



Wilkinsons' News

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Dear friends,

Last time we wrote, the summer holidays were beginning and we were preparing for our first rainy season in Thiès. Now the last rain was several weeks ago and the boys have been back at school for a while.

Thank you for your prayers for us over the summer. We managed to juggle our various responsibilities and were grateful that David's workload wasn't overly heavy, despite several key colleagues being away for a few months. One of the highlights of the summer for Joel and Isaac was the opportunity for them to go away on a church kids camp for a few days based right on the beach front. They particularly enjoyed learning several French memory verse songs, as well as eating copious amounts of rice. Bedtime at nearly midnight was a bit of a shock for them but it was a great experience. Just prior to that, we'd had a few days holiday together finding out what the beaches near here are like in comparison to the Casamance (more people, fewer cows) and enjoyed our time away.



Joel & Isaac at camp

In September, David was invited to Dakar to participate in the closing ceremony for an event training people in trauma healing. This course is based on a curriculum developed by SIL colleagues and is used around the world in war zones and refugee camps to help participants have a biblical understanding of suffering. Thankfully most of our participants haven't experienced this kind of trauma, but the reality is that nearly everybody has experienced some kind of trauma in their life, whether loved ones dying, abuse or significant health issues etc., and God's word speaks into these situations. Our desire is to work with partners to expand this training to churches across Senegal, and to help translate the training into local languages.



The 27th September was International Sign Languages Day and David again travelled to Dakar to represent SIL at a celebration being held at a Christian deaf school. It was impressive to see how much work goes into giving deaf students a quality education through signing so that they can read and write in French and improve their job prospects. But the main reason for going was to start exploring whether there is a need for Bible translation in a Senegalese sign language. Sign languages are far from a universal means of communication. In fact it's estimated that there are over 200 sign languages worldwide, so we're looking into what might be needed here.

During the half-term holidays, David took the opportunity to take the boys to visit Beersheba, a Christian agricultural project that combines teaching sustainable farming methods with discipleship training, and a strong emphasis on local languages. The boys enjoyed seeing all the farm animals and David appreciated talking with those who lead the project about possibilities for working together more to encourage Scripture use.

David's work isn't all about visits of course, there are many day to day tasks to keep on top of, as well as helping to shape the focus of SIL Senegal. Recently he led a couple of days of Vision & Strategy meetings. These meetings are made up of 3 elected colleagues and 2 members chosen by David, in this case a pastor in Dakar and a strategist from another Christian organisation with a lot of experience in Senegal. Praise God for the clear direction that we got from this time of reflection. We are now seeking to appoint a Senegalese worker to help us to listen to the needs of the local church and to consider how we can respond. Pray that God would lead us to the right candidate.



The boys at Beersheba

Meanwhile, these last couple of months have been an incredibly busy period for Janet. It's normally the busiest time of the year anyway because the financial year ends in September. However, this year there has been the added challenge of adapting to new finance software with some completely different processes to follow and helping colleagues through these changes too. Janet will be happy to submit the final year end documents at the end of this week, but is all too aware that there is plenty of other work to catch up on then. Please pray for perseverance and energy for her, as well as attention to detail.

As a final prayer point, David will be involved in some delicate meetings on Thursday 21st November as a variety of partners continue to seek to move forward in finding solutions to copyright issues that are holding up the publication of the Bible in a widely-spoken language. We'd be grateful for your prayers for wisdom and unity.

Love,

David, Janet, Joel, Isaac & Theo

Praise God :

- For clear guidance from the Vision & Strategy meetings.
- For the encouragements of hearing how God is at work through many different ministries.
- For the range of opportunities our boys are able to experience here.

Pray:

- For perseverance and energy for Janet at this busy time for her.
- For wisdom and a path forward with the copyright discussions.
- That God would lead us to the right person to appoint for the church relations role.



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