

OUR HISTORY WITH KONO

I am currently working with two translation projects in Sierra Leone – the Mende Old Testament project, and the Kono Old Testament Project. I have worked with the Kono people before, and I want to share about some of that history that Susan and I have with them.



In 1985, Susan and I married and were asked by Lutheran Bible Translators to work with the Kono New Testament translation project. From 1986-1990, our three sons were all born in Sierra Leone.

From 1986-1988, we focused on learning the language, developing a writing system, learning about the culture, and developing relationships with the churches in the area. Translation work began in 1990, and good progress was made until the rebel war in Liberia spread into Sierra Leone in 1991. In 1992, the fighting forced us to move from the Kono area to the capital city of Freetown. We were able to re-organize the project there, but then



following a coup in 1997, we were evacuated by US marines. We relocated our team to nearby Ivory Coast and continued working there until unrest in 2002 again made it



necessary to evacuate. Our family relocated to the US, and I (Jim) helped finish the New Testament translation in 2006 using email and regular trips back to Sierra Leone. So we are now glad to be helping with the Old Testament.



SHOUTING LIONS

The team was translating Daniel 10:6 into English for me so that I could hear what their translation was saying. In this verse, Daniel is describing the appearance of an angel who was sent to him. Things were going well until the translator translated the last part of the verse: "...and the sound of his voice was like a crowd of lions shouting."

Lions! Where did lions come from? The English Standard Version (ESV) says here, "the sound of his words like the sound of a multitude." Then I looked at the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV) and got a clue as to where the lions might have come from: "the sound of his words like the roar of a multitude."

In my dialect of English, we have many things that can *roar*: lions, engines, and crowds, to name a few. The translation team knows English well, but it is a second language for them, and in the dialect they have learned, only lions roar. So when they read in the NRSV about "the roar of a multitude," it could only refer to the loud noise made by a multitude of lions.

I encountered a similar problem years before in Acts 7:30: "an angel appeared to Moses in the flames of a burning bush." In my dialect of English, the most common meaning of the word *bush* is a small tree or shrub. The word can also

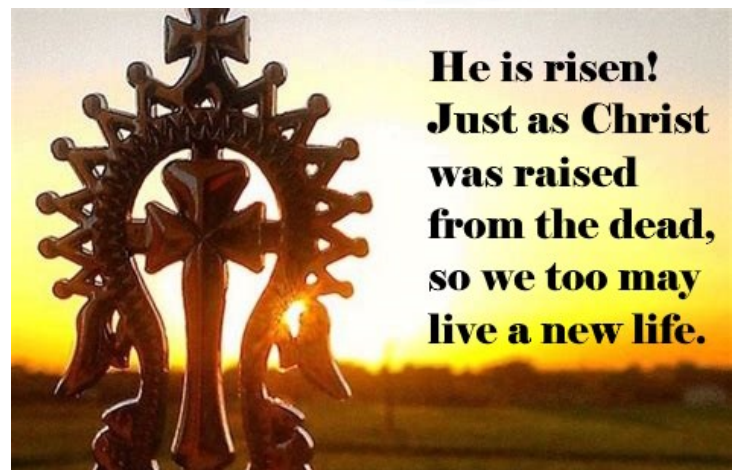
refer to a wild forest area (out in the bush), but for me, that meaning is much less common.

But in that area, in the dialect of English spoken there, the word *bush* had only one meaning – the wild, forest area. So when they read this story, they understood it as Moses in a forest fire, and part of the miracle was that Moses wasn't burned up in the fire.

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PRAYER REQUESTS

- Pray for the Mende team (Sierra Leone) as they continue to work on their translation of the Old Testament and revision of the New Testament.
- Pray for the Kono team (Sierra Leone) as they continue to work on their translation of the Old Testament.
- Praise God that we were able to finish checking over the Mende translation of Isaiah, and the Kono translation of Daniel.
- Pray for online checking sessions scheduled with the Kono team April 6-10 and May 11-15, and with the Mende team April 20-24. Pray for good health, reliable electricity, good internet connection, wisdom, and guidance from the Holy Spirit for all involved.

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