



NEW LEADERSHIP

In November 2024, Linus Otronyi **became the new Regional Director for West Africa**. He is my new boss, so I want to introduce him to all of you as part of our team working in Liberia and Sierra Leone. I met Linus a few years back and we studied for several weeks together in Israel. Linus is an ordained pastor with the Lutheran Church of Nigeria and International Associate with Lutheran Bible Translators.

Linus grew up in the rural village of Iboko, Cross River state where the late Rev Dr. Morris and Lois Watkin lived. The Watkins were the founders of Lutheran Bible Translators back in 1964. He was born about the time the New Testament in his language Yala was completed and dedicated. Being the first born in a polygamous and uneducated family made life difficult growing up. Linus grew up sleeping on a bed made of palm fronds and eating three times a day was difficult to manage. Getting through primary and secondary school was very challenging. Education is not free and often his

family could not pay the tuition fees on time. When the fees were not paid, he would spend time helping his family out on the small family farm. Even when he was attending, he often went to the farm after school hours so he could get food to eat walking an hour or more each way.

As a child, he attended church services mostly in the Lutheran church which was the only church then in the village. He never understood anything or what being a Christian meant, partly because the lay preacher was not serious about his work. This preacher would often come to church late and unprepared after returning from his farm. Also, Linus' parents and others could not exemplify their faith, if they had any.

He learned how to read in English while in secondary school and joined the school fellowship. He would help to lead school devotions. Since there were less than four people in the village who could read well, he became a popular writer and reader of letters for many families.



Linus is married to Katherine and they have two loving daughters Joanna (5 years), Joella (3 years) and a son Josiah-Jason (3 months). Here on the occasion of Josiah-Jason's baptism.

“Two things that will live forever are God’s Word and people and to be involved in translating His Word for His people is [the greatest] blessing and privilege that one can ever have.”

He started helping in the church to teach children, lead in church worship, and preach. Since ninety-nine percent of the members were non-literate members, everything was done in the mother tongue Yala. He learned how to read in Yala so that he could read from the Yala New Testament directly. **It was when he started reading the Yala NT in the church and for himself and others that he began to understand the message of the Bible and what it means to be Jesus’ follower.**

From there, Linus began to grow in his faith and found joy in life. What he was previously doing in

church, only because he was one of the few who could read, now had deeper meaning. He says, **“This is why it is important for people to be able read and hear the word of God for themselves in the language of their heart and why Bible Translation is important.”**

He studied at the Lutheran Seminary in Obot Idim, Uyo, Nigeria for pastoral training and formation. He studied at the University of Calabar, Nigeria for both his BA and MA in Applied Linguistics and is currently studying toward a PhD in Translation Studies at the Africa International University, Nairobi, Kenya.

Linus has been involved in Bible translation work since 2000 while at the seminary. He has experience in language assessment, scripture engagement, church and community mobilization, project management, training and Bible translation. He occasionally provides pastoral support for a small congregation where he lives.

Linus desires to see more people accessing and engaging in God’s word in their heart language so that they can experience the transformative power of God’s word in their lives just like he did. He says, “Two things that will live forever are God’s Word and people and to be involved in translating His Word for His people is [the greatest] blessing and privilege that one can ever have.” One of his **favorite Bible passages** is, “I thank him who has given me strength, Christ Jesus our Lord, because he judged me faithful, appointing me to his service” (1 Tim 1:12 ESV).

Serving together with Rev. Otronyi and all of you,

Becky

TRANSLATION TIDBITS

We always run across something interesting as we check various books in the various languages.

A catchy proverb in **Bandi** says: “Take it from your eye and show it to your eye.” Meaning that you observe something keenly.

Dan has borrowed the English word “church” but adds “building” to it for the building. *Sósikò* is church building, *sósi* is the church people. They never have to be confused about the fact that the church is really the people. It is not a place.

In **Maan**, they say, “We are Christ’s eyeball” in 2CO 5:20. This means we are his ambassadors. In 2CO 6:3 they translated “so that no one can put butt on our work and overlook it.” That is to say no one will find fault with it. It is a common way to refer to a defect and is used elsewhere when describing sacrificial lambs without blemish or no butt on them.

PRAYER REQUESTS

- Praise that we are nearly done checking the Maan manuscript. Only Mark and Revelation remain.
- Pray for Bandi Translator Humphrey Ndorbor who lost his wife of many years in December.
- Pray for good health and safety for all team members.
- Pray for good scheduling to complete the last books in Maan and Dan either online or in person.
- Pray as Rev. Otronyi becomes acquainted with all the people, systems, and tasks pertaining to his new role, and that he will have wisdom going forward.

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