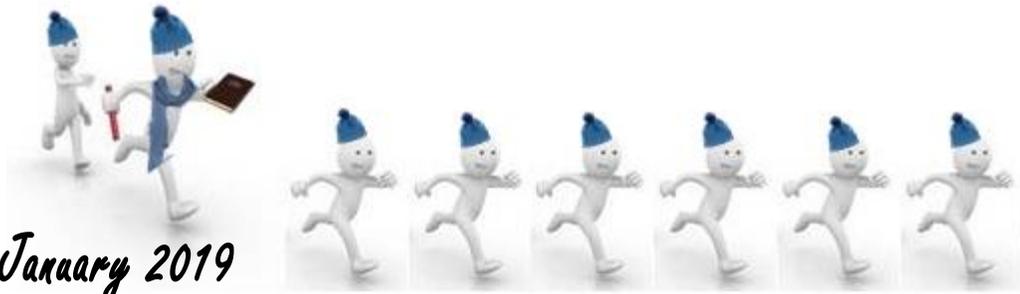


# Grossman Prayer Letters

January 2019



THE RELAY

When I share the good news that the New Testament is soon to be available in the heart-language of the Gola, people often suggest to me that Revelation must be a hard book to **translate**. This is a good observation as Revelation is a difficult book to **interpret** because of its style of writing. It is what theologians refer to as apocalyptic literature meaning many of the words and scenes are symbolic of something else. However, it is not as daunting as it might seem to translate because it is a pretty straightforward description of what John saw in his vision. As translators, we have to relay the vision and not necessarily all the interpretation.

Several things did challenge us though. One thing that was hardest in the Gola and Bandi languages was the fractions. Other than “one-half”, fractions have to be described as dividing the whole into the number of parts and taking one of them. So, for  $1/3$  of the world they had to say “Divide the world into three pieces and take one” with adjustments for context. We needed to retain the numbers because numbers often have special meaning in apocalyptic literature.

The other difficult thing is translating all the names of the precious stones. Every precious stone in Gola is called “diamond”. It is similar to what we do with “facial tissue” when we call all of them no matter who makes them “Kleenex.” Translating all the stones as diamond, of course, wouldn’t make sense. The text would lose meaning and probably would be awkward in structure. One choice a translator can make is to borrow a term. However, in this case, with lists of foreign words for all these stones, the translation might just get too confusing and offer little meaning. (You know how most

of us avoid the chapters with all the hard names to pronounce.) The other choice we had was to try to get at some of what John may have seen in the vision as he was naming the stones, and that is all the color. The Gola translators decided to put the focus on color and distinguish the various stones based on the color without adding a foreign name. Try enhancing your own understanding of this text by closing your eyes and visualizing the spectacular colors John must have been experiencing.

By the time you receive this letter, we hope that the Gola New Testament has reached the typesetters and is underway to become a printed book. We finished all the final checks last year. The translators were completing the finer details in December. This is a rather tedious stage of the translation work and it can be difficult to be patient as setbacks can still happen at this stage, but it would be great to check over this typeset copy when I am in Liberia in March so it can be forwarded on to the printer.

Now for examination of an English word—**“furlough.”** The dictionary definition refers to a time of leave for military personnel, a temporary leave from a place of employment, or a temporary leave given to a prisoner. The meaning in the context of my role as a missionary is quite different as I certainly don’t view my service as a battlefield or a constraining cell, nor am I leaving LBT--not when there are still people waiting for their chance to hear God speaking to their heart—nor am I getting a vacation. A helpful article on this topic can be found at <http://ministry127.com/missions/the-purpose-of-missionary-furloughs>.

Technical definitions aside, I am to take a furlough this year. I have not done this in the six years I have been back with LBT despite policy statements requiring I do it every three years. It might seem odd that I who spend the majority of my time in my home country would need a furlough. However, there are some good reasons to do so.

1. Take time to meet with home office staff and catch up with latest staff and latest policy.
2. Take time to evaluate my mental, spiritual and physical health.
3. Take time to catch up with you as much as possible.

**This latter reason requires your help.** I want to come and share about my ministry with your small group or congregation. During this time, I also want to increase my prayer and financial partners to meet current ministry needs. (My budget is actually less this year than in previous years; however, some of my financial partners have had to reduce or stop contributions or perhaps they are now residing in their heavenly home. In reality, quite a number have gone there in the last several years!)

Please talk with your pastor or group leaders and see if there is a time I might come. Keep in mind that I have partners stretched out from Washington to Massachusetts and North Dakota to Texas. I may not be able to visit everybody in person, but we can find other creative means such as Skype if necessary. For those further from Michigan, I may need to coordinate several events to make the most of the travel expenses. Maybe you are willing to do some event arranging in your area. Or, maybe you can gather several congregations or mission-minded friends in one place.

**If you desire such a visit,** please select several dates starting in April through December and send them to me via the email address below as soon as possible. Consider weekday events as they may be easier for me to include on the visitation calendar and also help fill in

the time especially when I am making a long-distance trip. I will do my best to coordinate these dates into a schedule that is manageable and let you know if your request is feasible. As I receive requests, I will start to develop a schedule of the general geographic area I hope to be in at a particular time. Hopefully, I will have enough requests to include this information in my March newsletter and e-mail. I will try to keep the calendar flexible, so I can visit as many of you as possible. While more advanced notice and planning is desirable, I encourage you to contact me even at the last minute if a sudden opportunity appears.

If you are already partnering with me, I hope you realize the valuable gift you are giving to a thirsting people and will continue to include my work in your prayers and financial commitments. I would love to hear from you, so I can personally share with you the impact of that commitment and include you in the funding program for continuing to spread God's Word. On behalf of each waiting language group, I also ask you to prayerfully consider if you might be able to increase your gift at this time. Always remember that any gift of partnering with me is not too small and is much appreciated, be it prayer, financial support or introduction to new friends seeking to share Christ.

**W**hen your "heart is attached" to something forms an interesting idiom in Gola that means "hope". This same idiom can also be used for "assurance" or "guarantee". So, how does this affect our thinking when we read in Ephesians 1:14 and 4:30 where the Spirit is given as the guarantee of the freedom God promises those who are his? Hope is a very sure thing and not just a wish for the Gola people. Our hope in God's promises is also a sure thing.

May we attach our hearts to this hope and guarantee in this new year.

*Becky*

**Praise:** For completion of the Gola New Testament My Doctor of Ministry studies are complete, and I have passed the requirements for graduation in May.

**Pray:** For swift typesetting of the Gola New Testament.  
For my speaking schedule to come together.  
For open hearts to join this Amazing Relay.



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