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Lutheran Bible Translators

The Relay

Grossmann Prayer letter

May 2025

INCREASING ACCESS

Welcome to SANKOFA Farms. During my most recent trip to Liberia, I visited my friend Nyamah's farm. People in Liberia have farmed for centuries using slash and burn methods along with a lot of hard work. However, with shifting populations, changes from the civil war, Ebola, and outside influences, not as many people farm to sustain themselves. People no longer survive on what is produced in country. Many staples such as rice are now imported. Nyamah is one of the people and agencies working to help re-engage people in agriculture. She has two farms. Her desire is to practice methods that increase productivity but also reduce the effort needed for people to raise their food.

She has cleared some 12 acres so far on the small farm. The tractor and tillers help reduce the effort of clearing the land and keeping it clear for the crops.

Her smaller farm is located on a tributary of the Farmington River. She takes advantage of the flood stage to grow cucumbers on stakes. She hopes to block off a portion of the river to have a fish farm.

Plants are started in nurseries and then put out in raised beds covered with plastic. The plastic reduces erosion, keeps weeds down, and retains moisture and nutrients from the manure she uses to fertilize. The beds are reusable for about 3 years.

She grows rice, cucumbers, cassava, eggplants, and sweet potatoes to name a few. She also has planted pineapple, guava, papaya, avocado and mango trees. She raises goats, sheep and pigs on the large farm and hopes to expand to cattle soon.

Students come from the Booker T. Washington Institute to intern on her farm. At capacity, nearly 50 persons work between the two farms, extending livelihood support to over 300 within their households. She hopes to increase this capacity yearly. In the future, she hopes to host technicians from partner entities and have a retreat center for people involved in ministry.

TRANSLATION TIDBITS

We were working through Hebrews 7:22 in Dan where Jesus is the guarantee of the better covenant. They needed to find a word for "guarantee", so I asked if they had something similar to Maan that uses "bone". They said, "Oh, yes, bone! (At least I thought that was what they were saying.)" But then they explained they were really saying "bond". The two words come out sounding the same in Liberian English. So, I laughed that we had used "bone" in the back-translation definition of the Maan word. I was hoping for some sort of great cultural story explaining "bone". The Dan team had none, because they meant "bond". Later, when I was going through the Maan more thoroughly, they do, in fact, use their word for "bone". It is the Maan team I need to ask for the story of how a "bone" is a guarantee. Perhaps it is a comedy of errors where English bone and bond were confused at some point in history, the local language picked up on "bone", and now guarantee/bond stuck as a second definition of the Maan word "bone"--a mystery awaiting resolution. Word definitions are determined by how people use them. Language overlap can create some strange usages.

So, what does this have to do with Bible translation? God started our world in a garden. He gave the people the purpose of being fruitful and to multiply, to be stewards of the world he made. Nyamah hears God's call to help people be the stewards God calls them to be, to work at being fruitful and promoting sufficiency as they engage in such a vital enterprise as farming. Just like Nyamah and others are trying to **decrease the amount of effort** and **increase productivity** in order to encourage a return to agriculture **as a God-given means of sustaining our earthly lives**, so Bible translation does something similar. We do Bible translation to help people return to all God intended for his creation from the beginning, to restore the relationship that is broken. **Bible translators decrease the effort it takes for someone to have access to the Good News with the hope of increasing engagement with the Word so people are connected with the One who gives true life.**

Thank you for your labor to make the Good News accessible to people in Liberia and Sierra Leone.

Becky

PRAYER REQUESTS

Pray with the Maan and Dan communities as they are wrapping up the huge task of translating their Bibles.

Pray that these last editing efforts will smooth out any rough places and "weed" out confusing wording. Pray that the finished product will connect people with their Savior and sustain them in life now and into eternity.

CONTACT

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STAMP COLLECTION UPDATE

Stamp collecting is back! However, please keep these points in mind. Flag stamps need to be grouped separately from all other stamps. Foreign, rare, old, and commemorative stamps bring the most return. Stamps are sold by the pound, so **please, please, please trim all stamps as close as possible** to the stamp without cutting the stamp. If you don't, someone else has to sit for hours cutting off the excess. You can imagine the job that is! Please mail trimmed stamps to: Renita Wolberg, 8463 Wolf Rd, Bellevue, MI 49021. Call me if you have questions. Thank you!

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.