

# Bible News

With the publication of at least one book of the Holy Scriptures in 1,232 languages by the end of last year, the written Word, potentially at least, can now reach 97 per cent of the world's population. There are 236 languages which have received entire Bibles and 290 other languages which possess New Testaments—the greatest accomplishment in inter-language communication the world has known.

The task of spreading the light is not complete, however, since revisions of the Bible are urgently needed in scores of languages especially where languages are in process of rapid change as the result of unprecedented social, economic and political developments. For numerous other people, Gospels must soon be followed by New Testaments, and where there are New Testaments, full Bibles are increasingly requested. Millions of people as yet have nothing of the Word of God in their own language, and there is a tremendous amount of work still to be accomplished, since these people represent more than 1,000 mutually unintelligible languages and dialects.

Giving people the message of the Bible in written form for the first time is no simple task. The missionary linguist must begin with a seemingly hopeless jumble of strange sounds, and for these construct an alphabet. He must analyze a complicated grammatical structure, master the meanings of tens of thousands of words and become thoroughly familiar with the beliefs and practice of the people. Only then can he translate the Word of life in such a way that, in turn, can be translated into life.

If, for example, he endeavors to learn the Cuzco dialect of Quechua, spoken by about one million Indians in the highlands of Peru, he must distinguish six different k-like sounds, three of which are pronounced in the central part of the mouth and three very far back in the mouth. These six different k's are the only distinguishing sounds in the words of "cloth," "blanket," "bush," "medicine," "hillside" and "mud."

In many languages of Africa a slip of the tongue produces serious misunderstanding. In one African language, missionaries pronounced an "n" with the tip of the tongue against the upper teeth, when it should have been between the teeth. As a result, what missionaries were saying about God's "Son" was understood by the people to be a reference to God's "ox."

Many so-called primitive languages have extremely complicated grammars. For example, in the Piro language of Peru, spoken by about 2,000 people in the eastern jungles, the word for a council is actually "jemanshiinkankajetikakaya," a word made of seven different parts and meaning literally "a place where people reciprocally hear one another's thoughts." A language such as Piro can readily construct as many as 50,000 different forms from a single verb root—making some of the verb constructions of Greek and Latin seem very simple in comparison.

Though many people have assumed that strange languages spoken by primitive peoples would have unusual sounds and difficult grammars, they are usually astonished to learn that such languages also possess thousands of words. The isolated Hanun's people on Mindoro Island in the Philippines do not have names for hundreds of automobile parts, but they do have names for more than 1,800 different plants; even professional botanists distinguish only about 1,300 varieties.

The light of the Gospel is never transmitted by meaningless mutterings, but only by the clear expression of truth in the languages of men. Only then can the message become the Word of life—when it is translated into life by men and women who understand its living truth through words which speak to their own lives.

The American Bible Society is continually at work, helping missionaries and others translate and revise the Scriptures in many languages, publishing them in inexpensive missionary and evangelistic editions and distributing them in more than 130 countries. As the agency of the churches to carry on this worldwide mission of the written Word, the society needs your prayers and gifts.

Jesus, however, offered them a comfort and strength that they did not at that time fully understand, for he promised to send the Spirit, who would be their guide, who would lead them to the truth, and who would be their Comforter. By the Spirit, humanity was to live; without it, they would perish, and would not know the full meaning and joy of the Resurrection. To live by the Spirit was to overcome death.

The Spirit is an integral part of the Christian belief; the Holy Trinity is accepted by all true believers. God is the Father, who created heaven and earth, and all things therein; Christ is the Son, sent into the world by God to redeem mankind; the Spirit is God the Comforter, at work in the world. Three separate functions performed by one Being, just as sight, sound and smell are part of one human body, to choose a parallel.

The Spirit is around us and within us, wherever we go, giving us courage, insight and strength. It was with Jesus at the time of his baptism and during his temptation in the wilderness; it was most assuredly with him on the Cross. It flowed from his being all through his brief life on earth, manifesting itself in the loving concern he felt for the people, in the patience with which he dealt with unbelievers and betrayers; it reached out to those who tried, and stumbled—and even fell—urging them on to new courage, new hope—even greater heights.

And as we face the catastrophes and calamities that befall us in our lives today, the Spirit is with us, giving us that same courage, that same faith, that same hope. Even if we should waver in our faith, the Spirit does not desert us. Intangible though it is, it is our anchor and our shield, if we but have the tenacity of mind and heart to strive on.

Some have been fortunate in knowing a great emotional experience, as did Paul on the road to Damascus, and latter-day leaders in the Christian faith, but to most of us our experiences are quieter and less spectacular. Paul braved the hardships of the desert, the ignominy of imprisonment, the pain of many lashes, to proclaim his message to the world. Many of our saintly and dedicated fellow beings in contemporary times face untold hardships in foreign and hostile lands to proclaim that same message of hope and glory today. Their lives, as Paul's, will go down in history, while ours may not. But if just a few of the people we encounter during the course of our lives remember us for a helping hand in time of need, an earnest, loving concern manifested in their lives, we will have made our life meaningful on this earth. The Spirit at work within us will have shone through, and the world will be a better place for our having been there.

(These comments are based on outlines of the International Sunday School Lessons, copyrighted by the International Council of Religious Education, and used by permission).

# Make Church-Going a Habit

## Sunday School Lesson

**GOD IS LIVING SPIRIT**  
International Sunday School Lesson for February 6

**Memory Selection:** "By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his own spirit."—1 John 4:13.

**Lesson Text:** John 16:7-15; Acts 2:1-4; Romans 8:9-27; 1 John 4:13-21.

Today the purpose of our lesson is to encourage adults to fully understand and wholeheartedly respond to the leading of the Holy Spirit, the essence of which dwells within us.

In the verses which comprise our Scriptural readings, Jesus is warning his disciples that the road ahead was to be a difficult one for them; that in their loyalty to God they would face persecution and suffering at the hands of those who opposed the Christian doctrine.

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## STAR BRIGHT



**THE CHURCH FOR ALL... ALL FOR THE CHURCH**

The Church is the greatest factor on earth for the building of character and good citizenship. It is a source of spiritual values. Without a strong Church, neither democracy nor civilization can survive. There are four sound reasons why every person should attend services regularly and support the Church: They are: (1) For his own sake; (2) For his children's sake; (3) For the sake of his community and nation; (4) For the sake of the Church itself, which needs his moral and material support. Please to go to church regularly and read your Bible daily.

When Millie goes to bed she stops by the stairway window to say good night to her favorite star. It twinkles in the frosty evening sky, and to her it seems remote and cold. But to Millie, the star is a warm and glowing friend. It's just a matter of viewpoint. A grown-up sees through the eyes of experience. The child gazes through the eyes of innocence. And as we all know, it isn't easy to exchange our experience for innocence again.

Yet, this is exactly what many of us need to do. Many of us need a new approach, a new look at the old things, the old truths. We need to open our eyes, and let our eyes see; to open our ears, and let ourselves hear.

There is no better place to discover this new approach than in your church. In church next Sunday you will find a new point of view. Let yourself see, let yourself hear. You will be surprised at the results.

Sunday Genesis 21:7	Monday Job 42:1-6	Tuesday Amos 5:4-9	Wednesday Luke 24:28-35	Thursday 1 Corinthians 4:13-18	Friday Ephesians 2:14-22	Saturday Hebrews 11:8-19
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