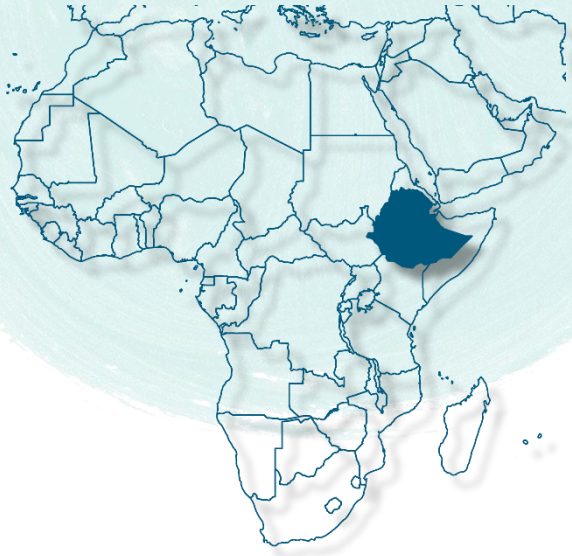
Lutheran Bible Translators

The Relay

Grossmann Prayer letter

November 2026

ETHIOPIA EXPERIENCES (continued)



I spent all four weeks of July in Addis Ababa, the capital city of Ethiopia. This city has grown by leaps and bounds in just a few decades. It is quite modern with wide roads, skyscrapers, parks, bike trails, and modern transportation. But one can also pass by cattle or goats being herded down a street to the slaughter-house. On weekends, small portable shelters are set up for the market women to sell fruits and vegetables. Coffee shops are ubiquitous along every road. It's a wonder they all can make a profit.

Weather in July in Addis is cool, often high 50's in the morning with rain throughout the day. I enjoyed the temps. My colleagues were often seen in parkas and beanies. In other parts of Ethiopia, the weather can be quite hot and dry. Addis sits at 7,726 feet above sea level compared to Denver at 5280 feet. I never really got used to that, but it does help keep the temperatures more moderate.

Coffee is almost a staple here. Sort of like teatime in Britain. Black pottery coffee pots called jebena are heated on a fire. The grounds and water are put directly in the pot and boiled. After the first serving more water is added up to 3 times total. By the third serving the coffee may be quite weak and some more grounds can be added. I did at least try their coffee, but it didn't convince me to become an avid consumer.

One of the students in my class shared some of his traditional life experiences with me. As in much of Africa, the ancestral spirits play a large role in the community and everyday life. They connect past and present. Bodies of loved ones must go through proper burials, and proper sacrifices must be made to the spirits for various life events. He shared that when a child is born, a goat is sacrificed on the grave of the grandparents. A child must go through a "door" to the ancestors as a rite of passage into adulthood and as a way to know the ancestors. Unless this is done, he is not a full member of the community and cannot marry. This student









Platter of traditional food: shiro, lentils, veggies, beets, and cabbage on injera bread used to scoop the food. No utensils needed.

became a Christian before the ceremony occurred and so he did not consent. He receives a lot of pressure from his parents because of this.

Cattle in his community are a sign of wealth. They are not used for food. Goats have that honor. The cattle are mainly acquired to perform sacrifices and feasts for proper burial of past relatives. Initially, a person might be buried near the village. But when someone has enough cattle for the ceremonies and to give to those carrying the bones "across the river", the necessary sacrifices are made.

In his region it is estimated that 98% of the church is all young people. The older members of the community do not want to give up the beliefs and practices associated with their ancestors. But this student is a great example to people and as he described it, he is "preparing the way through a dense forest." He has not suffered at the hands of the ancestors or unjustly as a result of his faith. He is educated, married and has children. People are seeing the fruits of his faith in his life and that is attractive. Pray for more people to trust in Jesus including older members of the community.

The year has gone by fast. I hope to get back to Liberia early in 2027. Meanwhile we continue to work online and appreciate your prayers and support. I certainly am not a lone donkey drinking all the water! Thank you!

My family is doing well and I have enjoyed several trips around the country to see them in Florida, Kansas, Minnesota, and Wisconsin.

May you be wrapped in the blessings of our Savior's birth.

Becky

TRANSLATION TIDBITS

Here are the answers to the Ethiopian proverbs from my last letter. Proverbs can powerfully relay a message while avoiding conflict of a direct accusation as in the second to the last example.

"*One donkey cannot drink all the water*." No one can handle everything alone.

"*a person with a strong heart*" is courageous

"*a person with a smooth heart*" doesn't listen

"*a person with a red eye*" is angry

"*My wife is on the top of a tree*." She is pregnant.

"*He walks in the shadows*." He is a thief.

"*He is laughing with his wisdom teeth*." He is really happy.

PRAYER REQUESTS

- Pray for the family of Dan translator Rev. Levi Yentee who passed away last month. Pray for the team as they continue without him.
- Pray for Ethiopia amid the renewed conflicts in the Tigray region.
- Praise for the completion of Themne Numbers and Bandi 2 Samuel in September. Pray for the continued work in Deuteronomy

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Becky is YOUR HEART IN ACTION. She serves you as a consultant for translation teams in Liberia and Sierra Leone 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.