

Good News *for* Galim

DEAR PRAYING PARTNERS

There is a proverb that is often used in this part of the world... In French, it goes like this, "Petit-à-petit, l'oiseau fait son nid." In English? "Little by little, the bird makes his nest." The meaning is something similar to how I hear Canadians use "Rome wasn't built in a day!" It emphasizes the fact that some tasks are painstaking, meticulous, time-consuming, and detailed... like translating the New Testament! We are now in the phase of our work where more than half of our work time is devoted to making progress on translating New Testament texts, so the proverbs that I listed above have come to my mind with some frequency!



THE KUHN FAMILY - NOVEMBER 2017



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NIZAA IS A FUN LANGUAGE!

To say that a task takes time does not mean that it is unenjoyable! I have greatly enjoyed getting to know the Nizaa language a little better as I have worked with my team to massage the this African tongue so that it brings across the meanings of New Testament texts. In fact, I thought it might be enjoyable for you if I shared some of the more interesting ways that Nizaa has rendered some biblical concepts. Assuming you're game for this exercise, let's pop the hood on this language and see what I can show you!

ἀγάπη (agape) affection, good-will, love, benevolence

Most Christians are familiar with this Greek word and have probably heard their pastors teach about the various words for the concept of love in Greek and that this word refers to a self-sacrificing love. In Nizaa, the word *yéeri* is a generic word for love, but there is a suffix in Nizaa, *-ni*, that makes verbs "for the benefit of another". When the suffix is added to this Nizaa verb, you get *yééniri* and the suffix gives it a selfless or other-focused flavour.

χαίρω (chairō) to rejoice, be glad

Nizaa speakers can express a variety of emotions by putting various adjectives or verbs after their word for "heart" which is *bàan*. For example, to translate the idea of joy or gladness, they use the word for "sweet" or "delicious" after "heart" - *bàan dūu*. By contrast, *bàan cèeri* (heart bitter) means angry or perturbed, and *bàan dàari* (heart fall) means to be angry at someone or vexed by someone. These are just three of a host of examples of how emotions and characteristics can be described with *bàan*.

ὀνειδος (oneidos) reproach, shame

Not all emotions are expressed in relation to *bàan*. The concept of shame is a very negative one in Nizaa culture and is expressed in a rather unique formula - *buu yúu*. Literally, this translates as "head lift". The etymological roots of this form are unclear to me, but perhaps the meanings of the words betray how strongly Nizaa people feel about the sensation of shame! Most people in this part of the world would rather have their heads lifted off than to be shamed before their community.



There are others I could share, but these three show you some of the fun and interesting things we are learning about the Nizaa language while we work to help Nizaa people learn about our great and loving Lord. *Please keep praying for our team; that God will inspire our thoughts, guide our conversations and decisions, and otherwise have His way with us so that the translation we produce would communicate His Word clearly, beautifully and faithfully in Nizaa. (February)*

NIZAA LITERATURE CENTRE



While most of our time has been spent on translation work recently, we have also kept pushing forward on a few other fronts. One of the more exciting ones is the Nizaa Literature Centre that was featured in the last edition of LBTC's magazine, *The Messenger*. If you haven't yet read that write-up, I encourage you to check it out! You, our partners, have been contributing to this project and the work on the centre has been progressing very well. As I write this letter, local workers are putting the finishing touches on the building, but the financial goal for the project has not yet been met.

Please also pray that the Lord would provide the funds necessary to pay for the work and that He will bless the translation and language development work to take place in the centre. (November)

LITERACY CLASSES



Another area we have been working on is getting literacy classes up and running again. My translation team mate, Yougouda Bah, has agreed to head up the effort to relaunch Nizaa literacy classes which is no small task! There have been no classes meeting since 2006, so even the one-time teachers no longer have a firm grasp for how to write – let alone teach – the written form of their language. Bah took part in a week-long seminar on overseeing a Literacy project and will begin working with his teachers this month. Our plan and hope is that classes will start up again in five Nizaa communities in 2018.

Please ask our Lord to bless Bah's efforts to get literacy work up and running again so that Nizaa speakers will learn to read and write in their language, and – in time – read God's Word in their language too! (December)

LBT(C) WEST AFRICA MISSIONARIES RETREAT

One item that we have circled on our calendars is a retreat that we have been working to plan for all LBT(C) missionaries in West Africa. Volunteers from Western Canada will come to Cameroon in January to serve our missionary community as we retreat together. It has been over five years since the last retreat of this kind and we are greatly looking forward to connecting with our colleagues, worshipping in English (!), and studying His Word together.

Please join us in praying that the retreat goes off without a hitch, and that it proves to be a refreshing and edifying time for the missionaries, and a rewarding and memorable time for the Canadian volunteers. (January)



On a personal note, this upcoming Christmas season promises to be a special and memorable one for our family. We will get to spend time with Kara's mom, Deanna, and my parents, Sid & Melanie, at various times during Advent and Christmas. In anticipation of some wonderful Cameroon Christmas memories, we wish all of you and yours a blessed Advent and a very Merry Christmas wherever you celebrate it.

Rev. Mike, Kara, Tobias, Gideon and Gloria Kuhn

Translation Project Progress Tracker

