

Report of Words of Hope

Words of Hope believes that all people in all places should have access to God's Word. With Words of Hope, people are connected daily to the truths of Scripture so that they can grow in faith and share it worldwide.

Words of Hope works to share the good news in all ways possible in order to provide access to Scripture in heart languages, remote locations, and a variety of media types. Where poverty, geography, or persecution hinder the spread of the gospel, Words of Hope partners with indigenous Christian leaders to equip them to more effectively minister in their own language and context, among their own people.

Words of Hope's regions of ministry include Albania, Bhutan, India, Indonesia, Iran, Nepal, Niger, North America, South Sudan, Turkey, and Uganda. Each ministry field requires its own unique media outreach approach. Depending on the variety of resources and challenges in a given region, an assortment of radio programs, text messages, social media, print materials, and satellite television is used to proclaim the gospel.

Some notable highlights from Words of Hope's ministry in the past year include an increased focus on daily devotional distribution in North America, gratitude for God's providence that sustained and grew outreach efforts in the midst of the pandemic, and an exciting new partnership with Western Theological Seminary.

As the COVID-19 pandemic swept the world, many were forced to shelter in place in their homes. Worshiping in person became rare. People who had already lived in isolation became lonelier still as visiting rights were rescinded for prisons and nursing homes. It was during this time that Words of Hope's daily devotional booklet became even more critical as a point of connection. Chaplains were able to use the resource to encourage those in their care, and for this we are very thankful!

In the past year, we also expanded the devotional into some new formats. Words of Hope devotional series are now available on YouVersion's Bible app. To date, nearly 250,000 people have completed Words of Hope reading plans in the Bible app. Our daily devotional will also be featured on radio stations soon. The daily texts are being adapted into short, encouraging radio segments that will be available for stations to pick up.

God's provision has been evident in sustaining and growing Words of Hope during the COVID-19 pandemic. This provision was felt not only in North America, but specifically in Uganda as well. In 2019, the Ugandan ministry team had a vision for using video and computer equipment to livestream worship services and teaching programs on social media. Donors responded to the vision, and the equipment was purchased and sent.

As COVID-19 began threatening lives and livelihoods in Uganda, the president of the country made the decision to shut everything down, asking residents to stay at home and social distance. But he also asked the archbishop of the country, Stephen Kaziimba, to produce a series of daily video devotionals to encourage Ugandans while they were forced to stay home. Through the Lord's provision and Stephen's connection to Words of Hope as the chairperson of the in-country board, all of the recording equipment was already in place to make livestreaming of these daily meditations accessible for Christians across Uganda.

Viewers of the programs were so impressed by the quality that the national Ugandan television stations picked up the livestreams as well! Words of Hope messages from the archbishop and from director Titus Baraka were viewed by hundreds of thousands of people across the country daily!

Looking to the future, Words of Hope's board of directors launched a three-year capital campaign in the spring of 2020. This campaign is called Vision of Hope and has a goal of raising \$1.5 million in new and increased giving for special projects that will a) expand our follow-up capacity so that we can respond to the unprecedented interest in the gospel that our teams are experiencing, b) refresh our 55-year-old office building in Grand Rapids, Michigan, and c) upgrade technology across all of our ministry fields.

One of the expanded projects that is part of the Vision of Hope campaign is a partnership with Western Theological Seminary. We will be working together to produce a seminary-level distance learning program for Christians in Iran who are leading secret house churches. We invite your prayers for this new venture.

Words of Hope is deeply grateful for the support of RCA churches that continues to sustain this outreach ministry. In 2020, contributions from RCA congregations totaled \$428,267. We celebrate this generosity, knowing that these dollars are allowing people to be introduced to Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. Thank you for sharing hope worldwide as we work together to proclaim the good news in all ways possible.