



Grasslands

From Stone Mason to Bible Translator

"I never dreamed that one day I would sit at this table with you to translate the Bible!" new coworker Feliciano recently told the Grasslands translation team. Feliciano has been a familiar figure to the team for a long time. Five years ago he used to sit across the street outside a liquor store, spending his wages as a stone mason on alcohol.

However, God changed Feliciano's life and for the past year he's been the co-pastor of a large church. He participates in a theological education by extension program, and for three months he's been helping regularly with Bible translation. The dramatic transformation came about when he almost lost his beautiful daughter and God used the near-tragedy to change his heart.

Over the years, many people repeatedly talked to Feliciano, urging him to surrender his life and his alcohol problem to Jesus. Pastor Alfonso, in whose house the translation work takes place, was one of those who talked to him. Pastor Alfonso himself, like many Grasslands pastors, was once dependent on alcohol, so he feels a special burden for people like Feliciano. Those conversations laid the foundation for the change in his life later.

One day five years ago, Feliciano's little daughter became extremely ill. The family thought she was dying. Devastated, Feliciano wished he could die instead. Some men from the church came to his home to pray for his daughter. While they prayed, Feliciano prayed too and surrendered his life completely to Jesus. His daughter recovered and Feliciano immediately lost his desire for alcohol. Now, instead of being drawn to alcohol he's drawn to Jesus.

Feliciano quickly applied himself to a thorough study of the Bible. He used the Spanish Bible, which wasn't too difficult because he'd lived in the capital city for many years. However, as a Grasslands speaker, his passion is to help make God's Word accessible to other Grasslands speakers. With his busy schedule, he's able to fit in translation work once or twice a week. His church, the largest in the Grasslands area, nurtures 16 daughter churches.

- **Praise God for His transformational work in Feliciano's life.**

1 and 2 Corinthians Approved for Publication

In answer to prayer, the SIL translation consultants checked the two epistles of 1 and 2 Corinthians. The team went over the consultants' comments and made a handful of changes to the text. They rejoice that both epistles were approved for publication.



For security reasons, pseudonyms have been used for the language name and names of individuals.

- **Location: Mexico**
- **Number of Speakers: 18,000**
- **Year Project Began: 2003**
- **Expected Completion Date: 2009**

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1 and 2 Peter Stepping Along

Translators Elizabeth and Pedro finished testing 1 Peter with Grasslands speakers and made small changes for clarity. New translator Florinda then translated the epistle back into literal Spanish and Petra, the project advisor, checked it for correctness, making comments for the SIL translation consultant. A translation consultant is needed to check the back-translation.

Elizabeth prepared questions to use with Grasslands speakers for testing 2 Peter. It's now ready for Pedro and Elizabeth to read to other Grasslands speakers. They'll use the questions to determine if the translation communicates the message correctly.

Matthew in the Mix

The team almost finished revising Elizabeth's draft of Matthew's Gospel. Petra did an exegetical check of chapters 4-16 with the team. Elizabeth and Pedro, with part-time help from translators Eduardo, Ubaldo and Feliciano, will finish the revision of Elizabeth's draft of Matthew while Petra continues the exegetical check of chapters 17-28. At the same time, the team will check the parallel passages in Mark and Luke to determine where the wording is truly parallel and where there are differences. That makes the translation process very slow.

Audio Dramas Present Answers to Life

Grasslands believers are often not aware that the Bible has answers to their problems. They tend to view Scripture as beneficial for salvation, but not for day-to-day living. This can be attributed to not having the Scriptures in a language that's easily understood.

With this in mind, the Grasslands team produced a set of five audio dramas depicting typical problems in the lives of mother-tongue speakers. Each episode gives a relevant biblical answer, showing that the Scriptures have answers to their everyday problems.

Scripture-Use Workshop

The Grasslands team plans to participate in a training workshop for promoting the use of Grasslands Scriptures. Pedro will help teach the workshop, which will be held by a national organization of mother-tongue Bible translators.

- **Pray that the consultant will be available soon to check 1 Peter.**

- **Pray that God will give the team great wisdom to accurately translate Matthew.**

- **Pray that Grasslands speakers will discover the Bible to be relevant to their lives.**

- **Pray that God will open many doors for the impact of Grasslands Scripture.**