Bibles of different languages present.
3. Ask the students:
 - Imagine if you couldn't read the bible. What would that be like? (Have a person read the text in another language. Does that mean anything to you? What if this is the only access you had to scripture?)
 - What parts of your culture are important to you?
 - How do you preserve those parts?

EQUIP

1. Have youth read Acts 2:1-12.
2. Ask:
 - Imagine you had been there at Pentecost. What would that have been like?
 - How would you have responded to Peter's words?
 - How important is it to have the stories of the bible in a language we understand?



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EXTEND

1. Read the article about Greg Long and his Navajo Bible Translation Project.

- What similarities did Greg give between Jewish culture and Navajo culture?
- What previous translation did the Navajo have to translate from? Why do you think this new one will be better?
- How is Greg getting help for this project?

MISSION PROJECT

1. Are there different cultures in your community? How can you and your youth group support them?

- Go to cultural centers to learn about them.
- Go to their festivals and fundraisers (like the Armenian, Greek, or Lebanese festival)
- Have a person representing that culture (Native American if possible) to come speak to your group about what their culture and faith means to them.

2. How can you help Greg with the project?

- Find the story and pictures of Greg here: https://issuu.com/fellowship/docs/summer18_fellowship/22

