



Nystrom Prayer Update

Ukarumpa, PNG

February 22, 2007

When a bad translation is a good thing

Our February translation workshop was only three weeks long, but we had three translators get malaria, including Emil Ninkure and Kenny Aiprum (photo in title bar above left). Sebby Nugia from Sumo was taken to town coughing up blood and was diagnosed with TB.

The rest of the translators kept working and all finished their first draft of Luke. Most of them spent the entire workshop reading through Luke chapter by chapter, making corrections as they went.

When a bad translation is a good thing. Several translators commented on how awful the first few chapters they did a couple years ago now looked compared to the last few chapters. They were discouraged about the amount of editing they now needed to do on those first few chapters. I pointed out that, the worse those early chapters look now, the more it shows how much they have improved as translators.

It's better together. When I arrived from the US one week into the workshop, I showed the four Coastal Language teams how they could work together to check each other's translations before having me check them. They enjoyed working this way and kept it going for the rest of the workshop. The result was a lot more talking at their table about their translations, better quality translations, and less dependence on me. The more they talk, the better the translations get. *Pray that they continue to work closely together in future workshops.*

When a two-week campaign is too long. Since two of the three language families will not have all of Luke ready for "Final Checking" in May, the translators unanimously decided that we should only do Final Checking on Luke for the Coastal Group (the group I work most closely with) during a specific 3-week period in May. The translators left Arop to go back to their villages on Saturday Feb. 16. On Sunday the 17th we heard the campaign and actual voting in local elections will be held during that same three weeks.

Because of Bonnie's trip to Thailand for our International Conference and our furlough coming up in June, there is no other time I can do the Final Checking. It would be very difficult to let all the translators in their isolated villages know of a date change. So we have no choice but to go ahead with our plans **and pray that everybody who needs to be there will be there for as long as they are needed.**

- **Praise the Lord that all teams finished their first draft of Luke** in the February translation workshop. Some have a ways to go before they will be ready for "Final Checking."
- **Pray that we can do "Final Checking,"** at least for the Coastal Group languages in May, despite local elections being scheduled at the same time.
- **Praise the Lord that my health improved** before my trip to the US in January.
- **Pray for Sebby Nugia who has TB.** His treatments are due to end 3 weeks before our next workshop.



Consulting the team geek. During the workshop, I spent a lot of time helping the translators use their computers effectively to do their translations. One goal of my January meetings in Dallas was to help make translation software easier to use so translators can spend more time translating and less time fighting the computer. I would also like to spend more time helping with translation and less time on "technical support." James Panso(left) and Dominic Pusai speak two different dialects of the Onnele language.

THEY SENT HIM AWAY “JUST SWINGING HANDS”

While the Coastal Group (a.k.a. The Beach Boys) were checking through Luke 20 in the Sissano language, I was sitting at the same table listening with one ear while searching our electronic archives for a lost file for a translator from one of the other languages.

I heard something than made me listen up. They were reading Jesus' story about the man who rents out his vineyard and sends his servants to collect a portion of the harvest. They got to v. 11, where the NIV says, “He sent another servant, but that one also they beat and treated shamefully and sent away **empty-handed**.”

I said, “Kenny, what does ‘lewlew’ mean in Sissano in this context? I hear Arops using it for when a person is unconscious and their spirit leaves them ‘just hanging-swinging.’ How are you using it here?” Kenny said, “they sent him away ‘just hands swinging.’” “OK,” I said, “But what does that mean?” “It means **there’s nothing heavy in his hands, so he’s walking away with his hands just swinging.**”

Isn’t translation fun?

Fascinated, I looked to see what the other related languages had. Arop and Serra both had “hand-nothing.” Malol had “arm-hand-nothing.” Four languages, three different translations of this one little part of a verse.

Later as I was checking the Serra translation at this spot, I noticed that for ‘went away,’ Serra has *epei*. In Arop, *kepe* would mean ‘he ran,’ so I was wondering if the servant was running in the Serra translation. I asked Ignas, the Serra translator, what ‘*epei*’ means. Ignas said, “It means ‘he went.’”

“Not ‘he ran,’ just ‘he went?’”

“Yes, he went.”

Arop translator Peter Marokiki chimed in from the other end of the table. “Yeah, they have a lot of things in their language that sound like our words, but when they use them, **they mean the opposite of what we mean by the same word.** I’ve been noticing that as we check his translation. I might be able to think of some more examples.” “I would love to have a list!” I said. In a future NPU, I’ll share some of that list with you.

So here we have **four significantly different ways** to say they sent the guy away empty-handed.

This is why we are working together doing four translations in this group, four in “Group One” and three more in the “Onnele Group” rather than eleven separate translation projects.

If we could only do one translation that had to somehow ‘cover’ all four languages/dialects in the Coastal Group, the readers would get the wrong meaning or no meaning at all a lot of the time. By working together, the translators can fine-tune their translations for their own languages, and also check each other’s translations for accuracy and faithfulness to the original.

Pray for Bonnie at her “Strategic Planning and Facilitation” workshop in Thailand. Pray that she’ll learn what she needs to learn and that she’ll be able to use it here in PNG as we develop our strategy for Bible Translation here. She returns Feb. 29.

Thank you for helping make it possible for us to continue to help make God’s Word available in all these languages, so nobody has to go home “just swinging hands.”

Your partner in this adventure for over 20 years,

John Nystrom (for Bonnie and all of us)

STAYING CONNECTED

Our web site: www.thenystroms.org.

Mailing Addresses

US: 12352 Imperial Dr
Seminole FL 33772
PNG: SIL Box 365
Ukarumpa EHP 444
Papua New Guinea

Contributions

Checks can go to the Wycliffe address at right, with a note saying it’s for John & Bonnie Nystrom in PNG.

Email:

John_Nystrom@sil.org
Bonnie_Nystrom@sil.org
Eric@TheNystroms.org
Brianna@TheNystroms.org

Phone: 011-675-737-4669



Partners in Bible Translation

Wycliffe Bible Translators
PO Box 628200
Orlando FL 32862-8200
1-800-WYCLIFFE
www.wycliffe.org