

There was great rejoicing throughout Moruland as the people received the very first complete Bible in the Moru language. The story of how the Moru received the Bible in their own language is an inspiring example of dedication and sacrifice.

A Matter of Life and Death

Dr. Kenneth Fraser, the pioneer missionary to the Moru people, translated the Gospels and Acts into the Moru language before his death in 1935. Canon Ezra Lawiri, once a principal of the Bishop Gwynne College, completed the translation of the whole Bible into Moru just before his death in 1991. While fleeing the fighting, Canon Ezra was fatally wounded in an attack near Rokon in 1991. As he lay dying, Canon Ezra entrusted the completed manuscripts of the Bible translation to Archdeacon (now Bishop) Bullen Dollie: *"My ministry is complete!"* he declared. In the words of the Apostle Paul, Canon Ezra could rejoice:

"I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the Faith." 2 Timothy 4:7

Canon Ezra's final words were concerned with having the Bible published in the Moru language. Clearly the Word of God is a matter of life and death.

God's Word is *"eternal"* (Psalm 119:89); *"the grass withers and the flowers fall, but the Word of our God stands forever"* Isaiah 40:8.

The Bible is a lamp to our feet and a light to our path (Psalm 119:105); it is *"sharper than any double edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow, it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart"*

(Hebrews 4:12). It is like a fire that burns within our heart, it is like a hammer that breaks the rocks in pieces (Jeremiah 23:29).

"It is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes"

Romans 1:16. It is the Truth (John 17:17) that sets us free (John 8:32). It is sweeter than honey (Psalm 119:103) and more precious than gold or silver (Psalm 119:72). It is

"radiant, giving light to the eyes"

and

"joy to the heart"

Psalm 19:8.

Throughout the ages some men have so hated, or feared, the Word of God that they were willing to kill – to destroy the Bible. (To this day the Bible is forbidden by the National Islamic Front government to be transported into Southern Sudan.) And others have so loved the Word of God that they have been willing to give their lives for the Bible.



Carrying the new Moru Bibles across the Nile in England We have the Bible in English today because of the sacrifices of the Bible in the

"In Our Own Tongue"

As we distributed boxes of Moru Bibles in the church surrounded by bomb craters, we were reminded of



Moru Chis, it had taken 30 years since the first complete Bible in the Yoruba language but initially there was no-one who could read it. As I heard this, I had a revelation: **This is the greatest gift anyone could ever receive: the Word of God in our own language.**