

God of Miracles

Our WA president arrived in Myanmar three days before the KhawngTu MAST workshop ended. He asked how it was going and my response was, “barring a miracle, they will not finish the Old Testament.”

Ten days earlier 117 KhawngTu Christian from fourteen remote villages had arrived in Yangon. They came



from 49 local churches representing 22 denominations. Many had traveled four or five days (on foot, by river boat, motorcycle, truck, and bus, to get to this workshop. In an assessment of their skills, we discovered that one third of them could not read and write their own language. The decision had been made by most of the remote language groups to use Roman characters to write their

language, but most of them do not have any books written in their language. The only practice they may have had with Roman characters would have been with trying to read English. Of these 117 participants, only a handful knew how to type, and many were afraid of using a computer.

The KhawngTu people had been represented at the first MAST workshop in February 2015. Members of the translation committee also had attended a quality checking workshop, to learn principles and practices for checking the Scripture they had translated. It was at that workshop they stated they could gather 100 or more people, and they requested a MAST workshop to attempt to complete translation of the entire Bible into their language.

Twenty-five volunteers from the U.S. joined fourteen national volunteers for two days of orientation. After



those two days, more KhawngTu people arrived and we found that the translation committee had drafted most the New Testament, but none was typed. Some of the KhawngTu volunteers began typing the New Testament. Between the dinner break at 4:30 and evening session at 6:30, we would print

what had been typed and organize it into sections so that it could be checked in the evening by the fourteen groups we had designated. There were seven groups with four to six pastors each, and seven groups with eight to ten church/community members. These are the two types of groups needed to check translated Scripture to “Level 2” status.



During the day, the KhawngTu people were divided into 27 groups of four to five people (plus one facilitator) per group. They were grouped based on an assessment of six different skills. Each group was assigned several chapters of a different Old Testament book, and each group member was given a different chapter (or section) to translate. Given that

many could not read or write KhawngTu, and very few could type, progress was slow. Some of the American volunteers began typing what their groups were translating (adding an extra spelling and grammar check by the KhawngTu people).



Nearing the end of the second week, the New Testament had been typed and checked to Level 2. We began printing 130 copies of New Testament books as they were checked, and corrections were typed. The last of the New Testament books was printed and checked for completeness shortly after midnight on Thursday. 130 copies of the New Testament were assembled, stapled and bound by about 2:30 Friday

morning. The completed New Testaments were distributed during an exciting and enthusiastic celebration on Friday afternoon.

The KhawngTu people were able to complete translation of the first draft of the Old Testament. They continued to work until late Friday night and several people continued to type until Saturday night. They completed an electronic copy of the KhawngTu Old Testament. Work was still necessary to get everything printed and bound for distribution for further checking and editing, but God indeed performed a miracle. The KhawngTu people were able to translate the Old Testament, check the New Testament, and each translator was able to take home a printed copy of the New Testament. Praise the Lord!

