



At the Well



Tim and Lisa Beckendorf, LBT missionaries in Botswana

Jesus answered, "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life."

John 4:13, 14 (NIV)

Sierra Leone

In January I (Tim) was privileged to travel to Sierra Leone, West Africa, where I met with the General Secretary of the Bible Society of Sierra Leone and her staff, the United Bible Society consultant who works in the country, and a few others. Three of us LBT consultants, Jim Kaiser, Becky Grossmann, and I, had been invited to help out with consulting work on two LBT projects. The projects are eagerly waiting for a consultant to work with them as all the other stages of the translation are completed, but there are few consultants and they are in great demand. Our meetings with the staff at the Bible Society really helped me understand the context and needs there, and how we can fit in. Dr. Grossmann and I have been assigned to work with the Themne project, which is a very large language group with many highly educated people. LBT has been working with the Themne people for many years and they have a completed New Testament; the Old Testament is in progress.



Tim working with a couple of the Themne translators.

After our meetings with the Bible Society, a driver took Dr. Grossmann, me, and one of the translation managers up north to the village where the Themne have their translation office. We spent a week with the translation team working through their translation of Genesis. It was an absolute pleasure

to work with the 5 translators. Even though we took longer to check the text than the translators expected, we had many great discussions about linguistics, their language, and their translation practices, and I really look forward to working with them again.



The traffic outside the Themne translation office.

Both the Bible Society office in the capital city and the translation office in the village are on busy streets where there is a lot of noise and activity. One thing that always stays with me are the sounds of a new place; in Sierra Leone it is the sound of "Top up! Top up! Top up!" over and over and over again on a megaphone. It is a recorded loop that lets people know that they can buy airtime for their phones in that spot. There were a number of other competing hawkers advertising their wares in the same way, and the translation office also added to the sounds. The office veranda overlooks the street, so one of the men pointed a Proclaimer (a portable device for playing audio Scripture) toward the street and played the Gospel of John in Krio (spoken by a majority of people in Sierra Leone). This is a real change from our situation in Botswana where we translate in relative quiet, so it took a while to get used to the constant cacophony in the background.

Please pray that our consultant work in Sierra Leone will enable the projects to move forward at a consistent pace.

Namibia

In February, Splash and I visited one of the villages in Namibia we used to often visit to get feedback on the translation project and to teach literacy classes. For various reasons we hadn't been there in a long time, so it was wonderful to catch up with their lives and update them on what is happening in the Bible translation work. They have a keen interest in having Splash visit them for an extended literacy workshop so that when their Bible is printed they already have fluency in reading. We had long discussions about the ways the Khwe communities can contribute to the project, and they had good ideas for how to find funding for literacy workshops. Hopefully their ideas will be fruitful.

We pray that literacy work in Namibia will go forward and that the Khwe there will be active participants in the project.



Splash and several of the Khwe in Namibia catching up.

Botswana

Here at home, I've had a busy couple of months repairing stuff, building things, and replacing tired and worn out equipment. After 8 years, our solar batteries were failing rapidly. So, back in December we bought new lithium batteries to replace our old lead-gel batteries. We now have 2 batteries instead of 8. Replacing the batteries was very easy, but afterwards we weren't getting the performance we had expected. I tried a number of tweaks to the charge controller, but nothing made any significant difference. I was finally able to speak to someone

I've known for a long time who works on big solar installations. He advised me to rewire our panel array so that it would double the number of volts coming in to the controller, since the new batteries could take a higher charging rate. So, Aaron and I spent one morning on the solar shed roof rewiring the panels. The roof is tin and the temps are in the hundreds every day, but it was worth the discomfort because our system charges very quickly now and gives us lots of power. We are very thankful to live in a place where we can meet all of our power needs with solar.



Aaron and Tim on the shed roof rewiring our solar panels.

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Your servants in Christ,

Tim, Lisa, Aaron, and Andrew Beckendorf