

Equipping Translators and Myself: Lessons from our First Training Workshop



Leading discussion on internalizing the Bible story

I moved to Sierra Leone eight years ago with only a vague idea of what a translation advisor does. Since then, I've grown into my role with the Mende team, added support for the Themne team, and begun pre-checking books before consultant reviews which helps them focus on more complex issues. Many advisors eventually become consultants who lead workshops, ensure translation accuracy, share insights, and contribute to the Bible translation community through mentoring, publishing, and presenting. I'm slowly working toward those qualifications, but even if I never become a consultant, the skills required make me a better advisor.

One thing I feared about consulting was leading workshops. I couldn't imagine agreeing to facilitate a session let alone willingly volunteering to plan one. But with support from Lutheran Bible Translators and the Bible Society of Sierra Leone, I joined two Bible Society managers to plan and lead our own translator training workshop.

Avril Hanciles, Omega Sesay, and I collaborated with consultants and translators to choose topics and create a schedule. We led sessions on computer care, translation software, parallel passages, key terms, consistency, teamwork, and emotional intelligence. My missionary mom, Carrie Jo Cain, joined online to teach health topics like malaria, typhoid, proper medical treatment, and advocacy.

Most translators have 5–20 years of experience, so the workshop focused on review, project challenges, and building on past training. We also included the new sign language team, giving us a chance to learn their process of translating Bible stories into the local sign language and connect with one another.

Themne Translators

The workshop had many benefits:

- Experience as facilitators
- Translators were brought together to learn from one other.
- Time to work through topics that are relevant to our own projects in Sierra Leone
- Health and interpersonal skills that affect translators were covered.

Translators and those of us in support roles need to have a background in so many areas of expertise, so I'm already brainstorming for the next training – there are too many topics to choose from!



Groups acting out story of Mary and Martha at the workshop

Most Recent Video from the Field:



Scan the QR code or use the link below to hear from the team lead of the Mende team about the training experience.

amyformella.wixsite.com/amyonthefield/videos

PRAYER REQUESTS

- Pray for continued learning and confidence as I grow in leadership and translation skills, preparing for future responsibilities
- Pray for strong teamwork among translators, advisors, and consultants so projects move forward smoothly and relationships deepen.
- Pray that the recent workshop and training will strengthen translation quality.
- Pray for the safety and health of the translation teams.

Mende Bible Translation Project (with Deuterocanonical Books) Progress

Portion	Drafting	Team Checking	External Review	Consultant Checked
Old Testament	39/39	39/39	39/39	24/39
Deuterocanonical Books	12/12	12/12	12/12	0/12
New Testament	27/27	6/27	5/27	1/27

Themne Bible Translation Project Progress

Portion	Drafting	Team Checking	External Review	Consultant Checked
Old Testament	39/39	39/39	39/39	16/39
New Testament	20/27	5/27	4/27	0/27

Note: The Deuterocanon (which means 'second canon') includes the books accepted into the Roman Catholic Church inspired canon. While Lutherans and other protestants do not hold them as inspired, they are considered beneficial like reading other theological or religious publications, and they give us a view into the context between the Old and New Testament. The wisdom books are quite beautiful, and the stories are very interesting. Have you read any? Which is your favorite?

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Give at LBT.org/formella



While most of my time is spent in Sierra Leone, I want to still be able to connect with churches and small groups throughout the U.S.

Use this form if you are interested in having me present to your congregation or small group on Zoom.

forms.gle/sSPhvC2ahCsW6ugk6