

One of the guys on my team, Bruce, asked me to record a story for a DVD he needs to provide for his home church. I thought I'd share the story I told:

"Bruce joining our team was a real live answer to prayer for us. It was at a point in our history where we were making a move from how we'd traditionally hosted servers. While we had talented and capable server administrators, what we didn't have – what we were lacking – was someone with experience or specialized knowledge of network storage devices. So we were puzzling through what this meant – whether additional training or engaging a potentially high-priced outside consultant. And it was at this point when Bruce showed up – not Bruce the person, but Bruce on paper as someone God had called to Bible translation and who was preparing – in the process of coming here. Right there on the paper was a person with the specialized skills and experience we were lacking. It's just so cool to realize that God was preparing Bruce and Midge for service with Wycliffe Bible Translators at just the time when Wycliffe was needing someone with Bruce's specialized skills and experience."

Telling the story got me thinking: God could've given us a way to just get by, right? We didn't actually need a network storage expert to do what we wanted to do. But God supplied one: our every need according to his glorious riches (Phil. 4:19). Reminding me of two things (1) God's passion for the minority and marginalized peoples of the world. God sets apart incredibly talented and skilled people to devote their lives to this work. They're giving their lives to God of course. But God uses them to serve the marginalized, but highly prized by God. And (2) God's provision is by definition over the top. Why should God concern himself with my needs, with my every need? And what is He thinking "wasting" the glorious riches of Jesus to meet these in the grand scheme of things "unimportant" needs?

Because Tanzania churches use the Swahili Bible, prayer is always in Swahili. "But what about when you are at home, or if you are alone, what language do you use when you pray?"

The elderly Zanaki pastor thought for a moment and answered, 'Swahili, I always use Swahili. I don't think I ever prayed in Zanaki. Yes, I am sure I never have in my whole life.'

This soft spoken, gentle pastor had never spoken to Jesus in his heart language. He readily agreed it would be possible to pray in Zanaki. He believed God would understand Zanaki, but since Swahili, the national language, is the language of the Bible, it simply never occurred to him that he could use his mother tongue for prayer.

That afternoon the seven Zanaki workshop participants stopped their work to pray for the upcoming Bible translation and literacy project. Just before beginning, we suggested they use Zanaki. They were startled, but agreed. In Tanzanian fashion, they all prayed out loud simultaneously. Passionate Zanaki prayers tumbled out as they asked God to bless the project. One woman simply sat smiling and crying, listening to the others pray in her language.

When their voices all quieted, one man closed with a Zanaki, "In Jesus' name, amen." They lifted their heads, and everyone had tears running down.

Tanzanians don't often cry in public, but every one of the seven were wiping their eyes. The elderly pastor, who had just prayed and heard others pray in Zanaki for the very first time, could not stop smiling. One Zanaki man said, "Let's do this again. This is very good."

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