



Lutheran Bible Translators

# The Relay

Grossmann Prayer Letter



September  
2022

## All in a day's work

My recent trip to Liberia found me up in Nimba county for the full three-week stay since I didn't need to take a COVID test before I could fly out. The Maan team needs to finish their work by 2024 and since we have quite a lot of checking yet to do, I decided to stay with them for two weeks of checking. The Dan team is only about 10 miles away, so I spent one week with them.



*Regina and Kwideh heating bath water*

In the Dan area, I stay with the family of one of the translators. I am given their bedroom which has a bathroom included. In the Maan area, I have been staying in a house near Mary Donkeh's house. Again, I am given the master bedroom with the bathroom. Mary Karnkeh, Leona and Regina along with Kwideh (literally means "white woman") took care of my housing, bathing and dining needs.

My day begins around 6:30 when bath water heated on the open fire outside is brought to me. The warm water, sometimes too-hot water, is poured in my bath bucket. There is usually a plastic barrel in the bathroom filled with cool water that I can use to temper the bath water or flush the toilet. I save the bath water as well to flush the toilet as there is no running water to flush.

Breakfast consists of a variety of foods: perhaps a banana, fried plantains, plantain gravy, spaghetti noodles and yams with tomato sauce, cream of wheat and maybe tea or Ovaltine. Ovaltine is common in Europe. It is a hot cocoa mix.

We start checking by meeting on the front porch as soon as everybody arrives. We may hook into the local power or the solar power depending on what is available. I was very thankful the local power was working in both locations this trip. It is being brought in from Ivory Coast and proved very reliable for my entire stay. It was great to keep everything fully charged and have lights whenever needed.

While working with the Dan team, a church conference was being held next door. A foot path passes directly by the porch where we work. Everybody has to greet and respond. So much greeting was going on that even one of the translators was ready to pack up and work somewhere else. Other competition for our attention might be a sawmill across the street or the auto mechanic shop with noisy machinery. Sometimes other visitors might stop in to see how we are doing.

While we check the passages, one person reads the text while everyone else listens. I follow along with a rough translation put back in English looking for any missing information, confusing content, or improper format. We discuss and revise as necessary.

During the day, Doris Yentee might bring us some fruit to snack on. Or the donut lady might come by while we are working. Remember the proverb from July? "It is difficult to fell a tree when you have peanuts in your pocket." This is the occasion. It's hard to type on the computer with donuts in our hands. At noon, we break for a lunch of rice and a tasty sauce of greens and fish, or palm butter and fish, or bitterballs and fish. Sometimes there will be chicken, a chicken foot, or pigs' feet. The Dan people also prepare gibi out of cassava. Gibi is starchy, formed into a ball, and eaten by pulling off a piece with our fingers and dipping it in sauce.

Normally, we work until about 4, but this time the Dan team really wanted to finish the book of Job, so we often stayed until 8. With such reliable electricity we were able to do this. It gets dark around 6:30. The Maan team prefers to stop about 4 or 5. Then I take a walk around the neighborhood to stretch my legs after a long day of sitting. I am greeted often by the children, "White woman, white woman." Some will bring the small children up to me to make them cry because they tell them something scary about white people. I don't appreciate this, but the children think it is funny.



*Rev. Amos enjoying gibi.*



*Mary reading her Maan NT.*

On my trips around town, I saw someone making coal by burying wood and lighting it. It burns for a couple days, and the result is coal. Others are working in their gardens or playing football (soccer) at the local field. Somedays I visit a local street vendor, Agnes, to buy some bananas. Regina's grandfather is a traditional herbalist specializing in broken bones. He put Regina and Kwideh to work preparing the herbs. He used to be a member of the local secret society. Now he is a Christian, and a faithful member of the translation committee. He speaks out against the teachings of the society, but still uses the wisdom of traditional herbs to minister to people in need of healing.



Stacking and burning wood to make coal.

My evenings are spent with a visit with my host family, my evening bath, and some more rice and sauce. I often work ahead for the next day to save us time. I will check spelling



Some of our visitors brought us a chicken.



Regina and Kwideh pounding herbs.

and formatting and look for areas to flag that need attention. I may read a book or call to greet other friends. On Sundays I attend the church where one of the translators belongs. A special service was held on account of the conference. The youth came in and gave recitations from their week of learning. These could go on for five or more minutes with the whole group reciting their lessons and Bible verses in unison. It was impressive. There were skits based on the Good Samaritan and other biblical passages. Special choirs sang; special offerings were taken, some for the translation effort. Liberians take their conferences seriously. Several are held throughout the year. On both Sundays, someone read from the Dan or Maan scriptures.

While the days were intense, the time was very productive as we completed several lengthy books: Job in Dan, Luke in Maan, and chapters 1-48 in Isaiah. We get extra credit for Isaiah. Some verses are worth three. We also got Charles and Mary set up to produce a Maan dictionary.

The only downside to this trip was bad weather in New Jersey making my return trip a 60-hour marathon. However, I arrived home safely, luggage followed two days later, and I am pretty well rested as I write. Thank you for your marathon of prayers especially when I travel.

In Christ,

*Becky*

## PRAYER REQUESTS

- Pray that we will be able to make the 2024 completion deadline for both the Dan and Maan Bibles.
- Pray for online checking this month and in-person checking to go smoothly in November with the other consultant.
- Pray that the Bandi team will form a diverse and active review team up in Lofa county and that people will be serious about learning to read.
- Praise for working computers, consistent power, and great progress.

## CONTACT

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*Becky is YOUR HEART IN ACTION. She serves you as a consultant for translation teams in Liberia, West Africa by using your prayers and support to fulfill your desire to "PUT GOD'S WORD IN THEIR HANDS." Becky rejoices that she is part of your Lutheran Bible Translators team and values this special relationship.*



Remember **Bible translation Sunday** is September 25. Celebrate any Sunday.

Lutheran Bible Translators has created an event toolkit that equips you with simple, effective resources that will inspire and energize your church. Celebrate your partnership in God's mission.

To get the toolkit, visit [lbt.org/bts](http://lbt.org/bts).