



Wilkinsons' News

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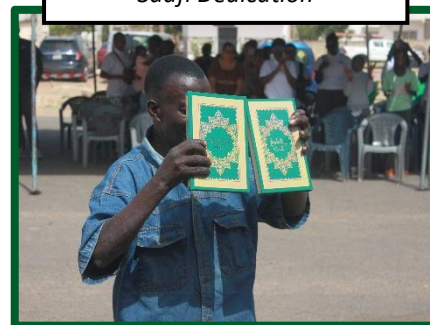
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Dear friends,

As we near the end of May, it's been surprisingly cool up to now this year. The exception was a week in February, when Janet's mum happened to be visiting and it reached 40 degrees, but we were still able to have a good time. Otherwise, David feels like the last few months have been characterised by lots of speech-writing. But that means there have been celebrations and milestone events.

In April, we joined with a couple of hundred people in the coastal town of Popenguine, to celebrate the dedication of the New Testament (plus Genesis & Exodus) in the Saafi-Saafi language. The family who pioneered this work first moved to this area in 1990, with the translation work starting 20 years ago. David encouraged the community to take advantage of the opportunity they have to understand God speaking to them in their own language through his word. The books are available in both Latin script and Arabic script. You might recognise some faces at youtu.be/aAq_LO4gnpg

Saafi Dedication



The following month there was another dedication, but this time of the complete Bible in Wolof, the most widely spoken language in Senegal. This was a big event and took place in our town of Thies, and was actually the first of a number of events for this Regional Wolof Bible. Although the printed Bibles didn't actually arrive by boat in time, it was a very joyful celebration. This project started in the 1960s, and has been the life work of Marilyn Escher who first arrived in Senegal in 1972 and saw it through to the end. The translation project was run by a different organisation, but our organisation provided translation consultants, so David was asked to make a speech to recognise their involvement. A Christian TV company started live-streaming the ceremony half-way through his speech at youtu.be/nXrT2P3uuxY (put on automatic English subtitles). He mentions the 6 different translation consultants involved, and then challenges people to think about why we translate the Bible and how God speaks to us.

Wolof Bible Dedication



While there was a strong Christian presence in attendance, there were also a number of local officials. Afterwards the neighbourhood chief approached me (David). I had mentioned the translation work I had been involved in for the Gusilay and he proceeded to tell me that he had been a headteacher at a school in Thionck-Essyl for many years and spoke the language! When I rang a friend to ask if he knew him, it turned out he'd been his English teacher as an 8-year old nearly 50 years ago! I praise God for the continued connections I'm able to make with the Gusilay here. Last month, while waiting on the corner of the road outside our apartment for the electricity company to come and sort out a

problem, I overheard a taximan parked on the corner speaking on the phone, and eventually realised he was talking in Gusilay. You can imagine his surprise when I greeted him!

In between those two Bible dedications, we had our annual conference. David gave his annual director's speech – looking back on the activities of the past year and outlining some plans for the months ahead - and there were also some discussions. Now that we have a significant number of local staff, it was important to allow everyone's voice to be heard. We have also just recruited a new HR coordinator. Please pray for George as he adapts to this responsibility. There was even some time in the programme for some first aid training, where we discovered that many here think putting toothpaste or other such pastes on burns is the best thing. Meanwhile the kids very much enjoyed their holiday Bible club, learning about the kingdom of God. We are delighted to have had a team from a different NI church come out to run the kids' programme for the past 4 years and hope another church will be able to meet this important need next year.



George, HR

On the family front, Joel recently entered a competition run through school to compose a song, based on the theme of the Youth Olympics which are coming to Senegal this November. He got through to the national finals so was invited to a ceremony in Dakar. Janet, together with his school class and some teachers, went along to watch him perform his entry. Quite an experience!

So what do the next few months have in store for us? We will be staying in Senegal while a number of our colleagues will be on home assignment, so we are hoping it will be quite quiet on the work front. Many of our family friends will be away too, so pray for us as we try to keep the boys entertained during their school holidays while holding down the fort.

Love,

David, Janet, Joel, Isaac & Theo

Praise God:

- For the encouragement of visitors (Janet's mum and the NI childcare team).
- For His faithfulness over many decades of Bible translation.
- For new colleagues and for what they bring to our team here.

Pray:

- For unity and a strong sense of community in an increasingly diverse team.
- For a summer that is quiet enough work-wise but not too quiet for our boys!



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