

# Coalition spreading Gospel through heart language translations

*Editor's note: Some names may have been changed for security reasons.*

UNDISCLOSED (IMB) – Bir Bahdur is a simple animal herder. Sometimes he works as a day laborer. He's quiet and meek. He's uneducated and soft-spoken. He doesn't consider himself qualified to share the Gospel, let alone teach it. Many of his South Asian countrymen don't think so either.

However, the beauty of the Gospel is that it brings worth to those society considers not worthy. Bir Bahdur became a believer by hearing Bible stories that were translated into his language by a coalition of workers from Southern Baptists' International Mission Board (IMB), Omega Training Partnership, and another international translation organization.

After hearing and believing the truth, he knew he wanted to share it. With the encouragement of fellow participants and the trainers from the project's workshops, he learned to craft and share Bible stories in his heart language.

Bir Bahdur started telling people he encountered each day the Bible stories, and people listened. "He's not trained. He's not professional, but he knows the God that he serves and he knows how to tell these stories. It's by sharing those stories that God's Word has gone forth," said Royce Alyward, an IMB worker who helps lead the translation initiative.

Bir Bahdur reported that several of his friends professed faith in Christ after hearing the stories, but his influence doesn't stop at those friends simply believing. He intentionally disciples these believers and from Bir Bahdur's

influence, two house churches have been started in his remote area.

Bir Bahdur's story doesn't stand alone. Royce and his wife, Elsbeth, can tell story after story of churches being planted and lives changed because of this translation project.

The idea behind this massive Bible translation project is to engage least-reached places with the Gospel. Getting the Word of God into the heart language of remote people has fostered healthy church planting and multiplication.

The Alywards said since the translation coalition started in 2013, the project has seen:

- Completion of Bible story sets in 23 languages among many of the least-served people groups of South Asia.
- Multiplication of Gospel-sharing and indigenous church plants across the 23 languages.
- Initiation and advancement of New Testament translation in 16 of the 23 languages, with imminent plans to begin translation in four more heart languages.
- Ongoing discipleship and church enrichment interaction with growing churches in many of South Asia's least-reached peoples.

The key to seeing a work of this magnitude accomplished has been not only the partnership between the three organizations, but the strategic discipleship and deployment of national believers. "This task is too big for anybody, but it is certainly biblical to have this kind of collaboration between like-minded organizations," Elsbeth said.

"We're working on seeing every tribe, every language be able to have an understandable and appropriate presentation of the gospel in their language", she said. "This is such a huge need in this area of South Asia where you have so many harder-to-

reach languages in harder-to-reach areas.”