

Driving home from work the other night, I stopped at a little place to pick up a rotisserie chicken that Kathy asked me to bring home for supper. While I was waiting for it to be prepared for take-out, I began talking to someone that turned out to be the owner, a Christian lady who attended a large church nearby. When she introduced herself, it was with a surname whose origins I did not recognize. So I asked her what ethnic group she was from. “Buaba,” she replied.

“Really?” I asked, starting to get a tingle down my back, the kind you get when you suspect you’re about to become a part of something God is doing. “Did you know that the New Testament in your language is almost finished and ready for printing, and that the Buamu translation team is on our Centre right now doing consultant checking of one of the last books they translated?” She had not a clue! So I invited her to come by the Centre to meet the team and see what they were doing.

For one reason or another, she was unable to come. So I took the initiative to invite the team leader, Pastor Bonzi, to accompany me to the little restaurant to meet the lady. It turned out that her mother, a deaconess in the local church, was also there, and that these three people already knew each other! But the ladies had no idea that Pastor Bonzi and his team were translating the Bible into their language. However, they wanted to be informed as soon as the New Testaments were available so that they could get some and start giving them to their fellow Buaba.

“But wait a minute!” said the younger lady. “How are they going to be able to read them? Are there literacy classes? Without literacy classes teaching people to read Buamu, the books will be useless!” Pastor Bonzi told her that classes had been held in the Buaba area, but that funding was coming to an end. “Well, maybe I can help in that area,” she said. “I’m no good at evangelism, but I can raise money for the kingdom of God!”

When we parted ways with the ladies an hour and a half later, Pastor Bonzi was on an emotional high. “You know,” he said, “sometimes I wonder if anyone cares that we’re translating the Bible into Buamu. Today really changed that!” He prepared to head back to the task with renewed enthusiasm. But before he left, I pointed out the one lady’s interest in Buamu literacy, something she made reference to several times. I suggested that he strike while the iron was hot, that he put together a funding proposal for some literacy classes to show the lady the next time he was in town. At first, he looked at me with surprise. He was so used to looking towards outside sources of funding that it never even occurred to him that funds could come from interested people inside the country! Then he nodded in agreement and promised to follow up on my suggestion.

Kathy & I are spending more of our time behind a desk doing administrative work these days, but we still look for opportunities like this to encourage local people in the work of language development and Bible translation, to increase their capacity to do the work themselves, and to connect opportunities with resources, especially local resources! Overall, we’re doing fine, especially now that the rainy season has arrived and the heat is no longer so intense. Our main problem these past months is that we often don’t seem to have enough hours in a day or the energy necessary to do all that we’re asked or required to do! Can you imagine that? ☺

Please pray that God will give us wisdom in establishing clear priorities, finding better ways to organize ourselves and the work, and delegating more of it to qualified and responsible colleagues. Please also keep the Kusassi people in your prayers. Our involvement with them is by necessity very limited now, but we’ll give you an update on what’s happening in our next EMU.

Blessings, Mike & Kathy