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# **PUBLISHER'S MEMO**

## **Advancing Scripture Translation**

By Doug Birdsall

Earlier this year, Hollywood moviemakers released a glossy, high-action remake of the 1960s American science fiction classic *Star Trek*. First created in 1966 as a television series, *Star Trek* grew into six television series and eleven feature films, quickly becoming a permanent fixture in pop culture. The series dealt with many issues, including war and peace, imperialism, classism, racism, sexism, and especially the role of technology in society. One could not help imagining what the future would look like in terms of technology used for travel through time and space, weaponry, creating home environments, and communications.

Many of the futuristic pieces of technology depicted in the 1960s series are now very much a part of the world. Lasers are used in industry, weaponry, and surgery; "tricorders" used to read, compute, and communicate information can be seen in cell phones, PDAs, and blackberries; and computers, especially touch-screen, are now available in every size, shape, and form for use in every part of the home.

One piece of technology depicted in Star Trek that has yet to come into existence is the "universal translator" that can instantaneously translate language spoken from one language to another. Although there are online tools available (e.g., Babelfish and Google) that assist in translating text, in some cases they are far from being accurate or even discernible. As far as we have come technologically from the 1960s, languages and their translation, with all their great variety and nuances, continue to be a tremendous hurdle to overcome. So much more is the case with scripture translation.

#### A Brief Look at Bible Translation

In the nineteenth century and early decades of the twentieth century, much of the focus was placed on Bible distribution more so than on Bible translation. However, after 1910 there was a steady increase of work done on Bible translation. In the decade following 1910, scripture translation in some part was done in 102 additional languages with a cumulative total of 722 languages having some Bible translation. In the 1950s, 142 translations were added; in the 1960s, 258 languages; in the 1970s, 290 languages; and in the 1980s, 175 additional languages. It is estimated that by 2010 there will be over 2,500 translations of the Bible.\*

Even with great increases in Bible translations over the last century, still less than ten percent of the world's languages have complete Bibles. Only 458 of the world's 7,299 languages have full translations of the Bible, while 4,723 languages are without any scripture translations.

Many languages in Africa, Western Asia, and Southeast Asia do not have translations of the full Bible. Sadly, the lowest scripture translation availability is found in countries of western Asia and North Africa—countries such as Iraq, Syria, Jordan, Mauritania, Egypt, and Algeria, which are predominantly Muslim. Languages used by populations with very small Christian populations have an urgent need for scripture translation.

There is also great need to reach the remote areas of the world, as they are also the least touched by the advances of technology. MP3 downloads, podcasts, and Bibles in SMS format for mobile communication have served well those in urban areas with access to the Internet; however, they have not reached many of those in the Majority World. Often times, countries with the least access to the Internet also have lower Gross Domestic Products (GDPs) and adult literacy rates. The remote regions of the world are in great need for scripture translations and access to them. For example, Melanesia has the lowest percentage (24.1%) of full Bibles in their languages, although they have one of the highest numbers of languages in the world (just over 1,000 languages, second only to Southeast Asia with over 1,200 languages).

Although priority was given to New Testament translations twenty to thirty years ago due to limited personnel and financial resources, these limitations continue to exist today. In addition to these continuing infrastructural challenges, as well as the recognition of the need for Old Testament translations for the global Church, there is an increased need for trained consultants to work alongside translators as areas of specialization continue to increase. Concurrently, with the recognition of the importance of context in evangelizing and discipling, there is also an increased need for study Bibles.

#### **Equalizing the Task of Bible Translation**

More and more, we are recognizing that Bible translation cannot lie in the hands of the global North, but rather it is a task for the global Church. Reallocation of resources, realignment of organizations, and redistribution of manpower are necessary, especially as we move toward translations made by local speakers and not merely outside translators. Toward that end, the Forum of Bible Agencies International (FOBAI) was established in 1990 to increase cooperation and communication between many Bible translation and distribution agencies in the world.

It is in this spirit of cooperation and communication—the Spirit of Lausanne—that we must engage with the challenges of scripture translation. How must we increase cooperation and communication for this global task? How do we redistribute personnel and resources? How must we prioritize translation works? These are the questions we must ask ourselves and investigate further to boldly face the challenges of effectively communicating the gospel through the written word of the Bible in each person's first tongue.

It is my hope and prayer that as we examine and work toward finding solutions to the challenges of scripture translation that we would be inspired and re-energized to work toward the vision of Revelation 7. It is our hope and vision that every nation, tribe, people, and tongue would be found worshiping before the throne of the Lord God Almighty.

God's best to you.

\* All figures from Atlas of Global Christianity to be published by Edinburgh University Press in 2010.

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# **NEWS BRIEFS**

#### AROUND THE WORLD: Global Media Outreach Reaches a Milestone

For the first time, Global Media Outreach (GMO) saw over one million people indicate decisions for Jesus Christ in a single month. In June 2009, 1,030,581 people indicated either a first-time decision to follow Jesus or a decision to recommit their lives to Christ through one of more than ninety GMO gospel websites. GMO has seen the number of people indicating decisions for Jesus on their gospel websites triple over the last year. "This is an historic event only possible by God's power," said Walt Wilson, GMO founder and chair. "Over the past few months, we have seen an increasing number of people come to our evangelistic web and mobile sites." GMO is using the Web and other emerging technologies to effectively and efficiently convey the love of Christ and plan of salvation across the globe. Since its inception in 2004, GMO has seen the number of people making commitments to Christ grow from 21,066 people annually to more than three million people in 2008. (Assist News Service)

### **AROUND THE WORLD: Thirty Days of Prayer Focuses on Ramadan**

Muslims around the world are in the midst of Ramadan. It's Islam's holiest month, and it began 22 August 2009. Ramadan is a time when Muslims re-evaluate their lives in light of Islamic guidance. For the eighteenth year in a row, World Christian's Paul Filidis is asking Christians to pray that many Muslims will come to know Christ during their holiest time of the year. He helped create the 30 Days Muslim Prayer Focus. "The prayer focus always coincides with Ramadan, which is one of the five pillars of Islam. And Ramadan is the annual month of fasting where Muslims fast from sun up to sun down," Filidis explained. This year, the thirty days occur from 22 August to 20 September. The 30 Days Muslim Prayer Focus is a worldwide prayer effort designed to raise awareness, educate, and mobilize new support and workers to reach out to people groups who practice Islam. Many Christians want to participate in Muslim evangelism, but don't know where to begin. Mission Network News is providing the 30 Days Muslim Prayer Guide for a gift of any amount. This prayer guide is a 30-page booklet that focuses each day on a specific area of the Islamic world. (Mission Network News)

### CONGO: Wycliffe Moves Quickly to Establish Bible Translation Center

War in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) has ravaged the land for the past five years and left three million dead. Estimates report that almost 1,200 people die each day "from conflict-related causes." In addition, the life expectancy rates are age 45 for men and 48 for women. Wycliffe Associates realizes this country needs Jesus more than ever and will be constructing a Bible translation center in the city of Bunia in northeastern DRC. Some of the violence has subsided in this region recently, according to Bruce Smith, president and CEO of Wycliffe Associates. "There's a window of peace, of security. If we move quickly, we can establish a permanent translation center. The Christians of the Democratic Republic of Congo are begging for this opportunity not to be missed," Smith said. The center will be located at Shalom University and will begin translating the Bible into five new languages. This will give 1.6 million people access to the scriptures in their own language for the first time. (Wycliffe Associates)

#### **GAZA: A One Heart Solution**

E3 Partners' Tom Doyle was recently in the Gaza Strip on a short-term mission trip; his team visited Jerusalem, the Hypha area, Tel Aviv, Bethlehem, and the West Bank. In several of the areas they visited, such as Hypha, Jews and Arabs live together peacefully. Doyle said while Palestinians are often associated with terrorists, many just want peace. "The majority of the Palestinians that we know would love for there to be a peace. They really don't want to fight Israel, and don't want any of that nonsense that has been going on for decades," said Doyle. E3 Partners sees this as an open door to share with the Jews and Arabs in the region the inner peace Jesus gives. Doyle also said, "We hear all about maybe a 'two

states' solution—Israel and Palestine. We try to stay out of the politics if we can and just say, 'How about a one heart solution, where Jews and Arabs come together under the name of Jesus Christ?'" (Mission Network News)

#### **MOLDOVA: Donated Cancer Medicines Help the Poor**

The National Cancer Coalition and German nonprofit HFK Krebsallianz recently donated \$130,000USD in cancer-fighting drugs to Medical Teams International. These medications arrived in Moldova earlier this month and are already helping patients who cannot afford cancer treatments. This donation will benefit an estimated 150 children and adults seeking care at Moldova's largest cancer hospital. According to the United Nations, Moldova is the poorest country in Eastern Europe, with most families earning less than \$2,200EU per year. Although Moldova recently established a centralized health system, the program is in its infancy and faces serious shortages of medical supplies and equipment. Medical Teams International has an office located in the capital city of Chisinau and employs eight full-time national staff. The primary activity of this office is to train local paramedics in pre-hospital emergency response. (Medical Teams International)

### **PAKISTAN: Believers in Pakistan Urge Prayer**

Christians in Pakistan invited believers around the world to join them in prayer for their nation and for the blasphemy laws to be repealed, according to the Voice of the Martyrs (VOM) contacts. More than 575 pastors from different churches in Pakistan agreed to observe 26 July as a day of prayer for persecuted believers. Christians also ran a petition aimed at repealing the blasphemy laws that have led to the arrest of many believers. VOM joined believers in Pakistan in prayer and encouraged Christians around the world to pray. Recently, incidents of persecution and violence toward Christians in the country have escalated. It was reported that on 26 June, more than 150 Muslim extremists attacked more than 150 Christian families. (Voice of the Martyrs)

### **RWANDA:** On the Road to Healing, Festival Draws Thousands

Fifteen years after the 1994 genocide that killed an estimated one million people in one hundred days, the people of Rwanda continue the hard work of healing and restoration, laying the groundwork for a strong future. Through Kigali Festival with Andrew Palau on 17-18 July 2009, and the festival's preceding Season of Service, hope and good news were offered in abundance. With attendance estimated at more than seventy thousand people, the evangelist's two-day festival was held on the Amahoro National Stadium grounds in Rwanda's capital city. Another three thousand people attended separate events for women, government, business, and civic leaders, and prisoners at Kigali Central Prison. More than five thousand people made public decisions for Jesus Christ. The Palau festival was a partnership with Africa New Life Ministries, Hope Rwanda, and Water for Life, combining their efforts to gather more than 350 participating churches. The campaign was fully supported by Kigali City's mayor, vice mayor, city council, and all of the city's sector leadership. (Andrew Palau)

### **VIETNAM: Violence Escalates, Church Property Confiscated**

Catholics carried out mass demonstrations in Vietnam the week of 30 July 2009 against a violent police clampdown on a protest over a disputed site. Among the casualties was a priest who was beaten and thrown from the second floor of a hospital by gangs allegedly acting on police instructions. It was reported that armed police attacked a group of priests and lay people as they tried to erect a cross and altar at the ruins of Tam Toa Church in the coastal city of Dong Hoi. Police reportedly used stun guns, tear gas, and batons. On 26 July, Father Paul Dinh Phu Nguyen was attacked by a mob, including plain-clothed police, on his way to celebrate mass at Tam Toa. He was later visited in the hospital by Father Peter Nguyen The Binh, who was attacked by a gang and thrown from an upstairs window of the hospital. He is in a coma and believed to be in critical condition. Christian Solidarity Worldwide sources have reported

that tension has been rising for some time between the government and both Catholic and Protestant communities regarding confiscated church property. (Christian Solidarity Worldwide)

# **UNITED KINGDOM: Soul Survivor Keeps Growing**

July and August saw the seventeenth year of the growing U.K.-based youth movement, Soul Survivor. Soul Survivor grew out of an Anglican church, St. Andrew's Chorleywood, which was equipping Christians to move in the power of the Holy Spirit through the New Wine family conferences. Because of significant growth in youth work at New Wine, something separate was needed for young people. So in 1993, Soul Survivor launched its first annual five-day conference in Shepton Mallet, Somerset in southwest England. This first event hosted just fewer than two thousand people, and the number of delegates has grown every year since. In 2008 approximately twenty-eight thousand people participated. Key leader Mike Pilavachi never expected it to grow at such a rate. "Every day, every year, you just do the next thing that God tells you to do....But the thing is you can't get complacent with serving God, because it's not about the past; it's about the future." Currently, six international Soul Survivor centers around the world share the movement's vision and values and hold annual events for young people in Australia, Holland, Malaysia, New Zealand, South Africa, and the USA. (Assist News Service)

### **UNITED STATES:** Audio Bible Ministry Targets the Many Languages of Texas

Faith Comes By Hearing (FCBH) was called upon by the Baptist General Convention of Texas (BGCT) to provide audio Bibles for the Texas Hope 2010 campaign. Texas Hope 2010 is a BGCT outreach to more than 8.8 million homes in Texas. "The audio Bibles are in a word-for-word, dramatized format—complete with sound effects and music," said Troy Carl, FCBH national director. "These audio Bibles are easy to listen to and people can listen while getting ready for their day, while driving to work, or while doing household chores....We want to give everyone the opportunity to hear the Bible in their own language." said Carl. (Faith Comes By Hearing)

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# **THEMED ARTICLES: Advancing Scripture Translation**

### **Advancing Bible Translation for Non-Reading Audiences**

By Viggo Søgaard

The challenges confronting Bible agencies are greater than ever. The population of the world is increasing and the number of non-literates can be counted in the hundreds of millions. Furthermore, millions of children are going to school and learning to read and write; however, about half are likely to stop the learning process before actual skills for reading a daily newspaper have been achieved. There are likely more than one billion people who are classified as readers, but who are functionally non-literate.

Our habit has often been to neglect those who do not read, as it is difficult for us to imagine that God can work effectively with people in any other way than through the written text. We assume that people come to and grow in Christ largely through reading the Bible, so we can scarcely imagine that God could have worked before the invention of the printing press. Yet for thousands of years before printing made mass literacy possible, God was at work. He is not limited to one single medium of communication.

The issue of non-readers is an issue for all countries, as we see reading declining even in countries with high literacy rates. It has been estimated that in some African countries printed scripture only reaches around ten percent of the population. The challenge is therefore to develop translations that are relevant to the media, productions that are appropriate, and distribution systems for scripture that reach the non-reading population.

Several Bible agencies are now committed to providing scripture in audio and video media; in practice, however, the enthusiasm seems more restrained, as setting new priorities takes courage, energy, and dedication.

#### **Bible Translation Is a Communication Task**

The Great Commission is a communication commission. The word is alive when it is communicated, and new media provide us with outstanding possibilities for doing just that. There are many examples which demonstrate that the Bible can be communicated effectively through media other than print.

A strategy for "distributing" scripture to non-literates will need to be substantially different from the approaches used when distributing printed scripture. Active participation of the person in the process is necessary if effective communication of the message is to take place. The primary question is not which technique we should use, but rather the underlying philosophy or attitudes which we have toward non-literates. Recent calls for holistic involvement and engagement material are of extreme importance for agencies that aim at fulfilling their mandate of reaching all people.

Oral societies have a high tolerance for time expenditure, and the importance of an activity is judged by the amount of time devoted to it. A Bible reading therefore becomes a Bible communication event, where the text is set in its context, and where immediate application is achieved in the minds and context of the listeners. An event is experienced as a whole rather than as segmented, sequential parts. Participation is not only necessary, but participative communication brings the message in a mode which is customary for oral societies. All of this has implications for translation, as the text needs to inspire interaction and involvement.

### Preparation of a Translation for Audio and Video Purposes

Whenever we are dealing with translation of scripture, we are in the area of cross-cultural communication. Bible translators are faced with the problem of understanding the meaning of a written communication coming from thousands of years ago, and passing that message on to another reader or listener in a totally different culture, age, setting, and language, hoping that the same meaning will be created in his or her mind.

If the audience consists of non-literates or functional non-literates, the Bible translator must translate for media other than print. Furthermore, many non-literate people are poor, so relevancy regarding the needs of the poor, the homeless, or the outcasts needs to be considered. If we want to reach such audiences, the relevancy of language and program format will be an increasing challenge to translation.

The original text of the Bible was composed for reception via the ear rather than the eye. Thus, it becomes important to investigate the communicative design of the original biblical source texts in Hebrew and Greek for features significant for translation and adaptations for oral, audio, and video productions.

Although some translations have used oral language, in most cases existing translations have been used in the audio and video media. Usually common language translations give the best starting point, as other translations may have outdated or difficult words that make hearing complicated. For oral presentations, we need to conform to the rules and requirements of spoken rather than written language.

Script writers are narrators of stories that are to be presented in a manner suitable to the chosen medium, so script writing may call for certain restructuring of the biblical text to fit the medium. This will then be a new translation which conforms to the features, style, and structure of oral discourse rather than to those of the print medium. We also need to find ways to express the meaning of such print characteristics as paragraph indentations, section headings, quotation marks, illustrations, maps, and footnotes.

### Implications of Some Oral Characteristics for Audio Programs<sup>1</sup>

<b>Oral Communication Characteristics</b>	Written Communication Characteristics
Sound only	Sight only
Rhythm	Format
Spoken aloud	Read silently
Present time	Past time
Direct speech	Indirect speech
Personal interaction	Objectification
Emotional impact	Analysis
More verbs	More nouns
Repetition	Movement

Several of these features can be seen from the original text. Acts 12:14 is an example of direct speech made into indirect speech during the translation process. In written translations the text is indirect and reads: "She recognized Peter's voice and was so happy that she ran back in without opening the door and announced that Peter was standing outside" (Good News Bible translation). The Greek text is direct speech, so in audio we can follow the Greek and make it direct: "...and said, 'Peter is standing...'"

In written texts, we can have implicit information, as the reader can find the information from the context. In Acts 12:25 we read: "Barnabas and Saul finished their mission and returned from Jerusalem, taking John Mark with them" (GNB). The uninformed reader or listener would ask, "Returned to where?" The reader can go back to chapter 11:25ff to find the information, but a listener needs to be provided with such information.

There are many other examples of implicit information in scripture such as place names, people, and events. The original readers knew this, and in printed scripture there are many "helps," including word explanations, headings, and maps. Such information also needs to be included in audio. Footnotes and word explanations, for example, will need to be provided up front or inserted where needed.

In written texts, headings are often just one word or a few words. In oral presentations, one or more sentences may need to be provided. Pictures and maps from written Bibles need to be inserted as stories. In the printed text, biblical vs. non-biblical material can be distinguished by different font size; however, in non-print formats this will normally require two different voices.<sup>2</sup>

Another issue relates to emphasis. Written texts are more ambiguous as to emphasis, but in audio the reader will need to be informed of where emphasis should be placed. Emphasis on the wrong word may totally change the message communicated. For example, Acts 1:8 reads: "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth" (New International Version). From the structure of the Greek text, it is clear that only one word—my—should be emphasized.

Expression of surprise provides life to a text. Acts 2:7 is an example of a text where the written scriptures leave out words that are more oral in nature: "Utterly amazed, they asked, "[----] *Are not all these men who are speaking Galileans?*" (NIV). In Greek there is a word indicating surprise, but this has not been made clear in the printed text. In audio the word can be communicated through an expression or the tone of the voice.

#### Faithfulness of an Audio or Video Translation

As the message communicated through audio or video media will be influenced by numerous other factors (e.g., voice, personality, setting, production, clothing), the issue of faithfulness will not only be concerned with the written script, but the total presentation. Various guidelines have been prepared for this, but it will mean that translation consultants need to approve not only the script, but also the performance.

All elements in the audio or video production should be in accord with the message and theme of the biblical text, so that it is seen as a faithful rendering of the meaning of the original. The biblical text needs to be clearly distinguishable from other program elements, and it must be the main focus of any scripture product. All program elements should support that focus. By focusing translation programs on non-reading audiences, we may be able to actually make the word of God available to all people.

#### **Endnotes**

- 1. The examples are taken from "Communicating Scriptures: The Bible in Audio and Video," published by the United Bible Societies, 2002.
- 2. Further illustrations and examples are given in "Communicating Scriptures: The Bible in Audio and Video."

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### **Advancing Scripture Translation by Empowering Nationals**

By Véroni Krüger

**Early Bible translation was done by nationals translating the Bible into their own language**. It is also a fact that Bible translation done under the auspices of Bible societies has by and large typically been done by nationals.<sup>1</sup>

Some organizations who focused more on expatriate translators nevertheless made ample use of nationals (also called "mother tongue translators"). They were sometimes referred to as "helpers" or "informants" (or lately as "assistant translators"), when in fact they generally were the actual translators. The term "language consultant" is more acceptable when it refers to someone who provides data on a language. Applied to someone who does the actual work of translation simply because that person is a mother tongue translator, it is a misnomer.

Expatriate translation developed as a result of the missionary intention, which by itself is praiseworthy and was part of God's plan. However, since the early second half of the twentieth century, there has been an observable change in the focus of who does what.

### **Nationals Translating the Bible for Their Own People**

The year 1970 has come to be regarded as the start of the era of non-missionary translation. That was the time when articles about the training of nationals started to appear.<sup>2</sup> This seemed to be in accordance with a global shift in missions in general. The following press release issued after the Global Consultation on World Evangelization in 1995 (GCOWE '95) illustrates this shift very well:

The Global Consultation on World Evangelization marks a radical shift from the days of American/European-only missions. According to Luis Bush of Argentina, International Director of the AD2000 & Beyond Movement, which organized GCOWE '95, the consultation became "a rite of passage." Not only were two-thirds of the participants from Africa, Latin America, and Asia, but the majority of the consultation's funding came from those nations as well. Western missionaries took notes as African, Asian, and Latin American leaders presented their successful methodology. They had become full partners in the task.

There are numerous advantages to having nationals translate the Bible for their own people. Among these:

- 1. Nationals are culturally conditioned and sensitive in reaching their own people for Jesus Christ.
- 2. Nationals don't need to spend years of study learning a foreign language in order to communicate effectively.
- 3. Nationals, being born and raised in the countries in which they will minister, are physically and psychologically adjusted to both climate and culture.
- 4. Nationals have rights and privileges that might not be extended to a foreigner.
- 5. Nationals are organizationally simple and able to live, minister, and function on a far more basic level than that of their foreign counterparts. Most have never known the luxury of cars, offices, telephones, computers, or video equipment. For many nationals, a bicycle is a great luxury!
- 6. Nationals do not need to go on furlough every few years.
- 7. Nationals are economically conditioned to live on \$30 to \$50USD a month in many parts of the world. By contrast, the average cost for sending and sustaining a foreign missionary family of four is \$35,000-\$50,000USD a year.<sup>3</sup>

Also, translations made by nationals are more likely to be free of "translationese," and are much more readily accepted by the speakers of that language. This is due to the fact that a national speaks his or her own language better than anyone else can ever learn to speak it.

Of course, stressing the advantages of empowering nationals to do the work of Bible translation does not imply that expatriate involvement is not valuable and could be discontinued. Cooperation among all possible role players is the ideal.

With regard to the issue of skills and capabilities, it is a fact that nationals in many cultures (particularly multilingual cultures) possess tremendous linguistic skills as evidenced by their language learning abilities. Lack of experience of Western-type training may be a very real obstacle. However, this can be overcome by adapting the training procedures to suit the particular cultural background.

Two keys to successfully empowering nationals for the task of Bible translation are (1) training and (2) ensuring that an adequate number of Bible translation consultants are available. These two requisites are equally important. They must be applied to the empowerment of nationals as stringently as for expatriate translators.

### Training<sup>4</sup>

In the mid 1990s The Word for the World (WW) began offering a diploma course on the field, where

WW missionary Bible translators were actively engaged in projects in Zambia, Ethiopia, and later Tanzania and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). WW personnel and church leaders participate in the recruitment of potential mother-tongue translators, who are then invited to enroll in the WW Diploma in Bible Translation (DBT). This program provides training for the different participants involved in the translation process, viz. prospective Bible translators (including mother tongue translators), project coordinators, testers, reviewers, and church leaders.

The DBT is a practical course presented over a number of years. It typically consists of intensive contact modules (in-class) completed in four weeks per year, for four years, as well as practical work and assignments done in the time between modules. Subjects cover studies in Bible translation (theoretical and practical), the processes of a Bible translation project, reading and understanding the Bible, applied linguistics, language and community, Christian leadership, intercultural communication, and computer skills.

Great emphasis is placed on a student's active involvement and participation in a Bible translation project. One of the requirements for continuing in the program after the first formal training is active involvement in a translation project, or evidence that the trainee is passionate about long-term involvement in Bible translation as a translator, project coordinator, exegete, or future consultant.

Students are trained both theoretically and practically through all the phases of translation, from research into his or her language, to making a first draft, to final publication. Teaching nationals to do their own sociolinguistic research to determine prestige dialect, language vitality, and whether a definite need for translation exists has an added advantage. Because nationals have a natural intuition of their own language, they can do research straight after the training in that aspect in their own home areas. This speeds up the process and saves great expense.

The concept of on-the-job training is of prime importance, where the student can implement and reinforce on a daily basis what he or she has been taught in the contact modules and what he or she is learning throughout the course work assignments, which are very practical nature. Doing the DBT keeps translators on a learning curve, and continually sharpens their linguistic, translation, and Bible skills. Not only should their quality of work improve as their skills are honed, but their competency is enhanced. This empowers them to become project leaders, and eventually trainers.

One of the long-term goals of WW is to train nationals to become country directors and translation consultants. The former goal has been achieved, with nationals leading the work in the DRC, Ethiopia, and Tanzania. Training consultants is currently a high priority, particularly with the increase in number of Bible translation projects.

#### **The Outcomes**

The most effective evaluation of the focus on empowering nationals as it relates to advancing scripture translation is to examine the results. The following summary of the progress in WW's Bible translation projects provides proof that the approach is effective. To place the statistics in perspective, it is necessary to realize that all WW Bible translation projects are first-time translations. That means the Bible has never been translated into those languages before. All WW projects are aimed at translating the entire Bible. All translations are checked by trained and qualified consultants, often from outside WW's own ministry (e.g., by the publishing ministries and outside academics).

The average translation time for WW's first two translations of the complete Bible (not necessarily including all checking, testing, typesetting, and proofreading) is 10.6 years (9.4 for the Sena Bible of Malawi, and 11.9 for the Taabua Bible of the DRC). The average percentage of the Bible translated per

year per project in all WW's projects is approximately eight percent (eighteen percent of projects are translated at less than five percent per year, fifty-three percent of projects at five to ten percent, and twenty-one percent of projects at ten percent or greater). Numerous translation teams have completed the New Testament in three years.

After two thousand years of church history, the complete Bible is available in only 438 languages. The rate at which the Bible is being translated needs to be radically accelerated. It has been proven that empowering nationals to translate the Bible for their own people is one of the keys to that acceleration.

#### **Endnotes**

- 1. See Smalley, William Allen. 1991. *Translation as Mission, Bible Translation in the Modern Missionary Movement*, 22-33, for an overview of the history of Bible translation, with comments about work done by nationals or by others for them.
- 2. Ibid, 33.
- 3. www.missionlink.org
- 4. See Funnell, Barry. 2008. "A Holistic Field-based Training Program: The Birthplace of Multiple Translation Projects in Southeast Tanzania and Ethiopia." In *GIALens: Electronic Notes Series* 2(1). www.gial.edu/GIALens/issues.htm

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## Bible Translation in History and into the Future

By Phil Noss

According to linguistic count, there are 6,909 living languages in the world today (*Ethnologue* 16th ed.). Of these, 2,496 have at least a portion of translated scripture, but the remaining 4,413 have no Bible translation at all.

Although scripture translation has been underway for over two millennia, the speakers of more than half the world's languages still have no translated scripture. At the same time linguists estimate that approximately ninety-four to ninety-five percent of the world's population has access to the Bible in a language they are able to speak or understand. However, that language may be a language of conquerors or enemies that they do not wish to use, and they do not have access to God's word in their mother tongue or in their "heart language."

### Up Until Now...

Putting these linguistic facts in perspective, missiologist Andrew Walls observes that the Christian message is a translated message and the Christian Church is a translated Church. Before Christ was born, the words of the Hebrew Scriptures were translated into Greek (the international language of the day) in Alexandria in Egypt, one of the great cultural and economic centers of the time. It was this translation—the Septuagint—that became the first Bible of the Christian Church. The New Testament authors recorded the story of Jesus' message of good news, not in the Aramaic language that Jesus and his disciples and

followers spoke in their daily lives, but in the widely-spoken Koiné Greek of the eastern Mediterranean world.

Implicit in the Great Commission is the need for translation: "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them ... and teaching them..." (Matthew 28:19-20). The story of Pentecost is a story of cross-language communication through the miracle of speaking in tongues (Acts 2:5-13). The early Christian Church spread out from Jerusalem, Judea, and Samaria to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8).

In the east, the Bible was translated in the first centuries into Syriac, Persian, Gothic, Armenian, Georgian, and in the seventh century parts of it were translated even into Chinese. To the south, it was translated into Coptic dialects, into Nubian, and into Ge'ez. To the west, in North Africa and in southern Europe, it was translated into dialects of Old Latin. Over time, Latin, the language of the Roman Empire, of *pax romana*, replaced Greek as the language of international communication, and the Latin Bible known as the Vulgate became the Bible of the Church in Europe for a thousand years. It was not until the Protestant Reformation in the sixteenth century that Bible translation became an integral feature of the life and growth of the Western Church.

The Reformation Period was followed by the Missionary Era of Bible translation during the colonial era of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Missionary efforts in Bible translation were facilitated by the translation, publishing, and distribution expertise of the Bible Society enterprise, beginning with the founding of the British and Foreign Bible Society in 1804. In the mid-twentieth century, a number of professional Bible translation agencies were founded, foremost being Wycliffe Bible Translators.

The translation of the Bible cannot be separated from the growth of the Christian Church worldwide. Just as the early Church grew across Asia and North Africa and into Europe in the first centuries, so the Church has grown throughout Africa, Oceania, and the New World alongside Bible translation. Wherever the Christian Church has gone, it has been accompanied by translation of the Word of God, whether in the international languages of the time, or in the mother tongues of the new Christian communities.

The principle of a pragmatic approach to Bible translation may be seen from biblical times to the present day. The very first translation was into a trade language, Greek. Bible translation in Asia and northeast Africa quickly shifted from Greek to major local languages, and through these languages many Christian communities survived in the midst of great pressures for a very long time.

The Nubian Church existed until the sixteenth century in what is present-day Sudan, and the Udi Church in the Caucasus existed into the nineteenth century. Some of these early churches continue to be with us to the present time (e.g., the Coptic Orthodox Church in Egypt and the Ethiopian Orthodox Church in Ethiopia). It is frequently suggested that part of the reason for the disappearance of the early Church in North Africa from Libya to Algeria was that no scripture translation was undertaken in local languages.

#### **Culture and Translation**

In the "translated church" not only are the words of the Bible translated, but concepts as well. Old Testament truths were reinterpreted by Jesus for the disciples and his followers. Using the Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures, the early Church adjusted from a Semitic way of thinking to Greek philosophical thought.

In the New Testament we already see ecclesiastical differences between the Jewish way of life and the Gentile way of life. As the Christian Church moved eastward across Asia and northward, it underwent a continuing process of translation, and likewise as it moved westward into Europe.

In each community, when the Word of God enters the speech form of a people, it enters their culture. Unlike the Islamic practice of not translating the Qur'an and always using the Arabic name *Allah*, the Bible is translated and translators have almost always adopted a local name for God. Thus, *YHWH* of the Israelite forefathers became *Theos* and *Kyrios* in the Septuagint and in the Greek New Testament. In Africa, the Zulu name for God is *Nkulunkulu*, the "Great Great One"; among the Samba of Cameroon one name for God is *Nyaama*, a word associated with the sun; among the Lame in Chad, it is *Yafray*, a feminine name that means "Mother of the heavens"; and for the Gà in Ghana, God may be referred to as *Ataa Naa Nyonmo*, the "Father Mother God." God reveals himself through his word and through each culture.

### **Bible Translation in the Coming Days**

What is the task that lies ahead of us in Bible translation? According to Vision 2025 articulated by Wycliffe Bible Translators, all language communities in the world that need Bible translations should have translation projects underway by the year 2025. However, of the 2,496 languages that already have scripture translations, only 1,204 have New Testaments and an even fewer 453 have complete Bibles. The translation of a portion (i.e., one book or a selection from the Bible) may signal the beginning of a Bible translation project, but it is only a beginning.

For evangelistic purposes, a New Testament is needed; for theological training and discourse, a Bible is needed. But herein lies a problem. Translating an entire Bible is very costly in terms of human and financial resources. Furthermore, Bible schools and seminaries often use a language of wider communication such as English, French, or Spanish in the classroom, instead of local languages, thereby greatly reducing the use of minority language Bibles.

In the global languages, new Bible translations are published almost every year for all audiences in print and non-print media alike. However, for many small language communities there will only be one translation. Here there is a great need for Bible Helps and for Study Bibles for private reading and for group study.

The Forum of Bible Agencies International identifies its vision as "working together to maximize the worldwide access and impact of God's Word." Making the scriptures accessible in the language of each community is important, but Bible translation must not end with the publishing and distribution of the translated scriptures. From accessibility there will hopefully be impact and engagement.

The United Bible Societies describes *scripture engagement* as a "concept that emphasizes making the scriptures discoverable, accessible, and relevant." Great effort needs to be expended by churches everywhere, with support from Bible agencies, to stimulate engagement with the translated scriptures through literacy programs that lead to reading of the translated Word of God, through liturgical use of the mother tongue scriptures, through workshops and formal courses in Bible study, and through multi-media and Internet presentations of the scriptures.

As has been apparent in the life of the Christian Church throughout history, through the presence of the Holy Spirit, the word that goes out from his mouth does not return empty: it does accomplish that which he purposed and it does succeed in the thing for which he sent it (Isaiah 55:11).

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### **The Future of Scripture Translation**

By Bryan Harmelink

Scripture translation has been an integral part of the growth and expansion of the Church through the ages, motivated by the desire to have access to the Word of God in new languages. The long and rich history of scripture translation is a fascinating area of study that gives perspective on the future of this foundational activity of God's people.

### **History of Scripture Translation**

This history began more than two centuries before the time of Christ, when the Hebrew Scriptures were translated into Greek. This translation, the Septuagint, became the "Bible" of the early Church and is still in use today. Other ancient versions followed in languages such as Syriac, Coptic, and Latin as the Church expanded into other regions. By the year 1500, there were scripture translations in twenty languages, and over the next three hundred years this number increased to eighty.

The formation of the British and Foreign Bible Society in 1804 was the beginning of a new era of scripture translation. This article does not allow for all the details of the history of the Bible Society movement, but it is important to note that it was the beginning of more focused attention on the task of scripture translation and distribution in the world's languages. More than a century later, the Bible societies were joined by other agencies such as SIL International, New Tribes Mission, Lutheran Bible Translators, the Institute for Bible Translation, Pioneer Bible Translators, Evangel Bible Translators, and The World.

Together, the Bible societies and translation agencies have served the Church by providing access to scripture in an unprecedented number of languages. As a point of reference, in 1820 scripture was available in 107 languages. In 1910, the total was 722, and by 2010, this number will surpass 2,500. As we look to the future, a significant challenge remains: to provide scripture for more than two thousand more language communities who still have no access to scripture in their language.

#### My Personal Walk into Translation

My perspective on the future of scripture translation has been shaped by my experience working with SIL International over the last thirty years, and by an increasing awareness of not only the history, but the impact of translation around the world. When I began my training with SIL, I had no idea that I was part of one of the largest movements in the history of scripture translation.

From my perspective in the late 1970s, I was merely following my interests and God's guidance. In retrospect, I can see how several different streams were converging in the middle of the twentieth century that, in some direct or indirect way, gave rise to this movement. One of the main streams was the vitality of the modern mission movement. Another stream, specifically related to scripture translation, was the growth of Descriptive Linguistics as a field of study.

Closely related to the growth of Descriptive Linguistics was Eugene Nida's development of Functional Equivalence as a theory of translation. The analytical principles and methods of these developing disciplines were at the heart of the training provided in the summer training programs of SIL and other translation agencies. As a result of these converging streams, many translators were trained and became involved in an unprecedented number of translation projects in languages around the world under the auspices of various Bible societies and translation agencies.

Other key initiatives Nida set in motion in the mid-twentieth century have had a lasting impact on the way translation is carried out today, thus laying a foundation for the future. One of these was to produce

editions of the Hebrew and Greek texts for translators. Another important initiative was the training of translation consultants who would work closely with teams of translators on location with the goal of helping to improve the quality of translation.

The training I received in the late 1970s was squarely within the trends briefly mentioned above. Equipped with cutting-edge linguistics, translation theory, and even a new "personal computer," I was ready to learn a new language and train translators to work on a scripture translation project. During the next several years I worked with a team of dedicated translators and consultants, which eventually culminated in the publication and distribution of the Mapuche New Testament in Chile. The experience of many colleagues in SIL and other translation agencies would have been very similar during this period of time.

### **But Times Are Changing**

The world is not the same as it was when I was trained and began my work in Bible translation. One of the most significant changes is the growth of the Church around the world. It is impossible to even consider the future of scripture translation without taking this reality into account. So, as I contemplate the future of scripture translation, I ask myself: What is my appropriate role in light of the growth of the global Church? How can I best serve the Church? How can the translation agency in which I work best serve the Church?

I've come to realize that answers to these questions cannot be found unless I am engaged in direct conversation and consultation with the global Church. I've also realized that the "right" answers today will likely be quite different from what they were twenty or thirty years ago. The work of translation has always been carried out in service to the Church, but the time is right for the whole Church to be involved in decisions of what best serves its mission, including scripture translation, in the world. This seems to be an appropriate response approach to how the "center of gravity" has shifted in the Church.

As I envision the future of scripture translation, I see:

- 1. ...more translation being carried out by teams that are representative of the complexion of the global Church (hence, less westerners being sent to initiate translation work). There will likely be a greater internationalization of existing translation agencies and the creation of new, more streamlined and agile ones that can respond more directly to local issues and needs. In the future, there will likely be more and more translation teams and consultants working directly under the auspices of these local agencies. At the same time, there will be increased cooperative efforts of the Church, translation agencies, and other organizations as they seek to work toward common goals for scripture translation and engagement.
- 2. ...an increased number of revisions of already existing translations. This will go hand in hand with an increase in the Church's active engagement with scripture, participation in global dialogue, and the development of local theologies. The future will not only see the availability of at least some portion of Scripture in all the world's languages, but it will also be characterized by more translations of the Old Testament and whole Bibles. The trend will also continue to produce notes and materials to aid in the comprehension of the biblical text.
- 3. ...a previously-thought-impossible number of consultants from diverse regions of the world working across the globe. These future consultants will work in an unprecedented way with already existing and new technologies, providing them greater access to translation, biblical studies, and biblical language resources. There will also be increased use of current and new

4. ...unprecedented access to the Bible through a variety of media and mobile devices, some of which are not even in use or available today. Traditional publication and distribution channels will also change, enhancing local access to scripture through on-demand publishing technologies.

I am sure there will be changes in the future of scripture translation that I have not even anticipated. I am very aware of my limited perspective, but I am certain that the basic motivation to provide access to the Word of God will not change. There may have been an unprecedented number of translations published during recent decades, but I believe we are now living in one of the most exciting eras of scripture translation as the global Church works together to provide access to the Word of God.

**Bryan Harmelink** is international translation coordinator for SIL International. He began his work with SIL International in Latin America, working for many years with the Mapuche translation team in Chile.

# **PERSPECTIVES**

# **Gaining Spiritual Sight: A Continuous Process**

By Dana Ryan

"You can see leaves on trees?"

Those were the first words out of my mouth as I exited the optometrist's office. At nine years of age I learned that trees seen from a distance did not match the iconic pictures of trees often drawn by children—a brown trunk topped by a fuzzy green circle—and I was stunned.

Similar revelations followed as I began to see the world with 20/20 vision for the first time. And while my newfound clarity proved exciting, it also carried a certain unease, not only from realizing I hadn't seen the world accurately for nine years, but also (and perhaps more so), because I hadn't known it. I felt as though I was emerging from a long deception.

#### The Miracle of Sight: Removing Spiritual Blindness

The transformation of my visual world from one of blurred images to one of sharp, focused shapes is easy to explain scientifically. But for me, the experience of seeing clearly for the first time was nothing short of miraculous. However, the true miracle of sight is in God's ability to remove our spiritual blindness—to reveal who he is, who we are, and how great a gulf exists between the two. That process, unlike the correction of physical sight, is one not easily explained by science, nor is it always as easily accepted.

The difficulty lies in the fact that the lens through which we view the world is closely connected to our identity—who we perceive ourselves to be and who others are in relation to this perception. When a worldview is questioned, the holder of that worldview is suddenly faced with a very personal dilemma: *Do I really know who I am?* And that places the individual in the uncomfortable position of questioning the people who helped form his or her identity—usually the most loved and respected people in his or her life. Accepting a differing set of beliefs feels, for many, like a betrayal.

#### Interacting with Individuals Who Come from a Different Starting Point

I learned this during my interactions with Ya Hue.\* My friendship with Ya Hue, a student from China,

developed quickly. We met at church and soon began meeting once a week after she expressed interest in learning more about the Bible. Almost immediately I discovered her quick wit, her interest in other cultures, and her reflective nature. We spent hours conversing on a wide range of topics and our relationship deepened to the point that we openly shared our joys and sorrows with one another.

During one of my initial meetings with Ya Hue, the topic of original sin surfaced. She disagreed with my assertion that people are born evil, instead attributing the bad behavior of individuals to corrupt influences within society. She then agreed to the concept of absolute truth, but remained unable to provide any standard for that truth. When she suggested society as the standard, I asked her whether an entire society could be wrong. She grew quiet and then said, "I've never thought about some of these things before."

It was a statement Ya Hue would repeat many times during our discussions. Sometimes her admission surprised me, revealing the fact that I often take many biblical truths for granted and assume that everyone around me sees the world the same way. But I have to remember that some people are still seeing trees as big green circles. I also have to be honest and admit that my own vision continues to be corrected as God reveals blind spots in my own life. I know from experience that the process of gaining spiritual sight can be painful. And for someone whose vision is radically altered, it may feel as if the person is emerging from a long deception.

Ya Hue seemed to move back and forth. She wanted what she saw when she looked at our group of believers and she recognized the wisdom and truth within the Bible, yet she still held back. At one point she even asked "You realize that this is very difficult for me?" And I did, because I understood that she felt like her whole belief system would essentially collapse if she accepted the truths of the Bible. Gaining a new worldview meant seeing the world in a radically different way from those she loved—and that made her feel disloyal, even disrespectful.

I reminded Ya Hue of Jesus' statement, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free" (John 8:31-32). She had discovered the verse while reading on her own and found it to be a source of great comfort. She sincerely wanted to find truth. I knew that the truth would indeed set her free from all her fears when she received God's gift of salvation and his peace entered her heart.

### Realizing Obstacles, yet Staying Faithful to Witness

However, for individuals to accept God's offer of redemption they must receive enough clarity of vision to see their need for reconciliation with him. And there may be many obstacles preventing this optical acuity, especially (if not entirely) due to a person's worldview. For instance, when Ya Hue and I first began meeting together, she told me she didn't believe in God. Quite obviously I couldn't talk about the separation between her and a being she didn't believe in. She also didn't believe in original sin, so the idea that men and women are corrupt could not serve as a starting point for discussion.

Through the work of the Holy Spirit, God can use us like optometrists to learn about a person's spiritual sight. Can the person only see near? Or far? Is there something which blocks only a portion of the vision? Or is it almost entirely obscured? This kind of understanding is obtained by asking questions. Just as an optometrist cannot possibly know what his patient is seeing, we also cannot know what the people around us are seeing. So we must ask questions. And then we must listen.

I did this with Ya Hue and over time developed a better understanding of how she viewed the world. It helped me know which questions to ask, such as, "Is there such a thing as absolute truth?" and "Do the gods you give offerings to care about you?" I also gained a greater sense of compassion, feeling the pain behind her statement, "I can't just throw away my culture," and gently exploring why she felt that way.

My role as an "optometrist" was only possible with Ya Hue because she took the initiative to visit our church. But what about people who never go to the doctor? What about those who, for whatever reason, will never visit a church service?

Individuals within our church realized that some of their friends would never come to one of our Sunday services. Many reasons kept them from coming—some cultural, some religious—so a decision was made to host dinner after the service at a nearby home. The reasoning was that a non-religious setting would create a non-threatening environment for people to visit. It would also allow individuals to engage with our community without causing them to disobey their parents or bring shame upon their families by visiting a "Christian" place of worship.

### God Wooing One Step at a Time

Each week, the Sunday dinner brings in a crowd of people, some of whom I have never seen at our organized service. They know the meal is put on by International Bible Church and that a certain topic will be introduced, followed by a period of discussion. We make no attempts to hide either the purpose of the evening, or its affiliation to our church. And still they come—Hindus, Buddhists, Muslims, atheists, etc.—to participate.

Many of the people who come are students. They are graduate students, visiting scholars, and post-doctoral students from all over the world. As such, the worldviews held by some of the students blind them to the truths of the Bible. But each week they are hearing truth as we discuss issues such as corruption, integrity, or equality. These are topics all people can relate to, regardless of worldview. And each week they hear what God has to say about important issues that affect their everyday lives.

As they listen, those of us who are followers of Christ pray that they will hear the wisdom of God's words. And we pray that the Spirit will work to remove the blindness from their eyes and give them divine sight. We realize it may be a slow and even painful process as they emerge from a long deception. But we also know how grateful they will be once they see God for who he is, see themselves for who they are, and see God's gracious offer of salvation in all of its beauty and power.

This process is taking place in Ya Hue. She has yet to accept God's offer, but one of her most stirring statements continues to ring in my mind today. She said it at the end of one of our times together, during which we talked about how the Holy Spirit indwells Christians, enabling them to love with a supernatural love that only God can give. I wasn't sure how much she understood. She looked into my eyes and took away all speculation when she said, "The thing is that right now there is only me living in me." I sat in stunned silence. Then she looked at me again and said, "Maybe someday I will be able to love like that."

Sight can come to the physically blind and that indeed is a miracle. But sight coming to the spiritually blind moves into the realm of mystery. And that is the profound and eternally significant mystery we seek.

\*Name changed to protect identity.

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# **URBAN COMMUNITIES**

# Contemporary Paradigms in Urban Mission: A Case Study from Lima, Peru

By Israel Mandujano

#### Introduction

This article intends to present some of the conditioning factors that might have contributed to the current and meaningful membership growth over the last thirty years in one of the evangelical Christian churches in Peru. The Christian and Missionary Alliance (C&MA) in Lima has grown from one congregation in 1973, with a membership of 150, to about thirty-five thousand members in close to one hundred new congregations today.

Knowing the important role of religion in Peru and its obvious impacts on individuals and society, the study of a rather new, non-Catholic church movement is highly relevant in an attempt to understand the role of Christian forms of spirituality in contemporary Latin American societies. The work of the C&MA in Peru was established by Western missionaries in 1925, and became one of the most significant evangelical Christian denominations.

The work in Lima started in the 1960s. This movement, which has resulted in this substantial growth, is unusual within Christian missions. Missiologist Stephen Neill has observed that Latin American church growth "is something potentially different from anything that has been produced by the Christian churches in other parts of the world." It may also prove to represent a paradigmatic Christian movement, marking the relevance of spirituality issues in Christian church growth.<sup>2</sup>

Dr. Arnold Cook has asked, What do you call the Lima story? Was it just successful evangelism in a responsive culture? Was it revival? Was it an awakening impacting society? Answer: It was a wonderful, inscrutable, divine complexity of all the above.<sup>3</sup>

The first pilot congregation in Lima, located in the district of Lince, experienced a growth from about 150 members in 1973 to more than five thousand today. They have seven worship services each Sunday in their current building, and are in the process of building a new church building for three thousand persons. This congregation initiated an innovative program of evangelism in 1973 called *Lima al Encuentro con Dios* (Lima Encounters God—LED).

LED has since become the administrative structure of evangelism supported by all the C&MA churches in Lima. Partly as a result of this substantial growth, all Western missionaries of the C&MA have now left Peru. The Peruvian C&MA Church is both economically and structurally self-supporting. Thus, in the Peruvian churches of the C&MA, all 213 ministers are now local, making this group of pastors the largest in the C&MA-related Latin American churches.

#### **Hypothesis of Conditioning Factors**

In order to identify and understand the church's contextual and internal factors that might have conditioned the growth, it is necessary to work with some hypothesis. The working hypothesis with regard to the *external* conditioning factors is that the movement has indeed been negotiating actively with the socio-religious aspects of the Peruvian culture.

Further, this church movement in some respects represents culture-affirmative social patterns and values, and in other respects represents culture-critical and new social patterns and values after being part of the Christian spiritual events in their lives in this movement. The working hypothesis with regard to *internal* conditioning factors is that the triune God has erupted suddenly through LED and C&MA churches in Lima, making himself and his attributes visible through his acts in the lives of established congregations on an extended family model, where the fellowship with the triune God is the cornerstone in their life

patterns and ethos. The new life patterns and ethos have bearings on their relationships to families, friends, and local communities.

## Areas Where Internal and External Conditioning Factors Are Interwoven

Andrew Walls writes, "Theology springs out of practical situations; it is therefore occasional and local in character." This means that theological investigations need adequate interaction with other sciences such as sociology, anthropology, or history in order to study the local contexts.

Context is a dynamic manifestation of what is going on with people in relationship with God and his divine work among them directly and through the Church. In this way, it becomes possible to see how the backgrounds of people without Christ (the external factors), and Christ through his direct events of love and within his Church (the internal factors) meet together.

Samuel Escobar writes that "the discernment of the breath of the Spirit requires an open attitude and the sensitivity to acknowledge that behind facts something as new and unusual as the strength and vigour of the Spirit may be at work." I will now point out at some of those facts, as Escobar puts it, in the context of these churches in Lima.

### Salvation of People and Christology

Salvation and the new life in Christ are topics which are very much in focus in the C&MA congregations in Lima. The ethos of the message is Christ centred. The C&MA congregations have as their motto the phrase, "Cristo Salva, Sana, Santifica y Viene otra vez" ('Christ saves, heals, sanctifies, and is coming again').

The Christological emphasis, according to Lesslie Newbigin, is vital in Christian missions:

Mission is also sharing the life of the Son; for it is in Jesus that God's kingdom is present in the life of the world, and this presence is continued—under the sign of the cross—in the community that confesses Jesus as Lord and belongs to him as his body.<sup>7</sup>

Christ is presented as the servant in the Gospels, not in terms of an aggressive Christendom. But how can this message, after all, change people from within? Is it simply a social response in a theistic culture, a fruit of the Catholic inheritance, and of the spiritual awareness of pre-Hispanic societies?<sup>8</sup>

Or is the gospel, the Christ-centred message, a vital and dynamic agent of truth and life for their lives? It seems that when people in these churches met the gospel of salvation of the crucified Christ, hey saw the need of salvation as eternal life and salvation from a lost life. They received the Christ who died for them and rose up from the death in victory over sin.

### The Heterogeneous Fellowship—The Spirit's Bonds

Writing about Latin America, Escobar says that "thousands have come to know Jesus as Saviour and Lord because they first experienced the gift of acceptance in a local church and belonging to a new family." This seems to be the experience also in the C&MA congregations in Lima.

Several of these churches have their own cafés or restaurants in which they sell food, thus giving an opportunity for fellowship. In Peruvian society, love is generally expressed through friendly attitudes and gestures. In the expressive Latin culture it is difficult to understand love without warm gestures of friendship.

The inclusive fellowships found in the C&MA congregations seem to have transposed the love expressions of family and friendship to the congregational life. Here seems to be a *translation of* Christian fellowship ideas into cultural terms which are familiar to Peruvians. <sup>11</sup> The Peruvian society in Lima is a multicultural society, <sup>12</sup> marked by the waves of migration from the highlands of Peru to Lima since the late 1950s and 1960s. <sup>13</sup> This diversity seems not to create divisions among the church members. Instead, the church is one and for everyone.

### **Active Involvement of Members—Christ's Body in Movement**

Strategically, it seems that among C&MA congregations in Lima, Christian service as a practical outreach to others depends upon the whole faith community. Christian service seems not to be considered the task of only the educated members or of the employed church workers. It is also carried out by ordinary members.

Likewise, participation in Christian missions is not limited to economically strong congregations, but also includes churches in the rural and poorer areas of Lima, where a high percentage of the population has migrated from the Andean areas and is economically poor. Orlando Costas describes these congregations as churches of the periphery, where we find the perspective of the poor. Here, the poor are seen assisting the other poor with concrete expressions of love and care, thus showing an attitude which also characterised the early Christians in the Roman Empire.

### The Holy Spirit and the Role of Care and Intercession

Another expression of care in the congregations is prayer. An extensive prayer life is a common characteristic for growing churches in South America, <sup>15</sup> so also in Lima. When there is a person in need, this is usually shared as an item for prayer and care. Members devote themselves to praying for one another and for non-members.

Consequently, prayer items are not confined to internal matters alone, but to contextual matters as well, that is, with the world. Prayers are conducted in homes, as well as in congregational prayer meetings. Prayer, more than a religious routine, is a means to come to God with all that we are. Paul writes in Romans 8:27: "And he who searches the hearts of men knows what is in the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to will of God." In Paul's view, prayer is neither a human activity alone, nor a spiritual activity alone. There is a unity between the human heart, the will of God, and the interceding role of the Spirit.

### **Impact of Faith on Life Patterns**

Christianity, as experienced in the C&MA congregations, has taken the shape of a faith with concrete consequences for the ways people think and live. There is little room for the modern dichotomy of faith and secularity, which pushed the Western world into essentialist and reductionist conceptions. <sup>16</sup>

Instead, a relationship between faith and ethos is seen as the outcome of a religious conversion. This brings about obvious changes in the micro-world of people that affect them individually and as families. This can be exemplified by men who no longer mistreat women and children, thus making family life rehabilitation possible.

David Martin describes this local meaning of *conversion* as a transformation or turning point. <sup>17</sup> Yet, what is it—in the opinion of the informants—that leads to this transformation? For almost all of those I have interviewed, it was their meeting with God that created the conversion of their lives.

#### Generosity and Sacrifice—God's Giving Nature

The generous giving of money to the work of the church seems, for many members of the C&MA in

Lima and Peru, to be a consequence of a sacrificial attitude, followed by action. In terms of time, members find their way to church after work, where they take part in evangelistic efforts. Among the pastors of the C&MA churches in Lima, there are also people who have exchanged their profitable secular careers for the ordained ministry or other church employment.

Among these one finds engineers, businesspeople, and sportsmen. It seems that sacrifice is linked with an alternative value system, resulting from their Christian faith. There seems to be a relationship between the cost they are prepared to make and their value system. Willingness to sacrifice, as a consequence of personal commitment to Christian faith, is well known throughout church history and in contemporary Christianity.

Tormod Engelsviken states with regard to Christians in Malaysia, "The fact that to be a Christian costs...makes passive and nominal Christianity little attractive." There is a sense of commitment in sacrificial terms both individually and as a life in community through and in Jesus Christ. This is the argument Paul gives in order to explain the attitude of the church in Macedonia, who even in the midst of poverty, gave meaningful offerings.

#### Conclusion

The experiences related to the growth of theses churches seem to be the result of the actions of God in a particular context in a particular time of grace—*Kairos*. The diversity of the background of people in Lima can also be seen in the C&MA churches in a fellowship of love. The tiredness of a life living in sin and away from God, in a country with a high percentage of economic and political corruption, might have provoked the longing of a new beginning among many. This new beginning was found in the new life which Christ gives.

The friendly character among these churches as a godly community has not only been attractive to people living in Lima, but they actually became their new spiritual family with patterns of life announced in the gospel and lived in the power of God.

In the 1970s and 1980s Peru became one of the poorest countries in Latin America, with deep social disappointments and struggles. It was in the middle of these disappointments that the evangelical Church in general started to grow in Lima and Peru.

It is possible to say that the social situation created an atmosphere of spiritual emptiness, which made people more open. The openness of Limeneans toward spiritual issues was met in these churches with the good news preached within a frame of authenticity and deepness. Since the 1970s, these churches have changed some of their methods, but the ethos is the same—that human beings need the salvation that only Christ can give, because he gained it through his propitiatory death; that he is alive today; and that he will return to the world one day. To proclaim this message is, among them, an unavoidable mission.

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- 6. Escobar, Samuel. 2003. *The New Global Mission: The Gospel from Everywhere to Everyone*. Carol Stream, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 137.
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# LAUSANNE REPORTS

### **Europe Today**

By Ksenija Sabo

Nearly twenty years have passed since the wall fell between East and West Europe. But what did the new "freedom" bring?

In Modra, Slovakia, delegates of twenty-two countries took part in Hope for Europe's Women in Leadership conference. Both older and younger generations were represented. After all the reports were shared on the conference, the big picture was put together from all of the puzzle pieces.

#### Overview

Even in the present financial collapse, countries of the West are still better off economically than in the East, where there is still much hardship. The "middle class" is all but gone; there are only the rich and the poor working class. However, the East and West have similar problems.

For example, the highest number of teen pregnancies are found in England, and terminating pregnancies are legal until the very moment of birth. In Germany, there is a high rate of underage mothers, and in Byelorussia, ninety-eight percent of all abortions are performed on girls aged fifteen to nineteen. Abortion is legal throughout Europe. Populations are dwindling. Many from the East travel to the West to find work. Twenty-five percent of the total population in Moldova live and work abroad. In Romania it is the same, with more and more people moving out of the country in search of a better life.

Some countries, like Greece, are a goal for refugees from Turkey and Albania. Holland is the most liberal country of all. Here, euthanasia is legal, as is the use of narcotics and legality of same-sex marriages. Marriage between same-sex partners is being made lawful in other countries as well.

### **Family Situations**

The rate of domestic violence is highest in Moldova: seventy percent of households have some form of violence. Second is the Czech Republic with sixty percent. In Byelorussia, twenty-four percent of children are born in either single-parent homes or to couples who are not married.

In both the East and the West there is a rising tendency for couples to not get married. In Eastern countries, Romania and Bulgaria in particular, women are considered "less important." In Greece, sixty percent of women are unemployed, while with men it's only six percent. Every second or third marriage will end in divorce.

#### **Religious Picture**

The Czech Republic ranks number one in the world for prevalence of atheism. Half of the population in Holland and Greece call themselves atheists. In Greece, there is still a small minority who believe in the twelve mythological gods. In France, forty-five percent of the people profess to be atheists; in Germany it is forty percent and in Denmark it is ten to fifteen percent.

In East Europe the ratio is not as high. After the fall of communism it became fashionable to be "Christian," even if there was no faith behind it. The power of the Orthodox Church has grown in Byelorussia, Ukraine, Russia, Romania, Bulgaria, Moldova, and Serbia. Although the people of these countries call themselves Christian, only three to four percent attend church regularly. In other countries, either Roman Catholicism or other historic Protestant churches have become stronger. Throughout

Europe, born again, evangelical believers compose 0.01 to three percent of the total population. Megachurches, however, can be found in some countries; for example, in Holland there are thirty churches with more than one thousand members.

#### Islam

Islam is spreading throughout Europe; Muslims are now found in every country. The Muslim communities of the Balkan countries (like Bulgaria, Albania, Serbia, and Bosnia) are descendants of those who were forcefully converted to Islam in the Ottoman Empire in centuries past. Today, some of these peoples try to find work in Western Europe; however, these Muslims are only a small minority in the larger immigrant groups of Western Europe. Most people come from Turkey, Pakistan, Iran, and North Africa. In some places, Muslims number between twenty and thirty thousand. However, in some countries this number is much larger. For example, about five million Muslims call France home. Islam is also spreading by birth and through inter-marrying.

### Freedom of Religion

In Western atheist countries liberal laws have created anti-Christian societies. As a result, there is strong persecution against believers. For example, in England, witnessing to an associate outside working hours can cause someone to be fired. An orientation-seminar about homosexual lifestyle during the Christian youth event Christival 2008 in Germany caused a question-time in the Parliament. Some of the meetings with the fifteen thousand young people were attacked by militant groups.

In post-Communist countries, however, Christians are enjoying a great awakening and freedom. Prison ministries are functioning in Croatia, Moldova, Slovakia, and Romania. Bibles are freely distributed on the streets of the Czech Republic during Easter. Open air, public evangelism is accepted in Ukraine and Moldova. In Finland, celebrities can affirm their faith on television shows and use the same platform for evangelism.

#### **Human Trafficking**

Unemployment in the East causes many people to seek better circumstances in other countries. However, leaving home is dangerous for women and children, for they can be easily deceived by work agencies and ensnared in today's slave trade—prostitution. Passports and valuables are taken away and victims are intimidated. Countries of origin are mostly Romania, Bulgaria, and Moldova; however, many come from the Far East, Africa, and South America as well.

The exact number of victims is not known. Their destination is Belgium, France, Holland, and Germany. By information obtained from Germany, forty percent of men from that country claim the service of prostitutes, internet, and telephone sex. The government openly advocates prostitution. In Russia, there is an advertisement for the richness and easy money of the West; yet it is only a hook to enslave people.

### **Christian Ministry**

"There is no official government action that would stop human trafficking," said the Greek delegate at the Hope for Europe's Women in Leadership conference. This quote is true in each of the countries. Some delegates could not obtain information on this issue. They could only rely upon the internet, feeling that government officials hide the problem very cleverly. Some delegates didn't even know this problem the existed in their own country.

Evangelical Christians are trying to deal with the issue. They fight through organizations like Stop the Traffic in England, Door of Life, or A21 in Greece. Shelter homes have been opened in France and black churches are working hard on this issue in Holland. For the International Women's Day on 8 March 2009, churches in Switzerland organized a march to free women. In Romania and Moldova the emphasis is on

educating the population so that it won't get lured into this trade. In countries like Ukraine, Moldova, and Romania many children grow up on the streets because their parents are abroad working. These kids are being cared for by Christian organizations like Child Rescue.

### **Prayer Request**

"We are the nation of tulips, yet cut off from the roots," said Romkje from Holland. But this isn't just true for them; it defines all of Europe who has cut off itself from its Christian roots. This is our prayer request—that new shoots will grow from the roots and life will once again be celebrated in Europe.

**Ksenija Sabo** is a respected Bible teacher in Serbia. She holds seminars locally and internationally on how to study the Bible inductively. Sabo is also on the steering community for Hope for Europe Women in Leadership.

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