

Meetto Translation Interview with the Talbotts, Part 1

John H: Well, Corinne, thank you for joining us here. It's just past 7:30 in the morning on Monday, September 28 here in Highlands Ranch/Littleton, Colorado.

Corinne Talbott, you are in Mozambique, I understand?

Corinne T: That's right. We, the Talbott family – we live in Marrupa, and I am now in Lichinga, which is the city four hours west. This is where we have our SIM office, and we come in here about once a month to – for communication and fellowship and groceries and lots of different things.

So I'm actually at our SIM office here, and it is a very warm Monday afternoon here. It's 3:30 here.

John H: So you are about eight hours ahead of Mountain Time and about six hours ahead of Eastern Time in the United States.

Corinne T: That's right.

John H: And could you spell the names – both of the town where you live and where you are so we can find them on a map?

Corinne T: Right, very good. Marrupa is M-A-R-R-U-P-A. And then Lichinga – I'm in the town of Lichinga right now, and that's L-I-C-H-I-N-G-A.

We're in the north-western part of Mozambique and in the Nyasa Province.

So the town of Marrupa – as you're looking at the map of Mozambique, the town of Marrupa is halfway between Lake Malawi, which is a huge lake, and the ocean. So it's pretty easy to find there. Just up in the north. There's really not much between us and Tanzania and then halfway between those two big bodies of water.

John H: And then Lichinga is, you said, four hours west, but that's by car?

Corinne T: That's right. There's quite a good road, actually, at the moment. It's a fairly new road, so one of the best roads in Mozambique you could even say. But to the east of us – I say we're halfway between. We can't even go east because there's no road at all to the east. I shouldn't say "no road at all." There's a track. And we have done it before, but you have to do it only when there's been absolutely no rain and anyway.

- John H: So how fast can you drive on the new highway there?
- Corinne T: Well, often when we come into Lichinga, we don't see any other cars until we get within 30 kilometers of Lichinga. So we can go – we do everything in kilometers here – So we drive 100 kilometers an hour.
- John H: So that's about 65 miles per hour, I believe. Something like that.
- Corinne T: Yeah, and totally – like I said – not seeing any other cars. And if we do see any other cars, we know the people.
- John H: Wow, so it's about 400 kilometers based on what you said. It's four hours, so 100 kilometers an hour. It's 400 kilometers west.
- Corinne T: Yeah, I think it's 360 – something like that.
- John H: All right, so you – I understand you're a Sonlight family.
- Corinne T: That's right, that's right. And being here in the city today, there are quite a few Sonlight families that come into Lichinga for fellowship and supplies and so forth. So all the other families are very excited also that we're doing this. We are the only ones with the Meetto people.
- Where we are in Marrupa, we're on the very western edge of the Meetto, and so the rest are more to the east of us, whereas around Lichinga, the main people group is the Yao. And they are also a mostly unreached group.
- So we have quite a few families who are out in the bush with the Yao people and with the Meetto people. And we were trying to count up. We think there may be as many as ten Sonlight families in the Nyasa Province right now. So we're all very excited about this. Yeah, anyway – most of – I think nine families with the Yao people and one family with the Meetto people is how it works.
- John H: Thank you for actually pronouncing that for me. I – and I think everybody else at the office and even the people with The Seed Company – had always assumed it was *Mee - toe*. But it's *May - toe*.
- Corinne T: Yeah, well. See, that's a funny thing even here in Mozambique because we all speak so many different languages, and I speak Meetto. And that's – if you're actually speaking it, you say Imeetto [*Ee-may-toe*], but – so I'm sort of trying to change it a little bit into English. But when you speak Portuguese, Portuguese is the trade language and the language of education in Mozambique. And they say [unclear], and so even here, we hear

lots of different things, but if you're actually speaking a language, it's Imeetto – Meetto.

And the people – so the language is different than the name of the people. The language is Imeetto and the people are Meetto.

John H: Oh, okay. So the language is Imeetto, but the people name is Meetto. And that would be kind of like the end of *tomato* – *tomato*, so – . . . But you also soften the “t” a little bit because it’s a soft “t” – Meetto.

Corinne T: That’s right. [The “t” sound] is halfway between a “t” and a “d.”

John H: Okay. Can you tell us a little about your family? How many children and maybe how long have you been there in Mozambique?

Corinne T: Sure, Bob and I have three kids. Donna is 15, Lincoln is 14 and Graham is 12. And we first came to Mozambique in 2000. But we were down in the capital helping with flood relief. You may remember all the horrible floods that were happening in Mozambique about that time.

We were down in the capital of Maputo for a year, and then we were up in the north doing survey work of seeing which tribes – who were the neediest people and where were the neediest places. We did that for a year and then ended up settling in Marrupa with the Meetto people in 2003.

John H: Wow, when you say you surveyed people to see who were the most needy, what does that mean? What does that look like?

Corinne T: We were looking both at spiritual needs and also just basic human need at that point, but we were looking to see are there churches in the different areas? Are there people doing outreach – both national evangelists and expatriate missionaries? What kind of resources are available to people?

You may know that Mozambique had many, many years of civil war. They had a difficult time getting independences and then many years of civil war. And after the war stopped in '92, they've really done quite well at developing the country, but most of that has happened down close to Maputo. And Mozambique is a long skinny country, and up here in the north, a lot of that just hasn't come up here too much yet or is just now reaching up here.

So a lot of just basic human need, but also in terms of spiritual outreach – yeah, we still have some people groups that are mostly unreached. In other words, when I say mostly unreached, there's

not much of a church presence yet. Not many believers and just a few scattered believers who have very little fellowship.

John H: And is that case with the Meetto?

Corinne T: Yes, the Meetto – how I described to you the road situation – we are on the – in the Nyasa Province, we are on the western side of the Meetto, and then they extend over east into the Cabo Delgado Province. And they kind of – there’s just very little – you can get through on a bicycle part of the year, you can walk, but it’s not easy to get from one side of the group to the other. And even coming this way, it’s only been the last couple of years that you could come this way. So they were pretty isolated, and even groups of them were isolated from each other.

And it seems that the church is becoming a little better established on the eastern side of things over in Cabo Delgado, and that’s where the Bible translation project is happening over in Balama – east of us. Whereas, over in this area, the Meetto are still mostly Muslim and much like the Yao people who are their next door neighbors basically.

So it’s still the case, but there are glimmers of hope, and there are some – a few people who are believing and growing. So we’re excited about that.

John H: You went over and you’re not in – I understand you are not part of Wycliffe or The Seed Company. You mentioned you went to the SIM headquarters there. So are you with SIM?

Corinne T: Yes, we are SIM missionaries. SIM and Wycliffe have a lot in common in that we’re both non-denominational evangelical missions. We kind of consider each other as brothers and sisters. We get along very well and are very like-minded. It seems that they do the Bible translation and the literacy, and we do the church work and discipleship.

So we’re very compatible and it works really well to work together, but the guys that are doing the translation in Balama were trained by the Iseminger family who are an SIL family. Well, maybe you already know that Wycliffe is how they are known in the US, and then in other countries, Wycliffe is known as SIL, which is – I’m going blank.

John H: Summer Institute of Linguistics.

Corinne T: Thank you. I was thinking in Portuguese. I was trying to translate it from Portuguese to English. Anyway, but John and Susan and their kids lived in a village outside of Balama and learned the

language and started the translation, and now they're doing work – more overall consulting work within SIL. And they've left the project with the Mozambiquan men there in Balama, and they're doing a great job.

We just went to visit them – the guys in Balama who are doing the translation. We were there in July, and it's just really fun to see that. That's actually only our second time we've been there in all these years just because, like I say, it's not easy to get there. You can go around, but it's a three-day trip.

John H: Three *days*? If you were going – driving straight or flying over – how far away is it?

Corinne T: It's 160 kilometers.

John H: But it takes three days because you have to drive so far out of the way. And the roads are so poor.

Corinne T: Well, when we can go through, it only took us five hours to go that far. But that was in total dry season. We could do it still now, but as soon as there's a rain, you couldn't make it.

John H: And why –

Corinne T: And that's with a Land Rover.

John H: Why does rain make it so hard?

Corinne T: It's very sandy in there, and it just becomes a marsh.

John H: I think so many of these kinds of experiences that you're describing are simply out of the range of knowledge of those of us who have always lived our lives here in the United States.

I guess there are a few such areas in the United States and maybe some Sonlighters will think I'm strange to say such a thing, but I would imagine, for the majority of us, that just seems impossible.

When you all first did your survey work and moved to live amongst the Meetto back in 2003, what was the – what were your living circumstances like? What was the spiritual situation there? And I guess I'm asking that question partially in anticipation of has there been much change in the meantime? And not that there needs to be, I'm just curious because time moves on and things do change – maybe slowly, maybe rapidly.

Corinne T: All right, well, that's a lot to answer there. Let me just get started with it.

When we moved to Marrupa in 2003, at that time they were saying Marrupa had about 12,000 people, and now it probably has 20,000. So we're talking about a big town, but when we first moved there, it felt like a big village because it wasn't – there was no – actually, you still can't buy fuel there. There's no running water. There's electricity – a little bit of electricity. They have a generator that runs sometimes.

So there are many people, but yet more like a huge village, but before we arrived, some of our SIM colleagues – we were on home assignment in the states for a year. And during that time, some of our friends went up there and got an old Portuguese house ready for us – a row house that's connected to other houses around.

So we moved up there, but because Marrupa is the big town for quite a huge area – in fact, it's the biggest market all the way up north to Tanzania. You actually have quite a few people who come in for their jobs. Like there's a clinic – there was a clinic at that point. Now there's even a hospital, and so we had some nurses who came in to work at that clinic, some teachers, director of the jail – different people like that.

And when we moved to Marrupa, those were mostly the Christians. There were three little churches in town – three different denominations, but all evangelical. And so we decided that rather than planting a church, it was best to work within those churches. At that point, there were no pastors, and no one, really, with Bible training. And so we worked within those churches disciplining leadership, working with leaders, and then together trying to reach the Meetto.

One thing that's been hard is that because people – because the believers in town have come for their jobs, they tend to be there for a couple years and then move on. So we – discipling people and then they move on and then other people come.

So you can see things happening there, but it's a slow process because those churches are transient kind of churches. And some of them have done better than others at actually doing that outreach to the Meetto people. We started a radio program that goes out to the villages around. We do a conference every year where we bring people in from the villages that the few believers who are out there to come in and have some teaching. And then we do some different seminars with the leaders.

There are now four – well, actually, even when we arrived, there were three churches out in the village, and now there are four. And those are the churches that truly are Meetto churches. And

like I said, when you get over into Cabo Delgado Province over by Balama area where the translation is being done, there are more churches out in the villages. I should've tried to get some numbers on that.

But anyway, there's more happening there, although it's still – boy, there's a huge need for prayer. It's especially in the leadership. There are very few Meetto leaders still at this point. Okay?

John H: Okay, some of the things that you said are, again, almost beyond my comprehension. You said that Marrupa is a big town. When you first arrived about 12,000 people – now about 20,000. It's the biggest market in northern Mozambique, and yet – this is where I have a hard time imagining. You said there's no fuel. So like there's no gasoline, no water, and you have to have a hospital, and you've got 20,000 people living there. How does that even work?

Corinne T: Yeah, that's right. I need to explain, don't I?

John H: Well, I don't know – hard to understand.

Corinne T: Yeah, okay. In terms of fuel – when we got to Marrupa, there were really just a few cars. And then trucks will come in from the cities – there's a city to the south – about a five hour drive and then, of course, over here in Lichinga. And so there's not exactly public transportation, but trucks will come in with some supplies, and then people could ride those trucks back. And now there's actually a little – a couple vans that go back.

So people will bring in fuel – just in jugs.

John H: Fifty gallon –

Corinne T: No, no, small – and then sell it by the side of the road.



[I realized I saw what Corinne was talking about back in early 2007 when I visited northern Iraq. —John]

But we don't buy that because sometimes it's watered down, so we just buy fuel in the city and then bring it in – is what we do. And pretty much everybody that has a vehicle – that's what they would do.

It's changing – Marrupa's changing by the minute. They're actually building a fuel station. So it will change. It's happening, but in terms of water, Marrupa is up on a ridge, and because of it being up on a ridge, it's a very nice climate, but it is very hard to get water. And so people walk quite a ways to get down to the streams around, and then there are a few wells in Marrupa, but boy, not enough.

Sometimes right before the rains come, people will fight about water. They'll be waiting in line at that well. Just somebody cuts in line or they get frustrated and – water is just difficult in Marrupa and nobody has come up with a good solution for it yet.

And electricity – yeah, there's a town generator, and they have night classes at the school, and so sometimes they'll run it in the evening for a couple of hours while the school needs it and then it's off.

John H: Wow, so then you also mentioned there were three churches. And I'm going to assume because I think you clarified this later on. These churches exist in the town, but they're not Meetto churches.

Corinne T: Right.

John H: These are churches of people maybe like you, expatriates or –

Corinne T: Oh, no, no, no. No, sorry – no, not expatriates. In fact, we're the only protestant expatriates in town. We do have some nuns and some priests, and then there are some Spanish people who are there for an NGO, and they come for just a short time and then they leave.

So, no, there are never as many as ten expatriates in Marrupa at a time. The churches are people from other tribes who have – who come in. The Meetto people are not as highly educated as some of the other people. They've resisted education a little more, and like I said, they are living about as far from the capital as you can live. And so education just hasn't reached up in this area so much. And so when people come in for these different government jobs, it tends to be people from other tribes and that's who mostly are in the churches.

But there are a few Meetto people, too. Of the three churches, the one – I don't know. The one is really not very Meetto at all, but the other two do have some Meetto people in the two churches.

John H: You used the term there – just for clarity for our listeners. You mentioned *NGO*, and that stands for *Non-Government Organization*. That would be pretty much – these would be different relief and non-profit kinds of organizations. Is that pretty accurate?

Corinne T: That's right, that's right, and we have one in Marrupa that has some foreigners working – the other folks from Spain. And they are working with agriculture – helping to improve agriculture. So they have two or three expatriates there, and yeah, they stay for a year or two, and then they go and others come.

John H: Okay, you said these three churches had no pastors. How do you have a church without a pastor? It sounds like this is a long-term thing. I mean, there are churches here in the states, too, who maybe temporarily don't have pastors, or I guess maybe they're more like home churches. Is that what you're talking about? Or this is – maybe you can explain that.

Corinne T: No, it's more that they came together, but didn't have anyone who had any kind of Bible training, and so they, between themselves, decided on leadership and take turns preaching, take turns teaching, but not really having anyone who definitely can take the leadership there. Two of the churches do have pastors right now.

John H: At this time.

- Corinne T: And then the third church has a leader, which for different complications, he's actually not considered a pastor, but he does lead and then a couple deacons. There is different leadership, but just not trained leadership. So within their denomination, they don't want to actually ordain them as a pastor until they're a little further along.
- John H: So your work – your family's work when you went there – you mentioned that you did survey work both spiritually, as well as physically. You mentioned that you all – I take it it was – this is part of your family's responsibility – the radio program. But what is your family's particular focus?
- Corinne T: Okay, let me give you a little bit of background there. My husband, Bob, has his Master's in public health and environmental health, and my background is social work. And we both had worked overseas some before and have done some community development work and different things.
- And we thought we would probably come in and use some sort of community development as the avenue to be able to do outreach and discipleship, but it's been very interesting in Marrupa that pretty much the doors have opened just to be traditional missionaries. And actually, it's not been so easy to work in health, and so it's just – yeah, it's been easier to be traditional missionaries and there's been an openness there.
- So we've really changed from what we thought we would be doing, but like I say, we've been doing a lot of leadership training and Bible teaching. And for me, personally, I've taught the kids. Sometimes I get to teach different women's groups, but building relationships. I mean, that's so much what we've done the whole time we've been there is build relationships with our Meetto neighbors, build relationships with the believers who are in town. That's what we're doing.
- John H: What – again, for the sake of our listeners, community development means?
- Corinne T: You know that Mozambique during the early '90s was considered one of, if not the, poorest countries in the whole world in terms of infant mortality and lots of different things because of so many years of war. And community development is just helping with basic needs – helping with agriculture, helping the communities to develop so that they can meet their own needs again.
- John H: Hmm, okay. So when you got there, I imagine you did not know Meetto or Imetto. And I don't know – it sounded like from what you said earlier, you know that language and you know

Portuguese, as well as your American English. How did you learn all these languages and when?

Corinne T: Yeah, well, that's pretty important as a missionary. Yeah, well, we – all of the SIM missionaries in Mozambique – we've all gone to Portugal before coming to Mozambique just because it's so vital to have Portuguese here. That would be the same in Angola. The different countries that were originally Portuguese colonies. Portuguese is such the trade language. That's the main language here that you really can't travel around or go anywhere without Portuguese.

So we went to Portugal for a year and a half in 1998 and 1999 to learn the language.

John H: And then Meetto – or Imeetto?

Corinne T: You can just say Meetto when we're speaking in English. Make it easier on you. Well, so after arriving in Marrupa, we saw quickly that Bob was going to end up working with the leaders who do speak Portuguese, and they tend to have lots of different dialects because Mozambique – boy. He'd be able to tell you how many languages are here in Mozambique, but I don't remember.

But anyway, the different ones who've come into Marrupa for their jobs speak many different languages, so they tend to speak together in Portuguese – the men do. And so we could see that Bob was able to use Portuguese and be translated as he went out to the villages. And he ended up settling into a lot of leadership training and discipling of leaders, and so it worked well to work together on any teaching that they did.

Whereas for me, I really haven't been able to find anyone who could translate me from Portuguese to Meetto. There just are very few women who can speak Portuguese. So it's just been – it's been necessary to learn Meetto. I'm not – I can teach in Meetto, but it's been a frustrating thing to me to not be as fluent in it as I am in Portuguese. Part of that is, like I say, the church situation is such that there are many languages represented there, and we're not in a pure Meetto. And I have many jobs – many hats that I wear.

John H: I'm struck by this division along gender lines that the men – it's as if as though the men can speak one language and their wives can't join them.

Corinne T: Yeah, if you go out to a Meetto village, there will – in the homes, they will speak Meetto, and even sitting around, they will speak Meetto. But then there will be a couple leaders in the village who

will speak good Portuguese who are more educated. And in town – again, Marrupa’s a town. It’s not – it isn’t a village. It doesn’t have the village dynamics, and so all those people who come in for their profession, they are more likely to speak Portuguese. And actually, their wives do, too. In the professional families – it’s Portuguese.

John H: Right, but should we say the common people, that’s not the way it is.

Corinne T: No, and again, there are mostly Muslim. It’s fairly nominal Islam, but the girls don’t go to school. Not too much. I mean, sometimes they do, but like my neighbor – the girls in the families that are neighbors to us really don’t go to school.

John H: So they will never learn to read, at least if they follow their tradition.

Corinne T: Right.

John H: Wow, talk to us a little bit about Bible translation. How important is this that people have it in the Meetto? I guess also considering the issues of illiteracy – how does that work?

Corinne T: Wow, we have been so excited to get those first four books in Meetto. We now have Genesis, Jonah, Mark and James. And it’s been this group – first Isemingers were helping, and then the three guys that have kept on going with it. And they’ve got those first few four done, and now to be able to use those to go out and teach with them has been so exciting.

I was with a group of women two weeks that none of them can speak a word of Portuguese and none can read a word. And I was reading to them, and we were talking about prayer and just bringing out different – being able to read to them from scripture in their language is so exciting. And they are so excited about it, too.

We – they have – as soon as they’ve translated something, they’ve recorded it. And see we – a lot of what we do around here is bring recordings to people of the translations. So it has to happen first. It has to be translated first, and then it can be recorded so all people can hear it. They don’t have to read it. They can hear it.

John H: Okay, I take it based on the capabilities – what you said about your own language capabilities – I’m sure you can read better than you could perhaps automatically speak that language.

Corinne T: That’s right.

- John H: So in some ways the translation increases your own – not fluency, but your own – the word escapes me.
- Corinne T: My ability to be able to share the word of God. To be able to really explain to them what the good news is all about. I can read scripture, and then we can together discuss what that means. And if they're not totally understanding me, they can say, "Is this what you mean?" And I can say, "Yes," and we can together figure out what those passages of scripture mean.
- John H: Interesting, okay. So you mentioned these four books, and Genesis I can kind of understand. Mark – I can kind of understand, but then Jonah and James?
- Corinne T: They started with Jonah. I understand that's pretty common for SIL to do that – to start with Jonah because it's a short book. It's a story, and it kind of – it's a good practice book. When they're doing translation it kind of gears them up for some of the harder stuff. And it actually – it's interesting how much you learn about God from the book of Jonah. It makes more sense than you might think.
- But Genesis – working with these people – well, actually, even the believers who come in from their churches, some of those groups only have the New Testament and even some of the other languages of Mozambique. And some of the first languages that were translated in Mozambique have only had the New Testament. And having Genesis is a huge thing. Again, working with Muslim people to be able to say, "Who is God?" He's the creator God, okay. But he is perfect. He is holy, and he wants relation with us, but we sinned and we're far from Him.
- Genesis is so important. We always teach Genesis first. Setting up our need for God – our need for a savior.
- John H: When did – you said these – you're so excited that these have come out. When did you receive these first four books?
- Corinne T: I got a – what do you call it? An example copy in January. So that was just the one copy. And then we got the – some boxes in maybe July. Yeah, I think it might have been July.
- John H: Wow, do you have any idea with the project that the Sonlighters are working towards, how quickly does something like this move forward? Do you know?
- Corinne T: I'm sorry, I really don't know. I can't really guess.

John H: Can you – as you think about your experience, which apparently, is not that long here since you only received a shipment of many copies in July and your very first copy in January. But have there been any situations where as you were reading this new translation where a particular passage or something kind of came alive in a way that you realized uniquely it wouldn't have been before the translation came out?

Corinne T: Trying to think of an example, yeah. Sorry, I was distracted there for a bit, too. You know, for me – again, we're working with a resistant group and even in those folks out in the villages, some of it's still curiosity. I think it might be hard to understand when you're back in the states. You often hear these wonderful stories about people coming to Christ so quickly, and I'm afraid both with the Yao people and the Meetto people who we're all working with here in northern Mozambique, that hasn't been the case. And it's one reason that they have – that they're not reached yet because they've been so resistant to the gospel.

John H: What does that mean that they're resistant?

Corinne T: Well, like they're so interested in hearing – they're like – I mean, I can go visit anyone anytime. It's not like they're rejecting me, but it's – they're like, "Now, what is it you believe? Oh, well, that's interesting." But you know they're kind of interested, but there's just so many barriers.

There somewhat nominally Muslim, and then they also still worship spirit. Well, they're still very afraid of the spirits and always doing sacrifices to the spirits. And they are – they just live in fear. Fear is a huge part of their lives. And they're afraid of ancestors. They think maybe they didn't treat them well, and so they need to go do more ceremonies. They're also afraid of curses from each other that if someone's mad at you, they're gonna go pay for a curse to be done on you.

So there's so many layers of the spiritual realm in their lives that it's like, "Oh, Jesus." Some people even think maybe I could just add him just to sort of cover all the bases. And we're like, "No, that's not what this is all about." And so you even have some people in the churches who are like, "Well, I'm interested in this," but it's so hard for them to let go and for them to truly understand repentance and salvation.

So it just seems like a thing of living with them, maybe even for a lifetime, of over and over again sharing our need for a savior and that the savior is enough. And that there's only one God who has power over these spirits, and that they don't have to be afraid anymore if they do accept Him and only worship Him.

But it's a very frustrating and difficult task. It's not an easy one, and even within the churches, we're like, oh, some people have come, but then you start to talk to them and you realize – boy, do they truly believe yet? Do they truly get this?

So a lot of it – so even with me, two weeks ago, as I was saying, I was with that group of women. And it was – we were – I'm just trying to think of specifics here, but to say – well, actually, we were going through the Lord's Prayer together, which isn't part of those four books, but that has also been translated. But talking about how to really – how to truly worship God, and that he wants to be worshipped. That he – to honor His name. How do we do that? And how do we confess and do it? Have we forgiven others so He can forgive us? All these different parts of it, but to have that scripture there to be able to share and to work through them with them helps them see the truth. In the middle of all that muddle of what they have learned from so many different directions. They've got many layers in the way.

John H: It's just striking to me that the word resistant, for whatever this is valuable for – resistant in my mind has the connotation of people actively opposing. And as I heard you explain your meaning to the word, I get the impression it's more almost like there's a power barrier – a shield. In science fiction, right, they put up these shields – these barriers that deflect any incoming missiles or whatever, and so in a way, what's going on here it sounds like because of their spiritual precommitments to the spirit realm, to their ancestors, the fears. They aren't necessarily personally and voluntarily erecting barriers against you, but the barriers are there.

And so I guess in that sense maybe we see it is resistance – their culture is resistant to encroachment by the Gospel, or people entering in and being able to alter their view of the world because their view of the world is so all-encompassing. Is that a little bit kind of what you're saying?

Corinne T: Yeah, I think so, and there's a lot happening in the spiritual realm there. This is one reason I was so thrilled to realize that Sonlight was focusing on the Meetto because I think that sometimes the Meetto have been lumped in with the other **Macoy** tribes, whereas one of the SIL consultants told me once that the languages are more different than Spanish and Romanian and Italian and Portuguese. There are lots of languages.

You can call them all Macoy people, but culturally they are very different, too. The Meetto people are very different than some of the other Macoy tribes. So I think for years they've been lumped together and people haven't realized that there are a million people

here that very few of them know Christ. And so we have – I can actually only think of four missionary in that whole Meetto. This is outside missionary families. And even the Christian Mozambiquans who come in tend to get very discouraged and leave quickly.

So there's very little witness here, and so I'm just so hoping that not only will the Sonlight families give to the translation project, but that they might start to pray for God to send his workers to the Meetto people to do more and more witness there and for people to pray for these spiritual barriers to be broken down.

John H: I'd like to push a little bit further on this. You used an analogy, and I probably should have heard this before, but it was very striking. Our linguists would speak of Romania and Italian, Spanish, Portuguese and others as being – I guess they call them romance languages. They're all based on Latin. The old Latin way back when – they've all grown out of that common root.

And somebody who speaks Italian may be able to kind of pick up a little bit here or there from somebody who's speaking Portuguese kind of, but by and large, one person really cannot understand the other. And you're saying that it's very much that way and even more different between the Meettos and the other cognate languages – the other languages that came from some root way back when.

Corinne T: Yeah, that's right. You do find that people who've lived in cities – like the Mozambiquans who've lived together with people of the other dialects have learned to understand each other. So the ones that are more cosmopolitan – they do understand each and they say, "Oh, it's not that different." I sit with the women and I say, "Now, can you understand that guy?" They say, "No, I didn't really get what he said." And the more you go into the villages – the more you just go to the common people – no, they're not understanding.

John H: I guess actually that reminds of the day that Sarita and I were in Scotland, and we went to a shop to buy a sandwich. And the man clearly was – well, he knew who we were. He knew we were from the United States, but when he spoke, we had no idea what he was saying, though I'm sure he was speaking English. We absolutely could not understand him, so it must be kind of along those lines.

I was given a few questions to ask, and I'm trying to scan through here. You mentioned that the translations when they come out are then recorded. I take it that's sound recorded. My understanding from speaking with the people at The Seed Company, when they finish the book of Luke, Campus Crusade for Christ and the Jesus

Film Project have precommitted that whenever The Seed Company finishes a translation of the book of Luke, they will immediately put that – or as rapidly as they can, put that into the Jesus film. Can you talk a little bit about how your family or others would use these kinds of resources that are created by or as a result of the Bible translations?

Corinne T: We will probably use sound recordings more than we will the video. We find that video is very helpful, except that we are in such a remote area, that people – when we tried showing videos in the past, even some of the more sophisticated guys we worked with for a while, they’ve been like, “Oh, we see Jesus in person.” It’s just so hard for them to get the idea of having an actor. And I think in most parts of the world, people have just had more exposure, but we just found that – like within the churches, yes, we will have used that some. But to go out to the villages, it’s just still such a reach that there just needs to be a lot of ground work. So it’s a good tool, but it also does have its limitations in some settings.

So, yeah – we have had around here – well, like with the Yao people. I could talk about them because we have a lot of colleagues working with the Yao, and they do have a lot of recordings now in Yao and are using hand-wound MP3 players. And those are very popular. Some of them are also – you can also set them out in the sun, and they have a little solar panel on them. Those are great. We just love that when we’re able to get those things because people will listen to it all day. They’ll listen to whatever scripture they can get because they’re just so excited to have something to listen to like that.

John H: I’ve been told that in many cultures just having a recording in their own language – in some ways, it doesn’t matter the content. There is so little in their language that having something is exciting to the people.

Corinne T: That’s very true with the Meetto, yeah.

John H: So when you have a hand-cranked and that’s so that – there’s a little generator inside if it’s hand-cranked, or if you have the solar-powered MP3 player – really, the primary content that they are likely to be able to play with that is going to be Gospel oriented.

Corinne T: Well, we – they even have them set up so you can’t record anything else once you record what you want. So we just put the Bible on there or put on – actually, some things were done in Meetto several years ago that it’s like some of the Bible stories were written or were done in Meetto. And *Look, Listen and Live* by – oh, sorry. I’m blanking out here on the group, but anyway,

that's been very helpful to have some of these Bible stories that they put on those things and then listen to.

John H: Yeah, what are some of – have you – I guess maybe I'll put it this way. Have you learned anything personally that you feel that you have profited personally from living with the Meettos.

Corinne T: I realize I am a very, very, very blessed person in so many ways to have grown up with Christian parents and grandparents and realizing that my children are able to learn the Gospel from a young age and to be able to read. Yeah, just personally just realizing what a – how many blessings we have and then to be able to share them, to some extent, with others I think is one of the biggest things living where we do.

John H: Are there – I'm gonna press you on that particular question, at least to this degree. I know that sometimes different cultures have certain values or ways of doing things where when you observe them as an outsider, suddenly you realize, "Whoa, that's really – there's some real wisdom there." Again, I'm just curious. Has that occurred to you there?

Corinne T: Oh, definitely. They are so relational. I love the way the Meetto people always will come and visit and love to have me visit them. Their door is never closed. I can have visitors on my doorstep at 5:00 am, and that's a very common time to visit. And I've gotten used to that now. We go to bed early and get up early so that we can handle that.

But you visit people. You interact with your neighbors. You sit there and hang out together and you just spend time sitting with people. Actually, when we go back to the US on [Furlow](#), our home assignment as we call it nowadays, that's kind of a hard thing to get used to back in the US now because people are busy and aren't so available just to sit around and visit like that. But I just love that about the Meetto people – the way that relationships are at the most important thing to them.

John H: Interesting, okay. What is your biggest prayer for the Meetto?

Corinne T: That those barriers would come down and that they would be open and that they truly can hear the good news. That there could be a strong church among the Meetto people.

John H: Totally switching directions here – can we talk a little bit about homeschooling?

Corinne T: Good, yes, very much.

- John H: When did you all start homeschooling?
- Corinne T: We started in 2000. We kind of skipped kindergarten because we were in Portugal and language study at the time, but anyway. We started in 2001 when Donna was in first grade and have been Sonlight all along. So Donna and Lincoln, our two oldest, are now in boarding school in Kenya. Rift Valley Academy is a very famous missionary kid boarding school.
- We decided – they just – Donna left in January and Lincoln in September. They go three months at a time, and then they're home for a month. So three and then one and three and then one. They're home three times a year for a month each.
- We decided to send them – we've ended up homeschooling through eighth grade, and then having them go at ninth grade. We've done that because of our isolation. We probably would have kept homeschooling longer except that for our kids, it's a four hour drive to another native speaker of English.
- So we're just so isolated and the other teenagers – Donna, when she turned 14, her Mozambiquan friends were already – well, at least their mothers were thinking about them getting married and having babies. So it just was time for Donna to be able to be an American teenager instead of being in the culture quite so much. So that's why we made that decision. It's not an easy decision, but it seems to be the best.
- John H: Yeah, so Graham, though, is still being taught at home. And he's 12. So you're doing Core 7.
- Corinne T: We sure are. We sure are, yes.
- John H: I'm not here trying to plug Sonlight, but I was asked to ask this. Do you have any favorite memories from having used Sonlight?
- Corinne T: Well, we love all the books. We are very far from the other missionary, but we all gather here in Lichinga and it's like a really close extended family because we all tend to be isolated. And when we get together, we're just so thrilled to be together. And it's really fun for the kids because so many of them are doing Sonlight that they can compare notes on their favorite books and different things.
- We're really thankful to have a curriculum that works so well in our situation, but that memories – even when our kids – when we went up to visit the school in Kenya – this boarding, we needed to have another missionary family who our kids could go to if they got sick or anything. And there's a German family up there. So

totally different culture than ours, but they had just moved there. They had been in a remote spot in Kenya, and then had just moved close to the school there. And they had done Sonlight, and that was really fun for our kids and their kids to be able to compare notes.

Here they live in Kenya. We live in Mozambique. They're from Germany. We're from the US, but suddenly, our kids had so much in common because they'd gone through the same thing, so –

[Skype went dead]