

CONSTRUCTIVE WORD

The Esala Prayer Letter—July 2019

...attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. Ephesians 4:12-13



DEAR FRIENDS,

Broken plates, powdered plaster, model magic, magazines, markers, and more were placed around the work spaces that my member care co-coordinator Ali Federwitz and I organized for one of our sessions during the annual Concordia Mission Institute (CMI), a conference to equip, connect, and renew workers in Lutheran Bible Translators (LBT) and Mission of Christ Network (MCN). This session was “hands-on” in an attempt to get beneath the radar and contemplate in new ways God’s word and his presence in our lives. It’s one of my favorite sessions as I often see participants gain insight or just experience joy through the creative process. It’s one of the ways I can “prepare God’s people for works of service, so the body of Christ may be built up.” (See our theme verse above.)



CMI is very much a give and take conference with participants also being some of the presenters. Missionaries from LBT and MCN from all over the world submit topics about which they have knowledge. It was striking to me how interconnected many of the sessions were, expanding on other presenters’ content.

Meditating on Scripture using Contemplative Collage

Nathan’s workshops focused on the areas of translation, Contextual Bible Study, and

issues of migration and ethnicity, all which are in his wheel house and impact our missionary work. I was focused on member care issues with topics related to holistic health, developing a wellness plan, and addressing taboo stuff (let’s talk about what we don’t want to talk about).

We had a great time enjoying rich worship experiences, crucial conversations with colleague-friends, not having to cook (I just had to say it), social events involving ice cream, cheese, and corn hole, a 5k, and being away from everyday responsibilities.

OTHER UPDATES

In April, Nathan spent time with the Kolibitrap team to check portions of the Old Testament and to follow up with more Contextual Bible Study (CBS) with seamstresses and apprentices. Since returning, he has been able to change gears again to dissertation writing. He is finding greater clarity in the process and is finding it easier to sort out what should be included in this project and what might be best revisited in the future. This is a huge answer to prayer and an on-going request.



Nathan’s presents on Contextual Bible Study—a process he believes can greatly impact Bible translation and the communities where it is taking place.



During checking sessions, the Bible text being reviewed is displayed on a large screen. One person makes edits which everyone else can see. This prevents confusion and keeps everyone on the same page.

In May I accompanied Josiah and Michaela Federwitz who were returning home to Ghana from boarding school in the U.S. for summer break. Then I stayed on for a week of missionary member care meetings with Ali. We usually work together via WhatsApp, Skype, and e-mail but relished our time together in person to develop educational materials for those in LBT, to pray, and to do long-range planning. With God’s help we amazed even ourselves with what got done. When not working, I got to hang out with some other favorite MKs, Ali’s kids. We relished Bananagrams and Forbidden Island games, and I learned how to play Othello.

Karissa spent the first 6 weeks of her summer in Sierra Leone taking a research class and doing an internship related to her international development major. She loved it while also gaining a new appreciation for what her parents did for her growing up as she was forced to navigate transportation, find sustenance, shop, and stay safe—it was exhausting but exciting.

Join us in giving praise for the good news that we’ve shared in this update. And pray for the following needs:

- for me as I come alongside LBTers in member care—that God would guide me in my interactions and equip me for my work
- for Nathan as he presses on in his dissertation—for continued clarity in the writing and editing processes
- for the Kolibitrap team as they continue translating the Old Testament—healthy team dynamics, the ability to translate well, computers that work correctly, strong literacy programs, and that God’s Word would be powerfully at work in each team member’s life
- for wisdom as Nathan finishes up his PhD and we contemplate our next move, desiring a good fit for both him and me as well as a place where the kids can thrive

Thank you for your prayers and on-going support for God’s work through our lives and Bible translation.

Then Moses and the people of Israel sang...

“I will sing unto the Lord for he has triumphed gloriously, the horse and his rider he has thrown into the sea.” - **Exodus 15:1** (RSV)

Miriam sang **responded** to them:

“Sing to the Lord for he has triumphed gloriously, the horse and his rider he has thrown into the sea.” – **Exodus 15:21**

Most English translations translate the Hebrew phrase “Miriam answered” as “Miriam sang.” In a singing tradition which practices call and response the Hebrew makes perfect sense. The Komba translation had just the perfect word!

JOY IN THE JOURNEY- Sarah for Nathan and the kids