

MiDi BIBLE

Ministry for the Diffusion of the Bible in Minority Languages

*Cast your bread on the surface of the waters, for you will find it after many days. Eccl. 11:1
So will my word be...It will not return to Me empty... Isa. 55:11*

BULLETIN n°3 - BOKO - dec. 2013



A few thoughts

In the two passages of Scripture above, God exhorts us to share the Bible all around, the bread of life for all people. This call is addressed to each one of us, to encourage us to spread the Bible around us and onto the waters of the entire world. It nourishes and satisfies hearts that are hungry for forgiveness, peace, and hope, no matter what their tribe or ethnic group. The promise contained in these two verses is definite :

*"for you will find it after many days"
and "it will not return to Me empty"*

And how ? With joy and peace for having answered His calling, and with souls saved for Eternity.

This promise of God gives us the motivation we need to keep moving forward in the translation of the Bible, and in publication and distribution of the Word without hesitation. It calls us to give witness to the grace that God gave us, including to ethnic minorities lost in a world that despises them. It also prompts us to pray and to support those missionaries who work faithfully for dozens of years to translate the

Word of God into the heart language of people who need it so badly, and also for those who do the publishing.

*Warmly,
Paul-André Eicher, President*

PROGRESS REPORT

A glance in the rear-view mirror shows us the faithfulness of God through the projects that have been accomplished.

At the beginning of this year we shared with you the joy of the Fulani of Burkina-Faso (a nomadic people, 98% Muslim)



who received the first edition of the New Testament in their mother tongue, **Fulfulde**. Last July we finally published 3,000 copies of the NT and Psalms in the **Nawdm** language. As the Nawdbas of Togo recently dedicated their New Testament, we will be sure to provide more news in our next prayer letter.



These two editions were possible thanks to your precious support that allowed us to finance half of the expenses, which were US\$20,000 for the **Fulfulde** and US\$26,730 for the **Nawdm**.

To us, these people may be unknown, and these numbers may seem disproportionate compared to the investment of the 20 or 30 years that were necessary for translation of the New Testament into these “minority” languages.

Yet we know that these are real people : men, women, and children who, like us, finally have access to the message of love of their Creator in the language of their heart.

As for our ongoing projects, two works are currently being printed :

- The first is a printing of 2,400 New Testaments in the **Cabécar** language for a tribe of Costa Rica. The story of this translation is so exciting that we plan a series of articles on it in the next

bulletin. By faith, and trusting in your support, we have committed to financing half of the project, which has a budget of US\$ 26,180.

- The second effort is a double project of 1,500 Bibles and 1,500 New Testaments in **Sisaala Tu-mulung**, the language of a people group of the northern part of Ghana. The budget for this project, co-financed with Wycliffe Switzerland, is US\$40'460.

These three projects have consumed a large part of our resources this year since, besides the printing, we also did the page layout for the two New Testaments.

SPECIAL ISSUE BOKO - BENIN

Dedication of the Boko Bible in Segbana

More than 600 people were present to celebrate the arrival of the Bible in **Boko**. It is a completely new version using a revised tonal alphabet.

The mayor gives an enthusiastic speech with Ross Jones, the missionary in charge of the translation



Mission leaders and church leaders came from Parakou, the district capital, as well as chiefs and dignitaries from the region and from Nigeria. The local mayor gave an enthusiastic speech, praising God and the translation team, who by their work have saved the **Boko** language from certain disappearance. He also praised the pastors for their support.



The celebration was a feast that lasted all day. The ambiance was warm and happy, with times of prayer and speeches alternating with colorful choirs from the churches, musical groups, and traditional dance troupes.

There were many Boko Christians there, some having travelled a long distance to celebrate and praise God for His goodness.

Benin in facts and figures

- Surface area : 112,000 km² (43,750 sq mi)
- Population : 10 million
- Historically called Dahomey, it

was the home of Voodoo and animistic religions, and one of the major sources of slaves

- The official language is French
- Literacy rate in French: 34%
- Ethnic languages : 43 (none are officially taught in the schools)
- Political system : multiparty democracy
- Economic situation : strong growth in recent years, but still among the 40 poorest countries of the world



Bokos area is spread across Benin and Nigeria

The story of the Boko Bible

The missionary work of Serving In Mission (SIM) began among the Bokos in 1954. Today there are around 30 churches and more than 2,000 Boko believers in Benin. They have a Bible school in their language, and a church council. Christian radio programs in **Boko** are broadcast each week on local radio.

The Bible was translated into **Boko** between 1974 and 1990, and published for the first time in 1992. As is often the case when a language is first reduced to writing, after a few years of use there are changes to the alphabet and the need for re-



vision is felt. To give an idea of the amount of work involved, John 3:16 required ten “tonal” changes and two “junction” changes.

Now the heavily revised Bible in **Boko** uses an improved tonal system and simplified vocabulary that makes it much easier to read.

At the end of this long and painstaking work, led by Ross Jones and two Boko brothers, Levi and André, MiDi Bible undertook the commitment to publish and finance half the cost of printing 2,000 Bibles. Thanks to your support, this large-format Bible, with 1,095 pages, maps, and a strong binding, cost the mission only US\$5.60 each. We have had the pleasure, once again, of being a link in the long chain



that allows these men and women to have access to the Word and its message of salvation.

About the Boko and their language

- Population: 150,000 of which 120,000 in Benin and 30,000 in Nigeria
- Language: Boko (or “Boo”)
- A majority of the Boko also speak Hausa as a second language, while 30% only speak their mother tongue
- Geographic: see map on page 3
- Demographics: 6.5% growth per year
- Lifestyle: subsistence farming in villages of 100 to 500 inhabitants. Some cities have over 10,000 inhabitants
- Beliefs: traditionally animist, predominantly Voodoo. Since 1960, 80 % have converted to Islam for economic advantage. About 3% are Christian, mainly evangelical.

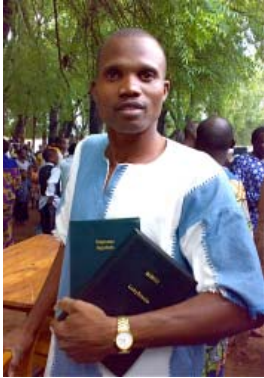
Ross Jones explains, “**Boko** is one of the most concise languages of the world, which is why the whole Bible only takes 1,095 pages (compared to 1,300 for a French Bible). This is due to short words, numerous tones, and the conciseness of **Boko** expressions”.

Initiated by the churches, and with the help of several NGOs, literacy programs in **Boko** have been set up under the auspices of local authorities. Teachers have been trained

in the villages and have available about 30 literacy booklets... along with the Bible in **Boko**!

The value of the Bible for the Boko people

For the Boko Christians, the Bible in **Boko** is become indispensable



Isaac is just one of the Boko who feels blessed to have God's word in his native tongue.

for preaching, evangelism, and teaching in the Bible school. So that each Christian can have a copy, it is sold at a very low price. Most of the churches are heavily involved in evangelism, and besides church services, they hold prayer meetings, youth meetings, women's' groups, literacy classes, choirs, etc... In each of these meetings the Bible is read and it holds a high place in the eyes of the Boko Christians, especially because it is... in their language!!



LOOKING AHEAD

Looking to what's ahead, we realize that the needs are immense. We are happy to see that all around the world Bible translation projects are increasing and moving forward ever more rapidly. At our level, in the coming months we are committed to the following three projects:

- A New Testament in the **Banna** language for a people group of southwest Ethiopia, of which 50% speak only their own language. This project, led by SIM, consists of a version in Latin characters for the younger population, and a version in Ethiopic script for older people.
- A full Bible in the **Gonja** language for a tribe of northern Ghana. This project comes to us from a SIL1 couple who though in their 80's are still on the field and absolutely want to see the Bible published before they retire.
- A New Testament in the **Tamajaq Tawallammat** (or Tamashek) language of southwest Niger. This language is spoken by nearly one million Tuaregs, but only a few dozen have heard and accepted the message of salvation in Jesus-Christ. This project, a collaboration of SIM and SIL, will publish three versions.

¹ SIL International is the organization of language development specialists associated with Wycliffe Bible Translators.

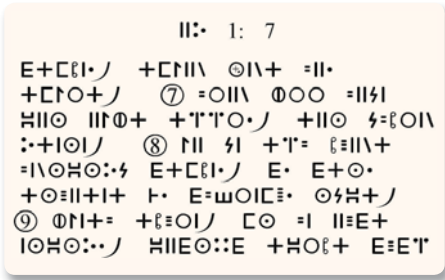
The first will be in the Latin alphabet, the second in the Arabic alphabet for those trained in Islamic schools, and the third, a smaller edition for its symbolic value, in the Shifinagh alphabet, which has existed for a millennium and is read by other Berber tribes as well.



Philippe Eicher, in charge of publications, is also our page layout specialist. He recently returned from a three-week seminar in Dallas at the SIL facility. This biannual conference brings together translators from around the world to discuss strategies to improve and speed up their work.

Philippe reports, «With this training I have become specialized in the techniques of working with Bible texts and page layout that are used by SIL and Wycliffe. This will help us to better meet the expectations of the translators and to better verify the texts before starting page layout.

«This trip was a chance to meet several people who are active in Bible publishing. I had some great opportunities to discuss Bible translation and publishing with them»



An extract of Luke 1 in Shifinagh script

Longer term we have 7 or 8 projects that are being discussed with translators, and which we require considerable wisdom and effort in the coming months.

TEAM'S LIFE



Since February of this year, our team has been reinforced by the arrival of **Luc Jouve**, who shares his time between us

and the Geneva Bible Society. He is taking over administrative responsibilities and project coordination. Luc says, "I feel very honored to be a part of the spreading of the Word of God among less privileged peoples."



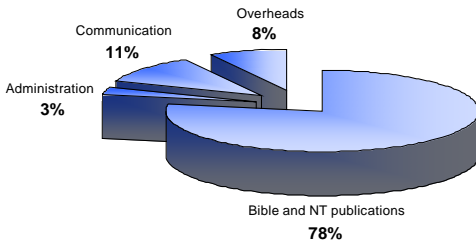
FINANCIAL REPORT 2012 (SWISS FRANCS)

RECEIPTS

Designated gifts	25,632.–
Non designated gifts	62,650.–
Total	88,282.–

EXPENSES

Bible and NT publications	68,287.–
Edition and page layout	43,822.–
Printing/freight	24,464.–
Administration	2,551.–
Communication	9,819.–
Overhead	7,098.–
Total	87,757.–



The accounts have been audited and approved by MM. W.Früh and P.-A. Koellmann October 2, 2013

TESTIMONIES FROM THE FIELD

“Dear brothers, God be praised for this incredible gift to the Nawdba people. Thank you for the good work that you do for minority peoples.”

P.B.

“John Joyce, one of our missionaries, is very impressed by the style and quality of the New Testament. He says he has been waiting a long time

for this day, and he has been here much longer than I.”

Robin Watson, SIM translation manager for the Fulfulde of Burkina Faso

“Thank you very much for the arrival of this beautiful Wallisian Bible in the Wallis Island. My heart rejoices in Jesus, knowing that my family who did not know the Lord can now read the living Word of God.”

A.M. 10/10/2013.

THE READER’S WORD

“I understand well the joy of the Bawongo of Congo, for we have experienced the same here. I praise the efforts that you have given in printing the Word of God, which you send to the different countries of the world, and which give joy and salvation to those who believe.”

I.K.M former Fulfulde translator of Benin

“May the church be enlivened, encouraged, and greatly strengthened by the Word that you help publish in numerous languages.”

I.S.

“I always read your news with interest. You sow, in summer as well as in winter; God makes it grow in His time. May He lead you in His work.”

J.P.G.

May the Lord richly bless you and may your precious ministry be torrential shower of blessings for this entire people! We praise the Lord for this fantastic work !”

P.W.

SUBJECTS FOR PRAYER

- Praise God for the nine languages for which MiDi Bible has already been able to publish the Bible or the New Testament.
- Give thanks for the arrival of a new colleague.
- Make intercession for good results in the printing, binding and shipping of the two editions currently in progress.
- Ask for good relationships and mutual understanding with the translators and partner missions for upcoming editions.
- Pray for the wisdom for us to discern God’s choice of projects among the many requests.
- Intercede for our need for additional help in administration and direction of the mission.
- Give thanks for the good will of two people who have helped create our web site. Pray for wisdom for completion of the project.

"And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." Phil. 4:7



By your support and your prayers, you bring to minority ethnic groups such as the Bocos 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.

Association Midi Bible
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UBS Bank – BIC UBSWCHZH80A
US\$ – IBAN CH65 0024 3243 3350 2860 Z
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CHF – La Poste Suisse – Compte CCP – 12-858811-0