

Lutheran Bible Translators Messenger

Alvina Federwitz and LIBTRALO Receive Honors Mother Tongue Language Education Endorsed by Liberia

Liberian President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf recently recognized and endorsed the importance of mother tongue and multilingual education in a formal ceremony honoring the accomplishments of the Liberian Translation and Literacy Organization (LIBTRALO), LBT missionary Alvina Federwitz, and others.

President Johnson Sirleaf cited the value and importance to Liberia of what LBT and its missionaries have been espousing for three decades: the critical importance of literacy and being able to read and write in your native tongue. "It raises the nation's vernacular to a higher level and adds more meaning to the promotion of our culture and tradition through the learning process," she said.

Every day, LBT translators, vernacular media, and Scripture Use specialists work toward providing the Bible in the heart languages of people. One way to familiarize people with their language is through use of the translated Scripture.

In Liberia, Alvina, respectfully known as "Ma Wata", and LIBTRALO are working to increase literacy among the country's people groups. The organization helps educate children and adults in the language spoken in their homes

and then helps them to learn English, the official language of Liberia.

"We pray LIBTRALO can work even more closely with the Liberian government," Alvina said. "We must use every opportunity to spread God's Word, and to further the



Alvina with President Johnson Sirleaf and the Minister of Education



Alvina received the Dame Grand Commander of the Humane Order of African Redemption

Drs. Dennis and Susan Malone, David Setiye (LIBTRALO Assistant Literacy Director), President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, Alvina Federwitz, Dr. Joseph Korto (Minister of Education), Ngaima Kawala (LIBTRALO member working at MOE), C. Bloty Necollin (LIBTRALO Executive Director)

proven concept of beginning children's education in their mother tongue. If children learn to read in the language they speak, the process of learning another language... English...becomes much easier."

This is the first time mother tongue education has formally captured the attention of the President since 1974, when LBT sponsored the Vacation Institute of Translation and Linguistics (VITAL) at the University of Liberia.

Liberia, located on the west coast of Africa, has a population of 3.2 million. Most Liberians come from one of 28 ethnic groups. The country endured two civil wars and ongoing civil unrest from 1989 - 2006. Hundreds of thousands of people have been displaced, and the economy has been almost destroyed.

Mother tongue learning helps build pride in heritage, minimizes school drop out rates and increases the chances people will continue to become more literate and further their education. Alvina has been devoting increasing amounts of her time to working with the Liberian Ministry of Education,

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The mission of Lutheran Bible Translators [LBT] is to help bring people to faith in Jesus Christ by making the Word of God available to those who do not yet have it in the language of their hearts.

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a heart
for missions

The Word at a Glance

God seems to be keenly interested in reading and writing! Not exactly a profound insight coming from Lutheran Bible Translators, is it?

For example, God specifically instructed his prophet Habakkuk to “Write down clearly on clay tablets what I reveal to you, so it can be read at a glance.” One translation clarifies God’s instructions further by instructing Habakkuk to write **boldly**.

God asked Habakkuk to write so that it could be “read at a glance!”

Every time I read these verses I am reminded of the old Burma Shave signs that dotted our nation’s highways — long before the interstate system. Each sign contained a short, pithy phrase. As you drove past them, sign by sign, the entire message became clear. In fact, you read it at a glance!

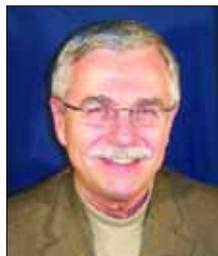
All of this reminds me (of course) of the mission of Lutheran Bible Translators — *to help bring people to faith in Jesus Christ by making the Word of God available to those who do not yet have it in the language of their heart.*

It all starts with the written word — God’s Word — translated and transcribed. But the process doesn’t end there. Translated Scripture set to music helps people worship God in their own language. Those who cannot read can still experience the joy of hearing the Bible spoken in their language. The list of ways to bring God’s Word into people’s lives goes on and on, all brought about through God’s command to clearly write down what He has revealed to us.

Our assignment is to ensure that the message is written boldly so that it can be “read at a glance,” accurate, concise, and easily understood. God, by his Spirit, works faith. What a phenomenal partnership in the Gospel! 

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Dr. Marshall R. Gillam, CFRE
Executive Director



How Sweet the Name of Jesus Sounds

**When Heard in Your Native Tongue
Especially if You’ve Never Heard it Before!**

“It is much sweeter to listen to the Bible spoken in your native language than to have it interpreted and translated from another language,” says Reverend Kombate Bigbi.

He should know.

Rev. Kombate, of the West African country of Togo... officially the Togolese Republic, is a member of the Moba people and the President of the Lutheran Church of Togo. He is also instrumental in the translation of the New Testament into the Moba language.

That Moba translation, which Rev. Kombate personally started working on in 1986, is currently entering its final review stage. Upon

completion, and after final edits, 5,000 copies of the Moba New Testament translation will be printed; ready for use by the 50,000 people who speak several closely related dialects of the Moba language.

Togo has a population of 5 million and is about the size of West Virginia. The long, narrow country has a central ridge of hills with broad savannas on either side leading to its border on the West with Ghana and on the East with Benin. Togo also has some frontage on the Gulf of Guinea. There are 21 major ethnic groups in Togo and the major religions, besides Christianity, are animism and Islam.

Rev. Kombate’s life’s work and calling is to share the Bible’s sweet news of grace and salvation with all of the people of Togo. Baptized at age 24 after studying the Bible and Catechism in French and learning about Jesus for three years, Rev. Kombate was confirmed and expected to return to a “normal life”. Instead, he felt called to take leadership training that was just beginning at the Lutheran Mission in Lokpano, Togo. Then he started working with Rev. Walt DeMoss (with LCMS World Mission at that time) on the Moba New Testament translation.

That translation work led to a desire to delve deeper into Bible study, then enrollment in seminary, establishment of various preaching stations, and eventually to ordination in 2002 as a Lutheran pastor in Togo. He has since been elected president of the Lutheran Church in Togo. At present, the church has ten pastors and five vicars.



Rev. Kombate Bigbi, President of the Lutheran Church in Togo

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August IDIOM Provides Answers for Prospective Missionaries

“Without IDIOM, I wouldn’t have any idea if being a missionary is for me.”

With comments like this, made by an IDIOM (In Depth Investigation of Missions) attendee this past August, it’s easy to see why participation in Lutheran Bible Translator’s annual IDIOM workshop continues to grow.

IDIOM is the only missionary introductory event among Lutheran mission agencies for individuals and couples interested in becoming missionaries. LBT has been conducting IDIOM type workshops to engage and inform individuals and families interested in long term overseas missionary service for more than a dozen years.

In August, nineteen people from five states and two countries traveled to Aurora, Illinois, to spend several days as LBT’s guests, investigating missions, Bible translation, and missionary service with LBT. The free IDIOM workshops, discussion groups, lectures, information exchanges, and demonstrations are all part of LBT’s overview of what’s involved in mission service. Many participants said one of the most valuable aspects of IDIOM is being able to spend so much time with missionaries and missionary families.

Jim and Pam Maxey, LBT missionaries to the Vuté in Cameroon, and David and Valerie Federwitz, LBT missionaries to the Kompa in Ghana, shared information,



Participants work on a Bible translation exercise



Cross cultural role playing helps participants get a feel for life on the field

experiences and observations about Bible translation and Literacy/Scripture Use with the participants. Jim is completing his

Ph.D. in Theology with a Mission emphasis at the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago. He is also finishing his work with the Vuté New Testament translation that will be dedicated this December. Jim has accepted the position of Director of Program Ministries with LBT and will formally start his new position this January.

David, currently on an extended furlough as he completes his Masters in language development, demonstrated Scripture Use and literacy practices, and how important they are in making sure the newly translated Scriptures can be read, understood, and applied.

Pam and Valerie added valuable perspectives on mission work and every day life, and discussed how missionary kids are educated overseas and what kind of living situations a missionary could expect once on the field.

“I’m now extremely well informed... both because of the sessions and because of the interaction with missionaries,” one participant said. “We got a real taste of what I, as a missionary, might do...what training is like, what day to day life is like.... not just photos and videos,” said another. “Now I’ve got a much greater understanding of what missionary life is like and what it takes.... it’s exactly what I need to help me decide.”

If you are interested in learning more about serving overseas with LBT, IDIOM provides an excellent opportunity to gain firsthand knowledge of the ministry of Bible translation. It is held every year and is specifically geared toward people who have a heart for missions and want to learn more about what it takes to be a missionary with LBT. Six of this year’s attendees requested applications to LBT after their experience at IDIOM. Another four are seriously considering taking that first step.

God has blessed LBT this year through the wonderful people He raised up at IDIOM. If you want to be a part of next year’s IDIOM event, contact LBT’s recruitment staff by calling 800-532-4253 or send an email to Recruiter@LBT.org 

Vuté New Testament to be Dedicated

The Vuté New Testament will be dedicated in Yoko, Cameroon on December 2, 2007. The dedication will be the culmination of a process that began in 1970, when the Cameroon Bible Society first began to explore the possibility of translating Scripture into the Vuté language.

LBT’s involvement with the translation began when missionaries Jim and Pam Maxey moved to the village of Yoko in 1992. Now, the Maxeys are joyfully making preparations to attend the dedication ceremonies.

Please mark December 2 on your calendars, and celebrate with us as God’s Word comes to the Vuté people in their heart language.



Changing the Change

by Paul and Ali Federwitz

Just when you start to get the hang of something, they change it on you. The money here in Ghana is called the “cedi.” As an estimate, there are approximately 10,000 cedis to \$1 U.S. To put that into perspective, 10,000 cedis can buy two apples or one small pineapple or a loaf of bread. Recently the government decided to change the money system in order to simplify it.

Four zeros were removed from the cedi so that 10,000 cedis is now 1 cedi and is much closer in value to the U.S. dollar. Anything smaller than 1 cedi is now a coin called a pesewa. It will be a much simpler way of buying and selling



but it is still confusing during this time of transition. Until the end of the year, both the old and new currency is legal tender. It is not uncommon to pay or receive change in a mixture of the old and the new. 📖

Paul and Ali Federwitz recently began their first assignment with LBT in Ghana, Paul as Information Technology Consultant and Trainer, and Ali as Missionary Children’s Education Advisor.

Rev. Walter DeMoss to Retire from LBT after 16 Years of Service

Rev. Walter DeMoss, Director of Program Ministries since 2000, will retire from Lutheran Bible Translators at the end of 2007.

Rev. DeMoss joined LBT in 1991. He served as Congregational Representative Coordinator and Director of Support Ministries before becoming Director of Program Ministries. For the past seven years, Rev. DeMoss has overseen the work of LBT missionaries and associate missionaries in the U.S. and overseas.



Rev. Walt DeMoss met with Rev. Kombate Bigbi at the LBT Service Center in June

Initially from Pittsburgh, Rev. DeMoss graduated from Valparaiso University in 1964 and was ordained a minister in 1968 after graduating from Concordia Theological Seminary, Springfield, Illinois (now Fort Wayne). He and his wife, Helena, then served as missionaries in Ghana and Togo.

“Those familiar with LBT’s mission and work have long recognized and appreciated the devoted guidance, effort and contribution Walt has made to our mission over the past 16 years,” Marshall Gillam, LBT Executive Director said.

Giving Going Up!

by Rick Allmon



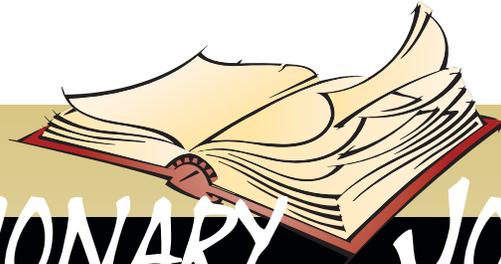
Rick Allmon

The Global economy affects us all. Over the last several months, we’ve heard a lot about the rising price of gas, the sluggish housing market, the uncertain value of the U.S. dollar, the cost of college tuition, healthcare, and everyday living. The list goes on and on. And each day, it becomes increasingly more challenging to live on the income that is available to us.

Ministry expenses are really no different. Our missionaries also take a hit. International travel, reliable in-country transportation, the costs of educating and training professionals for Bible translation, the expenses of everyday living are on the rise for each of them as well. Nevertheless, God continues to bless LBT with generous donors who support God’s ministry with gifts so that God’s Word is made available to people around the world.

So why have contributions been so strong this past year? Some suggest that the tragedy of 9/11, the terrible tsunami in Indonesia, and the devastating hurricanes in the southeast have sensitized people and reignited the human need to be caring and compassionate to those less fortunate. Others suggest that the transfer of wealth from the World War II generation to the Baby Boomers is fueling the influx. Personally, I’m not sure what to think.

Whatever the theorists come up with, it is our heartfelt feeling at LBT that the Lord is blessing the work of His people. Our goal is to significantly increase the number of missionaries over the next several years, adding to the number of projects, and ultimately helping to bring more people to faith in Jesus Christ. The increase in giving makes sense to us, because it is through God that all things are possible. We believe that it is God’s desire that all people everywhere should know the love of Jesus Christ and be saved. Thank *you* for responding to God’s call to give. 📖



MISSIONARY JOURNAL

A Meeting of the Chiefs

by Rev. Nathan and Sarah Esala

A constant concern and focus of the work we are doing is spreading the vision among the Komba people. While we as missionaries may bring an element of skill and expertise, it is their language that is being developed and that will benefit them. So 100 chiefs from our language group were invited to attend an informational meeting on August 18. That morning it rained (again!). However, what was distinctive about this rain was the quantity and length of time it fell. It just kept coming. We had swift currents flowing through our yard. The river by our house flooded. It was by far the biggest rain we'd ever seen since moving to Ghana. We expected that the terrible road to Gbintiri where the meeting was to be held might even be impassible. Should Nathan go?

After consulting with our friend, Elisha Yajim, who is the vice chairman of the language committee, Nathan went to the meeting, putting our 4-wheel drive to good use. The meeting got started around 2:30 pm. Despite the terrible travel conditions (remember, these people weren't coming in 4-wheel drive vehicles but by motorcycle and market transportation), about 20 chiefs or their representatives showed up. There was one man, Mr. James Wajack, the area supervisor for teachers, who has been very active in promoting the Komba language project. He was in the district capital (40 km away) the morning of the meeting and actually drove to his home village to pick up his chief and then on to the meeting in Gbintiri. At the meeting he gave a stirring speech. This meeting was very encouraging to us and we pray will yield more interest and support among the Komba.

Rev. Nathan and Sarah Esala serve in translation ministry among the Komba people of Ghana.

Need More Information?

Return this coupon to:

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Lutheran Bible Translators, 303 N Lake Street, PO Box 2050,
Aurora, IL 60507-2050
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Scripture Song Workshops A New Approach

by Kedra Larsen

I recently returned from my first trip to Nigeria where I worked with fellow LBT missionaries Ed and Wilma Rupprecht. Scripture song workshops were held in the Bokyi, Yala, and Kukele language areas. I usually begin workshops with an overview of what the Bible says about music (how we are to sing a new song to the Lord, how we can praise God and share the Gospel through music). Then I move into discussing some of the types of Bible passages the group can use to make new songs, putting the verses into categories (praise, evangelism, encouragement, etc). This time I tried a different approach and focused specifically on worship and developing music for the church service.

I learned this new approach while taking a class called “Worship and Culture”, part of my studies for my master’s degree in ethnomusicology. I was initially a bit disappointed in the class when I realized we would essentially be doing a Bible study on worship rather than examining how Christians in other cultures worship God. However, I ended up finding several new tools to use in my song workshops.

Often we assume that Christians attend church and worship God with the same overall attitudes and knowledge of what worship is. When I asked the workshop participants in Nigeria “what is worship?” most said that worship is the act of praising God. While this is correct, worship in reality is so much more.

Worship glorifies God. It takes place in the very presence of God. It is fellowship with God and is also a lifestyle.

During the workshops in Nigeria, we took a look at how various people in the Bible worshiped God. We then read Isaiah 6:1-9, the call of Isaiah to serve the Lord, and examined the passage verse by verse. This preparation



Participants at the Yala workshop practicing a song

showed us that worship is actually composed of seven steps, beginning when God initiates worship by revealing Himself to us, and culminating in our going out into the world to be witnesses for Him.

After this Bible study, the participants began composing songs using Bible verses that directly applied to the seven parts of worship. It didn’t take long to produce results! The wife of the Bokyi pastor astounded me by composing song after song practically instantaneously. Those working in groups composed a total of 46 new Scripture songs, all of which were recorded on cassette and CD. The songs were put to use the following Sunday at a Kukele church the Rupprechts and I attended. They were introduced by the song leader and sung by the congregation at the appropriate places during the worship service.

As a result of these workshops, several Lutheran pastors and lay leaders said they could use help putting music to their spoken liturgy. This may turn into a future project for me. Meanwhile, I’ll continue to flesh out this new approach, adapting it to fit different situations. 



The newly composed Kukele songs were sung during Sunday service

Kedra Larsen is LBT’s ethnomusicologist. Based at the LBT Service Center, she makes frequent trips overseas to work with various language groups.

“Mother Tongue”

Continued from page 1

raising awareness and mobilizing people and resources to address Liberia’s education needs. She has been assisted in her efforts by Drs. Dennis and Susan Malone, authorities in the field of mother tongue learning. The Malones, along with Alvina and members of LIBTRALO, were part of a select group who had an audience with President Johnson Sirleaf at the beginning of July. After the audience, Alvina was informed that she was to be honored for her work.

On July 24, Alvina was awarded Dame Grand Commander of the Humane Order of African Redemption during a national investiture ceremony held before a large group of foreign and Liberian dignitaries during the Liberian Independence Day observation.

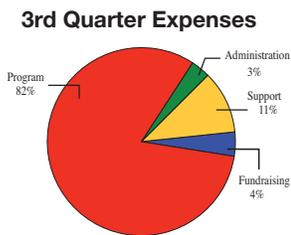
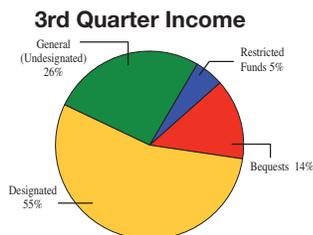
Alvina has been a missionary in Liberia for almost 34 years. She and her late husband, Rev. Dale Federwitz, began their work in Liberia in 1974. They were first assigned to Bible translation with the Mandingo people, and then to advise the Kuwaa translation and literacy project. Today, Alvina continues to serve as a Scripture Use and literature development advisor in Liberia and as the LBT Representative to LIBTRALO.

“Being honored in such an elaborate ceremony is a privilege,” Alvina said. “It’s my hope that God received the glory and that His Kingdom here continues to grow as a result of our Bible translation, Literacy and Scripture Use efforts.” 

LBT Partnership Support

July 1, 2007 — September 30, 2007

	Unaudited 3rd Quarter	Unaudited Year-to-date
INCOME		
Designated	\$438,475	\$1,368,095
General (Undesignated)	211,583	835,681
Restricted Funds	40,280	121,813
Bequests	109,319	524,183
<u>Endowments</u>	<u>(2,767)</u>	<u>175,391</u>
Total Income	\$796,891	\$3,025,164



EXPENSES		
Program	\$740,266	\$2,474,754
General & Administration	29,867	94,968
Support	97,009	339,746
<u>Fundraising</u>	<u>37,203</u>	<u>103,378</u>
Total Expenses	\$904,346	\$3,012,848

NOTE: During the third quarter of 2007, LBT was able to purchase five lap top computers, three missionary vehicles, a Risograph machine for Nigeria and paint the outside of the Service Center building. These expenditures totaled \$76,801 and are not reflected in the amounts shown above.

CUT HERE

Birthdays

DECEMBER			
2	Allen Larsen Guatemala	24	Josiah Kinney (1995) United States
6	Hailey Konrad (2005) United States	30	Matthew Konrad (1995) United States
JANUARY			
9	Larry Johnson United States	1	Micah Kaiser (1986) United States
9	Jill Boylan Namibia	6	Karen Tessaro Nigeria
11	Cindy Buhrke United States	7	Wilma Rupprecht Nigeria
12	Rachelle Buhrke (1993) United States	11	Erin Kinney (1991) United States
14	Paul Federwitz Ghana	12	Joe Dunsey Service Center Staff
18	Joan Weber Cameroon	13	Norman Price United States
19	Moses Schroeder (2006) Nigeria	14	Mike Buhrke Service Center Staff
22	Thomas Larsen (1997) Guatemala	14	Michael Elliott Service Center Staff
25	John Davies Papua New Guinea	15	Alvina Federwitz Ghana/Liberia
		20	Tim Boylan (1996) Namibia
		22	David Federwitz Ghana
		24	Karen Campbell Service Center Staff
		FEBRUARY	
		2	Phillip Buhrke (1996) United States
		3	Susan Kaiser United States
		16	Cindy Rodewald Botswana
		17	Michael Megahan Botswana
		19	Matthew Boylan (1993) Namibia
		23	Donald Jensen United States
		27	Mary Gruell Guatemala
		27	Wendi Schroeder Nigeria

FOLD

How Sweet the Name of Jesus Sounds

Continued from page 2

At its most elemental level, being a pastor in Togo is not that much different from being a pastor anywhere else. "A good day is when I am well prepared and give a good sermon... and when, with God's help, I can respond to half the problems that confront me," Rev. Kombate says. "A bad day is when I am not prepared and can't respond to the needs of the people who come to me for help."

Like most pastors, Rev. Kombate does not have a lot of time to reflect on the past. He is too busy preparing for the future: proofing drafts of the Moba New Testament, serving his flock through ministry, conducting church business and working to set up literacy programs among his people so that more of them can hear and understand the "sweet" Good News of Salvation through faith in Jesus Christ.

Gift Designations

Your gifts in support of Mission Projects and Programs are applied to the designated project or program. When a designated project is fully funded, surplus funds are applied to comparable projects. When a designated program is fully funded, surplus funds are applied to the General Fund.

CUT HERE

LBT MISSIONARY Currents

Prayer partnership is the backbone of this ministry. Here are several prayer concerns for which we ask your support. May God bless you abundantly!

BOTSWANA

■ Praise God for the July 30th birth of **Andrew Alexander Beckendorf**, son of missionaries Rev. Tim and Lisa Beckendorf. The Beckendorfs are returning to Botswana this month after a short furlough in the U.S.

ceremony: **Marshall Gillam, Walt DeMoss, Rick Allmon, the Maxey family**, and a group from the Maxeys' home church, Nazareth Lutheran Church in Cedar Falls, Iowa.

GHANA

■ Pray for **Paul and Ali Federwitz**, who are expecting their second child in March.

CAMEROON

■ Praise God for the completion of the **Vuté New Testament**. Pray for the LBT delegates attending the December 2 dedication

INTERNATIONAL

■ Pray for **Iraqi Christians**, who are facing increasing hostility and persecution.



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A Canadian edition of this newspaper is published by Lutheran Bible Translators of Canada, Box 934, Kitchener, Ontario N2G 4E3. Lutheran Bible Translators is an independent mission group, founded in 1964, which is dedicated to helping bring people to faith in Jesus Christ by making the Word of God available to those who do not yet have it in the language of their hearts. It is the only Lutheran organization totally devoted to this specialized ministry. LBT actively recruits Lutherans to serve as Bible translators, literacy or vernacular media specialists and support missionaries. The LBT ministry is supported by the prayers and contributions of fellow Christians. It is not subsidized by any church body or sponsoring agency.

Executive Director: Dr. Marshall R. Gillam



Want more information about translation, Scripture Use, or LBT's ministry in a specific country? Sign up to receive one or more prayer letters from LBT missionaries. Call Karen Campbell at 1-800-532-4253 for more details.

Pray for LBT's International Scholarship Recipients: Zhang Li, Lamin Kargbo, Samuel Cooper, and Eugène Kpengapsé.

LIBERIA

Praise God that the Liberian Ministry of Education is supportive of beginning Liberian children's education in their Mother Tongue.

Pray for Alvina Federwitz, LIBTRALO and the 16 Liberian language associations as they prepare learning materials in Liberian languages.

SIERRA LEONE

Praise God that the summer elections held in Sierra Leone were peaceful. Pray that the country can continue to rebuild and remain safe enough for LBT missionaries to return there.

TOGO

Praise God for Moba translators Bigbi and Lanbon, who completed a read-through of the Moba New Testament proofs. Continue to pray for the New Testament through the rest of the printing process.



UNITED STATES

Praise God for Rev. Walt DeMoss's 16 years of ministry with LBT. Walt retires December 31st.

Praise God for LBT's newest missionary, Ruth Lee, who began service with LBT in September. She begins advance linguistic training in January.

Continue to pray for LBT's missionaries who have medical concerns: Ed and Mary Fox, Stan McMillen, Erin Kinney, Joan Weber, Carl Knight, and Rev. Terry Borchard.

Give praise for the August 7th birth of Natalie Rose Konrad, daughter of Mark and Patty Konrad.

Pray for expectant mother Valerie Federwitz, due in February. She and husband David are currently on furlough from their Scripture Use assignment in Ghana.

Pray for Rev. Chuck and Karen Tessaro, who are returning to the field after furlough. Also pray for Rev. Michael and Jo Ann Megahan, and Alvina Federwitz, who are just beginning their furloughs.

