



Lutheran Bible Translators

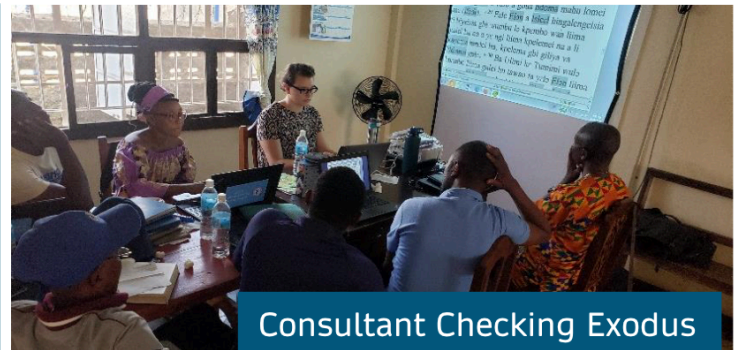
Formella 411

Sierra Leone West Africa
Mende & Themne

Volume 7 Issue 1

Quick Update

I must once again beg your forgiveness, as well as praise your understanding and patience, since it has been so long since my last newsletter. I am continuing to work on my balance between my different responsibilities as a student, translation advisor, and adult. I am so grateful for your prayers and encouragement as I continue to work in Sierra Leone with the Mende and Themne translation projects, continue my New Testament studies for my masters (lots of Greek homework!), and keep up with reports and correspondences with all of you (well try to at least). I always appreciate you and thank God for you, even if I am always delayed in writing to you. Since there is a lot to update you all on, the next few letters will have a focus on one particular part of my ministry and life, starting with the Mende project...



Consultant Checking Exodus



Women of Bible Translation



Mende Translators & Visiting Staff

Since I joined the translation project, while the translators still had some drafting to do, the main focus was on team checking, as well as reviewing and consultant checking a few times a year. This year we are heavily focused in all four stages of the translation work (drafting, team checking, reviewing, and consultant checking). Please pray for good health and safety for the team and their families.

Drafting: Since the Old Testament is in its final stages (still a couple years of work left), it was decided that it was time to begin drafting the New Testament. Some of you maybe remember that there is a 1959 edition of the Bible in Mende, as well as a 2002 New Testament. So why do we need another edition of the New Testament? One reason is consistency. Our current project uses the New Revised Standard Version (similar to the ESV) as our based text, and the 2002 New Testament used the Good News Translation as its base text. In order for the Old Testament and New Testament to have a similar style and translation choices, we need to continue on with the New Testament. Other reasons include adapting the text more fully to Mende orthography (using only letters found in the Mende alphabet) and vocabulary (using less borrowed words when possible) all in an effort to make the Mende Bible as

natural, accurate, and clear as possible for Mende speakers throughout Sierra Leone. Before any work was started, we had three days of training for understanding the New Testament historical and cultural context, for seeing how we got the New Testament we have today, and for translating Philemon together. The translators have all begun drafting their first New Testament books (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and 1&2 Timothy). Please pray for them as they not only make every effort to find the right words, but also keep in mind all the various details (spelling, consistency, punctuation, capitalization, translating for the Mende context without abandoning the original context, etc.). Please pray for them in this work that they may be led by the Holy Spirit in wisdom and patience.

Team Checking: Since all of the Old Testament is team checked, this year we will be focusing on team checking the Deuterocanonical (DC) books for the Catholic edition of the Bible. There is a fairly large number of Roman Catholics in the Mende speaking Christian community, so we are including the apocryphal books that are a part of their canon. Making this edition available will allow the translation to be more acceptable and accessible to a wider community of Mende speakers. While not in the protestant canon, Martin Luther assures us that “These are books that, though not esteemed like the Holy Scriptures, are still both useful and good to read.” They help us understand the culture and religious shift between the Old Testament and the New Testament, as well as record significant historical events, such as the events leading to the celebration of Hanukkah. Pray for us as we check these books together, for fruitful discussions leading to natural and clear translations.

Review: The reviewers will also be focusing on the Deuterocanonical books this year (in addition to a few remaining Old Testament books). To do this, we invite about ten to twelve Mende speakers and readers to go over portions of the book in small groups. They then come together to discuss the suggested changes. This process encourages reading the translations out loud (very important for not just well written translations, but ones that are ‘sweet’ to listen to), discussions for more natural translations, and active engagement from Mende speakers throughout the region. Last year I presented some of the important historical, cultural and other information about the DC books, so those who were not familiar with them would have the background to help them this year in their review. Pray for the reviewers, that they may read the books diligently and be encouragers of the work.

Consultant Checking: Does it sound like there is too much work to do already? Well, to add to the first three stages of work, we will also be reviewing Old Testament books with the translation consultant about one week a month. Usually, we only work with the consultant one or two weeks a year. This means that not only do we have twelve weeks out of the year set aside for the consultant, but we also need to check the books before we meet with her. Many of these books were team checked and reviewed years ago, so we need to update spellings and word choices. We have all learned a lot over the years, so we are more equipped for better translations, so we also spend time as a team focusing on greater accuracy and more natural sentence structure. For this stage, please pray for wisdom and perseverance!

Correspondence

Lutheran Bible Translators
PO Box 789 Concordia, MO 64020-0789
Phone: 660-225-0810

Contact

Amy.formella@lbt.org
Facebook: Formella 411
Phone: (920)288-2289 (texts only)