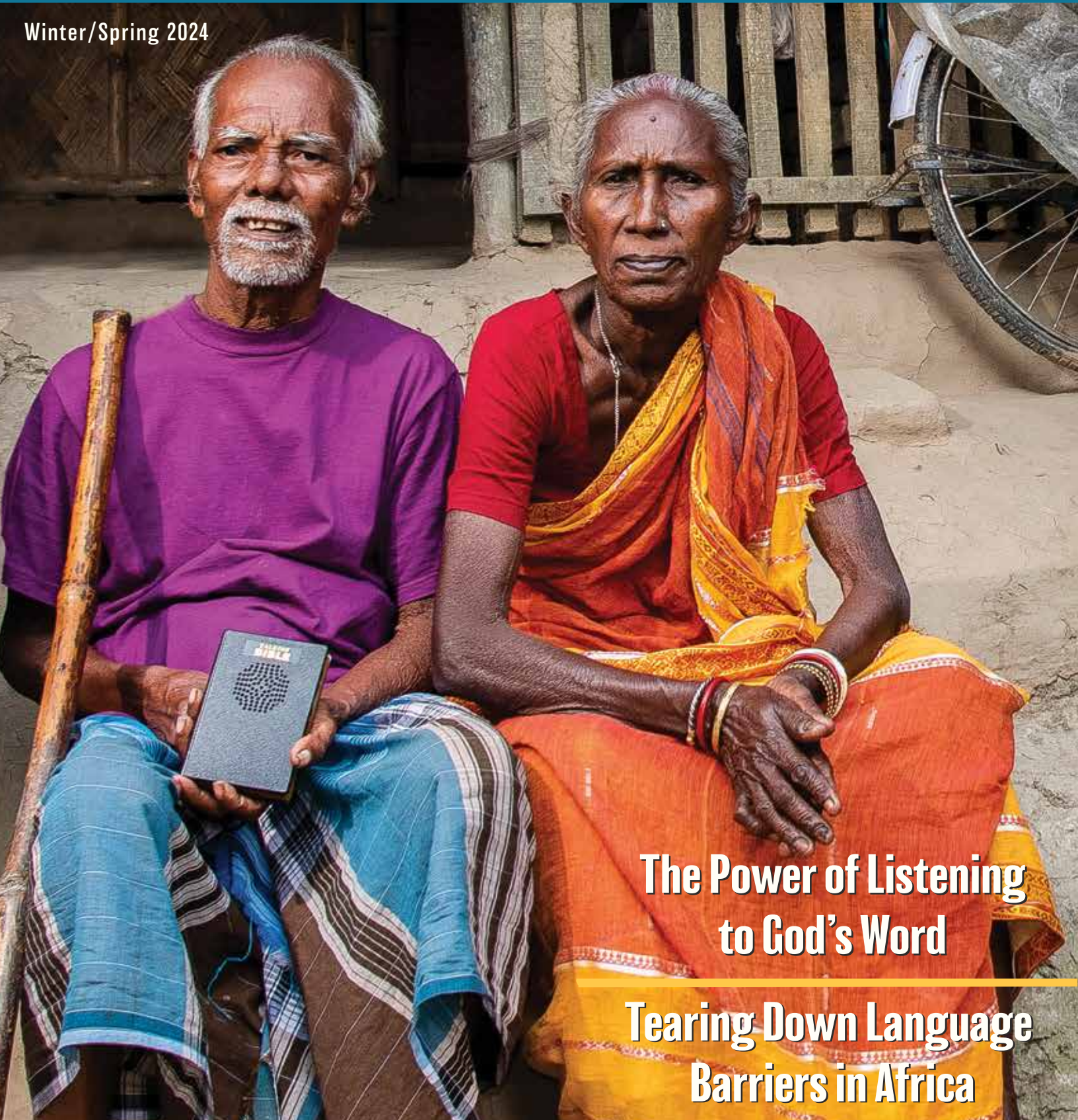


# Newsletter



TALKING  
BIBLES

Winter/Spring 2024



**The Power of Listening  
to God's Word**

**Tearing Down Language  
Barriers in Africa**



## AFRICA -

### Removing the Language Barrier

With anywhere between 1,000 and 2,000 spoken languages in Africa, reaching the heart of the people takes something special. While younger kids who have the opportunity to go to school are usually taught to read the national language, they often speak a different language at home – their heart language. This is the language that they are most familiar with, the language in which they think and dream.

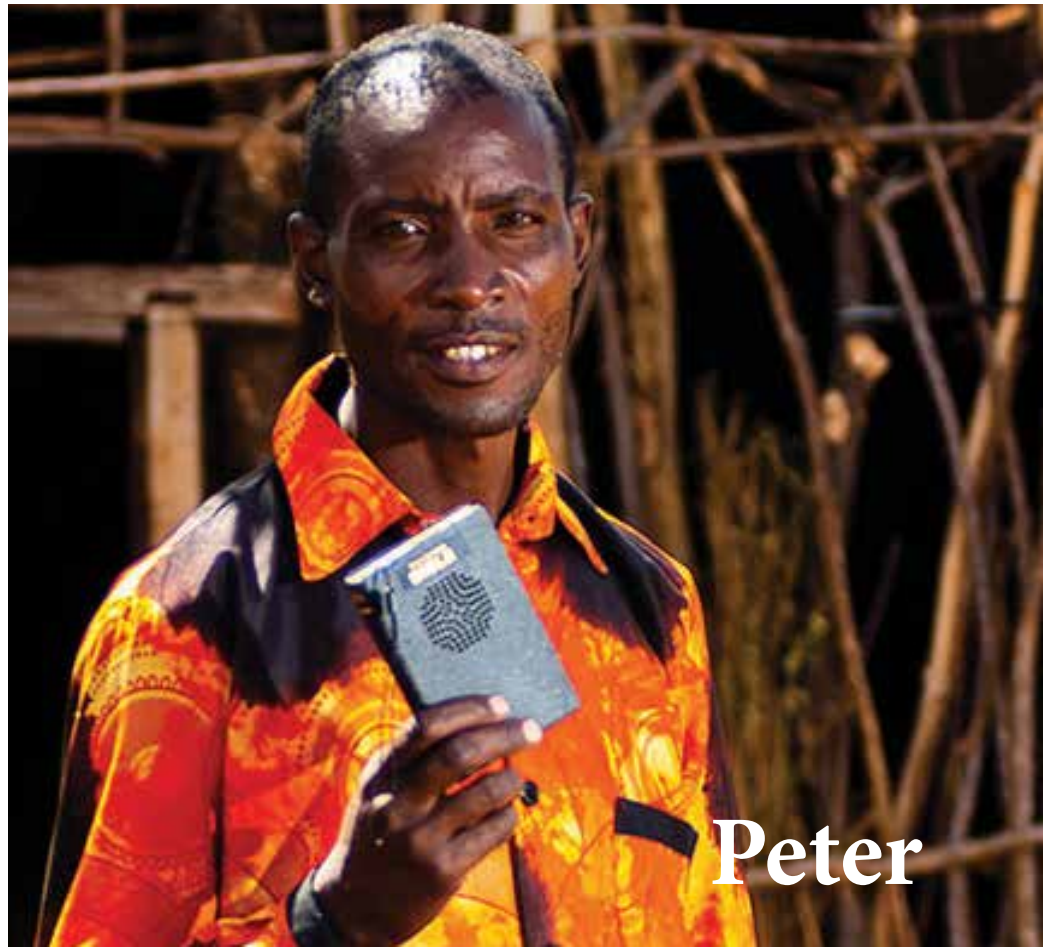
As you can imagine, this situation poses many obstacles in presenting the Gospel.

Here are three stories celebrating what happens when Talking Bibles are provided to rural villagers in Tanzania in their heart language.

**Peter** is part of the Tatoga people group in Tanzania. They are among the least educated groups in the nation. Their language is not taught in any schools. Instead, any child who attends school will learn how to read and write in Kiswahili, the national language of Tanzania.

Even if an educated Tatoga person wants to read, they will struggle to find any material printed in their language. Peter's church has one print Tatoga Bible, but he says it is too difficult to read, even though he can somewhat read the Kiswahili Bible.

Despite these obstacles, Peter has faithfully led a Bible study for 12 other Tatoga believers for years, of whom only five know how to read.



Peter

## Dear Friends of Talking Bibles,

**The Word of God should easily flow to a person's heart; without language barriers or the need for literacy, everyone should have access to the Bible in their language.**

There are over 1 billion people in the world who cannot read the Bible in their heart language.

Whether they belong to oral cultures, do not have access to education, or are visually impaired, these groups will struggle to read a print Bible, but they can easily listen to the Talking Bible.

By supporting Talking Bibles, you provide the Bible in a format non-readers can use: audio.

With access to over 2,000 languages, you give the Bible in the language they best understand.

And with the infrastructure already in place to reach those in need, your donation goes right to producing audio Bibles and getting them into the hands of those who need them the most.

We praise God for His Word and for providing access for everyone, no matter the circumstances.

Because they need to hear,

Mark S. Hoekstra  
President, Talking Bibles International

They meet every Wednesday, and one will read from the Kiswahili Bible before discussing what they have heard.

### **Everything changed when Peter received a Talking Bible with the Tatoga New Testament!**

Peter says that switching from reading the Kiswahili Bible to listening to the Tatoga Bible finally opened up the Scriptures to them.

He is already thinking about using the Talking Bible to share the story of Jesus with others. “We have many people who are not reached with the gospel, so if we get more of these Talking Bibles, it will help us to reach them,” Peter says. “The Talking Bible helps because it is new for many people. So, if we go to people with it, they will surely understand.”

**Sayuni’s** group is Maasai and speaks KiMaasai as their heart language. Like Peter, the only printed Bibles available are written in Kiswahili, making it challenging to access the message of the Gospel.

But Sayuni has a Talking Bible with the entire Bible in KiMaasai. She says that hearing the scriptures in her mother tongue changes everything because she can thoroughly learn and understand what she hears.

Sayuni has been in a Talking Bible listening group for two years now. Each Tuesday, she and six other people from her church gather to listen to the scriptures for 90 minutes, after



which they discuss together what they have heard.

When Sayuni heard the story of the man healed of his shriveled hand in the third chapter of Acts of the Apostles, she began teaching other people that Jesus has the power to heal. One woman she spoke with was on her deathbed in the hospital, but through Sayuni’s prayers and sharing what she had learned from the Talking Bible, that ill woman was healed and is at home again.

Now, Sayuni sees the other women in her listening group going house to house in their community to evangelize. “Jesus is the way of life,” they tell their neighbors, and now many are responding and believing.

**Neema** got her Talking Bible from a local evangelist and started a listening group. She and 15 other people meet three times a week to listen to her

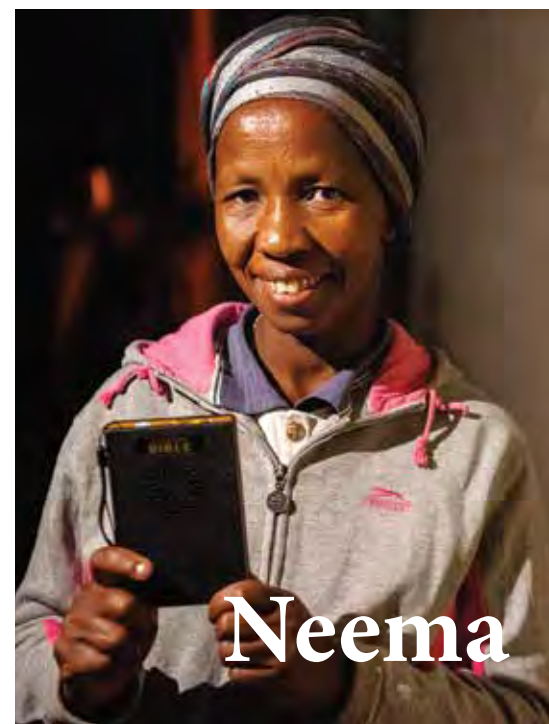
Talking Bible. Among the 15, eight are illiterate and unable to access the scriptures in any way other than audio, including Neema’s 89-year-old mother.

Her Talking Bible has the New Testament in her language, Kiiraqw, and in Tanzania’s national language, Kiswahili, making it possible for other tribes to hear God’s Word.

**“This Talking Bible is for all people, and we all like it because it is in our mother tongue,” says Neema.**

“Those who can speak Kiswahili can listen in their language. And those who only know Kiiraqw can also listen in their language.”

Many of the Irawq members of the listening group are hearing the scriptures in their language for the first time and growing excited to know more about God; even those who can read could not find a print Bible in Kiiraqw. Now, they can hear God’s Word speaking directly to their heart. 📖





# The Power of Listening to God's Word!

## West Bengal, India

On a small island in the Sundarbans in West Bengal, 70-year-old Sardar lives with his family. For most of his life, Sardar lived like everyone else on the island: raising animals, planting and harvesting rice fields, and making the occasional sacrifices to the local gods, called pujas.

Then, he became sick a few years ago, and that is when his life began to change.

“Earlier, we would do this puja and that puja, but nothing would happen. Then these Christians prayed for me, and I was healed!” Sardar says a missionary from another part of West Bengal came and preached to his village, “When pastor Pintu gave the Gospel, I understood how the real God is.... I was healed, then I believed.” Soon after, Sardar’s wife, Poklo, and his youngest son, Ratan, came to Christ.

Pastor Pintu recently brought a few Talking Bibles to Sardar’s village, knowing that most people over 20 have no education. Sardar received one and began faithfully listening to the scriptures with his wife and son each night.

Through listening, he says he has learned that some of his old habits are bad and destructive, like drinking too much.

**“We didn’t have an education. Now, by listening, I am understanding little by little.” Sardar says that he especially likes the story of the prodigal son in Luke 15, “The second son gets wisdom and comes back. We are like that with Jesus.”**



When Sardar first came to Jesus, nobody in his village nor his sons would speak with him. Even the neighbors wouldn’t come to his house.

However, after seeing his miraculous healing and the many other ways Jesus has changed his life, people are speaking with him again.

Several other Christians are in his village now, and more in the surrounding villages. Sardar has donated a small piece of land and helped build a thatch-walled church so they can all meet together.

Now, he is seeing more changes in the community, not just in his home. 

Check out our new website!  
Scan the QR code using the  
camera app on your phone.



Want to share our newsletter? Email: [info@talkingbibles.org](mailto:info@talkingbibles.org), and we'll gladly send you extra copies!

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