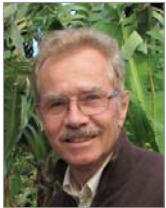


MiDi BIBLE

Ministry for the Diffusion of the Bible in Minority Languages

Fear not little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. Luke 12.32

A few thoughts



The Lord Jesus often had it in His heart to teach and to encourage the "little flock" of despised and rejected minorities.

Today, people flock to the "mega". Believing bigger

is better. But to God, the Good Shepherd, what matters is not size or appearance, but the heart of His little flock, the heart of the one who has received His Word, who puts it into practice and gives praise to God for His goodness and forgiveness.

Back from the high mountains of Costa Rica, we particularly remember the Cabécar attitude of joy and praise to God as they celebrated the arrival of the New Testament in the language of their heart! I was also greatly touched by this message Timothy Jones sent me before we left, after decades of work among this tribe: "My priority now is to finish the translation of the Bible in their language to help train more disciples of Jesus Christ. The study of the whole Word of God is a key element in helping the Cabécar believers to convey the message of salvation to their tribe. Thank you for your prayers and support."

These words have also encouraged us to continue our "Midi Bible" publishing ministry, namely the first edition in a

BULLETIN n°4 - CABÉCAR - Sept. 2014

minority language. We do not look at the size of the area, or the number of its people, but we focus on the immense need they have for the Word of God by reminding ourselves that Jesus said, "Man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God" (Matthew 4.4). His Word is a food that strengthens us and that we all need. After publishing 12 editions of the Word of God in 10 languages and with 11 future projects in sight, this reminder of the Lord to his disciples, "Fear not, little flock ..." helps us stand firm when we need a team member to assure the administration of our mission. Thank you for praying also for this need.

With warmest regards,

Paul-André Eicher, President

LATEST NEWS

If we can say anything about these recent months, we can proclaim the faithfulness of God! Just as two translation teams postponed their projects early this year, two unexpected requests came from missionaries desiring to print a Bible and a Gospel of John. Usually it takes at least a year of preparation from first contact until printing. But these two were almost ready to print.

The Gospel of John came via a contact that we had through the Open Doors mission. It is for a **language of Sudan¹** spoken by more than 15 million people. This Gospel was translated by a Christian expelled from Sudan to Europe because of his faith. After the man's death in 2008, two Swiss missionaries and an American took up the torch and finished the proofreading and corrections. With these missionaries, we made the decision to make a pre-publication run for further verifications by native readers. That trial run would help in making contacts with partners that might be able to distribute John's Gospel in this sensitive region. These 100 copies have just been printed and are being distributed among expatriate Sudanese.

The second project is the Bible in the **Baltic Romani** language, which is spoken by 200–300,000 Gypsies, mainly in Russia, Ukraine, Poland, and Belarus. Here again, the translation was done by a professor who had to leave Belarus because of his faith. From his adopted country, England, he desired to offer the Word of God to his people who endure difficult circumstances. These semi-nomadic people, like many other Gypsies of Europe, have mostly adopted the language of their host country but they remain quite attached to their mother tongue, creating a very strong social bond. Among these Gypsies, many claim the God of the Bible, but as they do not have His Word in their own language, not surprisingly, their faith remains superficial, mixed with traditions and ancestral superstitions. We are delighted to be able to participate in this wonderful project, along with ano-

¹ not given for security reasons



ther Swiss organization², all the more because it is the first time MiDi Bible has been involved with a Bible publication for our continent! For this printing, planned for 4,000 copies, the total budget is about 42,000 Swiss Francs, of which MiDi Bible will finance 50%.

SPECIAL ISSUE CABÉCAR - COSTA RICA

The Cabécar, population 20,000, are spread over a vast territory. They live without contact with the Spanish-speaking population of coastal Costa Rica. Their isolated inland home is very



The Cabécars are spread over 3 distinct areas.

rugged, with rushing rivers and mountains as high as 10,000 feet. **Cabécar**

² Verbreitung Christlicher Schriften, Bienne

is also the name of their language, and although the government schools use Spanish, more than 70% of the native people, especially the women, speak only **Cabécar**.

The literacy rate of these people is similar to the third world (30%), whereas for the rest of Costa Rica, the rate is very high at more than 94% (source: United Nations).

Until recently the Cabécar were hunters and gatherers, but under the expansionary pressure of the Spanish-speaking population into their territory, they have begun to plant crops, obtaining mixed results.

The traditional religion of the Cabécar consists of a hierarchy of spirits, mostly malicious, that are consulted by divination. The Cabécar have a system of purification that, interestingly, is able to help them understand the work of Christ. Many have turned to faith in Christ after realizing that their religion offers them no hope. Today there are more than 900 genuine believers among the Cabécar.

The Gospel among the Cabécar

In 1952, Aziel and Marian Jones, American missionaries, arrived and began to learn the **Cabécar** language. As they spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ, they also began translating the New Testament (NT). Aziel and his sons began to establish house churches by means of simple Bible studies. In the words of Timothy, one of the Jones' sons who took up the ministry when their parents re-

tired in 1997, “this has had a profound impact on the tribe, giving the believers a new group identity and personal value through their new identity in Jesus Christ.”

The first New Testament was dedicated in 1993. Unfortunately, in the years since, the missionaries discovered a grave error in the translation of the name of “God.” The word, “Sibo,” is not, as they thought, a generic term for



The 4 Jones brothers united to celebrate and give thank to the Lord who faithfully led them till this great day.

a Supreme Being, but rather the specific name of a pagan divinity. This error caused many new believers to fall into dangerous syncretism.

What happened next is told by Timothy Jones. He recounts that after three years of prayer, seeking the will of God, the three brothers each came to the same conviction independently. They burned all of the existing copies of the corrupted translation and, with the support of their parents³, began a new translation. They found a simple solution for the translation of the name of “God. At the same time, they improved the translation using new, better-adapted methods. As a confirmation

³ to read the entire testimony of the Jones, go to www.midibible.org/en/cabecar/testimony

of their conviction, at that time the government introduced a new official alphabet that is easier to read!

Today, the Cabécar are still a society with little technological development. Reading is the favorite pastime of the young generation and many love to read the Word of God. While waiting for the translation of the Old Testament that is still being done by local Christians (supervised by the Jones brothers), the Cabécar are grateful to have the NT in their beautiful heart language.

The Story of the N.T. dedication

by Véronique André

To celebrate with dignity the long-awaited arrival of the NT, more than 500 Cabécar met together for two days in the small village of Nāri Nāk at the bottom of a deep valley.



Some came from far away and did not hesitate to cross swift rivers (like this couple with their child). Other women carrying their babies walked two days to come to the celebration! Still others, friends of the Jones family, made the difficult trek, a 3,000 feet descent, under the beating sun, while loaded with tents, mattresses, and food. Among this troop were Paul-Andre and Jocelyne Eicher, who had been invited to

the celebration to represent Midi Bible!

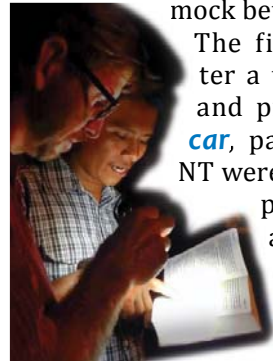
“What a gift to see so many friends and family arriving for the dedication,” Keiry, Timothy's wife, told me. *“It's a beautiful way to recognize all the translation work that has been done. And it shows to the Cabécar that outsiders recognize that they exist, that we have come to meet them and to get to know them.”*

Upon our arrival in the village, we were greeted with a meal cooked over a wood fire in huge pots. Everything was brought on horseback, along with mounds of rice



and the famous black beans of Costa Rica. What organization it took to feed more than 500 people for each meal!

We roughed it! Some put up their tents before the rain showers; others laid out a makeshift sleeping spot on the floor in the small chapel or settled in a hammock between two trees.



The first evening, after a time of worship and prayers in **Cabécar**, passages of their NT were read by several people of all ages, a beautiful way to show that the Bible is now accessible to all.

“What an encouragement to see our Cabécar brothers and sisters committed for this dedication. It is the result of all the discipleship that has been done among them,” shares Rebecca, Timothy and Keiry's oldest daughter.

The next morning, Good Friday, was the dedication ceremony and Lord's Supper.

It was a joy to see Timothy with three of his brothers worshipping God together. *"This dedication is a victory, not only for the NT that our father translated the first time, but also for our family members who have had some difficult moments,"* shared the eldest brother.

Timothy and his wife presented signed copies of the NT to several who played key roles in the translation. Among them was Timothy's "adoptive" mother, who spent several years teaching him **Cabécar**. It was a beautiful gesture of love when Timothy gave her his reading glasses so that she could read the NT at home. Everything was done with humility and gratitude to God.

Paul-Andre took advantage of the occasion to thank each of those who had a part in the translation, for all of the work accomplished, encouraging each one to feed each day upon the living Word of God.

On Friday evening, Timothy and his brothers gave a presentation of histo-

rical photos of the family's missionary work started by their parents. The work is not yet finished, as Timothy and local



hundreds of Cabécars gathered to share the Lord's Supper

translators are pursuing the translation of the Old Testament (several books have been translated), while his brother David is visiting the Cabécar Christian communities to encourage them in the faith and stimulate them to share their faith and to worship in their own language, the language of their heart, rather than in Spanish.

At the end of the two-day celebration, Timothy concluded, *"The result of all these years of translation is not only the New Testament, but also a spirit of unity and love that has been forged among all the villages of Cabécar."*

To hear and see John 3 in Cabécar, go to:
www.bible.is/CJPTJV/John/3

Important information

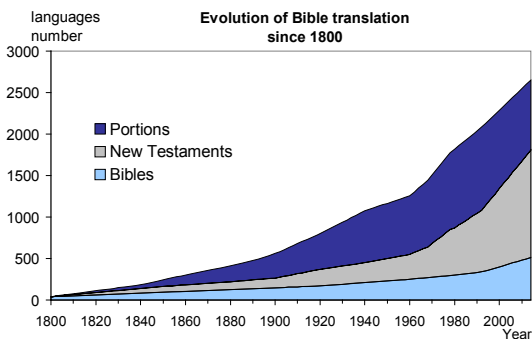
Our trips to attend the dedication ceremonies are financed by private resources and not through gifts reserved for the publishing work.



WHY TRANSLATE THE BIBLE?

While we have dozens of versions of the Bible in our “majority” Western languages, there are still more than 1 billion people speaking about 3,200 languages that do not have the complete Bible in their mother tongue¹. The task remains immense!

On the other hand there is great cause for rejoicing when we see the exponential acceleration of Bible translation, especially since the 1980's, with the arrival of computers.



It is true that the work of translation, publishing and distribution of the Bible demand a lot of human and financial investment. Yet, we believe that, even if only a small part of the world population is concerned, it is really worth the effort.

When you consider the story of Pentecost in Acts 2, it was to the disciples that God, by His Spirit, gave the capacity to speak other languages so that those who had come “from every nation under heaven” could hear in their own language “speaking the mighty deeds of God.” God could have just as easily given to the visitors the ability to understand Aramaic, but He chose rather to

speak to each one “in his own language, his mother tongue.” (Lit, “his tongue of birth” - the only place where this term appears in the Bible). If God made this choice, it is because He had a message of love for them. As a translator from Guatemala recently said to explain his work of many years, “If you ask a girl to marry you, would you use the official language or the language of her heart?” In fact, it was to declare His love for all people that God chose to speak through his son Jesus Christ become man. It is through His written Word that He has chosen to reveal himself and to declare His burning desire for us, and He wants to do it in the language of our emotions, our mother tongue, that we grew up speaking and of which we understand all its nuances.

Rather than to let ourselves be crushed under the weight of the task, if we remember that it is drop by drop that the oceans are formed, we can each in our own way contribute to the transmitting of God's letter of love to all the world.



According to translation organizations, it takes about \$38 to finance the translation of one Bible verse. Who among us would not be ready to invest that amount for a work that may change a life, ten lives... a tribe, a nation?

¹ source : wycliffe.net/statistics

TESTIMONIES FROM THE FIELD

The book is so well laid out. The size is perfect. The cover is high quality. Having the NT (in Cabécar) in our hands is very inspiring. We have enjoyed looking through it and have begun reading it.

Please accept our gratitude for the ministry of MiDi Bible and for your personal involvement. Please express our thanks to all who have had a part in the publication.

May our Lord continue to bless you and all who are part of MiDi Bible.

*A. & M. Jones, Pioneer missionaries
among the Cabécar*

READER'S COMMENTS

We wanted to say thank you for sharing with our family the ministry of MIDI Bible - we were truly blessed. How we appreciate the labor of love you do to put the work of translation in print and made available to the constituents it was prepared for in love. They are blessed to have such a beautiful book to ponder.

*P. & J. Suh (Hong Kong) -
Wycliffe missionaries*



Together with Cabécar brothers and sisters in Costa Rica and Sisaala in Ghana we praise our Heavenly Father for printing Bibles and NT. We are excited that his living Word helps many people get the assurance of eternal life by trusting in Jesus Christ. May the Lord bless you richly and may you continue to be a blessing for many people.

R.K., Winterthur, Switzerland



I share your immense privilege and your supreme joy, because you are privileged, as Paul said, to convey the word of God to these Amerindian people. I myself am Caribbean and experience a little the joy of these people to receive the "Word of Life". I pray with all my heart that the work that "God began among these people, He will pursue until his return." ... Be blessed, protected, guarded, supported, strengthened, in the name of Jesus....

E.P., Daumesnil, France

Blessed be the name of God for the how useful work that is given to you to perform in his kingdom. Hold fast! You are on the right track! God bless you!

M.M., France

PRAYER REQUESTS

Thank God :

- For the Bible and NT in **Cabécar** and in **Sisaala** that arrived at their destinations in excellent state.
- For the two new projects that came in at exactly the right moment.
- For the faithful support of donors.
- For the inspiring dedication celebration of the Bible in **Sisaala** that took place June 28th

Intercede :

- For the translation teams in **Banna** (Ethiopia), in **Tamajaq** (Niger) and in **Gonja** (Ghana) that are in the

critical final phases of proofreading and verification.

- For the translation in **Abuan** (Nigeria, 150,000 people). The complete Bible has been translated by national volunteers after the expulsion of Wycliffe missionaries. They now need wisdom and patience to assure the quality of the translation before publication.
- For the distribution of the **Cabécar** NT in the small village of the mountains of Costa Rica. Pray that each copy will be read, meditated upon, understood, and that God will transform many lives.

“Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life, and we have believed, and have come to know, that you are the Holy One of God.” John 6:68-69



By your support and your prayers, you bring to minority ethnic groups such as the Cabécar 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
Croix-de-Rive 32
1028 Prévèrenge, Suisse
Email: admin@midibible.org

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