

Briefings

The entrance of thy words

giveth light (Ps. 119:130)

August 2011



Pilgrim, Pioneer, Patriarch

by Becky Kerr, Associate Editor

You can learn a lot about a man from where he's willing to sleep. Consider the character of a man who could make the following statement: "I have slept over a pigpen, in an abandoned chicken barn, on a table, on the ground, in the remains of a fallen-down house, in a room with half a dozen drunk Indians, in a room with a family—all of them. I have slept on beds given to me as the respected visitor, and I knew the owner of the bed slept on the floor. I have slept in short beds and rested my head on a box or a chair, or on narrow church benches. I have slept on the back of a loaded truck, across four seats in a [Boeing] 747, and at my desk in my office at Bibles International." The preceding testimonial becomes even more incredible when you realize that the man who wrote it could have been sleeping in king-size beds at five-star hotels provided by Fortune-500 companies. He could have been making a six-figure salary in an office with a view. He could have made his world travels in first-class seats where he could stretch out his 6'4" frame in comfort. Yes, with his education, knowledge, and experience, Dr. Henry Osborn could have done a lot of things, but he only wanted to do one: follow God.

Dr. Henry Osborn could have done a lot of things, but he only wanted to do one: follow God.

Henry Augustus Osborn, Jr. was born in Birmingham, Alabama, on June 4, 1924. His interest in words surfaced early, both in school and at church. Henry received the Lord at age 14, after his family moved to Atlanta, Georgia. The Lord led Henry to Columbia Bible College in South Carolina after high school, and in his final year there he began dating Anne Kemp. Their relationship continued via the US Postal System after Henry began graduate studies at Indiana University's prestigious school of linguistics.

Another female influenced Henry during that time. Her name was Ruth Hege, Baptist Mid-Missions (BMM) missionary to Venezuela. Her plea for others to work with the Warao Indians in the Orinoco River Delta turned out to be a specific call of God on Henry's life. Anne became his wife on his 24th birthday, and the next day the new couple moved to Oklahoma,

where Anne began basic studies in linguistics.



Henry and Anne Osborn

and worked among the Warao people until 1969, during which time Henry reduced their language to writing and did extensive work on translating the New Testament into Warao. God gave Henry and Anne four children, two girls and two boys. When it was necessary for the family to return to the States due to health issues, Henry and Anne maintained a part-time status with BMM, and Henry joined the faculty at what was then Grand Rapids Baptist College and Seminary. In all but one summer during his tenure there, he (and sometimes Anne) traveled overseas, often to their beloved Venezuela, to assist BMM missionaries with Bible translation projects.

In 1974, the Warao New Testament was completed, and the Osborns were there to join in the tears, laughter, prayers of thanksgiving, and singing expressed by their Warao brothers and sisters in Christ. The Warao Old Testament is an ongoing BI project.

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IN A WORD

P. Hantz Bernard, Director

Tribute to Dr. Henry Osborn

Success, said someone, is a relative concept. Its meaning varies according to one's perspective and activity. For an army, defeating a foe is success. For the traveler, reaching the point of destination is success. The physician is successful who saves the life of a patient. The lawyer who wins a case, the politician who obtains office, the merchant who makes a profit, the farmer whose farm yields much, the scientist who initiates a discovery—each may claim success. Likewise, successful lives vary in scope and nature. Some stand out more than others.

The most genuinely successful lives, however, are not necessarily the most obvious. Dr. Osborn's life was one of those. Just as the best diamonds must be excavated, so the rare and valuable qualities of Dr. Osborn were mined from the tough and heavy soil of humility and modesty throughout his whole life. The spotlight embarrassed him. He reacted timidly to praises as if they demeaned him or offended him. He was a humble, upright, obstinate toiler. The sum total of his virtues was compacted into a powerful character that impacted lives individually for the Lord and for this world; yet, at his death a granddaughter commented, "I am looking forward to the funeral. It is only then that I will discover what Grandpa has done. He and Grandma never talked about their achievements."

I was in my late 20s and Dr. Osborn in his late 60s when we met. I was a translator, he the respected consultant of Bibles International! We traveled together and consulted on Bible translation together. His knowledge would surpass that of books in a library. His accomplishments spanned dozens of translations and literacy works throughout the world. Grand as those may be, they are miniature in comparison to the true measure of his success. His stature resided more in his heart than his height.

In the 90s, while still residing in my homeland of Haiti, I traveled with Dr. Osborn to Africa. We met in Paris and visited some points of interest. At one point I found myself shivering from the cold, and in an almost nonchalant manner, Dr. Osborn handed me his gloves and scarf. Then he turned his head away, lest he should hear my refusal. I still have the scarf. It is a special reminder of a man whose rare skills and knowledge were subservient to his proverbial kindness.

It was Cicero who said that "Right is not founded on opinion, but in nature." In this world, those whose success is based on opinion are called divas, celebrities, stars. But their lives pale before the luster of virtues in a man like Dr. Osborn. His life was genuine success.

Pilgrim, cont.

A lasting and life-changing ministry was formed between the two entities with which Henry worked, Grand Rapids Baptist College and Baptist Mid-Missions. The program, called ¡Arriba!, allows college students to spend a year in Peru, living with Peruvians while learning Spanish, taking college courses, and working with missionaries. Many are the men and women who look back on their experience in this program and realize how much God molded them during that time. The program still exists, administered by Faith Baptist Bible College in Ankeny, Iowa.

When God led BMM and Paul Versluis to begin the Bibles International ministry in 1981, He soon led them to Henry Osborn. At that point Henry and Anne reinstated their full-time status with Baptist Mid-Missions, and they both began their work at BI. It was Henry who established the principles of translation for the fledgling organization and who did all of the consulting work in the early days. He recruited professors proficient in the biblical languages to act as adjunct consultants, increasing exponentially the work that



Dr. Osborn with a group of Paite men

was able to be accomplished. Anne became the literacy expert and developed primers for many language groups.

For all his knowledge of words, Henry seemed incapable of grasping the meaning of one in particular—*retirement*. On the books, Henry retired in 1998, but he continued to work and travel, even after a stroke. Appropriately, Henry and Anne's last trip together was back to the Warao tribe and the work they had begun 50 years earlier. The occasion was the dedication of the new edition of the Warao New Testament, as all copies of the 1974 edition had sold out, and many copies worn out from being literally read to pieces.

Two lasting tributes have been made to Dr. Osborn's life and work. The first was a scholarship established in his name in 2007 at Cornerstone University (formerly Grand Rapids Baptist College). The second was the Baptist Mid-Missions

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Hampton Court and the “New” Bible Proposal

by Mike Grant

In the April 2011 Briefings, Mike Grant, Founder & President of Treasuring the Word Ministries International, discussed the impact of the Geneva Bible, an influential precursor to the King James edition. In this continuation, the author explores how church-state unity had surprising and historic results at the Hampton Court Conference of 1604.

Elizabeth I, Queen of England for almost 45 years, died in the spring of 1603 at almost 70 years of age. James VI of Scotland succeeded her, a succession Elizabeth had arranged by paying James 4000£ earnest money and later with a written agreement drawn up in 1586.

On April 4, 1603, prior to James’s arrival in London for his coronation, a group of Puritans presented him the Millenary Petition. This document set forth the petitioners’ desires and solutions for serious reform in the Anglican Church’s doctrines, ministers, practices, and its Book of Common Prayer. The Puritans believed James was coming to England with strong Protestant credentials and would be their ally in this reform endeavor, due to his reputation of having “gotten along” with the Presbyterians of Scotland.

In October 1603, the now coronated James I of England responded to the Millenary Petition of the Puritans by scheduling a three-day conference to be held January 1604 at Hampton Court for the purpose of discussing these concerns. In actuality, this conference, far from settling the concerns raised by the Puritans, compounded their concerns, but led surprisingly to a proposal by one of the Puritans that became an agreeable common-ground issue for all parties involved—a new edition of the English Bible, known today as the King James.



King James I

The Hampton Court Conference began Saturday, January 14, 1604, with 22 invited participants. Eighteen were Anglicans, including the Archbishop of Canterbury, John Whitgift; eight bishops; seven deans; one archdeacon; one royal chaplain; and

four Puritans: John Reynolds, Laurence Chaderton, Thomas Sparks, and John Knewstubs. The format for the conference was decided privately between the king, archbishop, eight bishops, and four deans while the rest waited outside the meeting room. During this private meeting, King James expressed his hatred for the Puritans, obvious evidence he was not interested in allying himself with the Puritans in the work of reforming the Anglican Church.

Further evidence of James’s hatred and unwillingness to work with the Puritans came at the end of day two when James was overheard saying, “If this be all they have to say, I shall make them conform, or I will harry [harass; torment] them out of the land, or else do worse.” Much to their dismay, the Puritans discovered James was no ally with strong Protestant credentials as they originally believed of him, but was, in fact, their enemy allied with the Anglican churchmen. James, who believed in the divine right of monarchs, desired supreme rule, even over the church, while the Anglicans desired keeping their ecclesiastical positions and all the trappings associated with those positions.

This symbiotic, self-centered relationship between James (state) and the Anglicans (church) provided a win-win for both parties, while it ignored the Puritans and their desires for reformation. The Puritans were outsiders participating in a conflict they could not win, with possible life-and-death implications. When one of the Puritans, John Reynolds, realized this, he “moved his Majesty, that there might be a new translation of the Bible.” This proposal no doubt surprised the group, possibly even Reynolds’s three fellow Puritans. King James surely delighted in the proposal knowing this “new” Bible would replace the most popular Bible among the English citizenry, a Bible he considered “the worst” of all English Bibles, the Geneva edition.

Though King James and the Anglicans “won” the Hampton Court Conference, positives that were larger than their selfish interests resulted from this meeting. One of the positives was the increased migration of citizens out of England, eventuating in America’s settlement. Another was the King James Bible project. We will examine this project in our next article.

Introducing Bible Day!

by P. Hantz Bernard, Director

We are launching a program for an annual Bible Day in partnership with churches in our worldwide constituency!

The idea of a Bible day at our churches started about ten years ago. Three major elements have impacted it since then. The first came at the beginning of my tenure at Bibles International. The BI team needed, even more than those we serve, to gather around God's Word. Hence, we began reading a chapter of the Scriptures every office day. At that pace, it took just over four years to read the whole Bible. We are now on our third round. The blessings of these daily readings have been numerous.

About five years ago, a second event impressed me with the Bible Day idea. I began inviting an area pastor a week to lunch, to share with them the primacy of the Scriptures delivered to the guardianship of the saints (I Tim. 3:14-15; Heb. 1:1-2;

The entrance of Thy words giveth light . . .

Psalms 119:130

Jude 3). As a Bible society, BI should only play a delegated role in providing, promoting, and preserving the Scriptures. The primary responsibility belongs to the church. And the church should so conduct its affairs that God's revelation might never be veiled, neglected, or demeaned but rather magnified, revered, and obeyed. From worship to preaching, if any square inch of our church activities were to be examined, it should display unmistakable evidence of the centrality of the Scriptures in our service.

The third and most impressive experience that brought me to propose the Bible Day is the response of the people groups

to whom we have been privileged to provide the Scriptures. It is not unusual for them to erect monuments in honor of their newly translated Scripture or to have it read aloud for



The Chiru NT dedication pillar

days and nights in marathon fashion. Closer to the western world, we may recall the heritage left to us by Wycliff or Luther, Tyndale or the hosts of others who laid their lives on the line so that God's Word might become available to their generation and the generations thereafter.

Since we are encompassed with such a cloud of witnesses, the least we can do is reserve one Sunday a year to intentionally

promote the Scriptures in our churches. We are suggesting one of the Sundays in the months of March, April, or October.

Though your church may choose to celebrate a Bible Day independently from BI, we are suggesting the possibility of using that day not only to emphasize the value of the Scriptures in your church, but also to prompt your church to help provide the Scriptures to those around the world who may have no or inadequate translations in their language. If your church wishes to partner with us in an annual Bible Day event, please contact us (see below). We will be glad to provide further information. The entrance of God's Word brings light indeed! We pray it would be so for your church as you jubilantly celebrate the Scriptures at an annual Bible Day!

WHAT DOES THE Bible MEAN TO YOU?

An annual Bible Day is the perfect way to encourage your congregation to value God's Word. Take time to celebrate the gift of the Bible in English—and spread the vision for making it available for all peoples, everywhere. We'll partner with you by providing materials and activity suggestions!

For more information on how your church can participate in Bible Day, contact:
MaryAnn Strain
Stewardship & Public Relations Coordinator
(616) 942-7712, ext. 22 | bibleDay@biblesint.org



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Living Legacies

An Eagerly Awaited End and Blessed Beginning

by Kim Hibbard, Translation Consultant, India

What is it like to reach the end of a Bible translation project?

In February, I had the privilege of seeing for myself when I attended the dedication of the Manipuri Bible in Imphal, the capital city of the state of Manipur in northeast India. The completion of this Bible had been the topic of prayers and discussions ever since I joined BI—and long before. In the weeks since the dedication, the exact order of events from that day has faded from my mind, but certain vivid impressions remain.

“This Bible is not just for keeping or showing; it is for learning and understanding.”

Manipuri believer

What is a Bible dedication like?

It's a celebration. The Bible dedication was scheduled to coincide with an annual conference of fundamental Baptist churches in northeast India, held at Imphal Baptist Church, whose pastor, Tomba Singh, was the primary translator. The dedication of the Bible was the first event of the conference. There were believers there from numerous churches, not only Manipuris, but other ethnic groups as well. Many travelled an entire day over dusty, treacherous mountain roads to get there. Dr. Bernard and Rev. and Mrs. Don Block from the home office of BI were able to attend, as were most of the staff of Bibles International India Society. The banner and balloons, the gift-wrapped Bible, the excellent choir, the colorful awning outside, all contributed to the festive atmosphere. This was a time to celebrate God's goodness!



The Manipuri Ladies' Choir

What is it like to complete a translation project?

For the translators and translation committee, it's like completing a marathon. Manipuri is a language of wider communication used not only by ethnic Manipuris but also by many tribal groups. The need was great, and so was the task. The Manipuri translation project spanned decades. The translation team persevered because they had a burden to give the Manipuri-speaking people a quality translation of the entire Bible. Even after the completion of the translation itself, the team invested months of work in careful checking, making sure that every word, every letter was correct.

What is it like for BI staff members who worked on the project?

For Rev. Don Block, who did the formatting of the translation, it was no doubt the trophy of a job well done. Unlike most of BI's projects, the Manipuri Bible uses a non-Roman script.



from left to right: Translator Tomba Singh, Rev. Don Block, Dr. Hantz Bernard, Dr. Sana Singh

Even the page and verse numbers were unrecognizable to Don. For weeks, Don and Pastor Tomba had worked long hours, far into many nights, to perfect the formatting. Each BI staff person who had worked on and prayed for this project felt that this was a prize worth all their labor.

What is it like to finally hold a completed Bible?

It's like holding pure gold. That was my thought the day that the director of Bibles International India Society, Dr. Fame Singh, himself a Manipuri, proudly displayed the advance copy of the Manipuri Bible. The beautiful leather-bound Bible had arrived the evening before—just the one copy—and as Dr. Fame showed it to those of us at the office, the joy in his voice, the loving way he handled the Bible, made it clear that for him this new Bible was a great treasure.

What is it like for a Manipuri speaker to own this new Bible?

For the believers who bought the newly completed translation, it is the source of a new confidence. It was a joy to see Mr. Deb Singh, now in his 90s, triumphantly holding up the Bible for which he had waited so many years. Others carefully unwrapped their copy and wrote their name inside. Now these believers can study their Bible with confidence. It has



Manipuri believers examine their new Bibles.

been my joy to see Manipuri believers bringing their new translation to ladies' meetings and using it in church, reading and understanding it with ease. As one Manipuri friend said, "This Bible is not just for keeping or showing; it is for learning and understanding." Now they are able to learn, to grow, to base their life and their decisions on a faithful translation in the language they understand best.

What is this translation for all Manipuri believers?

It is a responsibility—not an end but a beginning. Dr. Bernard reminded us all of this in a very convicting message at the Bible dedication. The Manipuri people now have a reliable, high-quality translation of the whole Bible. They have the responsibility of using God's Word properly and allowing it to lead them to a stronger faith in Christ.

What about us?

The Manipuri believers have only recently received a reliable translation of the Bible. You and I have possessed that gift our entire lives. How do we view God's Word? Do we think of it as a treasure more precious than pure gold? Do we remember the labor and sacrifice, the persecution that our ancestors endured to give us God's Word in our language? That morning in February, I left the dedication of the Manipuri Bible determined that I would confidently base my life on the teaching of God's Word, read it responsibly, and allow it to change my life. Is that your goal, too?



BI Translation Consultant Kim Hibbard and friend Ruth Singha attend the conference.

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If you do not receive an invitation by September 30, contact Judy Brinks: (616) 942-7712, x28; jbrinks@biblesint.org.

Pilgrim, cont.

William C. Haas Lifetime Service Award presented to Dr. Osborn in 2009. Both awards will make it possible for generations to come to be inspired by his life.

Henry lost his beloved Anne to cancer in 2006, but he joined her and their beloved Savior on May 13, 2011. He also joined a host from many nations, kindreds, people, and tongues whose lives were touched, directly or indirectly, by his. Some uncomfortable nights in some uncomfortable beds seem a small price to pay for the rewards Henry has already received. Yes, you can learn a lot about a man from where he's willing to sleep, especially when that willingness is an offering to Almighty God.

clip and mail ✂

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Your God-directed help is greatly appreciated!

PROJECTS UPDATE

Critical to each Bible translation project are the workshops that are conducted to check the translation work that has been completed. BI's consultants travel many miles and spend many hours working with nationals on the assigned passages for the workshops. Following is a report of some of the consultants' activities this year as presented by Dr. Troy Manning, Chief Language Consultant. Rejoice with us for the work completed. Pray with us that these Bible translation projects will progress well.

Central African Republic

Glenn Kerr checked the Sango Christmas story and the book of Mark (Jan. 4-21). A questionnaire that will help collect feedback on changes to the orthography was also prepared.

Chad

Susan Hossack and Joshua Hedges have drawn up plans to complete the Day Bible and the Sara Madjingaye Bible in seven years. Similar plans are being created for the other Chadian OT projects.

Mali

Glenn Kerr conducted a workshop on Galatians, Ephesians, 1-3 John with the Songhai NT translators and read-and-review committee in Timbuktu, Mali (Apr. 11-22). Though troubled by electrical power difficulties, the team completed all planned books.



Glenn Kerr with the Mali Read & Review Committee

India

Kim Hibbard conducted workshops for the Chakma NT (Jan. 14 –Feb. 2).

This workshop was to prepare for an eight-book trial edition. She also conducted a workshop for the Simte NT, checking Genesis 1-15 (Mar 8-23). The Simte would like to complete the OT in five years. Psalms & Proverbs were published with the NT. Kim also conducted workshops on the Darlong Bible, checking Job (February 2-18, April 6-24) and Isaiah 26-50 (Sept 1-11, 2010). Ezekiel is the only book remaining to be

checked in the Darlong Bible. Read-throughs of the NT have already begun.

Angam Rongmei conducted a workshop with the Inpui Naga NT (March 1-11), and the Chakma NT (April 26-May 20). He also worked with the Chakma NT team (Feb. 7-18) to finish the eight-book trial edition, which was released at their annual church conference.

The Manipuri Bible was dedicated in India in February, with 1,000 copies arriving in time for the dedication service. Dr. Hantz Bernard and Don Block were present and spoke at the

service, which was conducted in three languages.

Myanmar

Ross Hodsdon conducted final checks with the Bualkhaw NT and Zotung NT teams in Myanmar. Cathy Hodsdon conducted workshops on Proverbs and Psalm 1-17 for the Tedim Chin OT (Jan. 10-Feb. 4) and on Exodus 21-40 and Leviticus for the Falam Chin OT (Feb. 7-24).

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