

KONO TRIP

Lots of memories and emotions on this trip! This was my first trip to Kono since the dedication of the New Testament in 2008. Kono was the language that Susan and I started working with in 1986. After studying the language and culture, we helped to develop a writing system for Kono, and then helped to organize the translation team to translate the New Testament. In spite of many interruptions due to war, the translation was finished in 2006.

As we travelled into the Kono area, many locations and buildings brought back old memories of when we lived there before the war. There has been a lot of building and rebuilding since that time. And the people have changed. All of the translators that I worked with on the New Testament have passed away, but I did get to see two old friends from the Lutheran church.



Rev. Gborie, Rev. Yarjah, Jim, Rev. Musa, & Rev. Gbanyah

There are now four members of the Kono translation team - Rev. Samuel Aiah Gbanyah, Rev. Daniel Komba Yarjah, Rev. Sahr Victor Musa, and Rev. Tamba David Gborie. Revs. Gbanyah and Yarjah have been with the team longer and have more experience, while Revs. Musa and Gborie are relatively new additions.

The team shared that the Kono New Testament is being used by many people in the rural areas of Kono. And several church bodies are wanting to better train their pastors in reading Kono so that they can use the New Testament in their ministry. Very encouraging news!

I was surprised at how much Kono I still remember. I was

even able to help the team with some of their spelling. We are in the process of planning future checking sessions with the team that will be done online.

Please pray for the Kono team as they work on their translation, especially for the health of Rev. Yarjah.

TRANSLATING PROVERBS

My time working with the Mende team went well, and we were able to finish more than half of the book of Proverbs. As we worked, I noticed some challenges that would be common to many other translations:

My child, eat honey, for it is good, and the drippings of the honeycomb are sweet to your taste. Proverbs 24:13

When this proverb was translated somewhat literally, “eat honey” gave several problems. First of all, it is unnatural to use the word “eat” with a liquid like honey. The natural verb would be “lick”. Secondly, “honey” when used by itself refers to the honey bee. The liquid is referred to as “honey oil”. So the translation was adjusted from “eat honey” (which meant “eat honey bees”) to “lick honey oil”.

It is better to be of a lowly spirit among the poor than to divide the spoil with the proud. Proverbs 16:19

In this proverb, the meaning of “among the poor” is ambiguous. Does it mean that the person is among them, but not one of them? Or does it mean that the person is poor? The translation first took it as, “Don’t act proud when you are around poor people.” The better meaning here is that the person is also poor. The translation was adjusted to make this clear: “It is better to be humble and poor...”

Sheol and Abaddon are never satisfied, and human eyes are never satisfied. Proverbs 27:20

In this proverb, it is not clear how human eyes are never satisfied. Does it mean that people are always wanting to see new things? Or are “human eyes” being used to represent people themselves, and the meaning is that people’s desires are never satisfied? The best understanding is that “people never get all the things they want.”

**Where there are no oxen, there is no grain;
abundant crops come by the strength of the ox.** Proverbs
14:4

The problem in translating this proverb is that oxen are not used in Sierra Leone for doing any kind of field work. From farmers' experience there, it is more true that "where there ARE cows, there is no grain", because the cows tend to stray into their fields and eat their grain. The team decided to revise the translation to, "How you do your farmwork will determine the harvest, a big harvest comes from a strong man."



Jim working with the Mende team on Proverbs.

PRAYER REQUESTS

- Praise God for a safe and productive trip for Jim to Sierra Leone.
- Pray for the Mende team as they continue to work on their translation of the Old Testament and revision of the New Testament.
- Pray for the Kono team as they continue to work on their translation of the Old Testament.
- Pray for the two new Kono translators, Rev. Sahr Musa & Rev. Tamba Gborie, as they travel to Kenya in September for further training. Pray that it will be beneficial to them.
- Pray for the health of Kono translator Rev. Daniel Yarjah.
- Pray for safe travel and receptive listeners as we travel to Holy Trinity, Binghamton, NY September 12-16.
- Pray for online checking sessions scheduled with the Mende team August 25-29 and September 22-26. Pray for good health, reliable electricity, good internet connection, wisdom, and guidance from the Holy Spirit for all involved.



GOD SPEAKS

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