

translate is utter nonsense. There are no people there.' It is very apparent how the unspoken premises of the translator and of the informant from different cultures were causing the mis-translation.

If it was necessary for the Word to become flesh and to dwell among us so that men could see the glory of the Father, will it not become necessary again that each translator reincarnate the Word into the culture of the people to whom he is to bring the written Word?

WILFRED J. BRADNOCK

Some General Impressions of the TRANSLATORS' INSTITUTE held at Yarina Cocha, Peru, April 27-May 21, 1964

Translators' Institutes are now a well-established feature in the general translation scene, and reports of earlier Institutes at Bobo Dioulasso, Libamba and Manila have already appeared in the pages of *The Bible Translator*. In a sense no two Institutes can be altogether alike, for not only do the constituencies and linguistic environments vary considerably, but it is the aim and object of the organizers to experiment, to seek to discover the particular needs of groups of translators in different areas and to adjust the programme in each particular case to meet specific needs. This is the long-term plan. For the present it can be said that the main outlines of the Institutes so far held have followed similar patterns, and it would therefore be tedious to describe in detail the syllabus and sessions held at Yarina. This account will therefore deal only with certain features which may have a special interest to our readers.

This was the first time that the Bible Societies had arranged an Institute for a group of translators all of similar background and training, and all engaged, more or less at the same level, in pioneer work in tribal languages. Yarina Cocha is a tiny township on a large and beautiful lake, some 500 miles from Lima. Here a community of about 300 people have established their headquarters under the auspices of the *Instituto Linguistico de Verano* (Wycliffe Bible Translators), and from this place they reach out hundreds of miles into the Amazonian jungle to make contact with some scores of tribes of Indians. I suppose that at no time in history has there been a concerted effort on such a lavish scale to translate the Scriptures into the varied languages of relatively small tribal communities. This alone makes the movement unique. But Yarina Cocha, the place, is also unique for it is entirely dedicated to the translational task. Of 300 residents, some 80 or 90 are full-time translators. The others are described as 'support personnel', and consist of air pilots, doctors, teachers, printers and their art assistants, and general maintenance staff. A fleet of aeroplanes is their main means of

communication with the fields of operation and the outside world. Many of these 'planes have been provided by American townships or other interested groups, and they naturally play a large part in the life of an otherwise isolated community. Most of the translators spend some three to six months each year with their tribe, during which time they engage in language-learning and the acquiring of basic linguistic information relevant to their translational task. At the base in Yarina they work on this material with their informants. While the translational task has the first place, the organization also seeks to render service to the various governments in whose territories it works, and this lends significance to the elaborate radio and air communication facilities based on Yarina.

There is a small printing shop which is able to produce literacy materials for tribal work, and linguistic papers and documents related to the preliminary studies of the translators. Here is also a model farm which not only helps to supply community needs but is a centre from which skills and techniques are passed on whenever possible to any Indians who can benefit their own people by such knowledge. A large bilingual training centre provides facilities, with government support, for numbers of selected Indians who come in for three months each year for elementary education. Two doctors and a well-equipped clinic meet the medical needs of the residents, and also extend medical services far into the jungle as opportunity offers.

As most of the translators attending the Institute had a considerable background in technical linguistics, Dr Eugene A. Nida dealt with certain more advanced aspects of translational theory based largely on his recent book *Toward a Science of Translating*. The main field of study was that of 'logotactics', a term which covers the manifold processes involved in analysis of idiom and word order. These lectures were preceded by a course in Biblical background by Dr Robert G. Bratcher. Another hour each day was devoted to Biblical word studies and the principles of equivalence in translation. The rest of the time was devoted to the analysis and checking of a whole series of translations into tribal languages against a background of word-for-word English translation. This latter course served to illustrate the main principles in the checking of translations, and proved to be of especial value to many of those who are engaged in such procedures as part of their normal routine work.

It is perhaps too early to assess the results of this Institute, which was deliberately designed to combine elements of the proved and familiar with some of an experimental order. It can be said, however, that those present found it stimulating and helpful in a wide variety of ways. For the writer it was a challenging experience. Apart from the privilege of spending so much time at one of the main centres of the Wycliffe movement, it provided an unrivalled opportunity of rethinking the whole ethos and content of our translational task. One could not spend so much time in such an atmosphere and in such company without reflecting not only on such immediate and inescapable matters as translational methods and procedures, but on the more remote but cogent questions of ultimate ends and objectives. Yarina Cocha represents an immense outlay of physical, material and spiritual resources. Here one finds a devotion to the translational task which has

rarely been equalled. How does it fit in to the total picture of world evangelization? One could not but be impressed by the immense concentration of effort and resources on what must be regarded as a relatively small field. Translations Secretaries are schooled to keep in mind total world needs and the ever-increasing demands of vast communities as yet without worthy translations of the Scriptures. They are also accustomed to think of such matters in terms of challenge to the world Church. All Scripture translations are means to an end, never an end in themselves. No translator can escape for long the ultimate questions, What is the place of the Scriptures in the on-going life of the Christian Church? What obligations are incurred by the very process of translating the Scriptures at all? Normally such questions are asked and answered quite naturally either from within the bounds of the Church itself, or in direct relation to its wider programme of evangelism and mission. There can be little doubt that only where such concerns are paramount will a translator be able to achieve the desired ends. In such a short space of time it was not possible to follow up in any adequate way the twenty-five years of translational effort spent in the service of the Indian tribes of Peru and the other countries of South America, but the fact was revealed that many of these tribes are dying out, while others are moving over to the adoption of Spanish as a language of social, political and economic integration. Such factors seemed to the writer to demand adequate answers to our fundamental questions.

It was an unforgettable privilege to be able to pay brief visits to the Shipibo and Piro Indians and see at first hand some of the rich results of two translational projects. The Piro Indians received their New Testament only three years ago, but the Gospels have been at work in the tribe for some seven or eight years. Here one could see a whole community leavened by the power of the Scriptures. Many old customs have been swept away, enslaving debts wiped out, schools opened and a thorough-going campaign against poverty, dirt and disease launched. Here is a people with a new-found dignity, hard working and industrious, eager to reform the whole of their society in terms of a Christian ideal. The men were eager to acquire new skills. Groves of citrus fruit were being planted, and the jungle was giving way to cocoa and coffee plantations. Cedar trees were being grown as an investment for the future. There was a new concern for the sick and suffering, and a determination to acquire the skills to deal with disease. At the heart of all this was one man, Juan Sebastian, who for years had been the translators' chief informant and was himself the first convert. His translation became eloquent and communicative in terms of his own life. At that point the Church became operative and all that has happened since amongst the Piro Indians must be related to that fact. For the writer at least it was this experience that gave the Yarina Cocha Institute its most important meaning, and he came away hoping and praying that something like this might be the outcome of all that dedicated labour and devotion that Yarina Cocha represents. But how wonderful it would be if there could be a proportionate release of imaginative giving and dedicated service to the total cause of *Bible* translation on a world scale!