



Summary Report of FTT and Bible Translation Among the UUPG of Bihar Meetings

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General Background:

This symposium of Church Planting organizations affiliated with the Transform World Network of Bihar was called for after our conversation in October with Alex Philip which focused on the importance of vernacular Scriptures to church planting and discipleship. Dr Alex called together leaders representing approximately more than a dozen Indian church planting organizations working in Bihar to this consultation on the strategic importance and connection between Finishing the Task (FTT), Unreached and Unengaged People Groups (UUPG) and Bible translation.

Presentations of FTT and UUPG, particularly as it relates to Bihar, were made by the strategy coordinators of IMB for the region and Dr Alex Abraham (via video), Coordinator of UUPG/FTT and Serve-A-People for India and Director of Operation Agape. Data on people groups and languages for Bihar were presented by Tony Samuel of Serve-A-People of India Missions Association.

Underlining all of these presentations was a sense of urgency and size of task.

SAG, represented by Steve Echerd, gave a presentation on why Bible translation is vital to Finishing the Task in Bihar and where are the possible translation needs in Bihar today. Tony Samuel did a creditable job merging FTT and people groups lists with languages of Bihar.

Henry gave a presentation on The Seed Company and our mandate with the concept of end user defined entry into translation in order to serve the local church, in this context the attending church planting organizations. Special focus was given to the End to End Initiative and how this may serve the CP organizations in their mission with vernacular oral tools, training, and equipment.

Dr Alex called for reflection and commitment in the afternoon of the last day. Each organization leaders was asked to reflect and hear where and what people groups (UUPGs) God may be directing their organization to work amongst and commit to those here at the conference. Then they were asked if they had any interest in partnering with TSC to develop these oral tools in the language of their chosen people group. The response was very enthusiastic.

Commitment to engage with 25 new unreached and unengaged people groups were made with almost everyone wanting to participate in the development of oral tools for church planting use in the languages of their people groups.

As it turns out there are five languages primarily being used in Bihar – Bhojpuri, Maithili, Magahi, Angika, and Surjapuri. The Bible translation status for each language is as follows:

- Bhojpuri – NT translated and published but not being reprinted and difficult to find
- Maithili – NT nearly completed and is planned for publishing in 2009
- Magahi – A translation project in progress by Evangel Bible Translators related team. OTT out of country progress with MTT team is very slow and may not have done Luke yet
- Angika – No previous translation. Some question of translation need from LAM database but people working among Angika speakers say it is needed. Initial goals and oral projects are ideal for testing in this language community
- Surjapuri – No previous translation

Discovery:

When we shared about the idea of Bible translation resources serving the interest of the church planters in Bihar they were very interested. Every one said they would like to have Bible stories in the languages of the UUPG they are working in. They suggested story telling is a culturally appropriate and fitting tool for all these people groups. Even those languages with existing translation prefer receiving initial oral tools than printed scriptures.

We shared about an ideal translation team composed of three people – someone who is really good with the language, someone who has some theological understanding, and someone who has the gifting for using computers and other technical tools. It was suggested by the CP leadership at the meeting that there are relatively educated people in each of these language communities. Some even have Bible college graduates with BTh degrees. All agreed to help identify potential MTTs.

NIEA, Dr Alex's organization, agreed to serve as the administrative unit for the project. NIEA has the government certification to funds from foreign sources and the administrative infrastructure to manage the project.

Suggested Way Forward:

1. Start a cluster workshop for Bible stories in all five languages. The common LWC would be Hindi. My understanding is a consultant checked Hindi CBS story set is nearly completed. If so this may serve this cluster as the source for adapting Bible stories into the five languages.
2. Invite the Angika and Surjapuri teams to continue with translating Luke and JF script after the storying is done. Maybe Magahi team could also be invited to this if they have not done Luke yet.

Possible Additional Developments:

1. Steve Echerd is the LPM for the Pahari cluster project in NW India. He said SAG is responsible for 5 languages, WfA is responsible for 2 and NLCI is responsible for 1. The NLCI team has started translation work while the SAG teams have been training and preparing for the past recent past few years. He sees the possibility of connecting the SAG language teams with our End to End project as a way for getting translation started in these 5 languages. Should that be the case we may eventually consider a 7 to 8 language cluster including the 5 languages from the SAG Pahari Cluster and the 2 from Bihar needing translation. Since Hindi would be the common language of communication this is a very feasible possibility.
2. One other point of possible interest that came from my conversation with Ken Schmidt on Saturday. As we talked about national and western consultant development Ken expressed interest in placing ASA consultant trainees in TSC projects such as the End to End Clusters or other LP workshops – both to help and to gain experience and mentoring for the consultant interns as we have done with consultant interns in Africa.