

Bible OL in use in Addis Abeba

A fresh report on startup

Nicolai Winther-Nielsen, February 7, 2019.

Last year Lutheran Bible Translators provided funding for a new project to train 15 Ethiopian mother-tongue translators in a Bachelor for Theology and Bible Translators at the Mekane Yesus Seminary in Addis Abeba (cf <https://blogs.lcms.org/2018/lutheran-bible-translators-mekane-yesus-partner-teach-translation/>).

As part of this new translation education, the Mekane Yesus Seminary decided to use Bible Online Learner in a pilot project on Biblical Hebrew, using the My Biblical Hebrew learning environment for effective learning (<https://mbh.3bmoodle.dk/>). Having already been implemented successfully for a 560 hour Biblical Hebrew language course in the Fall of 2018, we can now adapt the first 140 hours of the beginners' Biblical Hebrew for this education.

Lutheran Bible Translators has also donated PCs, tables and infrastructure for a brand-new computer lab. The PCs are being set up, connected and tested during this first week in February. At the same time, we are launching the Biblical Hebrew course and experimenting with our flipped corpus-driven Hebrew classroom in an Ethiopian culture. Many learners already now appreciate the opportunity to learn Hebrew the practical way.



The new IT building is on the right.



The integration of this Biblical Hebrew project is administered by lecturer Albene Abraham, who is responsible for the Bible Translation program, and the computer lab is run by IT administrator Wendimu.



Albene logs on to Bible Online Learner for the first time.



Wendimu is working hard to fine-tune the computers to operate well a band-width of only 8 Megabites.... We are looking for more powerful solutions.



Our flipped classroom is full of vibrant life and gaming as learners practice Hebrew. For many it is a challenge, that they do not have computers, but this state-of-the art classroom provides a wonderful environment for persuasive learning.

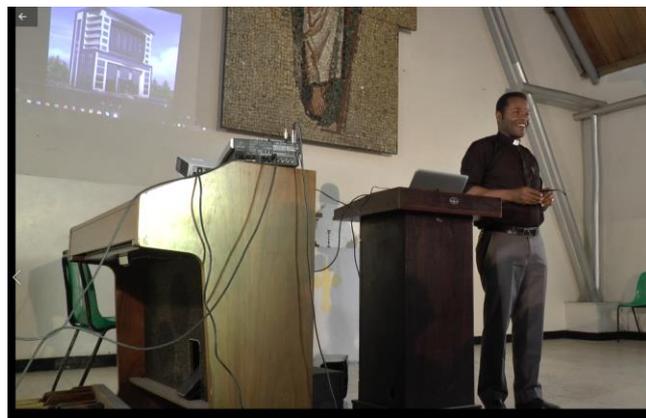


My main teaching assistant is Zetseat Fedaku. She lives and teaches Biblical Hebrew in Addis, but she is also my PhD-student at the VU University in Amsterdam. She has experience as a Bible translator in Ethiopia and she trained at the Jerusalem Center for Bible Translators in Israel in the Spring of 2018.



One of the main goals of the Mekane Yesus Seminary Bible OL project is to explore the potential and demands for facilitator training. Mrs Fedaku and I will explore what it takes for a Bible translator and Hebrew teacher to learn how to run courses for blended learning and online studies in Africa.

Many students envy the opportunities that our 30 students have, but they are barred from participation. We hope that Bible OL over the next years can enhance the learning of the Biblical languages for Bible translation and Biblical studies both at this seminary and far beyond.



The visionary president of the seminary, Dr Bruk Ayele, has been the driving force in paving the way for

setting up a completely new way of learning Biblical Hebrew in this setting. Under his leadership new projects are being developed, and he will no doubt know how to use the new 21st Century Bible-driven and learner directed classroom.

The leaders of Lutheran Bible Translators are here for the annual partnership meeting. Executive Director, Dr. Mike Rodewald, is sitting to the right. Training coordinator, Eshinee Veith, is sitting at the front. She came to our class and saw the challenges we had in launching. It is a privilege to serve in this new environment they are providing.



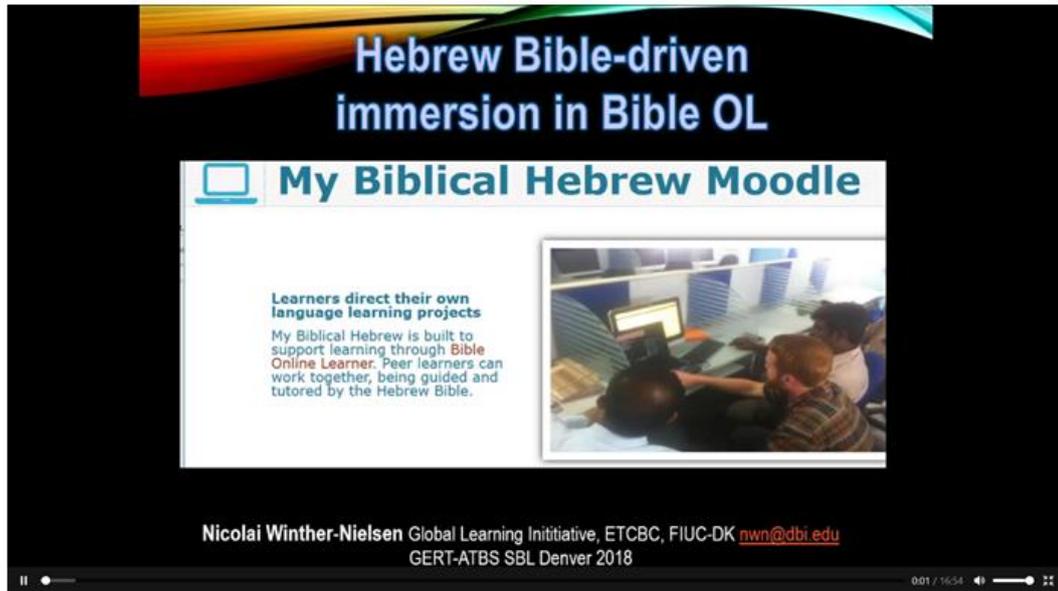
The funding for my two months course comes from the Danish mission organization Promissio. Its international coordinator, Simon Schøler Kristensen, is sitting to the right. He served on our board and coordinated our first project in Madagascar 2010-2015. Next to him is my college from the summer of 2019, Dr Christian Schøler Holmgaard. We both share strong connections to the VU University in Amsterdam and now also to the Mekane Yesus seminary.



As part of the partnership meetings this week, staff was invited for Ethiopian food and wonderful music from the band of the seminary.

In my mind, this party was also a celebration of how Bible OL is now taken from a Lutheran church in Madagascar, developed at a Lutheran college in Scandinavia and now taken to another vibrant Lutheran church in Africa. To serve the Word! It is encouraging to see so many partners from the US and Scandinavia join in to promote Biblical studies and Christian education.

Bible OL drives immersion into the Hebrew Bible



Video from presentation at SBL

Biblical Hebrew has never been more effective and enjoyable!

My Biblical Hebrew has been developed for a course at FIUC-DK in Copenhagen from August 15 to December 10 2018. The results and feedback is excellent, and it will guide the next phase of development. The course will be introduced and improved in Ethiopia in February-April, and then developed further for blended and online learning for the next Copenhagen classroom in the Fall of 2019.

