



The Word of God

*- In their hands
and upon their hearts*

*Weber - LBT Cameroon
Prayer Letter*

January 2016

The Kwanjas and Dowayo teams, with DTA Director Daniel Touka and us, are working hard with Lectionary translations.

Dear Prayer warriors,

BIGGER ... BIGGER ... and BIGGER

Lately we have been feeling a little overwhelmed at something that is **BIGGER** than what we had started with. So we are asking you again, please help us with **BIGGER** prayers and support at this time!

As you have been following our work, you know that our **BIGGEST** translation project the last few years is the Old Testament 3-year Lectionary series. This will be published, including the Psalms and Old Testament readings used by the Churches for all the Sundays (and other special days) in the Church Year.

BIGGER THAN JUST THE NEW TESTAMENT

Thanks to **YOUR** prayers and support through the years, the Kwanja people have the New Testament in their heart language, both written and oral.

As our Old Testament professor said in a seminary class, *“The New Testament is only a quarter of what God gave us!”*

2 Timothy 3:16-17 tells us, **“All Scripture** is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work. (RSV)

“ALL Scripture is inspired by God, and is profitable...” “make disciples ... **teaching them to observe ALL that I have commanded you.**” (Mt 28: 19 RSV) God Himself sends us to share with **all** peoples - **all** that He commands. LBTC has a specific calling and mission to make the Scriptures available to the peoples in their heart languages.

The lectionary readings were carefully selected to cover much of the Scriptures in a 3-year cycle of three series of readings, so the people can read/hear in their churches “the whole counsel of God”.

GREATER “OWNERSHIP” by Church Leaders

About a year ago, the three Kwanja pastors told us, “You have done your work faithfully in providing us with God’s Word in our language. Now it’s up to us, the Kwanja Church workers, to get the Word out there for our people.” When we met with them just a couple months ago, they told us emphatically, “Don’t publish these books until we have had a chance to see them to make comments and suggestions for improvement.” This is “ownership” – The Kwanjas saying, **“This is OUR book, we want a say in how it is produced!”**

*To some, Kwanjas this lectionary will be a **BIGGER** thing than the New Testament – because their input has been **BIGGER**.*

BIGGER THAN JUST LUTHERANS

The lectionary series historically began in the Catholic Church centuries ago, and is since also used by several Protestant Churches. As we translated Scriptures for the Lutheran Church, Kwanja Catholics also wanted the lectionary readings for their Church.

Twenty years ago, they sent Jerome, their man, to become part of the translation team. With training and many years of experience translating and working with me (Martin), Jerome has become a good exegete, a very solid Mother Tongue translator, and a faithful servant of his Lord.

BIGGER THAN JUST ONE DIALECT

As Nganko Emmanuel translated the Scriptures into Sundani dialect, used mostly among the Lutherans, Jerome translated the Scriptures into his dialect, spoken mostly by the Catholics. He has been working with Joan to resolve spelling issues in writing his dialect of Kwanja, the Ndung dialect. The Catholic community is now getting much more involved in testing the Lectionary translation for clarity and naturalness. **It is theirs!** This means **BIGGER, wider impact as more churches will be using the WORD. MORE people will be reading and hearing GOD’S WORD in their mother tongue!**

A BIGGER TASK Than we Thought

The lectionary books will be **BIGGER** than we thought. There will be more than **twice as many pages as we first guessed!** And **bigger costs!** We had no examples to follow from other lectionary projects with Old Testament lectionary readings in two dialects for two churches (Lutheran and Catholic). Our goal is to give the Churches three durable books, one for each of the three church years.

More Selections to translate: I, Martin, oversaw the Kwanja translation work, as Nganko Emmanuel translated the Old Testament lectionary readings over the past several years, printing draft copies each month and distributing them to the Lutheran congregations in the Kwanja area. Jerome simultaneously translated and distributed the Scripture readings for the Catholics. They finished consultant checking these Scripture selections in 2015 (through Skype).

In November, Joan began working with Jerome and Emmanuel, so the Scriptures would "look" right. She is helping them to use tools in ParaText, an important translation computer program, to do corrections and to check for consistency in preparing the Scripture selections for publishing.

First she wanted to see if they had translated all the readings. The new Lutheran Church calendar of lectionary readings for series C just came out here before Advent (in French). We found a number of new alternate readings that hadn't been translated. Where did these come from? She found them in the "Revised Common Lectionary" on the Internet, the revised source for the three-year series. She began to understand more how the Church Year interfaces with the calendar year that changes every year. Easter varies from March 22 to April 25, so the number of Sundays after Epiphany vary, as well as the number after Pentecost. Our Lectionary publication should include all possible readings, although some Sunday readings are not used in most calendar years (like those only read the years when Easter is "late").

PLEASE PRAY WITH US, BIG TIME, that:

- We will work well together as a team (Jerome, Emmanuel, Martin & Joan)
- We will keep focused, to work hard and persistently, with our hearts at rest in Jesus
- By God's grace, we will be able to publish at least the Year C book on time for March 12th dedication
- God will continue to renew our strength, health and guide us in His wisdom for this task
- God will protect us and all our computers (already some issues, possible virus concerns)
- We all keep living as Children of the King!

BIGGER TIME PRESSURE

Our goal was to prepare the Lectionary for publishing by the end of January, so it can be published and dedicated March 12th, when Dr. Jim Keller, our LBTC Director will be here to visit. But, at this writing, instead of being in the last stages of preparing for publishing, Jerome and Emmanuel are working overtime with us in Ngaoundéré to still get all the verses translated, and I am still checking these with them!

There is still have much serious work to do before we can publish this!

Joan is working to get all the references of the selections together, with proposed formatting details, for both the Lutheran and Catholic lectionary readings. She thanks God for help He is providing, through Matthew Lee, the Wycliffe / SIL highly qualified and helpful computer specialist working in Yaoundé. He is working with her to develop a very detailed "template" file that will work with Paratext to extract the readings from the the Scriptures in Paratext into a file of the Lectionary readings in their right order.

Then, we will meet with the Kwanja pastors for their input in the final decisions, and their approval of how to translate words like "advent", "lent", etc. Then to the Printer, still in early February? Only possible with God's help! Time is short! Join us in prayer!

BIGGER RESULTS

Once this is perfected for the Kwanja lectionary, it will be much easier for the Dowayo and Vute language teams to complete THEIR lectionaries! And get them published, and into hands and heart of listeners.

RESULTS? More people reading more Scripture in more languages – more occasions for the Holy Spirit to convict hearts, change lives, transform cultures! May God be glorified!

*Yours in Jesus,
Martin & Joan Weber*

For contributions:

Please designate for Weber-Cameroon ministry

NOTE: New Address of the *LBT US office*
Lutheran Bible Translators
205 S. Main Street Bldg 5
PO Box 789
Concordia, MO 64020---0789 U.S.A.

Our Cameroon mailing address:

Martin & Joan Weber
BP 111, c/o ELCA mission
Ngaoundéré
Cameroon, West Africa
Email address : weber.kwanja@gmail.com