

Aschmann Action

March 2010

How sweet are your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth!

Psalms 119:103

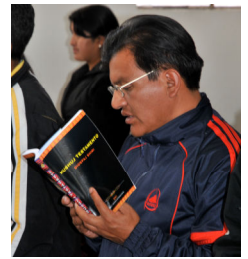
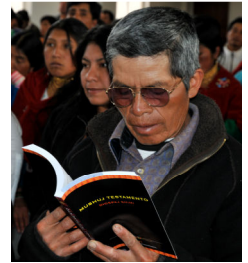
Rick: The Quichua New Testament is finished! Any Quichua speaker in the Central Highlands can now buy one and read it in his heart language, after some 5 years in which God's Word was unavailable in Quichua! The photos on these pages were taken at the dedication service held at a large Quichua church in Chimborazo province. Betty got to film the event, and interview some of the Quichua speakers who attended. It was very exciting for us and for them.

Comments from the Quichuas

Thank you! Father God has now given us this translation in our own language, one that is easy to understand, so now we won't say, "I wonder what that means?" This book, our Father's Word, will be for my children, for my grandchildren, and for my great-grandchildren. So I say to my Father God, Thank you Lord, because you gave us this New Testament. – Interview

I am so happy and joyful, and all of us who hear and read this will live by it. – Interview

I've been reading this new translation, and it's really clear and understandable! – A disciple.



"How sweet are your words..."



Daniel

(Photos by Martin Harrison)



I had the privilege of being the first person to read this translation aloud in church, while translating from English to Quichua for a visitor!

This new translation was sponsored by the International Bible Society, now called Biblica (www.biblica.com). I said in our last newsletter that it would probably be published some time in 2010, but I never expected it to happen so quick!

What happened was that God put together a great team. You already know that Daniel, a native Quichua speaker, had done the translation with help from Günter Schultze, and that Dave Strumbeck and I would be working on checking it and fine-tuning it for publication.

Because of a heart attack in October, we expected that the fourth member of the team, Günter Schultze, would no longer be able to help us. However, he made a rapid recovery, and was able to work a few hours a day. (In the last letter I made two errors related to Günter: I misspelled both his first and last names, and I added about 10 years to his age. The first was my mistake, but the second was based on what someone had told me. I apologized...)

We made a good team, in spite of being four people with fairly strong opinions: God allowed us to work together harmoniously and well. We all communicated with each other on Skype, even though we were in three different countries. Thank God for modern technology!

We each contributed in distinct ways. Daniel's translation into Quichua is excellent, clear and accurate. It sounds just like a Quichua speaker would naturally speak. Both Günter and Dave read through the whole New Testament verse by verse.

I focused on making sure that key terms like holiness, redemption and circumcision were translated consistently. Thanks for praying: God guided us well in finding good clear terms for some of these complex ideas.



Our brand new grandson Maximilian Earle Aschmann (Max) was born January 28 to our son James and his wife Christina



A drawing was held to give free copies to people of various ages. About 600 people came to the dedication.

Home Ministry Assignment

We are looking forward to seeing many of you in Nebraska, Colorado, Kansas, and Texas this summer. (We plan to see our friends and churches in the southeast the summer of 2012.)

I also focused on spelling. I have developed over the last ten years or so a computer program for spell-checking Quichua. I spell checked the entire New Testament, finding typos and catching certain punctuation and grammatical errors.

It was quite a marathon. The deadline for turning in the final text to the printer was Friday, February 12. I ended up burning the midnight oil many nights, something I usually try to avoid, and with God's help we got it done: I finished spell-checking Revelation the night of the 11th, and took my laptop to the print shop the next day to make the final corrections. Thanks for praying!

Prayer & Praise

- Please pray for the new Central Highland Quichua New Testament, that God would use it mightily in many lives. Pray also as we begin work on the Old Testament, a much longer job!
- Continue praying for the *Paltapamba* church, as they are in the process of becoming a Presbyterian church. On a recent visit with them we had 8 baptisms, including an elderly lady with cancer whom we had really not expected to have this chance!
- Continue praying for our needed monthly support. Our desire is to have most of it raised before our summer visits, so that we can relax and enjoy visiting with many of you. We are still lacking a bit over \$1,100 per month. (Please contact us if you are interested in supporting us. See below for contact info.)



Cultural Closeup

Rick: Why did I need to write a spell-checker for Quichua? Let's see if I can explain.

Quichua is a very different language from English or Spanish, and the grammatical structure of individual words is much more complicated. A typical English spell-checker program has about 100,000 words, according to one web site I consulted. This wordlist also includes different forms of the same word. For instance, in English all verbs have at least four forms, and many have five, as in the chart on the right.

speak
speaks
speaking
spoke
spoken

Quichua verbs are much more complicated than English verbs. It turns out that Quichua has billions of forms for each individual verb, because you can just keep adding one suffix after another: the longest verb in the Quichua Bible has 8 suffixes,* and valid words can have as many as 14 suffixes! This results in billions of possible combinations, because the possibilities multiply with each suffix. (I have actually calculated this.) This is just for one verb: the language actually has trillions of possible words! And Quichua speakers recognize every one of these possibilities as valid words, even if a particular word has never before been used, because they know which combinations are allowed!

For a language like this there's no way you can make an exhaustive list of all the possible words: it would be way too big. So I wrote a program that does what a Quichua speaker does: it checks to see if a word has the right suffixes in the right order, and if it does, it knows it's a valid word and adds it to the wordlist. And it works: it catches typos just like any other spell checker, about one per chapter in the New Testament, even after Günter and Dave read it through.

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* Described in our February, 2004, newsletter, which you can read on the Internet.

Our newsletters can be seen on the Internet at: www.Aschmann.net/Rick/Newsletter.