



they will See and Understand

ISAIAH 52:15; ROMANS 15:21

APR 2018 - DRY SEASON IN SIERRA LEONE

Greetings from the road! These days you'll find us traveling the U.S., popping in and out of homes and hotels, churches and living rooms. It's impossible to adequately convey our enormous gratitude to everyone on our team. *Thank you.* Check our Facebook group "Wagner Updates" for our schedule or email us.



TRAINING CHRISTIAN INFLUENCERS

BY JOSH WAGNER

Shortly before leaving Sierra Leone, I (Josh) hosted an app-building workshop. Several Christian, whom I like to categorize as "influencers," gathered at our home in Makeni. We took over Ruthie's office for three days. The participants were required to have computer proficiency, bring an android phone or tablet, and brainstorm an idea for an app. Interest in technology is growing fast in Sierra Leone, and we spent a significant amount of the workshop time discussing whom in their communities of influence they have a passion to reach. *What outcome did they desire by that audience using their app?* One literacy teacher wanted viewers to join literacy classes, so the app was to announce the free classes with their locations and contact info and to tell success stories of those who learned to read their own language. Another app builder targeted pastors with theological training. *(continued on next page)*



9 participants for the App-Building Workshop, including Rev. John Bundor (Lutheran Church President) and Rev. Frederick Jones (Retired Literacy Coordinator) who are pictured on the top left



If you are new to Wagner Updates, please introduce yourself to us! Also, please contact us if you have any questions about our ministry, how you can be involved, how you can pray in more detail, or how you can support us financially.



WHO WE ARE

The Wagner Family is serving with Lutheran Bible Translators in

Sierra Leone, working alongside the Themne people in Translation and Scripture Use!

Making God's Word accessible to those who do not yet have it in the language of their hearts. (LBT's Mission)

TIMELINE

- NOV-FEB** Settling in MN, medical leave, debriefing, time with our families
- MAR** Speaking in TX; meetings at LBT at Concordia, MO
- APR-JUNE** Speaking in MN, ND, WA, CA, AZ, and IA
- JULY** Josh in U.K. to kick off a distance Master's degree in "Leadership in a Complex World"; Ruthie at LBT for meetings
- AUG-DEC** Speaking in Midwest; Josh studying; preparing for return to Sierra Leone

TAKE ACTION

ADVOCATE by inviting friends to join our "Wagner Updates" group on Facebook!

[facebook.com/groups/wagnerupdates](https://www.facebook.com/groups/wagnerupdates)

GIVE to "Wagner Ministry" online or by mailing a check. Please contact us if you'd like to set up automatic giving.

PRAISE for the blessing of medical leave and the care we received.

PRAY for our family as we travel to speak in churches and thank our supporters. Pray for our nanny Hannah as she raises support and prepares to return with us later this year! Pray for the ongoing translation work in Sierra Leone, especially the Themne team.

CONTACT/SUPPORT

- ✉ Josh-Ruthie.Wagner@LBT.org
- 📘 [facebook.com/groups/wagnerupdates](https://www.facebook.com/groups/wagnerupdates)
- 📞 **GOOGLE VOICE:** 612.208.7680 (text anytime!)
- 🏠 LBT will forward "Wagner" mail to us.



Lutheran Bible Translators
800.532.4253
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PO Box 789
Concordia, MO 64020
Designate "Wagner Ministry"

RECURRING SUPPORT

THANK YOU!

THANK YOU!

THANK YOU!

100%

I greatly enjoyed hearing about their interests and the messages each participant found important for their audiences. One young man reaches Muslims through a football ministry. He wants them to repent and pray for salvation. But after discussing potential interests of his audience, he recognized that their interest would not be to join the Christian faith. Instead, he designed app content that helps them become better at football and includes a section called *'Life After Football.'*

Scripture doesn't get used simply by putting a Bible in someone's hand. There are too many barriers, especially disinterest. A common thread in the development of my Scripture Use strategy has been reaching people through influencers—people who already have respected voices in their communities. Riding the wave of existing interest is much easier than trying to shift an ocean. I believe this honors the truth that God is already working to reach people right where they are, through the circumstances and people surrounding them. *May we all share the Word of God with those we influence!*

FINALLY ON THE RIGHT TRACK BY RUTHIE WAGNER

"We're finally on the right track!" This was not what I expected to hear while on a WhatsApp call with the Themne translation coordinator. When we left unexpectedly after Lizzie's birth (due to her tumor), I felt like I abandoned the translation team just as things were ramping up. In my last weeks of pregnancy, I spent a significant amount of time training them in translation process, software, and checking tools. My hope was to get them working independently during my maternity leave, so that I could follow up with some additional training and checking.

God knew that they would have a reviewer's workshop planned as our family urgently packed to leave, and that the Translation Officer (consultant) would be scheduled to be in Sierra Leone while we were in Minnesota on medical leave. I was devastated

to not be with the team to support them in these milestones. And yet... two Old Testament books were signed off as complete! This is such a huge deal and what I have been working toward with them this entire last term. We are looking forward



Ruthie & LBT Regional Directors, Jim Laesch and Rev. David Federwitz, meet with the Themne translation team

to more books signed-off as complete soon! *Praise be to God.* As Daniel Fullah, the translation coordinator, updated me on the work, he said, "We're finally on the right track!" *So awesome.*

We also feel like *we* are finally on the right track again. Medical leave is over, and we are on the road testifying to the mercy of God on our family. And, the best part is the opportunity you are giving us to share about what God is doing in Sierra Leone, what he's doing in the nitty-gritty field of Bible translation, and how He is growing opportunities to engage people in using Scripture to impact their lives and communities. Needless to say, we love the work and are itching to get back. Thanks for reading our stories, praying for us, and playing a vital role in supporting us to make this possible.

♥ Josh & Ruthie Wagner

Elijah (5.5yo), Isaiah (3.5yo), Josiah (2yo), & Elizabeth

HELP NANNA HANNAH GO BACK WITH US! UPDATE FROM ELIJAH WAGNER

Hannah Brown... well, we call her Nanna... needs money to go back to Sierra Leone. First, she said that she was going to be with us one year, then two, then a bit longer. Then, when we talked about going back to Sierra Leone this year, she said that she would like to go back with us! She must really like homeschooling us.

Mommy and Daddy are super happy about it because Mommy can't help with translating the Bible unless we have a teacher. Nanna does more than teaching, and since she's been volunteering in Sierra Leone for so long, it's probably about time that she gets paid like a missionary teacher. I'll have Mommy put where to send a bunch of money below, but first, I want to tell you some of the things Nanna does.

- Teaches me first grade and Isaiah preschool
- Helps us play with the neighbor kids
- Includes some of my Themne friends in school
- Takes us to the pool and teaches us to swim
- Takes us to the market or on walks to greet people
- Keeps us safe so we don't get hurt
- Teaches us about motorcycle safety
- Helps Mommy with house stuff
- Stays with Mommy while Daddy travels for work
- Drives with Mommy when she has to go somewhere far in Sierra Leone

Yup, so she needs a bunch of money before she can go back with us so that she can pay for insurance, her plane ticket, and other grown-up stuff. I think she's going to be with us for another year or two, but don't tell her I'm never letting her leave.



To Donate to Hannah Brown's Ministry in Sierra Leone: <http://missionofchrist.org/service/brown-hannah/>

Mail checks designated "Hannah Brown" to: Mission of Christ Network • PO Box 533, Concordia, MO 64020 • (888) 495-9005