



The Bible Society of Baptist Mid-Missions

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Dear Co-laborer and Prayer Warrior in Christ,

Greetings from Bibles International. Our world is changing at such a rapid rate. This past year has been a challenge in a way that we have not seen for many years. The COVID-19 pandemic and all the ramifications that have come with it have swept across our globe to such a degree that very few souls were unaffected by it. Even my wife and mother-in-law are currently recovering from having the coronavirus. Some of you may have lost loved ones or jobs. Possibly you are living in an area where you have experienced the devastation of riots, conflicts, and pandemonium. No one has escaped completely unscathed. Yet we continue to trust in the living God who raises the dead and sovereignly controls the entire universe.

It is during a period of time like this that we must pause and rejoice that the Ancient of Days and heavenly Father sent to us the gift of His dear Son in the person of Jesus Christ. This is what we celebrate at Christmastime. This loving and eternal gift has not been swayed, troubled, or caught by surprise regarding the events of the day. Jesus Christ is hope and peace in the midst of turmoil, violence, and political unrest. He is the immutable One that does not change. He patiently waits for us to call upon Him in our troubles (Mt. 11:28-30; Jn. 14:1-6).

What a glorious truth we have been given in the promises of God's Word! Our faith (which often is as small as a mustard seed) is strengthened, encouraged, and sustained through trials because of the ever-present nearness of our Savior, Jesus Christ. He brings us joy and daily grace. He gave to us His Holy Spirit to comfort, guide, and assure us that the Resurrected One still lives and sits upon the Throne. He gave to us His Word that we might know Him, abide in Him, and grow in our knowledge of Him. We are told that faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God (Rom. 10:17). We can be strongly encouraged and strengthened in our faith by the Bible, but not everyone is able to turn the pages of truth to find hope in time of need. They do not possess the thing that you and I turn to for our hope. Current statistics tell us that over 3,900 languages do not possess any portion of the Bible translated in their tongue.

One group that I would like to highlight here is the wonderful Sango language.

The Sango language has a fascinating history. In fact, our parent ministry, Baptist Mid-Missions, has its roots firmly entrenched among the Sango-speaking people. The majority of them dwell in the Central African Republic (CAR), with some in Chad and the Republic of Congo. That region in Africa was known as French Equatorial Africa (FEA). According to *The Lord Gave the Word*, written by Elaine A. Schulte, William Haas (founder of BMM) settled in FEA in 1917, and began to study and translate Sango. No written language for the Sango-speaking people existed at that time. As a very gifted linguist, Haas saw the need for the translated Scriptures to be placed in the hands of all new believers. This intense burden in his soul motivated him with passion to learn the Sango trade language so these beautiful people could come to know God and grow spiritually by God's grace. Without the Scriptures they would remain in spiritual darkness.

With the help of additional dedicated missionaries, the Sango New Testament was completed in 1935, and the Old Testament was completed in 1966. Later it became clear that a revision was needed. However, since the copyright belonged to a different Bible Society that would not yield their rights for a revision,

Baptist Mid-Missions envisioned a need for “a Bible Society that would help church-planting missionaries produce whole Bibles, maintain conservative translation principles, and avoid entanglements which negatively influence translations.” Thus, the seed that would eventually birth Bibles International was produced. Our historical roots are firmly planted in the soil of the Sango language and people.

Over time the Sango language changed as all spoken and written tongues do. Therefore, the original translation began to lose its reliability and clarity. What good is a translation (even the best of translations) if it cannot be fully understood by the people because the language has changed so much over time? For this reason, it was incumbent upon BI representatives to meet with the Sango church leaders in 2006 to plan a careful revision of the text. The new Sango translation team, guided by BI consultants, labored through very difficult circumstances to provide a translation that would be understood by their people. They labored through the conclusion of a civil war, conflicts with Muslim rebels, family members being murdered, churches being destroyed, problems with upcoming technologies, stolen computers, translations that had been lost, the challenges of changing vocabulary, grammar, and word meanings, danger, fear, and a national political upheaval. The trials, challenges, barriers, and cost on every level was monumental. **However, they were faithful ... and so was God!**

Praise God! The revision of the Sango Bible is now complete. This is a historic achievement in light of the multitude of storms they endured. The revision team submitted the completed text on September 1, 2020, and you probably heard our rejoicing all around the world! God protected His people and provided His Word. The Bible text is now being formatted and will be printed soon so that the precious Sango people will have a copy of the Sango Bible in their hands in 2021. Would you rejoice with us? This is monumental. Would you also pray with us for the completion of this project? If possible, would you join this team of Sango sacrificial warriors and invest some of the resources that God has entrusted into your care to help them see the fruit of their labor complete?

The financial need is \$123,000.

If you are able to contribute to this great need, you may use the enclosed envelope to send your one-time donation, or you may go to our website, www.biblesint.org, and click the “GIVE” button to designate your gifts. Choose “BI Languages” and then scroll to the “Sango Project.” Next year (2021) is BI’s 40th Anniversary. What a way to celebrate by providing the Sango people (our roots) a clear, reliable Bible. Thank you!

May God bless you richly. Merry Christmas!

For the Glory of God and the Sango people,



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