

on Zechariah because he had not believed what he had *heard*. And, this being the case, was it not much more fitting that he should be stricken *deaf* (and dumb) because of this—that is, he would not henceforth *hear ANY words* until the angel's words were fulfilled? Nor would he be able to *speak* any words, since his spoken response was to question the truth of what he had heard.

Thus, when fully considered from all sides, it seems much more probable that the true sense of this verse is as follows: '... because you did not believe what I said, you will *hear no sound*, and you will be unable to speak until the day when everything that I have told you comes true. And it will all be fulfilled in due time.'

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INGYAPAM'S WORD: THE LENGUA NEW TESTAMENT

In order for both individual and group strength to be restored to an 'effective living' level, the tradition of the Lengua Indians of the Paraguayan Chaco dictated that they receive a 'chest-strength' (life) renewing message from *Ingyapam* 'our father'. At a designated time of the year each group seeking such a message erected a 'white' (with bark removed) pole in the centre of the open area of their usually circular villages. For this important event all the people washed themselves ritually, often with *palosanto* (a sweet smelling wood) scented warm water. Then they chanted and danced around the pole with expectant 'innermosts' until the word from the *Ingyapam* arrived. Once it 'came down from above' all the people knew that for another year their 'chests would be strong' and that everything would be well.

In April of 1968 a 'new word' from *Ingyapam* arrived, for the translation of the entire New Testament in Northern Lengua was completed. True it was still only a provisional mimeographed edition, but the whole New Testament was there (the Gospels and Acts printed in diglot form with the *Spanish Versión Popular* have just come from the press; the rest of the New Testament is now being set in type). The date marked the end of four years of intensive work by a missionary-national team of translators. As the individual books were completed and checked by the Translations Consultant, they were duplicated in limited editions. These editions served a double purpose: first, they made possible a widespread in-service check of the translation, but they also provided immediate access to the Scriptures for the rapidly growing indigenous Church among the Lengua.

In order to help national leaders, teachers, and preachers to use the Scriptures effectively, the missionary translator met periodically with them to study the individual books as they became available. The national leaders selected the passages most pertinent to the life of the Church and then jointly organized them for Bible studies and/or sermons to be used in the

churches. In this way most of the groups of believers received the impact of the message more or less simultaneously. Since the entire book was usually read orally in the churches, each book underwent extensive scrutiny and testing in which 'new' (i.e. departing from traditional Church usage) renderings could be weighed, obscure expressions and questionable translations identified and marked for change or improvement. Often these groups not only isolated the problem passages but they also produced suggestions for better renderings.

The Northern Lengua translation is one of nearly one hundred tribal languages in South America in which translation is currently in progress. It is true that only a few have been as fortunate as the Lengua to get the whole New Testament in so short a period of time. In fact many of the smaller groups probably may never have a complete New Testament in their own language. However, there are several more Testaments in tribal languages that are nearing completion. Among these are Aguaruna (Peru), Warao (Venezuela) and Nyengatu (Brazil).

The *Spanish Versión Popular* can be said to have provided the textual base for this Lengua translation. The bilingual Lengua translators depended almost exclusively on it. The missionary, in addition, used a number of German translations ranging from Luther through Görg Zink, and in the final stages also *Gute Nachricht für Sie*, the German NT 68. The translation aimed at producing a dynamic equivalent popular language version and if preliminary reactions are any indication, the team has successfully achieved its purpose.

The translation was not without its problems. For the duration of the project there were difficulties for the translators to be released from their normal responsibilities; in fact, all of them had to continue to carry them on at least in part. Again, during the early stages they did not have access to a vehicle for travelling between work sessions and church responsibilities. One then rode his bicycle seventy-five kilometres over rough trails week-end after week-end. When he was unable to go, the other rode his distance on horseback and a few times he even walked it.

On two occasions rains caused serious difficulties when the roads were closed during the very days the translators and the Translations Consultant had scheduled meetings. Near the end of the task one of the translators was disabled for a period through an accident. But whatever the external problems, the team continued to push forward and eventually brought the task to a successful conclusion.

Another of the early difficulties was the revision of the orthography. The traditional writing system in the area had been based on German—the language of the missionaries—but this had to be changed to conform to the Spanish, since the Lengua children were all being required to learn the official Spanish language in school. Then there was some unacceptable 'church jargon' such as *CoCristo* for 'Christian' or 'believer', which actually made Christ a place and expressed a point of origin, like *CoLondon*, 'He's from London'. Again, following an earlier usage, the Church was using *-jangaoc* 'soul-of-the-dead' instead of *-vananongcama* 'the living soul', and this had to be changed. However, since these and other expressions had been

hallowed by usage, the change was not without pain. The study meetings with leaders mentioned earlier were a big help to make responsible people aware of the value of a dynamic meaningful translation, and so a number of 'new' and more meaningful expressions gradually found acceptance in the churches.

There were also serious dialect problems, not only in the differences between the northern and southern Lengua dialects now being served by separate translations, but also obvious differences of speech among the members of the northern churches themselves. However, the translators by careful choice of vocabulary and by some imaginative restructuring of the contexts in which the problem words occurred were able to overcome one after another of these difficulties.

There was, of course, an extensive range of semantic problems due to difference of worldview, grammatical pattern and semantic structure between the source text and the receptor language. For example, owing to some negative 'spirit' implications, the expression 'to the uttermost part of the earth' (Acts 1: 8) had to be rendered as 'everywhere'. Lengua also had serious difficulty with the frequently recurring Biblical use of 'brothers and sisters' (German: *Geschwister*). In the first place neither brother nor sister could be used in the extended sense of 'co-members of the faith'. Again, the two available Lengua terms identified a distinction between older and younger siblings with a specific term for each instead of a generic term with an age-qualifier. For the extended meaning, Lengua usage necessitated the use of 'child or offspring of one's clan'; in order to specify both sexes in contexts where this seemed advisable, some additional conditioning had to be undertaken, e.g. 'if a man see his brother or sister destitute' (James 2: 15) was rendered 'if we see our clan child without food and without masculine or feminine clothes'. In this case the obligatory masculine and feminine noun-prefixes added to 'clothes' indicated that the reference included people of both sexes. Again, in the case of 'a son of Pharaoh's daughter' (Heb. 11: 24) a normal rendering would be 'a child of the child of Pharaoh'. However, this construction was both awkward and misleading and had to be restructured as 'his mother was chief Pharaoh's child'.

There were a number of very extensive idiomatic and figurative expression patterns that make the translation characteristically Lengua. Of these we mention only two: the use of *-valhoc*, 'innermost' and 'to go past'.

Some examples of *-valhoc* constructions include:

know the hearts (Acts 1: 24) ¹	know their <i>valhocs</i>
of one accord (Acts 2: 1, 46)	their <i>valhocs</i> did not go past each other
shall not be moved (Acts 2: 25)	their <i>valhocs</i> will not fall
glad (Acts 2: 24)	their <i>valhocs</i> are spread out
repent (Acts 2: 38)	exchange their <i>valhocs</i>
purpose (1 Cor. 4: 5)	the seeing of the <i>valhoc</i>
good conscience (Eph. 3: 24)	<i>valhoc</i> dissolves

¹ English Biblical references are to the Authorized Version.

former self (Col. 3: 9)	old <i>valhoc</i>
sanctification of the spirit (1 Pet. 1: 2)	new, clean <i>valhocs</i>
new hope (1 Pet. 1: 4)	new waiting of our <i>valhocs</i>
passions of the body against soul (1 Pet. 2: 11)	the wantings of the <i>valhoc</i> against the seekings of the chest
sorrow (1 Thess. 4: 13)	going aside of the <i>valhoc</i>
be comforted (1 Thess. 4: 18)	becoming calm of the <i>valhoc</i>
slow to understand (Heb. 5: 11)	hard <i>valhoc</i>

Constructions with ‘to go past’ include:

faithful (1 Cor. 10: 13)	does not go past his word
exceeding riches (1 Tim. 6: 9)	their belongings go past
orphans (Jas. 1: 22)	those who are gone past
full measure (1 Pet. 1: 2)	goes past top
prayers hindered (1 Pet. 3: 2)	prayers go past

Restructuring was sometimes necessary even where perfectly acceptable idiomatic *Lengua* patterns were available, for sometimes such expressions occurred in collocations in the Biblical context, that made the meaning ambiguous or misleading, e.g. the normal expression ‘to be born’ is ‘to fall’ but the construction ‘his firstborn son (child)’ without extra-contextual conditioning is usually understood as ‘to fall down’. Therefore this expression had to be rendered as ‘the first-seen child’ to assure its proper meaning.

There were extensive changes in the patterns of figurative and non-figurative language. Certain New Testament figures of speech could be translated by equivalent figures, e.g. ‘heart’ as *-valhoc* ‘innermost’, ‘the weaker sex’ (1 Pet. 3: 7) as ‘those with the un-strong feminine skin’, and ‘foundation’ (Acts 4: 12) as ‘like the house-root’. Others had to be rendered non-figuratively, e.g. ‘throne’ (Acts 2: 31) as ‘to sit’, ‘second death’ (Rev. 21: 5) as ‘another kind of dying’.

Certain non-figurative expressions from the source text were best rendered as figures of speech, e.g. ‘naked’ (Gal. 3: 21) as ‘our smoothness’, ‘cried’ (Heb. 5: 7) as ‘made his words strong’, ‘thirst’ (Rev. 21: 2) as ‘the sun kills’.

Some expressions for which no unit equivalent was found had to be rendered as descriptive phrases, e.g. ‘soldiers’ as ‘those who bind us’, ‘island’ as ‘the round earth in the middle of water’, ‘free men’ as ‘people who are not held habitually’, and ‘barbarians and savages’ (Col. 3: 11) as ‘not our kind of people and wild people’.

Other adjustments included shifts in the implicit-explicit relationship of the components of meaning, e.g. in ‘the ministering spirits’ (Heb. 1: 4) ‘invisible’ had to be made explicit, as ‘invisible spirits that help us’ to distinguish them from ‘wandering souls and ghosts’ which people ‘see’ and fear. Again, in the case of friends and enemies the aspect of reciprocity had to be made explicit as ‘those who hate (love) us and those whom we hate (love)’. Some explicit features that become implicit in the process of transfer included ‘anchor’ (Heb. 6: 19) which was expressed as ‘that holds us like a rope’ and ‘peace and security’ (1 Thess. 5: 3) became ‘no news’, for when all

is well there is 'no news'. Even when one sends a message to his family about one's being well, it will be: 'Tell them that coming from me there is no news', i.e. 'everything is fine and I am safe and well'.

A further type of adjustment involved the shifts between specific and generic vocabulary. Some Biblical specifics had to be expressed generically, e.g. 'gold and silver, hay and stubble' (1 Cor. 3: 11–12) became 'expensive things and ordinary cheap things'. At other times generic terms of the source text had to be expressed in Lengua specific forms. Thus, for example, Lengua has no generic word to express 'wind'. It knows only two specific winds: 'northwind' and 'southwind', of which the former has pleasant connotations and the latter unpleasant ones. These specifics had to be selected as per context, e.g. 'wind' (John 3: 8) with positive overtones became 'northwind' and 'storm' (Luke 8: 23–24) became 'strong south wind'.

Lengua also required that all rhetorical questions be answered appropriately; thus, 'do you want to return?' (Gal. 4: 9) was followed by the answer 'Certainly not'. In Jas. 3: 11–12 the long series of rhetorical questions had each to be followed by 'I believe not'. At other times the question had to be restructured as an affirmative statement, e.g. 'Have you never read . . . ?' (Mark 12: 26) became 'you surely have all read'.

The oral reading in the churches produced an additional dividend—it made apparent the need for more transition markers. This included markers signalling the beginning and the end of major sections and also minor transitions within certain sections or paragraphs. Many of the required markers differed from those used in the Greek source text, and others had to be introduced where the source text had no transition markers. Their addition not only made comprehension much easier, it actually prevented certain misinterpretations. For example, 2 Tim. 2: 6 had to be introduced by 'another saying' to show that a further comparison was being cited. Likewise in Heb. 4: 16 a summary, or cause and effect, transition had to be furnished, e.g. 'coming from the preceding we now . . .'.

This Lengua translation will still have to pass the test of time, but if its current enthusiastic reception and widespread use is any indication, one can predict that it will be to the Northern Lengua Church what the Authorized Version has been to English believers.