

Report of the Guibéroua New Testament Revision Mini-Dedications

By Ryan GOODLIN

The New Testament in the “bété de guibéroua” language was revised and dedicated during two “mini-dedications” in the Guibéroua village. These “mini-dedications” were held instead of one large dedication to accommodate the logistical constraints present in the translation project today.

Day 1: May 28, 2023

The first “mini-dedication” took place on Sunday, May 28, 2023 at the Holy Family Parish Catholic Church in Guibéroua as part of their celebration of Pentacost Sunday. During the sermon portion of the masse, the priest read the Pentacost account in the book of Acts and then declared that this is the same Holy Spirit that is with us today. He highlighted that the objective of Pentacost was “for each to hear and understand the Word of God”. This was certainly a timely message given that on this day the revised New Testament in guibéroua would be dedicated just after the conclusion of masse.

When masse concluded and the New Testament dedication portion of the day began, Ms Adelle N’DRI, the SIL Côte d’Ivoire member in charge of Scripture Engagement, mentioned that in just a bit, there would be a reading of the New Testament in the bété de guibéroua language at which point the crowd – several hundred people strong – began to buzz.

The presiding priest (the Père Fidele) gave a speech where he emphasized that this translation is “our bété” and not one of the other bété languages in the region. He encouraged all of the catechists, Sunday school teachers, and church leaders to be sure they get a copy of the New Testament saying “you need your Bible”.

Also present during this mini-dedication was the Regional Superintendent of the Methodist Church. He affirmed what the Père Fidele had just finished saying by adding that “this is also true for all you Protestants” – meaning that they too need their Bible. He also declared that “this is the right occasion to speak our language” at which point he noted the couple of years spent trying to organize this dedication and how amazing the fact was that it finally took place on Pentacost.

After the Superintendent finished speaking, Ryan GOODLIN, a member of SIL Côte d’Ivoire, spoke on behalf of the direction during which time he recounted some of the project’s long history – first the work to publish the first translation in the “bété de guibéroua” language in 1982, and then the work starting in 2008 to revise the New Testament. By God’s grace, two of the original translators for the first publication worked on the revision and one of them was event present at the dedication! Ryan emphasized the fact that this dedication did not mark the end of the work, but only a new chapter and he stressed the importance of using and reading this translation in order to actually see lives transformed by God’s Word.

Ms Adelle NDRI then spoke for SIL on the importance of engaging with the Scripture and gave some details about how to do that. She asked the choir to sing a song in bété de guibéroua and the song they picked sang about inviting “Jesus come to chase away the demons” – an important topic in this area of steeped in animism.

All of the church leaders that were present were then invited to pray over the unopened boxes of New Testaments in order to officially dedicate them and make them available for use. A young girl then carried around a New Testament and presented it to everyone in the crowd in order to show the generational nature of the work of using and engaging with God’s Word in the local language.

The project translator in attendance, Mr. Marcel GOGUOUAHI (who worked on the original and revised versions) read the account of Pentacost from the guibéroua New Testament. The crowd sat still as they listened, like those on the original day of Pentacost, to God's Word in their own language. The dedication ended with people coming to the sales table to buy their own copy of the New Testament – often with a copy of the literacy guides to help them learn to read in their own language too.

Day 2: May 29, 2023

The second “mini-dedication” took place on May 29, 2023, at an evangelical church in guibéroua and along those in attendance were about 25 pastors and church leaders from different local congregations and denominations. In all, this dedication was much smaller than the previous day's but there was a good representation of different expressions of the local church. The ceremony opened with several songs performed by a musical group and of course dancing.

When the speeches started, the first was given by the president of the local pastor's collective who declared that “God's people are here”. He actually heard about SIL Côte d'Ivoire through being contacted to help organize the dedication and he expressed his gratitude in knowing the work that SIL has done and continues to do, and he is excited to continue working with SIL so that “those who cannot preach or sing in French can do so in bété”.

After this, Ryan GOODLIN, with SIL, gave his same speech from the previous day's dedication and was then followed by Ms Adelle N'DRI. She again asked for the musical group to perform a song in the local language and they selected a song called “Thank you Lord” to express their gratitude for the ceremony taking place. Adelle then spoke and pointed out that the language “bété de guibéroua is a language that will be spoken in heaven because guibéroua people will be there”. The crowd erupted in applause at this! Adelle then made the comparison of those who have God's Word in their language being able to share it with those who have none to that of people with food sharing with those who have none – a culturally expected practice in this part of West Africa. The Word of God is food for our souls she pointed out. Finally, Adelle informed everyone that audio recordings have already been recorded by Faith Comes by Hearing and those are being finished in the production studio and should be available soon. Everyone loved hearing about this possibility of listening to Scripture in their language!

Again, Mr GOGUOUAHI, one of the original translators who also worked on the revision, was invited to read the Pentacost account from the guibéroua New Testament and those in attendance sat and joyously listened. Also, like in the dedication the previous day, those church leaders in attendance surrounded the boxes of New Testaments and prayed over them. A young guibéroua girl and boy were then selected and they presented the Scriptures to the crowd – some of whom reached out and snatched the New Testament so they could look at it for themselves! At this point, the other translator who worked on the project throughout its long history, Mr. Daniel GBEHIRI, was called forward and honored for his work and was presented a copy of the New Testament by the president on the pastor's collective.

[Link to photos](#)