

MiDi BIBLE

Ministry for the Diffusion of the Bible in Minority Languages

I have set before you life and death... therefore choose life, that both you and your descendent may live. Deuteronomy 30:19

Bulletin No. 2 - Nov 2011



A personal thought

World news, whether political, spiritual, or geophysical, shows that we are in perilous times. The good news, according to the Bible, is that these things that are happening foreshadow the triumphant return of Christ and the end of the world ruled by evil (Luke 21:28). No man, no government can prevent the prophecies of the Bible from being fulfilled!

But we who believe in the eternal salvation that Jesus Christ has given to all who believe in His name (John 1:12) are called to share our faith and to take the Word of God to those who do not have it yet.

What a privilege to be able to bring to lost souls the Bible, this extraordinary book that offers us the joy of peace with God and with ourselves, with the assurance of eternal life with Him.

If at times we feel very small in the face of the immense needs of humanity around us, let us remember this promise of God: "He who has begun

a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ." (Philippians 1:6).

Paul-André Eicher, President

Where are we?

It has been nearly a year since our first news bulletin. The editions of the Bible in Wolaitta, Shuar, Boko, and Wallisian have taken longer than planned. By the grace of God, the needs that we shared last year for the 25,000 Bibles in Wallisian have been covered (61,263 Swiss Francs). The New Testaments in Wolaitta, shipped to Addis Ababa, came in at the exceptional price of

Yadira unloading Bibles with joy!



1.75 Swiss Francs each, meeting the expectations of the translators and Wolaitta leaders, who received them with joy!

Thanks so much for sending us the seven New Testaments. Night before last, we showed them to a group that have been praying for the printing of the New Testaments. They were very pleased with the books, remarking on how well made they are. As we looked through them, we were very pleased with the printing and layout. They are a real credit to presenting Scripture in a beautiful format. Thanks for doing such a good job!

Bruce Adams, SIM translation projects leader

Here at Midi Bible we sometimes feel overwhelmed by all that is happening. We feel weak in the face of the enormous need of the peoples of the world who do not yet have a copy of the Word in their mother tongue. Weak also in human resources, we are always looking for missionaries and volunteers who have a vision for administration and public relations in this work.

But we are encouraged by this promise of God, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my strength is made perfect in weakness.” (2 Cor. 12:9) and by the many words of encouragement that you have sent us.

“What a blessing to receive the report of Midi Bible concerning your ministry of publishing the Bible in minority languages. May the Lord bless you and make fruitful your efforts for

the ‘least of these’ who desperately need His Word... (Matt. 19:14)”.

Bernie May, former President of Wycliffe Bible Translators and of The Seed Company

The incredible reception of the five printings in minority languages that we delivered in 2010, the Wolaitta, Shuar, and Boko Bibles, has strongly encouraged us to pursue this ministry.

In our next bulletin, we will share more about the extraordinary adventure of the Bible in Wallisian!

New Projects

Following the publication of the New Testament in Wolaitta (Ethiopia), another team of SIM translators from the same country has entrusted us with publication of the New Testament in Banna and the Bible in Kafa. It will be a long task, since the layout and proofreading are still to be done.

The SIL team at Dallas has also placed us in contact with a mission in Hawaii for publication of the Bible in Hawaiian. Those are excellent contacts and we already have received much amazing information



concerning this project. In fact, the Bible was translated into Hawaiian in the 1860's, but the first translation was not revised even though the use of the language has revived strongly since that date. Since the Hawaiians asked to be annexed to the US in 1959, only English, which became the official language, is taught in schools.

Wycliffe Switzerland put us in contact with a team of translators for the Nawdm, the language of an ethnic group of Togo. The coordinators visited us at SBG to finalize working plans and next steps. We have already sent sample layouts for their review.

We have also received other projects following our July meetings with SIM and JAARS in North and South Carolina and need all of God's grace to know how to best respond to these needs. Thank you, Lord, and thank you, dear friends for your prayers, help and gifts which allow us to continue this very important ministry.

Finally, brothers and sisters, pray for us that the message of the Lord may spread rapidly and be honored, just as it was with you. (2 Thes. 3:1)

A revival among the Shuar, formerly the Jivaros!

The Shuar, the best-known indigenous tribe of the Upper Amazon region, were formerly known as the Jivaros, meaning "bloody savages." But this insulting name was legally

rejected in 1964 and the Shuar are now known by the name they call themselves.



Holding on to their independence, the Jivaros were fierce warriors who blocked the invasion of the Incas in the 14th century. The Spanish, drawn by rumors of gold in the 16th century and by rubber in the 19th century, were stopped by the violence of the Jivaros in this hostile, impenetrable region of the Upper Amazon. The Jivaros would cut off their enemies' heads, empty and shrink them and sew their mouths and eyes shut to keep the spirits of their enemies from escaping and seeking revenge. This is one of their shamanic traditions called the "Tsantzas".



In 1941, the war between Ecuador and Peru split the Shuar territory in two.

Today there are now about 190,000 Shuar. They had no Scriptures until the missionaries in the 1920’s had the vision to develop an alphabet for them and teach them to read. In 1975 the N.T. in Shuar was published and since August 2010 they now have the Bible!

In spite of the penetration of the Jesuits and Catholicism through the centuries, and because of their strong syncretism, the message of the Word of God is the only means of liberation from the bondage of fear that shamanic animism still holds over the Shuar.

Shuar society is based on clans of related families who live in numerous isolated hamlets. If one family lacks enough food, other families will help them, demonstrating their solidarity. Other than a few villages along the western frontier, the many other isolated hamlets are connected only by rivers and paths through virgin forests.

Thanks to literacy work and Bible translation done by several missionaries and natives, the Shuar language today is taught to the Shuar, the Ashuar, and the Shiwar in their communities. Finally in 1998 the Shuar Federation convinced the Ecuadorian government to state



Helping teach literacy to children



Norma Hedlund and the translators using a projector to review and discuss texts before finalizing them for page layout.

in its constitution: “The state respects and encourages the development of the Ecuadorian languages. Castilian (Spanish) is the official language. Quechua and Shuar also have the status of official languages for the indigenous peoples.”

(Source: A.-Ch.Taylor, CNRS - José Marin, UNESCO - wikipedia.org - Jim Hedlund).

The Shuar Bible

Advised by Bernie May, retired president of Wycliffe, we met Aprile Erbe, Scripture Funding Assistant at the Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL) in Dallas, Texas, to share with her the ministry of Midi Bible. She immediately put us in contact with *Jim and Norma Hedlund,*



members of Avant Ministries assisting the Shuar translators since 1989 with the translation of the Bible into Shuar.

A partnership agreement was rapidly established, and we joyfully have been able to work with this project that began in 1958 with the creation of a 16-letter Jivaro alphabet through the work of missionary linguists.



Mrs. and Mr. Turner holding the Shuar Bible in their house.

Dorothy Walker of Avant and Dr. Glen Turner of SIL were the driving forces of this translation. With the help of several Shuar, they published the New Testament in 1975.

Daniel Chu thanking Frank Drown



At nearly 90 years old, *Frank and Mary Drown*, who dedicated their lives as missionaries and Bible teachers, returned to the Amazon in August 2010 to celebrate, with much emotion, the arrival of the Bible!

Due to the isolation of the people and villages of the Shuar in the tropical rain forests, the Association of Shuar Evangelical Churches, through the dynamism of their president, *Daniel Chu*, organized seven celebrations in the small churches across the territory. These communities are accessible by foot, by canoe, at times by bus or by the small airplanes of Mission Aviation Fellowship (MAF), provided the landing strips are cleared of branches!



Humberto Bible translator opening the Bible dedication ceremony with prayer.

Despite Daniel's bilharzias and serious surgery, the celebrations were full of emotion, joy, and thanksgiving. There were baptisms in the rivers, and pastors, teachers, parents, and children all held the Word of God to their hearts.



We have received 480 photos from these events, and they are deeply meaningful to us.

Producing the Bible

Doing the page layouts, printing the Bibles, and delivering them on schedule were a challenge that the Lord guided us through with great joy in answer to many prayers.

We have an excellent relationship with Jim and Norma that permitted us to work well together. After 44 years of ministry, they just entered the “ranks” of the retired. But nothing really has changed!

Imagine:

- 50 years of translation in the Amazon region
- Page layout in Dallas through SIL’s auspices
- Publishing by Midi Bible in Lausanne, Switzerland
- Printing in China
- Delivery to Ecuador, no customs duties required
- Storage in Quito by The Bible League and in Shell by MAF
- Distribution to the Shuar by MAF’s small airplanes

- And finally the joy of the Shuar receiving the Bibles!

The excellent quality of the Bibles: a sewn binding, hard waterproof cover, 1448 pages with red edges, nice Bible-quality paper, large type to make them easy to read, and the 5034 volumes, delivered to Quito, all contributed to the rejoicing.



Shuar believers and the church of Warients

Of the 35,950 Swiss francs that this edition cost, CHF 12,108 have not yet been covered by donations. It is by God’s help and your support that we can continue to move forward.



We would be happy to give a slide presentation entitled, "Revival among the Shuar, formerly the Jivaros of the Amazon" to your youth group or church.

Our co-workers

In September 1999, I started working at the Geneva Bible Society (GBS), in charge of Bible production. Over the years, we have published several million copies of the Holy Scriptures in different languages. Various designs of Bibles, New Testaments, and Gospel portions have been produced for different markets. I have worked with the largest Bible printers of Europe, Asia, and North and South America. Currently I am doing various editing jobs for the GBS.



My collaboration with Midi Bible started in 2008, when I began helping with production. We have finalized many Bible projects this past year, including six titles for four countries on three continents. The growing demands of Midi

Bible are causing my involvement to increase, with the full agreement of the GBS. I am assuming new responsibilities, particularly for communication and relations with the missions that do Bible translation.

Phillippe Eicher, Director of Editions



A dedicated life for the Bible

In 1976, a tree fell and broke the back of Humberto, a Shuar Indian. Since then he has been a paraplegic in a wheelchair. He is not able to go to the river to bathe on his own. A neighbor has to take him.

Malnourished, Humberto is susceptible to all kinds of maladies. His first wife died of hepatitis, the second of cancer, and his children have abandoned him. He has every reason to complain. But Humberto has found his reason to live: the translation of the Old Testament into Shuar, the language of his people.

Each month Humberto meets with the team of translators, but occasionally his illness interrupts his work. It is a miracle that he is still alive. When he is hospitalized, he takes his books of the Bible with



him to translate and proofread and spreads them out on his bed. Enthusiastic about his work, he knows large portions of that work by heart. His goal hasn't changed: to translate the Old Testament and to revise the New Testament. Humberto said, "This is why the Lord has given me time and strength for his work for 32 years." He also encourages other patients who

may feel that there is no future for them.

(Source: DMG)

Response from a reader

"I believe what you are doing is very edifying. It must be very satisfying to be part of God's plan, working with those minority populations that still do not have a translation of the Word of God.

"Our fellow humans from these unknown populations, as far removed as can be imagined from our culture, have an inalienable right to know the Truth and salvation by grace through Jesus Christ."

Marc Berger, Perly-Certoux, Switzerland



By your support and your prayers, you bring to minority ethnic groups such as the Shuar access to the Word of God that transforms their lives and gives them a new hope when they feel forgotten, despised, and without a future.

MiDi BIBLE: who are we?

Our non-profit charity aims to publish the Bible in minority languages. Its goal is to offer to these people groups the Good News of Jesus Christ and to help them in their literacy efforts.

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