



Lutheran Bible  
Translators

# Formella 411

Sierra Leone West Africa - Mende & Themne

Volume 7

Issue 2

Back again with another delayed newsletter, but I won't bore you again with more apologies. In my last newsletter I told you I would be focusing on one aspect of work and life at a time to share with you. There is too much to talk about, so instead of trying to give a little bit on each area, I'm dedicating a newsletter to each to give you better information. This newsletter will be focused on the Themne Bible Translation Project.

While my main work is the still with the Mende team, I have been asked to assist with the Themne translation team. From previous communications, you may remember my Lutheran Bible Translators colleagues, Josh and Ruthie Wagner. They and their four children became like family to me as they taught me how to live in Sierra Leone, introduced me to the translation and literacy world here, and mentored me. Josh was primarily working in Scripture engagement – working with church leaders to discover ways to effectively engage people with the Scripture being translated, always thinking of new ways to use technology for people to hear God's Word. Ruthie was the translation advisor for the Themne Bible Translation Project, the same role as I am in for the Mende project. Seeing her work with our colleagues at the Bible Society of Sierra Leone, I saw her love, mentorship, intelligence, and creativity make a positive impact on the work. In early 2020 they had to leave for medical reasons, and later in the same year they realized they wouldn't be able to return. Ruthie is now assisting translation work in Tanzania remotely, and Josh is working locally in Minnesota. Please pray that they will thrive in this season and for continued healing.



*Time with the Wagners in Minnesota*

That is when I first began to work with the Themne translation team, though I was home during Covid, so it was a soft beginning. The Themne translation team consists of four part-time translators and one full-time.

They are a part of different denominations and they come from backgrounds of teaching, linguistics, pastoring, journalism, and more. When the project first started, the translation was taken from the Good News Bible, which is a more dynamic translation. It was later decided that the Revised Standard Version, a more literal English translation, was the preferred base for the translation project, so the current translators have been revising the previous Themne text to reflect the more literal base text. The translators have completed the individual revision work for the Old Testament and will likely finish team checking and community review late next year or early 2024. Like with the Mende project, it will take time for the final stage of consultant checking to be completed, since all the translation consultants work with many different projects at once. But the translators won't just be sitting around waiting for the consultant, since they will have the New Testament work to begin. Let us thank God for the Themne team and for pray for continued perseverance and wisdom in the work.



*Themne Bible Translation Team*

Since I started working with the Themne team the same time I started my Masters program, I have not had the time to language learn; also the project is based four hours from my residence in Bo, so I am not able to be a part of the team in the same way as with the Mende team. I am grateful for the opportunity to observe the dynamics of another translation team and to see the similarities and differences in the challenges and strengths they have. At this point in time, I am mostly helping the team with challenges presented by the translation software, and I travel to Makeni where the office is located for those weeks dedicated to consultant checking and community review. In the coming months I will be working with them to check the parallelism of Psalms, so that the words are not just accurate, but the poetic lines and verses connect. Pray for wisdom and clarity for me that I may assist the team in helpful ways and learn from them.

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# PUT GOD'S WORD IN THEIR HANDS

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Themne review of 1 and 2 Chronicles.



Themne translation team.

## PRAYER REQUESTS

- Thank God for the work that the Wagners did in Sierra Leone and their influence in my life. Pray that they will continue to adjust and thrive in this new season of their lives.
- Thank God for the Themne team and pray for continued perseverance and wisdom in the work.
- Pray for wisdom and clarity for me that I may assist the team in helpful ways and learn from them.

## CONTACT

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