



Scripture Engagement

Over the decades, centuries, and millennia of Bible translation, there have been different methods, team compositions, and goals. Understandably and rightfully, the emphasis of Bible translation has been on the quality of the text, but that was sometimes at the expense of proper engagement with the local church and community alongside the translation project. Trying to engage people with Scripture without a good translation in the relevant language can lead to misunderstanding, and a strong translation without engagement is a great effort for a museum. So now, Bible translation has shifted from being its own goal to a task under the goal of people engaging with and using Scripture among communities and churches. This can be challenging to facilitate for older projects that have experienced leadership changes, translator turnover, or challenging environmental conditions (civil war, Ebola, COVID, etc.), requiring them to consistently try to catch up on community engagement. But when communities and churches are already interested and invested in the Bible being translated into their language before a verse is even translated, the translation project itself will probably be stronger and higher quality, and the translation will be more likely to be used when it is published in its entirety.

Interim Distribution of Booklets



In Sierra Leone, we are trying to engage people more intentionally with Scripture while we complete the translations that have been going on for over ten years. While we have done this in various ways before, starting this year, we are trying to connect the churches to the translation project more. We have begun hosting short training workshops on Scripture engagement, alongside distributing copies of the books that have gone through the accuracy and naturalness checks. The Mende team has distributed Ruth and Esther, while the Themne team has distributed Ruth, Joel, and Jonah. The recipients are encouraged to use the texts in their churches, communities, and families, as well to give feedback on the illustrations, translated text, font size, layout, and more. The Mende and Themne language groups are the largest in the country, so actively engaging with the different regions is a challenge, but we are working hard to connect the translation work with the communities who will hopefully use the published full Bible one day. There is still a lot of work to do, and not enough time to do it, but we are getting there little by little! A Bible that will be used takes a lot of teamwork between international and national translation organizations, translation teams, literacy workers, churches, and many more. Bible translation is a heavy responsibility indeed. Pray for us!



Translation Update

Recently the Mende translation team invited about 10 Mende speakers to read through 1st Corinthians through Philippians. We were also able to train some new reviewers during a three-day workshop to teach them about the translation process and the responsibilities of being a reviewer. The team is continually preparing for the consultant checks of Jeremiah, while also looking ahead to team checking Colossians. Soon we will also be preparing the next book to be distributed, which will be Ezra. The Themne team is team checking the Gospel of John, working with the consultants on Numbers and 1st Chronicles, and will soon prepare Judges for distribution. In May, the Themne reviewers also worked hard to read through the Gospel of Luke. Progress!

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	11/27	11/27	2/27

Themne Bible Translation Project Progress

Portion	Drafting	Team Checking	External Review	Consultant Checked
Old Testament	39/39	39/39	39/39	17/39
New Testament	26/27	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 the inspired Word of God, 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.

Prayer Requests

- Mende and Themne speakers will have more interest in using their language in devotion, Bible Study, and church
- They will have interest in learning to read and write their languages
- People will use the distributed books to edify their churches, homes, and communities
- Grant the translation teams wisdom, perseverance, and patience as they continue checking translations.
- Praise God for your continued faithful prayers and support!

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To give online, go to LBT.org/formella or call 660- 225-0810 to use a credit card or set up monthly payments.

Checks can be mailed to:
Lutheran Bible Translators
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Please make your check payable to Lutheran Bible Translators, and write Formella on the memo. Remember to sign and date your check.