

Briefings

The entrance of thy words giveth light (Ps. 119:130)

Fall 2008



**BI STAFF
AROUND THE
WORLD**

Called by His Grace; Enabled by His Power



IN A WORD

Dr. P. Hantz Bernard, Director

As you peruse the pages of this edition of the *Briefings*, you will meet or recognize a few people who are representative of the comprehensive staff that populates Bibles International around the world. Perhaps you may perceive that they are creative and entrepreneurial, unique but fallible, focused and passionate – a combination of qualities without which they would not have been able to accomplish the tedious and daunting tasks of Bible translation in some of the most remote places of the world.

Serving with wonderful people like they are is a privilege. Since Bible translation is a specialized ministry, excellence in the translation of Scripture, as much as in the intricate administration of the multi-faceted team, is complex and unpredictable. Such excellence is not synonymous with “perfection,” much as Michael Jordan’s shooting average was not 100 percent, nor is a professional juggler accurate 100 percent of the time. Nonetheless, they are considered experts in their respective fields.

Great people, the BI staff are! Rare people as well! In his book, *Mission-Based Management: Leading Your Not-For-Profit in the 21st Century*, Peter Brinckerhoff rightly assessed the staffing reality of non-profit organizations when he said, “You are increasingly in competition for good staff. Second, you can’t, and probably never will, pay like the private sector, whether for a secretary, a driver, a line staff person, or an administrator,” let alone for people who can play *Scrabble* in Hebrew as we may find them here at BI! Hence, to quote Brinckerhoff again, “The only reason there are staff is because there are people to serve.” And that is the reality at BI as well.

Service has to be their motivation! If not that, what else? Some have PhD’s, yet they often serve among, and with, marginalized and lesser educated people; they are talented but without fanfare; they have enormous potential, yet they minister for pennies on the dollar.

From a secular perspective, they are the type to whom Dennis W. Bakke was referring in *Joy at Work* when he said, “People want to be part of something greater than themselves. They want to do something that makes a positive difference in the world.” But from a spiritual perspective, the Apostle Paul would have called them “your servants for Jesus’ sake” (2 Corinthians 4:5) or people who “have addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints” (1 Corinthians 16:15). And to the extent that you join them in their ministry, you are their “partner and fellowhelper” (2 Corinthians 8:23).

BIBLES INTERNATIONAL INDIA SOCIETY

by BIIS Director Fame Singh

Bibles International India Society (BIIS) is a registered charitable society working on literacy and Bible translation in different languages of India, in partnership with national churches and with Bibles International, Grand Rapids. At the apex of BIIS’s decision-making body is its Executive



BIIS office workers l. to r.: Latoungam, Mishak, Manidhon, Fame (director), and Sashanka.

Committee (EC), comprised of a minimum of 5 members (mostly church leaders) elected from among the general members in

its Annual General Meeting (AGM). BI staff are assimilated into the meetings if they are in India at the time. Dr. Sana Singh, BMM missionary and Coordinator for Asia and Pacific Region for BI, is a permanent member of the EC. The EC makes all the major decisions in discussion and understanding with BIIS, and its decisions are approved by the general body in the AGM. The BIIS director is an ex-officio member of the EC and AGM and serves as the liaison between BI and BIIS.

Today, keeping a society legally alive and functional has become a challenge. The laws governing charitable societies in this country have created more demands than ever before on societies attempting to legally carry out their work. The BIIS director is responsible for keeping BIIS accountable in this regard.

The BIIS office takes the main role in helping churches set up a translation committee and in facilitating a project agreement between the committee, BIIS and BI. As the liaison between the consultant and the committee or translator, the BIIS office staff coordinates all training and workshops, including scheduling and accommodations. The office staff regularly updates progress on all ongoing projects and works closely with the committee and translator regarding promotion and fund raising. Fund-raising from Indian sources is a challenge for the director, and he regularly visits churches in the northeastern states of India for this purpose.



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BMM President • Dr. Gary Anderson
BI Director/Editor • Dr. P. Hantz Bernard
Associate Editor/Graphic Designer • Mrs. Becky Kerr

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BIBLES INTERNATIONAL MYANMAR SOCIETY

by BIMS Coordinator Paul Van Hre
& Becky Kerr

Though Bibles International has had a presence in Myanmar for many years, the Burmese Christians felt that forming their own Bible society was a great need for like-minded churches who desired to produce conservative Bible translations in Myanmar. In 2005, key leaders were invited to a dinner meeting, and there was good discussion. All were excited about the vote to start a Bible society. The group appointed a committee to proceed with the society's formation. Dr. Fame Singh, director of BIIS, traveled to Myanmar to offer assistance in starting the work. Bibles International Myanmar Society officially came into existence on January 2, 2006.

Dr. Go Za Kham coordinated the Myanmar work before BIMS was formed, and much is owed to his faithful service for the glory of God. Though advanced in years, he still assists in the work. BIMS currently has seven active projects: two Bibles, one New Testament, one literacy, and three NT/literacy combined. The Falam Chin New Testament is currently being formatted in the Grand Rapids office, and we eagerly await its publication.



Above, BIMS Committee: Coordinator Paul Van Hre, Rev. Lal Lian Vula, Rev. Samuel Zung Bawi Thawng, Rev. Jacob Kham Khan Mung, Dr. Timothy Sui Lian Mang, Dr. Do Suan Mung, Dr. Go Za Kham, Rev. Sen Hmung. Right: BIMS Secretary Cindy Siampuii.



BIMS coordinates the progress of all the Myanmar projects, keeping in close communication with the national translators and their committees. They also conduct research for potential new projects. Making arrangements for BI teams coming from the U.S., as well as producing a BIMS newsletter, are part of the work. God has provided a large apartment for the BIMS office, and in June a full-time secretary was hired to assist in the many day-to-day responsibilities.

Currently we are finding additional opportunities for ministry as our country continues to recover from Cyclone Nargis. We hope to distribute Scripture portions along with food and other provisions, so that both spiritual and physical needs can be met.

STAFFING THE CHAD FIELD

by Translation Consultant Susan Hossack

In Chad we are working with eight languages, each with a translator and an assistant translator working full time from their respective villages. They are assisted by a local committee of 10 to 20 people who raise funds to pay the translators' salaries and review the translated Scripture portions.

The translator writes a first draft on paper which is entered onto a battery-run keyboard by the assistant. At this point the translator or his assistant travels to the BI office in Sarh. Office workers Kimiri Kigata and Emmanuel Ngarbe transfer the text from the keyboard to the office computers, format the text and print it out.

The printout is taken back home, where the translator and his assistant review it and make corrections.

The corrected text is sent back to the Sarh office



Susan Hossack and Kimiri Kigata in Chad office

where Kimiri and Emmanuel incorporate the corrections into the computer version and print out a clean copy.

The local committee then meets to read the translation and make further corrections. At this point a translation consultant stationed in Chad (Susan Hossack, Ouya Ganda or Joshua Hedges) or a consultant from the Grand Rapids office conducts a workshop to compare the translated text to the original Hebrew or Greek. These workshop sessions are conducted at the BI office in Sarh, with Dale and Jody Davis (local projects coordinators) and Office Coordinator Mamra Oudalbaye in charge of arranging housing, meals and other details.

Mamra's additional duties include overseeing Emmanuel and Kimiri's work, supplying the translators with necessary materials, disbursing salaries, coordinating literature sales, and communicating with translators and local committees. Until the arrival of Dale Davis, he was also the computer and electrical repair person. Dale and Jody Davis's additional responsibilities include financial accounting, supervision of the Sarh office, and managing construction of the new translation center in Chad. The translation center will provide much-needed facilities for years to come, as there are many people groups in Chad who still need God's Word.

The central, national committee that coordinates all of the work mentioned above is our Direction Committee, which visits each local committee annually and serves as a link between the Chad field and the BI headquarters in Grand Rapids.

BI REP RECEIVES AWARD



At the closing session of the 2008 GARBC Conference, John Greening announced the annual service awards. These awards honor people who are active in building the body of Christ with passion,

vision, and commitment. Paul and Edwina Lobb were recipients of this award.

Rev. Lobb pastored four churches in Iowa and Minnesota before he accepted the position of Minnesota state representative, a job that included the position of Bass Lake Camp director. The couple served at this camp for 15 years, and the staff vividly recalls that the Lobbs' joy permeated even the most mundane jobs. The Lobbs' faithfulness impressed the joy of the Lord upon their camp staff, many of whom are now missionaries, pastors and pastors' wives in Columbia, Israel, Brazil, South Africa and the United States.

The Lobbs' first post-retirement ministry was filling in for missionaries in New Zealand, and they have participated in numerous camps and conferences. Today they minister as representatives of Bibles International in Minnesota, Iowa, Wisconsin and the Dakotas. We are extremely blessed to have people of this caliber on staff, using their gifts to promote Bible translation around the world.



Dr. Colin Smith
BI Adjunct Consultant

Born: August 25, 1954
Died: June 22, 2008

"Well done, good
and faithful servant"

Some of the BI staff work on an adjunct basis. These are people whose lives are filled with God-directed ministries but who desire to use their skills in translation on an as-able basis.

Dr. Colin Smith was such a BI staff member. Though called to preach and teach, he also made time for BI trips, using his highly developed biblical language skills to assist in translation workshops. The tasks he accomplished for Bibles International will have eternal value, and the person he was will leave an indelible mark on us all.

FAREWELL TO THE BREWERS

Over the years, we have watched God call His servants both *to* and *from* Bibles International. Recently His call came to Gary and Kathy Brewer, who have served with Bibles International since 1993. For most of those years Gary held the position of Projects Manager, a job of varied and heavy responsibilities that took him to many parts of the world to coordinate BI's ongoing projects. Kathy traveled with Gary as she was able and also worked part time in the bookkeeping department at the Grand Rapids office.

In 2005, Gary left the Projects Department and assumed the responsibilities of the newly created Finance & Office Department. This assignment kept him closer to home and involved all that is necessary to keep an office functioning.



He also handled the organization's finances and budget, an assignment that carries extra interest when the funds involve US dollars, Indian rupees, Thai bahts, Ghanaian cedis, etcetera!

The Brewers began their Baptist Mid-Missions missionary status in the country of Haiti and then spent several years with BMM's Spanish literature ministry, Editorial Bautista Independiente. They have three married children and eight grandchildren.

God has called the Brewers to a ministry that will provide desperately needed Sunday school materials and other Christian literature to India. The Brewers' familiarity with northeast India and the ties that they have with Christians there will be a plus as they begin their new work. We miss them and pray for God's continued blessing on their lives.

NEW BI APPOINTEE

These are exciting days for Miss Ashley Anderson. In 2006 she felt God's call to missions, specifically Bible translation. In 2007 she took a trip to Peru with BI staff. In 2008 she completed all the requirements necessary to be appointed a Baptist Mid-Missions missionary (assigned to BI), and in the summer of 2009 she will be married. We look forward to seeing all that God will continue to do in and through her.



MIND THE GAP

Have you noticed that many large, involved processes have a very small point into which they funnel to produce a big result on the other side? A water dam is like that, a big lake and tons of water funneled down to a small pipe that runs water into a turbine, where the electric power is produced that lights a million homes. An automobile, with all its wires and hoses and tubes, funnels everything down to a small gap

within that group, is a process on both sides that narrows down to a small gap across which translating the Bible sparks. That gap is the translation workshop session, and the two points of contact are the national translator and the Bible translation consultant. Across that gap and between those two people flow the combined energies of two powerful systems that result in the translation of God's Word and the evangelism of a lost people.

The translation consultant, one of the contact points at the gap, is trained in biblical

point, stand the team members and committee members who assist him. The translation team prepares the first draft, which the read-and-review committee reads. Then comes the translation checking session, the contact point where translator and consultant meet. The direction committee serves as the liaison between the translation process and the churches awaiting God's Word. They help pay the translators, provide places for them to work, and promote the translation work in the churches. Out from the doors of those churches go those who carry the new translation, first to their homes to read, study and hide in their hearts, then to the doors of their neighbors' houses and to the neighboring villages and regions, to proclaim the Word of God in their language.

On the London subways the attendants tell you to "mind the gap" between the train and the platform. So next time you see a picture of a BI translation workshop taking place in some remote part of the world, "mind the gap" between the translation consultant and the national translator. Remember all those behind them on either side of the gap -- those supplying the means to make the translation and those waiting to receive it -- as the spark of God's power jumps across the gap.



inside the cylinder where a spark ignites the gas and the car speeds forward.

The same thing is true for Bible translation. There is a group of people in the world who speaks the same language, lives in villages together, but does not have a Bible. There is a large group of Christian believers who prays for the spiritual needs of the world, that the Word of God might reach the lost and change their hearts. From the desire of those Christians to share the Gospel, to the salvation of people

languages, exegesis, and linguistics. Behind him is the staff of Bibles International, other consultants for advice and counsel, and projects support people to help him do his job. Behind them is the office staff, helping with practical matters such as travel tickets and visas, computers and supplies. The administrative and stewardship staff are the liaison between BI and the churches and individuals who wish to help and contribute to the work of Bible translation.

Behind the national translator, the other contact

Rev. Glenn Kerr
Chief Translation Consultant
Text Production Department



Around the World in Fifty Years: A Tribute to Clarissa Barton

by Becky Kerr, Associate Editor

Only God could have orchestrated the life and times of Clarissa Barton. Born in the small Michigan town of Newaygo, Clarissa aspired to be a teacher. While studying at Moody Bible Institute, Clarissa felt God confirm that call, but with a twist. He was directing her to teach in *Africa*.

With a couple of years of teaching under her belt, Clarissa joined Baptist Mid-Missions in 1958 and headed to Belgium for two years of French study, as the Lord had called her to French-speaking Belgian Congo. There were some political rumblings when she arrived there in 1961, and by 1964 those rumblings reached a loud and terrifying pitch. Clarissa and her coworkers spent fearful nights together before being evacuated by United Nations helicopters.

Back in the States, with no prospect of returning to the Congo, Clarissa felt God's call to teach missionary children

in Central African Republic (CAR), which she did from 1965 to 1973. On weekends and during school vacations, Clarissa could be found traveling to CAR villages in her Toyota pickup, helping Africans learn to read.

A two-year furlough (1973-75) included linguistic training through Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL). Then Clarissa felt that the literacy training she had been doing on her "off" hours should and would become her primary ministry. She had a Moses-like conversation with God ("How can I? I'm not only slow of speech; I don't speak Sango at all!") and

received the same answer Moses had: "Now go and I will be with thee and teach thee what thou shalt say."

Was it "coincidental" that she traveled with Dr. Henry and Anne Osborn back to Africa in 1975? The Osborns didn't think so. They included Clarissa in their literacy workshop, even leaving her with an assignment when they returned home. Clarissa learned Sango and soon found many outlets for teaching literacy in CAR, a ministry that she continued for 13 years.

Home on furlough in 1985, Clarissa was approached by Paul Versluis and Dr. Osborn about being "borrowed" temporarily from CAR to participate in a six-week literacy workshop in Thailand. Clarissa describes the experience as "magical" for many reasons, not the least of which was the call of God to begin a new season of ministry with Bibles International.

In 1988, God brought Clarissa back to Michigan, 37 miles from her home in Newaygo, and she has faithfully used

her teaching and literacy skills at BI ever since. Literacy has a hand-in-glove relationship with Bible translation, for what would be the value of publishing Scripture that people cannot read? Clarissa has traveled extensively to India and Africa and has been instrumental in preparing primers and Old Testament storybooks for many people groups. Her 50 years of service with Baptist Mid-Missions officially ended on July 31, 2008, but no doubt God and Clarissa have plans for the "unofficial" years that lie ahead!



Above: Clarissa checks her list as she packs for Africa. Right: Clarissa receives her 50-year recognition from Baptist Mid-Missions.



PROJECTS UPDATE

by Bob Thompson, Projects Manager

Bibles International is developing and building translation centers in India and Chad. These centers will meet the needs of Bible translation and literacy development for multiple language groups in each country. The centers will provide offices, library, workshop/meeting rooms, dormitory and kitchen facilities, and other support services.

The first building in the India Translation Center is completed and includes office and storage space and an apartment for Director

Fame Singh and his family. The underground water tank has also been completed. The second building will house the workshop/meeting rooms, library, dormitory and kitchen facilities, and more offices, and the first of three floors is finished.

The Chad Translation Center is a newer construction project but is progressing well. The hand-dug well and water tank are in place, the building housing the diesel generator is complete, and the office building foundation has been dug by Chadian volunteers.

Living Legacies

In Memory of

Hilda Ayres
Glenn L. Babcock
Susie Beasley
Alice Birch
Rev. William A. Bishop
Orville Thomas Bower
Eldon Cuddie

Mary Deal
Hyrthol DeMeritt
Warren Faber
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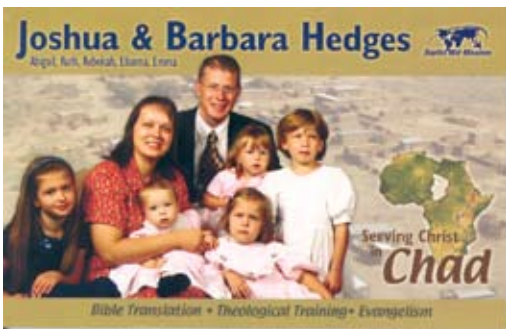
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Richard Jordan
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Mark & Teresa Jacobsen
Rod & Elly Gale
Keith Beckner
Helen Jean Zwyghuizen

Mr. & Mrs. John Nierste



They're There!
The Hedges family has arrived safely in Chad. We thank God for His leading in their lives. Pray with us that the adjustment period will be smooth. Joshua's work as an on-site consultant will be a boost for our Chad projects.

Have you considered Bibles International in your Estate Plan?

To designate Bibles International as a recipient either of a specific asset, amount, or percentage in your will or trust, the following wording is needed: "To: Baptist Mid-Missions, Cleveland, Ohio, designated for its Bibles International ministry."

Your God-directed help will be greatly appreciated

(All gifts are tax-deductible)

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Prayer Requests

That God will provide much-needed staff for the BI Grand Rapids office, and that He will give added strength to staff members whose responsibilities have increased.

For the Ranglong translator, who is in a coma at Burrows Memorial Hospital in India, and for three Chadian translators who are seriously ill.

For Translation Consultants Ross and Cathy Hodsdon, as they rebuild their home in Maine that burned while they were overseas.

For literacy workshops in India and Myanmar and translation workshops in Africa in September and October.

For continued funding of BI.

For God's direction and blessing in preparations for a special BI Harvest Dinner in October.

Thanks

For classes taught at BJU in August by Glenn Kerr and Birch Champeon. Class sizes were larger than normal, and the students were enthused about Bible translation.

For the literacy workshop conducted for the Chadian projects, not in Chad but at the Grand Rapids office! Literacy Coordinator Connie Champeon provided instruction and guidance for executing a concentrated literacy program in Chad.

For the refreshing and "gearing up" provided to BI staff by way of the annual meeting/retreat and the subsequent consultants' seminar.

For increased opportunities that BI Representative John Hadley has had recently to present the BI ministry. Give thanks for all of BI's representatives, who serve faithfully in their retirement years.

It's Time!

If you've not received an invitation, please call us to reserve a place at the

Bibles International Harvest Dinner

October 16, 2008
Calvary Baptist Church
Grand Rapids, Michigan

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