



FORMELLA 411

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Long tɛm! (ɛ, sounds like the 'e' in 'red')



**Lutheran Bible
Translators**

That is what people say in Krio when it has been a while since they have seen you or talked to you. So, I shall say, “Long tɛm!”, and also, “Sorry!” since it has been a while since I have written to you about my life and work with Lutheran Bible Translators and the Mende Bible translation Project. That is why the format is more simple for this newsletter; I figure it is better to communicate now than to keep delaying in favor of being more fancy :D

Since the last newsletter, a lot of things have developed or changed. Through the end of 2020, the translation proceeded as it had before. I met with the translation team virtually for a few hours a couple times a week (5 or 6 am in Wisconsin and 11am in Sierra Leone). We finished team checking Isaiah and 1st & 2nd Chronicles. In November, I was able to take an online three-week intensive course through a school in Jerusalem on the Book of Proverbs. This class allowed me to practice and improve my Hebrew and learn about different cultural, agricultural, environmental, and historical aspects of Israel that help give a better understanding of Proverbs and the Bible as a whole. During this time, I also applied for the Master of Arts in New Testament program at Biola University. I have been looking for some time for a fully online program that focused on either Greek or Hebrew and the New or Old Testament. Praise God, I was accepted into the program, which allows me to study regardless of the country I am in. I also received my advanced red belt at my martial arts school, which means I am one step (but over a year) away from being able to test for my black belt. A dream I had as a kid getting closer and closer to reality!

Now that you are caught up through the end of the year, here is the big news of 2021: I have returned to Sierra Leone safely! Last year I spent a lot of time going back and forth on whether I should go back to Sierra Leone while the pandemic continues and deciding IF I go back WHEN I should go. To say my mind went in circles is, indeed, an understatement. Ultimately, I decided to return after the holidays, so I left for Sierra Leone on January 11th and arrived on the 12th. Since so many plans for people around the world have been quickly changed, I wasn't sure the best time to say, “I am going back!”, and I waited so long that I now have to say, “I'm back!” Thank you for your understanding of my belated communications.

Because Sierra Leone required a negative PCR Covid-19 test within 7 days of travel, I had already taken one test when I learned I would need a test within 3 days of transiting through France. Because of this new information (which thankfully came before the three hour drive to Chicago), I took another PCR test at a site that said results usually came back in 2 days. While I was finishing that test my mom called to direct me to a place that had antigen tests with results within 15 minutes. Thankfully antigen tests were accepted for transiting through Paris, because the second PCR test arrived while I was already on the plane there!

When I arrived in Sierra Leone, we had to fill out a few forms, go through immigration where they kept our passports (there had already been official communication from the government, so I wasn't surprised to pass it over). Then we collected our bags and signed-in to receive two more Covid tests. One was a rapid test, so if it was positive they could keep you quarantined at a local hotel, and the other was a PCR test, so they had more accurate results whether your original results were positive or negative. Upon receiving confirmation of your positive PCR test a few days later, you could then go collect your passport from the capital. Fortunately, another missionary who lives near Bo was able to pick up my passport for me (I think I owe her pizza or cookies for waiting for so long). This allowed me to go right from the airport to Bo after staying for one night. Thankfully, my friend Bethany had checked on my house and Kiddo the dog to make sure everything was working and called the apartment manager if anything needed fixing. This made my first few days home so much easier!

After one week of unpacking, cleaning, and recovering from jet lag, I returned to the translation office! Working from home was not my best skill, but now that I am in the office again working with the translators in person I am already working better. I thank God for the opportunity to work from home while in the US, connecting with the translators virtually, but I am happy now to have an office to go to where I can shift my mind from home to work. I suppose that is why I am finally writing to you even when I have more things to do with school and work. We are currently working on proofreading Lamentations, so it is ready for the reviewers to read through, and then we will begin team checking Jeremiah. Jeremiah, and then Ezekiel, will take some time and energy because of their length and their poetic way of prophesying. Thank God for translators who take on the task of translating poetry; I am thankful for the being an advisor without the challenge of actual translating.

At this time, I am also beginning to assist another local language translation project, called Themne, located in the city of Makeni, three and half hours away. My colleagues, who were with the team full time, are now located in the United States, so I will just visit the Makeni office for short trips for any questions or challenges they have, as well as to sit in on a few team checking sessions.

Please pray for health and safety, wisdom and perseverance in the translation work, and diligence for my schoolwork.

I am so grateful for all of you as you continue to prayer, support, and encourage me through this important work. Thank you!

In Christ,

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