

Wycliffe Bible Translators, Inc.
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Peter (Pete) and Carole Unseth

Mr. Peter Unseth

I was born to missionary parents in Japan. My parents, for a number of reasons, permanently returned to the USA where my father served as a pastor. As I grew up, he served rural congregations in Michigan and Iowa.

My father is a Lutheran pastor, preaching the gospel. Fed up with increasing liberal theology and practices, in 1975 he left the American Lutheran Church and joined a more fundamental group, the Assoc. of Free Lutheran Congregations. My long-suffering mother has been the ideal pastor's wife, though busy raising 6 of us sons. My whole family is still living, all following the Lord, including one brother who is a pastor, two in Christian publishing.

Though I sat under the preaching of the gospel for years, I didn't believe Christianity was for me until my father took me to a Navigator retreat, where I met other high schoolers who were Christians. I was shocked, but enjoyed them very much. At a later retreat, organized by my father and another pastor, I came to know the Lord as Savior. These summer retreats and ensuing Bible studies led to a strong desire to serve Jesus to the maximum I was able. When a former missionary preached on Isaiah 6:6, "whom shall I send and who will go for us?", I decided that was what God wanted: me! As I investigated opportunities in missions, I realized my background, my desires and my abilities all kept pointing in the same direction. A summer of service with North American Indian Mission confirmed this. I'm not aware of ever claiming it as my life verse, but the Scripture that sums up my purposes is II Tim. 3:16,17: "All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work." This strong emphasis on Scripture is one reason why I chose a mission whose goal is Scripture translation. No church can ever thrive without access to Scripture since this is the basis for all areas of authority and the surest revelation of God's will to all men.

I completed a 1-year program at Bethany Fellowship Missionary Training Center, Minneapolis, MN. I received a diploma in Foreign Missions in 1977, from Moody Bible Institute, Chicago, IL. I received a BA in Missiology in 1978, from St. Paul Bible College, Bible College, MN. I received an MA in Linguistics, in 1981, from the Univ. of North Dakota, Grand Forks, ND. The degree in linguistics incorporates work done under Wycliffe's academic counterpart, The Summer Institute of Linguistics, at both the University of North Dakota and the University of Texas, Arlington.

I spent a summer, 1975, serving with North American Indian Mission on a Canadian Indian reservation. This involved Bible studies and visitation. Other service activities have included visitation and services in nursing homes on a weekly basis, teaching a released time class, outreach into a juvenile detention center, teaching DVBS, acting as choir chaplain and substituting in Sunday School.

Mrs. Carole Unseth

I was born in Carlisle, PA, and have lived in New Kingston, Williamsport, and Berwick, PA, since then. My father was a pastor in the United Methodist Church (formerly Evangelical United Brethren). He recently went home to be with the Lord. My mother died when I was young but my father remarried a wonderful lady. They started "Ministry to Missionaries" which provides spiritual and material services for missionaries. I have 3 brothers, all of whom love the Lord. Being raised in a Christian home, I've felt like I've known the Lord my whole life. When I was 5 however, I did realize that I didn't love God the way I knew I should and my mother led me to the Lord one night after church. Training in the home, plus Campus Crusade's seminars showed me the necessity of depending on the Holy Spirit and God's Word each day in order to grow in my Christian life. My life verse is Phil. 4:13, "I can do all things through Him who strengthens me." The whole chapter means a lot to me. While at Moody Bible Institute during Missions Conference, I was exposed to Wycliffe and was impressed with their Bible basis. In 1977 to 1978, I was a short-term missionary to the Philippines and a member of COD's missionary family. My time in the Philippines helped show me that God has given language ability to me and that He wants me to help give His Word to those who have never heard.

I attended Moody Bible Institute and received a diploma in Communications, 1974-77. I also received a BA in Journalism from Dallas Baptist College. I attended the University of Texas at Arlington in conjunction with the Summer Institute of Linguistics. I spent one and a half years with Wycliffe as a short-term assistant in the Philippines working in their Publicity Office. I was also involved in a Navigator's Bible study and evangelism program at Moody. I also learned to lead Bible studies, teach Sunday School, and Vacation Bible School.

After completing Wycliffe's Wilderness Training Program, we arrived in East Africa the Fall of '82. Our first term (3 1/2 years) was spent in Amharic language learning, Carole helping with computer printing programs for Scripture materials here, and Pete doing language survey work to help determine further translation needs. We also made initial contact with the Majang people (where there is a growing, although largely untaught church) and Pete started analyzing the language in preparation for Bible translation. Quite a bit of time was also devoted to University teaching, which is how we got our permission to be here in the country.

We have 2 children, Rachel who was born in Ethiopia, and Daniel who was born in the States during our May '86-May '87 furlough.

Our second term (2 1/2 years) we made good progress analyzing the Majang language and were able to live for 3 months out in a Majang village. That was a profitable time of speaking the language as well as building relationships and learning more about how the Majang church functions. Pete also served on the East Africa Group administrative committee which helps formulate policy.

During our third term (starting January 1990), after a revolution in the country and many other delays, we were finally able to move out to the Majang area in southwestern Ethiopia. It was good to be able to facilitate a literacy program including the production of 4 booklets (2 scripture portions), a teacher training program, and having those teachers teach about 500 Majang people to read.

Our main goal was to build up the struggling Majang church by encouraging growth (through pointing them to the Word) with Majang church elders and by providing Scripture and literacy materials in the Majang language.

After a year's furlough (summer '93-summer '94) we returned to the Majang area. Around November Pete began to get sick, and after 6 months with no diagnosis, a mission doctor said we should return to the States. There is still no diagnosis although many things have been eliminated.

In July of 1996, we moved to Dallas, TX to teach at Wycliffe's training program for new missionaries. Pete taught a course on how to do literacy work so that the translated Scriptures are read and used, and Carole worked in the school's library doing Interlibrary Loan and checking in the many technical journals relating to Bible translation, linguistics and literacy. We especially enjoy a Bible study we have with students.

In the Spring of 1999, Pete began a PhD program in linguistics at a university near where we live. Wycliffe has been encouraging him to do this for some time, and since a very good scholarship was available and other things fell into place, it seemed like the right time to start. This will be his full time assignment with Wycliffe until completion in 2002. His stamina is quite limited and he still has occasional times of feeling ill, but he has learned to pace himself well and the Lord is giving strength. Carole continues to enjoy her work in the library and we both enjoy the student Bible study in our home.

Where currently serving: Dallas, TX

Date of present assignment: July 1996

Date of next scheduled furlough:

Date of COD's beginning support: October 1982

Birthdates: Peter August 23, 1955

Carole February 8, 1956

Rachel June 6, 1984

Daniel September 7, 1986

Wedding Anniversary: August 2, 1980

Hobbies: Pete – reading, historical linguistics, ancient voyages, writing
Carole – reading, baking, watching football, walking
February 2001