



*"Behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest"*

### **"The Final Steps in Completing the Isan New Testament"**

Greetings Again For the First Time in 2013,

The New Year has begun, as you are well aware. We (*me and my Isan review team*) have already begun the tedious process of reviewing and evaluating the completed Isan New Testament... more on this below.

Looking back to Christmastime, after a 27-hour flight from Bangkok, I was scheduled to arrive home from Thailand at 6:00 PM on Christmas Eve. The flight was generally uneventful; I arrived at Los Angeles right on schedule (2:00 PM, Dec 24). I was anticipating seeing Cheryl again within the hour. Then, just before our 5:10 PM commuter flight boarding time, an announcement came that our short commuter hop to San Diego was being delayed. One hour soon turned into two, etc. We then learned that the scheduled flight attendant had called in sick at the last minute, and that they were searching for a stand-in.

Although visibly disappointed, everyone remained in good spirits as we stood or sat around, gazing at the clock's minute hand slowly circle the dial. Then, the good news came; the loudspeaker announced that a flight attendant who had just arrived from Denver had volunteered for our stranded flight. Upon boarding, we all burst into spontaneous applause as the captain announced her name. While disembarking in San Diego, we all wished her a very Merry Christmas. Over three hours had passed from when we were supposed to have arrived. At approximately 10:00 PM, I finally hugged Cheryl and wished her a Merry Christmas.

As mentioned, having completed translating the Isan New Testament in December, 2012, I have now begun the somewhat tedious process of a thorough final review. A complete reappraisal must be done before printing is possible, which will take at least a year. A well-meaning person, upon hearing this, remarked that it's too bad the Isan have to wait any longer than they already have.

Of course I want to see the translation completed and into the hands and hearts of the Isan people as soon as possible! (*Keep in mind that I finished three years ahead of projected Wycliffe BT timetabling, even with numerous unforeseen setbacks.*) Yet, a final overall check is a mandatory process that must be accomplished first. We are handling God's eternal, life-giving Word. As such, we cannot sacrifice accuracy on the altar of hastiness or immediacy.

The reasons for a final recheck fall into three main categories. First is grammatical accuracy following Greek Tense, Voice, and Mood. For example, if the verb in the original text is stated in perfect tense (*completed action*), passive voice (*the hearer is recipient of the action*), and indicative mood (*explanatory*), *the translation must follow suit*. The "official" Thai translation often takes undue liberties with passages such as this, changing the meaning to *place an undue obligation on the reader to perform something, when in fact the Word clearly states it has already been done for him or her by God Himself!*

We have been careful to avoid these types of errors with due diligence—*problems all too common to the Thai Bible*. Otherwise, the clarion, grace-based Biblical message is transformed into a confusing series of works-oriented religious requirements. This is the reason why many Thai believers have a difficult time understanding grace, since their "official" Bible Society Bible translation promotes a confusing mixture of Grace and works.

A second reason for a final check is to attain harmony and agreement of terminology. As the translator, I tested various terms as I progressed. These now need to be reviewed and updated for consistency. Take, for instance, the word "glory" (*doxa in Greek*). It's a term with a wide spectrum of meanings, depending on its contextual application. In the Thai and Isan languages, there are many ways to convey "glory." We have now arrived at a term that is both accurate and conveys God's glory quite fittingly.

Lastly, some passages are much more difficult to translate than others. Reevaluating and streamlining these for better readability can only strengthen message comprehension and clarity. Overall fidelity (as a reflection of the original text), is of major importance in keeping with faithful and accurate conveyance of God's powerful truths to the Isan readers' hearts and minds.

With these crucial goals in focus, please continue to pray for my good health. Also, pray particularly that some of our supporters would not abandon us midstream, since we are so close to completion. The eternal destiny of millions of Isan souls hangs in the balance. Bottom line, with your continued help we can see this through to the finish line together.

In closing, Cheryl and I want to sincerely thank all of you who have continued to remain faithful in your prayers and financial partnership over the years. Jesus' admonition to *occupy* till He returns in Luke 19:13, reminds us that, as believers, we are to cross the finish-line strong, and not falter.

The job is not done. God has also imparted a further vision of seeing the accuracy of the Isan translation converted into spoken Thai and Lao. Also, a vision to see the *Considering Creation* evangelism booklet expanded to include other Buddhist languages. With your continued support and affirmation, I assure you, with God at the helm, we will strive for excellence and *finish strong*.

By God's Enabling Grace and For His Eternal Glory,

*Ron Myers*

Ron and Cheryl Myers

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