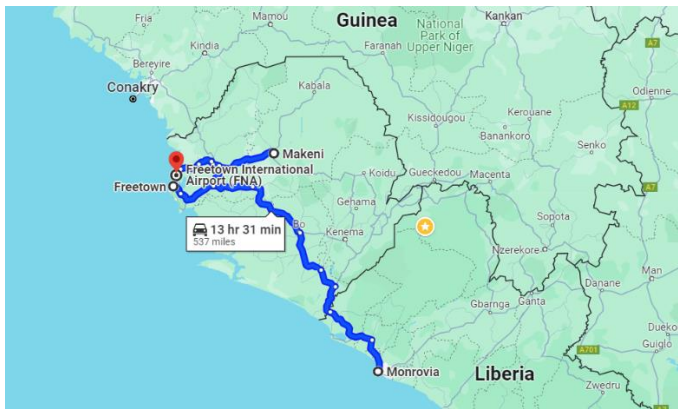




Sierra Leone

Sierra Leone as we know it today was formed by the British. Its name comes from the Lion Mountains surrounding the capital city Freetown. Sierra Leone gained independence in 1961 and formed a presidential republic in 1971. There are 18 ethnic groups with Mende and Themne being the largest. English is the official language of government and schools, but Krio is spoken by the vast majority of people. LBT started work there in the early 1970s. After spending two weeks in Liberia in January with the Maan and Dan teams checking Ezekiel, I traveled the eight or so hours to Freetown by road. This was less complicated and time-consuming than trying to get a flight. The only direct flight left at 3 a.m. LBT had been requested to find more consultant help for the current partner projects: Mende and Themne. My colleague Dr. Tim Beckendorf and I were assigned to the Themne team.



Our first few days were spent meeting the administrative staff at The Bible Society of Sierra Leone (BSSL). They are the support and logistics people for all the translation teams in Sierra Leone. In addition to Themne and Mende, they support the Limba, Loko, Kisi, Kono, Krio, Kuranko, and Sherbro projects with literacy assistance from The Institute for Sierra Leonean Languages (TISLL). Rev. David Federwitz gifted people at BSSL with special cloth to commemorate LBT's 60th anniversary. It will be made into dresses and shirts to wear in celebration.

Weather was hot this time of year going over 100 on several days. The office stayed relatively cool and we had a fan. I enjoyed air conditioning at both guest houses in Freetown and Makeni.

We stayed at the Oasis guest house in Freetown run by Gladys England who used to be with TISLL. She spontaneously shared that **when she hears God's word in Mende it speaks to her heart, and she really understands it.**

Gladys is pictured with her husband Raymond and Dr. Jim Kaiser, assigned to the Mende project. The food at the guest house was excellent with thick smoothies every morning made with fresh local fruits such as mangos, bananas, pineapples and oranges.



BSSL office has added another floor to rent out to groups hosting large gatherings or receptions to help support translation.

The Themne team is located in Makeni about four hours drive from Freetown. It boasts two universities. Several of the Themne translators are lecturers, or as we call them "professors", at these universities. Dr. Tim and I worked through Genesis 1-28 with the team. We will continue online now that we have established some good relationships. I hope to share more about the individual team members next time. The office in Makeni is on a noisy road, but this makes for good visibility. Sometimes the Krio oral recording is played for those passing by, the majority of whom are Muslim.



Tokeh beach is a beautiful white sands beach about an hour from Freetown. Before the civil war and Ebola it did a booming tourist business from Europe. Now it is very quiet. We enjoyed some seafood and a relaxing walk along the shore. These are snapper and fried plantain. We also enjoyed barracuda which is like eating a fish steak. Very tasty.



Freetown is built all over the hill sides of the Lion Mountains. We saw an interesting sight when this upholstered furniture went by on the roof of the Nissan in front of us. Looking at the far ends of the sofa, you can see the heads of two men enjoying their comfy ride!

TRANSLATION TIDBITS

In Gen 7:2 the Themne read that 7 pairs of all clean animals meaning only 14 animals total for the clean animals were put on the ark and only 2 for the unclean. So "of each kind" was added for accuracy. Something similar was added in 8:20 as well so Noah didn't end up sacrificing all the clean animals from the ark.

8:13 RSV has no reference for "601 years." Is it from creation, or the flood lasted that long? We had to clarify it was Noah's age. They thought this would be a great trick question for their Bible students.

In 21:14 the Themne translation seemed to mean Abraham put both the water and Ishmael on Hagar's shoulders. Ishmael was 12 or 13 here! They rearranged to say, he put the water on her shoulder and sent her away with the child.

STAMPS Thank you to all who saved stamps to support my ministry. At this time, we are suspending the program because it is not cost effective.

Thank you for your prayers and gifts which sustain me as I travel and sustain these projects until their completion.

Becky

PRAYER REQUESTS

- Pray for the Themne team as they balance their work load between the translation and their other obligations where they teach and minister.
- Pray that Charles' stump will tolerate the prosthesis better so he can use it all the time.
- Pray for stability in Sierra Leone following an attempted coup recently.
- Praise for the peaceful inauguration of Liberia's new president.

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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.