**The Boi Team**

Wednesday 26 November

It was decided at our staff meeting last night that I would become the facilitator for the Boi team – yes, pronounced *boy*! These are the people I shall now be working with since the team from the Sanga people did not turn up.

So, let me introduce you to the Boi team. Boi is the Hausa name for a town in southern Bauchi State in the north of Nigeria. The people themselves call their town Aya; they call themselves the Ya people and their language is called Tiya. So why should the Hausa people call them something so different? They tell me that the name Boi comes from the Hausa word for *hide*; when African slave traders were looking to kidnap people to sell them into slavery, these people would hide themselves away for their towns and villages, and so they were nicknamed the “hiders”!

There are three men in their fifties representing the Boi or Ya people:

Bature Yakubu Boi

His father was born about 1885 on the day that the white missionaries first arrived in Boi town; *Bature* means “white man” (European), hence his name. He is the ninth of twelve children. He is married with 5 children ranging in age from 32 to 6. He is an accountant, with a Diploma from the University of Jos. He speaks 4 other languages.

Luka Samuel

He is an Anglican clergyman, married with 4 children with the names Endurance, Gracious, Glorious and Kunwarmaya (= God is good to us). They live in Boi. He has a diploma in Theology from the Jos Christian Institute. He speaks 3 other languages.

Danladi Elisha Kyauta

The name Danladi means that he was born on a Sunday! He is a missionary with the Total Gospel Church in Boi, with a Diploma in Missiology from Missionary Crusades Ministry, Yola. Married, but with no children. He speaks 2 other languages (English and Hausa).

Today they were introduced to the idea of telling and recording a short story in their own language. Each language team – there are now 7 of them – was issued with a small Sony MP3 recorder, which would not only record their story but would also transfer it to their computer. So after all the introductions to the idea and the equipment, they chose a story and a story teller and completed the task by mid-morning break. After the tea break, then they each tried to write the story independently of each other, using whatever knowledge they have of spelling from Hausa and English. I warned them that a minute’s recording would take them an hour to write down, and it did, and then they began to compare their efforts with each other and discuss how they might improve their spelling. This was the very first time that they had ever attempted to write their own native tongue! After lunch they completed that task and then I spent a good hour or so going over their attempts and helping them to observe their pronunciations and suggest improvements to their spelling. They had to try and tackle the spelling of consonant and vowel sounds that occur neither in Hausa nor in English, and this is where I was particularly able to help them. So we managed to produce a ‘document’ in the Boi/Tiya language for the first time ever. I’m very conscious of some weaknesses in the orthography because we have not fully explored their whole pronunciation system, but on the other hand, they have achieved something that nobody else has ever done. So they are excited by their achievement and rightly proud; and I’m proud of them too!

Later in the afternoon, I had a bit of free time to prepare myself for the devotional session tomorrow when I’m speaking.

I’m being well fed! A delicious potato and vegetable stew with a piece of fish. I couldn’t finish all the stew, so I told the cook I could finish it off in the evening – so that is what I had again – and I enjoyed it as much as I did at lunch time. Then a fruit salad after the evening meal.

I still very much feel the dryness in the air; my lips and nostrils get very dry; good job that I had brought some Lipsyl with me.

The day has gone very well and I am very grateful to the Lord for this.