

Update Kieviet family – March 2018



The Lika translation team



The town of Isiro

Dear friends,

We wrote our last English update a year ago: early March 2017. Reading back that letter I see we had an early spring after a mild winter. This year, things are slightly different: after a couple of months of mild weather, winter made a late appearance with clear skies and cold east winds, and this week people are ice-skating on the canals and smaller rivers.

The girls are having a much-needed week off. Mattie (almost 18 now) is counting down the weeks until her final exams in May. This autumn she plans to start a BA in Languages and Cultures of the Ancient Near East in Leiden – kind of the same program Paulus started in 1993. Nina (just turned 16) will have one more year to go

In December last year, Antje finished her studies in Counselling. For now she continues to work in the Personnel department of Wycliffe Netherlands. It's a great relief not to have to squeeze in time for study any more!

For me, 2017 was a year of many trips (involving all continents except South America). In May I travelled to Isiro, in the

northeast of D.R. Congo, to help the Lika translation team with the last books of the New Testament. It was quite an experience to spend a few weeks in an African city and it was a privilege to work with the Lika team.

In July I spent a week in Honiara (Solomon Islands) for a linguistic conference on Oceanic languages, giving a paper about some aspects of the grammar of Rapa Nui.

Then in October I had the privilege to attend the Bible Translation Conference in Dallas. This biennial conference is the largest gathering of people involved in Bible Translation: around 500 translators, consultants, leaders and academics all interested in translating the Word of God. Apart from hearing many interesting talks (and giving one myself), it was good to meet people from all over the world, including people from the Pacific.

November involved a short trip to Brisbane, for meetings of SIL people in the Pacific. This has to do with a change in my role: since November I have started as Director of the Pacific Group. This group includes the five teams of SIL people working in Micronesia and Polynesia. This

means I will get somewhat more involved in the work happening in Micronesia; in May, Antje and I hope to travel to Guam to visit the teams there.

In the meantime, the translation projects are moving forward. Last year we told you about **Niuafu'ou** translator Sitiveni Tu'ilautala. Niuafu'ou is the only minority language in the Kingdom of Tonga. The Niuafu'ou translation project had been going on for some years, but the team kept struggling to make progress. In 2016 Sitiveni retired from his job and started to do full-time translation work. By the end of 2016 the first draft of the New Testament had been finished. I started working with him to check the text; by now we have gone through about 60% of the New Testament, making many improvements. As with most projects, this is distance work: Sitiveni works from his home in Tonga, while I stay in the Netherlands. Thanks to a contribution of the Isles of the Sea project, Sitiveni has internet at home, so digital communication is easy. We are both very grateful for progress made over the past two years. Pray for Sitiveni and his team as they work on improving the translation; it is often challenging for the team to find time together.

The **Nukuoro** project in Micronesia is going forward as well. Translator Betty

Amon lives on Guam, while the rest of the team is on Pohnpei. Over the past months, Betty has been entering many, many corrections suggested by the team; she hopes to finish the last books soon. Then the text will be given to the team once more for a last readthrough. In the meantime, I have started to go through the text for a second time as well. (I checked the first books in 2011, and many changes have been made to the text since then.) The second check is not as thorough as the first one: instead of two or three chapters, I now do eight or ten chapters per day. Please pray for health for Betty and her team; please also pray for Betty when she visits the team later between March 18–27: that she will have a fruitful visit and good meetings with the team.

One more piece of news: over the last months of 2017 I typeset the **Rapa Nui** New Testament (Easter Island). It is ready to go to the printer, except that some administrative details are holding things up for the moment. Please pray that these will be resolved soon, so that the translation can be printed.

All the best!

Antje and Paulus, Mattie and Nina



The river behind our house: Friday afternoon...



...and Saturday morning