



Nystrom Prayer Update

Upland, Indiana

January 20, 2009

Got the water, but our airstrip is closed

In the last NPU, I asked you to pray for rain so the translators would have water for their January workshop. Emil Ninkure wrote today to say, “Thank you all for praying with us. . . We had a lot of rain last week and had a very heavy one yesterday. **All our tanks are full and water is pouring out of the overflow.**” The translators asked me to pass their word of thanks and appreciation to all of you for praying with us.”

Now you can pray for our airstrip to open. We have two airstrips near (well, sort of near) our village: Tadji and Aitape. Tadji is an old WWII airstrip. It can take our largest aircraft, but it’s at a lonely place far outside of town. No one has been cutting the grass, so it is now closed.

Last year the more convenient but smaller airstrip in Aitape town has was repaired, but we can’t use it until an inspector comes and officially opens it. There’s no telling when that might happen. **Pray that this happens soon—before Nathan Miles and I go out to Arop on March 13.** Our alternative is to fly into Wewak and then hire a 4-wheel-drive truck to take us out to Arop—probably an all-day trip. The same rains that are filling our water tanks in Arop are probably wrecking the road from Wewak!

- **Praise the Lord for lots of rain in Arop!**
- **Pray the Aitape town airstrip opens before March 13.**
- **Pray for me** 1) checking the first chapters of Acts in the Arop language, and 2) testing the new translation software and helping make it work for multi-language translation projects, 3) speaking in churches and to groups interested in our work. During February we’ll be speaking at several churches in Florida.
- **Pray for Bonnie** as she prepares to lead strategy discussions in PNG in March.
- **Pray for Eric and Brianna** as they continue their studies at Taylor University.
- **Pray** that the translators will get a good start on Acts in the current translation workshop—Jan 12-30.



On Saturday Jan 10, Wycliffe’s new plane for PNG arrived at JAARS in NC. The Kodiak can carry far more passengers and cargo than our old Cessna 206 planes, still land at the same short airstrips, (like Aitape town), but uses Jet A-1 fuel, not Avgas, which is expensive and hard to get. The plane is due to arrive in PNG later this year. Google “JAARS Kodiak” or “Wycliffe Kodiak” for more info.

JAW-DROPPING MIRACLES THAT SHOW GOD'S POWER

Acts 2:43 was and still is a challenge for us to translate. Looking at it this morning, I realized we still have some "opportunities for improvement" in this verse that we must fix before the other translators use this as their source text. Here it is in NIV:

43 Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles.

And here's our back translation into English from the Arop:

"God caused Jesus' apostles to do large-large miracles that demonstrated the power of God, and these miracles made all those people's jaws opened-down on them."

'Were done by the apostles' is a passive grammatical construction. Arop and the rest of the languages we work with do not have passives. So we had to make it active: "God caused Jesus' apostles to do." We know God caused them to do it, and we know these apostles are Jesus' apostles, but that's not what the text says. We need to change that to **"the apostles did."**

Usually the phrase 'signs and wonders' really refers to the same events. There are not "signs" and then other things that are "wonders." "Miraculous signs" point to something, and wonders are things that amaze or awe people. So these are probably best understood as amazing/awesome happenings that demonstrate God's power.

But Arops don't have a word for this, let alone two words we can join with a word for 'and.'

For "Miraculous signs," the best we have come up with so far is to borrow the word 'mirakel,' which the people have heard

used in the Bible in the trade language. We have tested it and they seem to understand that term. (Some time I should write about the pros and cons of using borrowed terms.)

Our current translation has 'large-large miracles,' meaning many large miracles. We need to test to see if we really need 'large-large' or if 'mirakel' by itself covers the meaning.

To get the meaning of "signs" **we had to add "that demonstrated God's power."** I suggested that change in November. The Arop team agreed and it was put in the translation. **Now it's not there.** An older wrong version has clobbered our newer correct version. Arrrrgggghhhh! This is the kind of thing that has been happening over and over again because our system of working together at a distance is too hard to use. This is why I am working with United Bible Societies on better collaborative translation software!

When I saw their first draft of this verse, it was the first time I had seen the phrase "their jaws opened down on them." We'd say "their jaws dropped." I was surprised their idiom is so similar to ours. I guess some things are the same all over the world. Some are not, and that's why we do what we do.

Today this seems like a pretty good translation for "signs and wonders," but tomorrow we may find something better. As the translators from the other languages work on this chapter, they may have an even better idea that the Arops can use. Iron sharpens iron. Thanks again for being part of the team.

Letting my jaw drop open at what God allows us to be part of,

John Nystrom (for Bonnie and all of us)

STAYING CONNECTED

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Contributions

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

Contact us if you would like us to come to see you and/or to share about Bible translation with your church or group while we're "home."



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