Editor’s Note: The dedication ceremonies for the Zotung and Bualkhaw New Testaments for Myanmar were scheduled for July 29, 2012. The New Testaments for both languages were printed in India and reached the India/Myanmar border on July 22. But it appeared that there would be no way for them to be transported any farther. What happened in that week before the dedications was an amazing unfolding of God’s providential protection of His people and His Word as both made their way through dangerous situations. The minute-by-minute trials and triumphs of those involved are excerpted from the personal account of one of God’s present-day smugglers.

July 22, 2012: The New Testaments safely arrived in Moreh, a town in India that lies at the India/Myanmar border. Immediately, 29 of the 91 boxes (each box containing 65-70 New Testaments) were sent to Tamu, a Myanmar town near the border. When the Bibles were carried through the first main checkpoint, the gatekeepers did not allow them to pass through. After a long request, the gatekeepers relented, but they were so astonished and panicked to see such a large number of Bibles that they did not even take the money given to them. They did, however, give strict warning that no more New Testaments should be brought in. Because of their warning, we chose to pay a lorry driver to transport them.

July 25, 2012: When the driver did not show up, we went to Moreh to meet him. We learned that he could not drive into Myanmar until Sunday, so he returned the money to us. Finding no other means of transportation, we loaded one box on each motorcycle and sadly returned home.

July 26, 2012: There had been a strike for four days in Tamu and an officer was coming to settle the matter. All checkpoints would be guarded more strictly than before and all small gates would be closed. Though discouraged, we quickly decided we would transport the New Testaments by motorcycle. We had four of them, two 110 cc, two 125 cc, all made in China. We

continued on p. 2
chose the shortest smuggling road to avoid the main checkpoint we had come through earlier. It was a very narrow, slippery road that zigzagged through a jungle. The two smaller bikes could not go up the ascending road and rolled backward to a pool. After pushing the bikes up the hill with the help of friends, we came to a small gate where policemen stopped us and asked us to open our boxes. Thank God! They gave us no trouble, and we arrived safely in Tamu.

We were told there were many detectives with ordinary clothes everywhere, so we took another smuggling road in order to avoid suspicion. Almost seven times longer than the first one, this road crossed the river that forms the India/Myanmar border. Halfway through the river, the engines of the two 110 bikes stopped. We pushed them up to the bank of the river, knowing that with water getting inside the motorcycle coil boxes, the wires could easily cause an electric shock. Thank God! When we got to the bank, the bikes started again.

Tamu was heavily guarded when we arrived, so we decided to move all the remaining New Testaments to the nearby village of Haolenphai. Thank God! This was accomplished by a brother with a truck and some willing students. As we unloaded the New Testaments, seven three-wheelers full of what were alleged to be narcotic drugs were brought into the village. Those boxes were unloaded and kept near our New Testaments, which made us very uncomfortable.

At the same time there were demonstrations on both sides of the border, with policemen and detectives everywhere. I encouraged my friends, telling them that God would protect us and that many people were praying for us. I also told them that if any one of them was arrested and asked who owned the New Testaments, to say that the New Testaments belonged to me. If it was God’s will to send me to prison for the New Testaments, I would accept it as a great privilege. Thank God! We were able to entrust all the New Testaments to a pastor and his family, load three boxes on each motorcycle, and return home about sunset.

July 27, 2012: Multiple trips were made with very real dangers on each one, but all the New Testaments were in Tamu by 3:00 pm. We took a great relief, but the trouble had not ended. There was one more checkpoint remaining inside Tamu. Until our cargo reached the village of Canaan, we could not say that it was safe.

July 28, 2012: The distance between Tamu and Canaan is about 35 miles. The Combined Gate was an unavoidable checkpoint in Tamu. Either the New Testaments would go through the gate or they would remain in Tamu, 48 miles from Kalay where the dedications were to take place. No driver dared to carry the New Testaments through that gate. God had prepared one three-wheeler driver, however, who alone could negotiate with the gatekeepers. He and another man had begun carrying 4 or 5 boxes at a time from Tamu to Canaan on July 24. By July 28, all the New Testaments were successfully shifted from Tamu to Canaan. [Editor’s Note: Not the first time Canaan could aptly be called “The Promised Land.”]

It takes about three hours to get to Kalay from Canaan by bus. There are also some checkpoints between the two locations. So we sent only 8 to 10 boxes in each batch because of the danger. In this way the Bibles were slowly shifted from Canaan to Kalay.

July 29, 2012: At last, the New Testaments were in the hands of those to whom they belonged. I believe that the friends who took the adventure with me would agree to say: “We were tired, but we were not tired!” We realized in a deep way that the powers of darkness strongly oppose the spreading of the Word of God. But we also believe that “the harder the labor, the sweeter the fruit.” Thank God! His Word stands forever.
In the summer of 2011, the Falam translation team and I checked the book of Numbers together. Numbers is not one of the more difficult books in the Bible, but checking census data and descriptions of which tribe camped where can seem tedious at times. Why did God include all these details? Here are a few thoughts that came to mind as we worked:

**Real people need details.** Church by-laws and the U.S. Constitution are not exciting reading, but could your church or our government function without them? If we want proof that the Bible deals with real history, that it is not fiction or fable, Numbers provides that for us. When I began to think about Numbers in this way, I started noticing details that give fascinating insights into what life was like in the wilderness. For instance, Moses specifies where the tabernacle and its furnishings were in the tribal marching order. After the first three tribes set out, the sons of Gershon and Merari left with the pieces of the tabernacle (10:17). Three more tribes followed, and only then did the Kohathites set out, carrying the holy items that belonged in the tabernacle. By the time the holy furnishings arrived at the new campsite, the tabernacle was already set up and ready to receive them (10:21). What wonderful planning!

There is also encouragement for us today. The clans of Gershon and Merari were specifically selected by God for what seems like very menial labor: carrying the curtains, boards, posts, and hardware that made up the tabernacle (4:22-33). Yet even this was considered sacred service and is given great attention. The same could be said of the many mundane tasks needed to run a church, home, or other organization. If done for the Lord, these tasks, too, are sacred service.

Then consider chapter seven: 89 verses listing gifts from twelve leaders, each of whom brought exactly the same things. As I watched the typist copy and paste eleven times the corrections we had made to the first list of gifts, I wondered, *Why didn’t God just summarize? Is it really important that this list be repeated over and over?* But then I realized that it was important to the men who brought those gifts. It seems from the text that these leaders had intended to present their gifts as a group (7:2-3, 9), but God specifically asked them to present them individually (7:11). Here was proof that God noticed every single one of those men. Millennia later, we can still see exactly what each one of them did to show his devotion to God and His house. These thoughts were a great encouragement to me. If God took note of details like these in the past, then He knows what I am doing today. The work of a consultant is detail work. Does it matter if I make sure that one phrase goes in exactly the right place or that one word has just the right meaning? Will anyone even notice? God will. God does. And He notices what you are doing, too, no matter how small your role may seem to you.

*Lessons from Numbers*

*Kim Hibbard, Translation Consultant*

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*The golden lampstand described in Numbers, recreated and on display in Jerusalem*

*Kim and the Falam translation team check the OT*

*Kim Hibbard is a Translation Consultant based in Northeast India.*
Anticipation mounted as people lined both sides of the entrance to the Nan Chaung Baptist Church on July 29, 2012. In a ceremonial manner, someone was coming. More importantly, something was coming—the Bualkhaw New Testament. Certainly there had been plenty of time for anticipation to mount in the ten years it took to complete the translation. Now hundreds of Bualkhaw-speaking people in Myanmar were assembled to celebrate its completion and to dedicate its use to the glory of God.

As a cow lowed in the background, the ceremonial planting and watering of a small sapling took place before anyone entered the church building. Years from now, when that sapling has grown into a tall, strong tree, grandfathers will be pointing it out to their grandchildren and recounting what took place on the day it was planted. They will no doubt include in their account the difficulties preceding this happy day—difficulties such as the death of one translator and the stroke that left another translator paralyzed and unable to speak, difficulties in getting the New Testaments to the dedication ceremony. But like the stones erected by the Israelites as a memorial to...
God’s faithfulness, this tree will serve as a testimony to God’s goodness in bringing His people through every trial. Dr. Hantz Bernard, director of Bibles International, was the honored guest and speaker at the dedication ceremony. Accompanying him on this trip was Dr. Matthew Healey, a businessman from Greenville, South Carolina. The church building was filled, and although fans were running and brows were being wiped, no one’s spirits seemed dampened by the heat. Congregational singing and choir numbers were interspersed in the program. At one point the translation team and honored guests all placed their hands on the New Testament as Dr. Bernard prayed for its work in people’s lives.

As Dr. Bernard distributed NTs to individual members of the Bualkhaw translation committee and pastors, each person received the Book with both hands, signifying the value of the gift and their respect for it. Then in unison they all read aloud Romans 8. A plaque was presented to Dr. Bernard, and one committee member put his thoughts on paper:

First of all, we give all glory and honor to our almighty God. It is He who enables us to complete this great project and allowed us to have this celebration . . . . I would like to express my sincere appreciation and gratitude to Bibles International for your hard-working efforts to achieve this goal. Thank you for your invaluable support, friendship, transparency and patience in preparing, conducting and assisting for this project. Without BI, it is simply impossible to have what we have today.

Dr. Hantz Bernard, Bibles International director, was the honored guest. Traveling with Dr. Bernard was a businessman from Greenville, South Carolina, Dr. Matthew Healey. Both men took part in the service. As hands of various skin colors were laid on the New Testaments, Dr. Bernard prayed a prayer of dedication. He also preached a powerful sermon, and people were motivated to use this New Testament in their own lives as well as in spreading its good news to others.

Many attendees went to a restaurant following the service, where good fellowship continued. The Zotung ceremony was the sixth BI Scripture dedication held in the first seven months of 2012. Praise God for the thousands of people around the world who are reading God’s Word in their language for the first time.

The Zotung translators at work

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The Zotung translators at work
More Workers for the Harvest

This past July five people joined Baptist Mid-Missions to be full-time missionaries with Bibles International. We are grateful to already know and love them, and we wanted you to “meet” them so that you can pray for their respective ministries.

Joel and Sarah Wagner are being sent out from Cornerstone Baptist Church in Greenville, South Carolina. Their first contact with Bibles International came when Glenn Kerr spoke at a chapel service at Northland Baptist Bible College in Dunbar, Wisconsin. Though not dating at the time, Joel and Sarah were sitting together in that service, and Sarah remembers Joel turning to her and saying, “I have to speak to Mr. Kerr.” God’s prompting was strong enough to form a firm commitment in both Joel and Sarah, and now as husband and wife, and with two graduate degrees, BI internship experience, and three young children, Joel and Sarah embark on their pre-field ministry. The Wagners will live in an Asian city (yet to be determined) where Joel will serve as a BI translation consultant.

Bethany Boston is being sent out from Bible Baptist Church in Shickshinny, Pennsylvania. Bethany’s initial contact with Bibles International also came at Northland Baptist Bible College when she took a linguistics block course taught by BI staff. In 2008 she traveled with Birch and Connie Champeon to Asia, where she assisted in literacy projects. Bethany was struck with the need for many people groups to not only have God’s Word in their language, but to be able to read it for themselves. It was on that trip that the Lord gave Bethany clear indication that He wanted to use her as a literacy consultant for Bibles International. Her gift of teaching will most certainly be an asset in that role.

Dave and Nancy Cropsey come to Bibles International with qualifications, training, experience, and above all a heart to serve God wherever He directs. In the past, the Cropseys have been involved in planting churches and Christian schools in Europe and Africa. Now they serve both continents as project coordinator for Africa and Europe at Bibles International. Both have already traveled overseas in their new role at BI and have demonstrated an ability to handle the many facets of the Bible translation ministry. The Cropseys have four grown children and 14 grandchildren, and they are sent out by Hampton Park Baptist Church in Greenville, South Carolina.
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Your God-directed help is greatly appreciated!
**Dendi | Benin, West Africa**

Nine Old Testament books have been translated and checked by consultants for the Dendi Bible project in Benin, West Africa. Of the 39 Old Testament books, the Dendi translators have completed the first draft of 23 books. In November, the team will meet with BI’s chief language consultant, Dr. Troy Manning. The goal is to check the last seven chapters of 1 Samuel and all of 2 Samuel. In the meantime, three Dendi believers have been selected by the government to be paid to teach literacy, and they are using the Dendi primer and the Dendi NT as their texts.

**Sango | Central African Republic**

In September 2012, BI personnel (Dave and Nancy Cropsey and Eric Elmer) visited the capital city of Bangui in Central African Republic (CAR) to help reorganize the Sango Bible revision project and to implement procedures that will allow our colleagues to complete the revision more quickly and efficiently by tripling the number of checking sessions using interactive video conferences with Skype technology. Chief translation consultant Glenn Kerr reports that 93% of the basic revision is now in electronic form. We look forward to feedback from a recently edited Sango Christmas storybook to determine the readiness of churches to accept the CAR government’s new orthography and vocabulary used in the revision of the Sango Bible.

**Akha | Thailand**

Ross and Cathy Hodsdon worked with the Akha translation team in Thailand in October. Ross was blessed with some pain-free days, a wonderful change from the regular discomfort his cancer has caused. All of the nationals arrived as scheduled, and the team was able to begin right on time. Each time they work together the group better understands the flow of things and is able to function more efficiently as a cohesive unit.

**Haitian Creole | Haiti**

Haitian Creole translator Daniel Telfort came to the Grand Rapids office June 4-17 and worked with chief language consultant Troy Manning on the Haitian Creole Old Testament. They were able to check the entire book of Proverbs.

**Tok Pisin | Papua New Guinea**

A group of national Baptist pastors formed the Papua New Guinea Baptist Bible Translation Association (PNGBBTA) in 2011 with the goal of developing an “improved translation version of the Tok Pisin Bible.” On October 1, 2012, PNGBBTA asked BI to help them achieve this goal. BI has adopted the Tok Pisin project and will be thoroughly examining the language and existing Pidgin Bible translations. Dr. Troy Manning is planning a two-week workshop in PNG March 4-15, 2013.

*Aje is the main translator for the Akha New Testament*