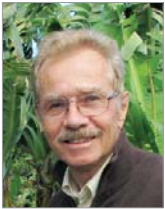


MiDi BIBLE

Ministry for the Distribution of the Bible in Minority Languages

"Yet I will rejoice in the Lord; I will take joy in the God of my salvation. The Lord God is my strength; he makes my feet like the deer's feet; and He makes me walk on my high hills." Habakkuk 3:18-19

A personal thought



After a busy year, it is with pleasure and gratitude that we provide you with our fifth newsletter! As you know, Midi Bible is dedicated to the publication of the Bible in minority languages and to support literacy of the people who do not have access to the printed Word. There are so many ethnic groups who have not yet received a copy of God's Word in their own language that we often feel overwhelmed by the needs.

But the many words of encouragement we have received help us move forward, relying on the promises of the Lord.

For example, look with me at the above passage from Habakkuk 3:18-19. It strengthened me, first because of this "yet I." Whatever has happened, (see verse 17), whatever happens this year, "yet I" means that it remains my decision. "I rejoice" and not in any thing, nor in any person, but "in the God of my salvation, the Eternal, the Lord" creator of the heavens and the earth.

He it is who saved me, He, my Lord. He is my Savior and "He is my strength." It helps me let go of anything that would burden me and turn me away from Him.

BULLETIN n°5 - SISAALA - Dec. 2014

It is He who makes me look up and walk, like a deer in the high mountain despite the rocks and crevasses of the way of life. With Him, in His presence, I am blessed.

Yes, God is alive and almighty. We cannot see all that He has done, or what He will do, but we have the assurance that He is our Heavenly Father and our strength!

In these "end times, troubled and troubling", we must stand firm, "walk like a deer in the mountains", and deliver His Word to all who need it so badly.

The Lord is here, every day, to guide and support us until the day when we will reign with Him in Heaven for eternity!

*With warmest regards,
Paul-André Eicher, President*

LATEST NEWS

Bible translation is always an adventure that consumes our time and is difficult to plan for. This was again the case these last several weeks. The Bible in **Romani Baltic** that we hoped to have printed in July has just been finished. Thanks to God, we were able to find a way to have the 4,000 copies

printed directly in Belarus, which allowed us to bypass considerable expense and customs difficulties as well as simplifying distribution in the former Soviet bloc region. The total budget for this edition amounts for about \$48,000 (USD).

The page layout in two different alphabets of the New Testament in **Banna** for Ethiopia has finally been finished by our sister *Betty Adams*



of SIM, after computer setbacks and many late corrections. The files were delivered to

the printer, and the manufacture of 1,000 and 2,000 copies is happening now in view of delivery at the beginning of next year. The total budget for this double publication amounts for \$28,000 (USD).

The next two projects, the New Testament in **Tamajaq Tawallamat** for Niger, and the Bible in **Gonja** for Ghana are also delayed by several months, and we ask that you pray that the Lord refresh, protect, and guide these teams in the home stretch of checking and page layout, which is so important but demands fastidious work.

not far from the Burkina Faso border. In this tropical climate region there are only two seasons: the rainy season from March to September, and the dry season from October through February, during



which the Harmattan blows from the Sahara desert, turning the sky to a dusty haze.

Most of the Sisaalas are in small villages where they live on harvests of corn, peanuts, cotton root yams, and manioc.

Even though in Ghana school is theoretically free and obligatory, most children quit school between 8 and 12 years old when the expenses of schooling increase and are no longer affordable for the family. As a result, a large majority does not speak and read English well even though it is the official language.

Over the past two generations a large majority of the Sisaalas have turned from ancestral animism towards Islam. Nevertheless, their

ISSUE SISAALA TUMULUNG

Sisaala Tumulung is one of the 58 languages of Ghana spoken by some 100,000 people in the grasslands of the Tumu district in the north,



deep beliefs in ancestor worship remains and their fear of spirits must be appeased by rituals determined by their tribes.

The Gospel among the Sisaalas

Until 1969 no portions of the Bible existed in **Sisaala Tumulung**, and despite the efforts of several missionaries, very few Sisaalas had been converted. At that time, two Wycliffe missionaries from Switzerland – one being Margrit Hauden-

schild, who would marry Justin Frempong a few years later – began analyzing the language and putting it into writing.

Since then, after starting literacy classes and translation of the Gospel of Mark, several have followed Christ and been baptized.

At the time of these first translations, intense literacy efforts brought the level in some areas to 25% of the people able to read! Among these first literates, two were accepted in a Bible

Testimony

*Dokta and Batong are two Sisaala brothers who were raised in a Catholic family in a village that was mostly Muslim. Dokta, the elder brother, chose to adopt the religion of his friends to avoid rejection. Batong was still young when he seized the opportunity to learn to read **Sisaala Tumulung** through a literacy program. He became passionate about reading the New Testament that a teacher gave him. Dokta had to quit school when young, and as a young adult he did not know how to read and write. He was intrigued to hear his brother reading out loud from this strange book. Curious, he asked him to read a few pages, and he in turn became fascinated by the extraordinary stories of Jesus. He was so interested, that he asked his brother to teach him how to read. He made rapid progress, and soon could read*

well. His friends, surprised to see him reading when he could not read a few weeks earlier, made fun of him. He answered them that he at least understood what he read whereas they who heard and repeated the phrases of the Qur'an in Arabic didn't even understand what they said!

Some time later Dokta confided to his brother that he wanted to become a disciple of Jesus. The two brothers then asked to have a missionary come from Tumu, a Ghanaian named Seth. He explained to them the Gospel, and invited them to confess their sins and offer their lives to Christ.

Today the two brothers still love to get together to read the New Testament and pray together. They witness their faith without fear in the surrounding villages and encourage the brothers and sisters in the churches.



Batong, pasteur Seth and Dokta

school and one eventually became a translator of the Old Testament.

In 1984 the arrival of the New Testament was celebrated. At the time they did not plan to continue with the Old Testament, but in 2001, due to the persistence of the Sisaala Christians, a team of four local translators began the work with the faithful support of Margrit and Justin. They had to wait until 2014 to finally complete the task after 45 years!



by his Word and thereby bring revival to their society.

The celebration took place in Tumu, the district seat. By the grace of God, the sun came to the meeting, and even though it was humid, the heat was reduced by a storm the evening before. Four hundred chairs were set up under canopies around the town square. The ceremony was scheduled for 10 A.M., but it wasn't until 11:30, after more chairs were found, that everyone was ready for the program to begin.

The speeches, some in English translated into Sisaala, others in Sisaala translated into English, followed for nearly three hours, separated by church choirs and tribal dances. Among those messages that I was able to understand through the accent and the poor sound quality, several were exhortations to Sisaala Christians to nourish themselves on the Word of God now entirely available in the language they love and know the best.

We had to wait until the end of



A translator leftside with Justin and Margrit holding the first manuscript of the complete Bible.

Report: Dedication of the Sisaala Tumulung Bible

By Luc Jouve

Last June 28th I had the privilege of sharing with the Sisaala people this unique moment of their history. It goes without saying that joy, gratefulness, and pride were palpable during the ceremony. As in many African cultures, celebrations are a mix of a large dose of protocol (nearly a dozen speeches!), a little folklore, and especially an immense hope of seeing God transform lives



the speeches for the Bible to be finally literally unveiled. The priest of the town received a decorated copy, raised it in the air, and walked around the square followed by a group of children singing and throwing flower petals.

Then all the pastors present were invited to gather around the Bible to invoke the name of the Lord. In their prayers they asked Him to grow the seed that will be sown by means of the written Word.

Despite now having the Bible in their heart language, the Sisaalas still face enormous challenges as they combat illiteracy and learn to use their Bible. Fortunately the Sisaalas are off to a good start. They already have an audio version of the New Testament, the Jesus film, and a dynamic literacy program that is

sustainable and self-supporting, which is rare. The Sisaalas are now proud of their language and hope one day that it will have the status of being taught at the University. Currently only 11 “major” languages are recognized by the government. As an example, two young children were invited

to the stage to read the first chapter of the book of Joshua. Even though I understood nothing (not even the name of Joshua), I heard their fluid reading and saw in the faces of the audience that they understood perfectly what was being read.

Before ending the celebration, the Bibles were sold at an affordable price equivalent to about two day’s wages for a farmer. We saw children, youth, and also “elders” leaving proudly with their first Bible in [Sisaala Tumulung](#).

This event, totally insignificant in the eyes of the world and the media, is reason for great joy in the kingdom of God. As was remarked by *Paul Opoku Mehsah*, director of GILLBT (Wycliffe Ghana), the Sisaala people have something of which to be proud and grateful, for “of the 7,000 languages used in the world, you are now among the first 500 to have the whole Bible translated!”

The next morning we took part in a worship service in a small church of the town. Looking around the room, I saw only one Sisaala Bible in the hands of the interpreter. The preacher, who comes from another region was speaking in English, translated





Paul Opoku Mehsah

into **Sisaala Tumulung**.

This sermon was for me the occasion to understand better what is at stake, and

also the importance of Bible translation in minority languages. For example, the interpreter, although young, well-trained, and capable, encountered several unfamiliar words as the preacher quoted the Bible in English. Nobody in the room could help, but fortunately, for the very first time, he was able to check the text in his new **Sisaala Tumulung** and faithfully transmit the message.

As a translator from Central America once said, “having access to the Bible in your mother tongue is like diving with a mask rather than looking in from the surface!”

If you would like to hear and see a sample of the New Testament in Sisaala Tumulung, go to: www.bible.is/SILGIL/Matt/1

The role of MiDi Bible

Thanks to your gifts we have been able to be a part of this wonderful work. In close collaboration with the Frempongs, SIL, and Wycliffe Switzerland, MiDi Bible has financed 50% of the publishing costs, consisting of page layout of the revised NT (the whole Bible was done by SIL), the production and shipping of 1500 Bibles and 1500 New Testaments. Wycliffe financed the other half. The scriptures were thus supplied with-

out cost to the branch of Wycliffe having the responsibility for distribution, permitting a sale price within reach, and allowing the revenue to be used for literacy work and teaching the Sisaalas to use their new Bible.

FINANCIAL REPORT 2013 (CHF)

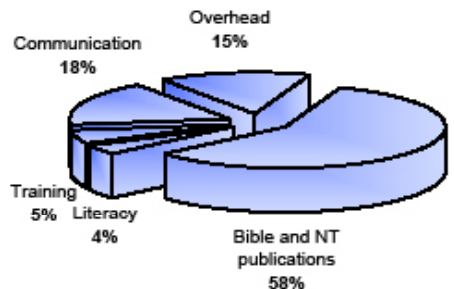
REVENUE

Designated gifts	23'612.85
Undesignated gifts	91'239.95
Total revenue	114'852.80
Provision use	17'430.66
Total	132'283.46

EXPENSES

Publishing Bibles and NT	66'336.87
<i>Labor, page layout and coordination</i>	<i>48'906.21</i>
<i>Printing and shipping</i>	<i>17'430.66</i>
Literacy support	4'616.50
Training	5'794.11
Communication	20'106.84
Admin. and general expense	17'436.75
Total expenses	114'291.07
Provisions	17'992.39
Total	132'283.46

The accounts were audited and approved by W. Früh & P.-A. Koellmann, 2 Oct. 2014



TESTIMONIES FROM THE FIELD

“Among the languages of Togo, the **Nawdm** is one of the most difficult, even for the Nawdba people. We didn’t think that our language could be written down. But as God created all these people groups, He also called missionaries to come share their linguistic knowledge, their faith in Jesus Christ, and their experiences with us. As a result, we have numerous texts translated, including the New Testament. All of the portions of scripture that have been published are helping the Nawdba Christians to understand the Word of God, to meditate on it, to teach it to others, and to use it for evangelism. The Nawdba people were very surprised to see the “Jesus” film translated into their language. In consequence, many souls have been won to Christ because Jesus speaks **Nawdm**. They are now interested in the Word of God and want to read it!”

A Nawdba

Here is what Timothy wrote us after the arrival celebration of the New Testament in **Cabécar**, in the mountains of Costa Rica: “The most wonderful moment of these two days of celebration was to see the hundreds of people lined up in faith to receive communion, distributed by the elders. It was for us a glimpse

of what heaven will be when we will celebrate, all together, what God has given us to receive, peace with Him – the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

T. Jones, missionary, leader of the Cabécar translation

READER’S WORD

Thank you for your captivating news. We are infinitely grateful to our God for answering our prayers for your trip to Costa Rica. It was an exceptional experience for you to be able to be with our Cabécar brothers and sisters. Thank you for the beautiful images. They motivate us even more towards intercession.

Warm greetings to all the MiDi
Biblicists

M.B.

Thank you for the good news of the 3000 New Testaments in **Cabécar** that were received with joy at the celebration of their arrival. Now the Cabécar people can read and understand the Word in greater depth. It is an extraordinary day when a people group receives the Word of God in their mother tongue. What a pleasure to see the photos, and the New Testament is wonderful. Glory to God, the expenses were covered by donations, small and large; each donor is blessed because his gift offered to God.

L.A.V.



SUBJECTS FOR PRAYER

General needs

- There are still 180 million people (1.860 languages) who do not yet have even one verse of the Bible translated and 1.3 billion people (3,200 languages) who have only part of the Bible available in their language.
- Pray for the needs involved in starting new translation projects and for those who are already working on Bible translation in minority languages.

Specific needs

- For the selection and the direction chosen for projects to be published

by MiDi Bible. May God direct us towards the most pressing needs.

- For the impact and successful distribution of the latest Bibles that are being printed and shipped to their destination. This includes the Bible in **Romani Baltic** and two New Testaments in **Banna** for Ethiopia.

Thanksgiving

- For all the gifts received
- For the help given by volunteers for translation, proofreading of our publications, preparation of mailings.
- For a new volunteer who has recently offered his service to set-up and maintain our website.



By your support and your prayers, you bring to minority ethnic groups such as the Sisaalas 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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UBS Bank – BIC UBSWCHZH80A
US\$ – IBAN CH65 0024 3243 3350 2860 Z
€ – IBAN CH96 0024 3243 3350 2840 M
CHF – La Poste Suisse – Compte CCP – 12-858811-0