ORDINARY MADE EXTRAORDINARY

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I am basically an ordinary sort of bloke â€“ middle aged, bald, slightly tubby, increasingly prone to aches and pains. You wouldnâ€™t think twice if you saw me in the street. You probably wouldnâ€™t even notice me. Iâ€™m just a face inÂ the crowd.

But you know what? I am really special, a truly extraordinary person. Let me tell you about it. God loves me, he has forgiven me and he has drawn me into his family. Godâ€™s Spirit lives in me and I am a joint heir with Jesus Christ. One day this lad from a council house in Sunderland will rule over a new heaven and a new earth with Jesus Christ.

This sounds ridiculous, but Iâ€™m certain itâ€™s true because the Bible tells me that it is. But the Bible doesnâ€™t just tell me about my amazing destiny; it is Godâ€™s power, through the message of the Bible, that turned my life around in the first place. Without the Bible, Iâ€™d just be ordinary.

The Bible is an extraordinary book. It tells the story of how God can change peopleâ€™s lives from death to life, from dark to light. But it doesnâ€™t just stop there: as people read the Bible they are drawn into the story and find their lives being completely transformed. They find themselves heading for an altogether different destiny, just like I did. And this is why we want to translate the Bible. We donâ€™t just want people to have access to an amazing work of literature, one of the great cultural artifacts of all time. Itâ€™s not simply so that people can read a fascinating story. No, we want people to experience the transforming power of Godâ€™s word for themselves. We want them to hear what God is saying to them and for them to know God at work in their lives and in their own context.

Having a Bible and being able to read it is an awesome privilege. Itâ€™s a great read, with all sorts of fascinating twists and turns and sub-plots. But the most wonderful thing about the Bible is that God, by his Spirit, uses the Bible to mould our lives, to shape us into the people he wants us to be. He has taken this lad from Sunderland and over time is transforming me into someone who will be fit to rule the world with him. And he is doing the same for people all across the globe.

But there are still millions of people around the world for whom the Bible is a closed book because they simply canâ€™t read it in a language they understand. It is our responsibility â€“ part of the shaping and moulding that God carries out in our lives â€“ to help bring the Bible to them. There is one thing that is an even greater privilege than having God at work in our lives through his word, and that is being a part of making that transforming wordÂ available to others.

This is an article I wrote for the lates edition of the Wycliffe Magazine, Words for Life. You can download it as a pdf here. Why not subscribe on a regular basis?