

Weekly Newsletter

10th February 2026



Holyrood
Church

Reflection: God speaks Bamunka too

By Hannu Sorsamo

In early 2006, I moved to rural North-West Cameroon to study the Bamunka language and help standardise its spelling rules. I was quite well prepared for the living conditions. I knew it would be materially poor, there would be no running water, and I would have electricity only through solar panels. I was perfectly fine with that. What I was much less prepared for, despite the training I had received, was the culture.

In Bamunka I encountered polygamy, ancestor worship, curses, food and drink offerings to deities, spirit beings with the outward appearance of flora and fauna. I also experienced great hospitality and an extremely tight-knit society where people relied on one another and where everybody knew what everybody else was doing. Everybody except me, that was. I also experienced various Christian churches. One of them, especially, was to me an example of how a community can engage in a dialogue with God's Word. Although not a single verse of the Bible had then been translated into the Bamunka language, the pastor preached in the mother tongue and explained to the congregation the text which was read in English. Whenever the Christians struggled with tensions between their faith and the expectations of the wider community, they sat down together to discuss how God's Word spoke to the situation at hand.

The material outcomes of my own stay in Bamunka were a phonology sketch and an orthography proposal. These have been later modified and expanded on by others, most importantly the Bamunka community themselves as they have been using their own language in written form. A less tangible outcome were the friendships formed, people with whom I worked and from whom I learned much. I can only hope that my impact on their lives was as positive as theirs were on mine. With hindsight, it is easy to see how many mistakes I made, how I often struggled with cultural stress, and how patiently people nevertheless humoured the *vawokombu* ("the Son of the White Man") and his eccentric behaviour.

These memories have come back to me recently as I have reconnected with some of the people I used to know in Bamunka. Mother tongue literacy and Scripture translation got started soon after my short time there. These activities have continued over the past 20 years despite persecution, sickness and death, and the simmering civil war that has displaced many Bamunka speakers. On 14th January this year, the Bamunka New Testament was dedicated in a ceremony attended by Baptists, Presbyterians, Catholics and independent churches. The war is not over but since the conditions have been more peaceful recently, the dedication celebration could go ahead in the Bamunka heartland. The news was relayed to me by Pastor Edward, who was still a seminary student when I got to know him twenty years ago. He told me that he and his family have also recently moved back to the area after six years in exile.





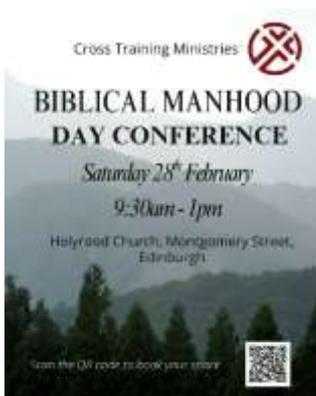
My prayer is that the mother tongue New Testament would continue to unite Christians and encourage all Bamunka churches to engage with the Bible. God speaks Bamunka. And God speaks English too. May this good news therefore also inspire us to continually converse with God's Word together!

Hannu is one of our Holyrood missionaries and serves with his wife Hazel and family in Finland.

Men's Event – Friday 20th February

On Friday 20th February at 7pm there will be an opportunity for the men in the church family to get together for Bible study and to play table tennis, pool and chess! If you are interested, please contact Daniel Trail for more details (danieltrail89@gmail.com)

Biblical Manhood Conference – Saturday 28th February



What does it mean to be a man? There are many voices today seeking to call men in different directions. Amidst the confusion many men are seeking Biblical clarity to step up to their God given calling.

Cross Training Ministries are organising a half day conference on the 28th of February (from 9.30am to 1pm) on the topic of Biblical manhood. We'll spend time thinking together about the gift of masculinity, the calling of manhood, and the importance of Christian brotherhood. Go [here](#) to sign up or speak to Joe for more details.

Meals and Prayer Meeting

Save the dates! We are planning to have meals together before the prayer meetings on 4th March, 6th May and 3rd June. There won't be one in April because of the Easter holidays and please keep the dates free.

Church Calendar

For your info and prayers:

- Wednesday: Home Groups. Contact Liz@holyroodchurch.org for more details
- Thursday: Women's Bible Study from 10.30am-11.30am
- Sunday:
 - Worship Service at 10.30am – Joe Barnard preaching (live streamed)
 - Evening Service at 6pm – Joe Barnard preaching (live streamed)
- Monday: Baby and Toddler Group from 10am – 11.30am

