

Bilingual Projects

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A bilingual outreach booklet based on *Steps to Christ* was recently printed at the Review. The two languages in this booklet are English and Navajo (*Walking With Jesus/Jesus Hoł Yi'ashgo*). Navajo is an American Indian language. The same material appears on facing pages throughout. In addition to the printed booklet, we also have an audio recording (in Navajo only) and a follow up web site (www.thebooklet.org). These things are all in the field and are being used now.

Table 1
English Based

National Language	Indigenous Language	Country	Population
English	Navajo	USA	280,000

In much of Latin America the national language is Spanish. There are large people groups in Spanish speaking areas where native language retention is high and a complete Bible is sometimes available, but literacy is low. What I envision is a Latin American sequel to the present booklet where Spanish is paired with each of a number of widely-spoken minority languages, maximizing reader comprehension. The first part of this has been done. There is a Spanish draft, although it is not fully polished. It has been through three levels of review.

Table 2
Spanish Based

National Language	Indigenous Language	Country	Population
IAD			
Spanish	Maya, Yucatán	Mexico	700,000
Spanish	K'iche', Central	Guatemala	1,900,000
SAD			
Spanish	Quechua, Ayacucho	Peru	900,000
Spanish	Quichua, Chimborazo Highlands	Ecuador	1,000,000
Spanish	Quechua, Cuzco	Peru	1,500,000
Spanish	Aymara, Southern	Bolivia	1,785,000
Spanish	Quechua, Cochabamba	Bolivia	2,780,000
Spanish	Guaraní, Paraguayan	Paraguay	4,648,000

If bilingual materials of this sort were ready for distribution, our colporteurs could sell them. And if they were given away, people would accept them. Table 2 represents over 15,000,000 people who I doubt are buying anything from us now, or not much. If they do buy our Spanish-only literature they are guaranteed to have difficulty understanding it. (For example, one third of those who speak Cuzco Quechua speak only Quechua.) If we are to have a membership that reads, it will have to be in a language the reader understands. One could easily imagine other bilingual projects – a booklet on the Sabbath, for example, again pairing Spanish with the above languages. If the idea is good, people will support it.

It is true that we need literature in national languages. It is right to place our major focus there. But we need literature in other languages as well if we are to reach the people who speak them. We must seek people where they are. Some 2000 years ago there was a well established international language (Greek) already in place when God poured out the gift of tongues at Pentecost. But that wasn't enough. God wanted more. If the same principle applies, we still need more today. The church's work must not end less aggressively than it began.