

Chaldean Chronicles

God's Word in the language of their hearts

February 10, 2009

WHO ARE THE CHALDEANS?

Q: Are the Chaldean people today the same as the Chaldeans in the Bible?

A: There is no direct line of succession that can be traced from the ancient Chaldeans to the Chaldeans of today. Modern Chaldeans did not begin to use the name "Chaldean" until the 16th century when they split from the Church of the East and joined with the Roman Catholic Church. The remaining members of the Church of the East call themselves "Assyrians." Both groups claim to be heirs of the ancient civilizations of Mesopotamia, but are probably ethnically mixed with other groups in the area who became Christians, such as the Jews.

Q: What is the Church of the East? Where did it come from?

A: According to its own tradition, the Church of the East was founded in the first century. One tradition credits the work of Addai, one of the seventy-two disciples sent out by Jesus, while another tradition credits the apostle Thomas. The church was centered in parts of what is now Syria, Iraq, Iran, and Turkey. The Church of the East split with the Roman Church in the fifth century when Nestorius was condemned as a heretic by Rome because of his teachings about the two natures of Christ. The Church of the East was known as the Nestorian Church for many centuries, but many modern historians question whether Nestorius or the Church of the East actually believed the heresy Nestorius was accused of.

Q: What happened to the Church of the East after that?

A: During the 6th to 8th centuries, the Church of the East expanded greatly throughout Asia. Their missionaries established congregations in Mongolia, India, and many places in China. These far-eastern churches continued for several hundred years until organized persecution eventually stamped them out.

Late in the 14th century, the Timurid empire arose in central Asia under Timur (or Tamerlane). Timur was a Muslim, and destroyed the Church of the East in all of the areas he conquered. Thousands of Christians were killed, and the Church never recovered from this period.

CHALDEAN TRANSLATION PROGRESS

Salim continues to work hard on drafting the Old Testament into Chaldean. He has now finished Deuteronomy and is working on Leviticus. (We do not necessarily work on the books in order, but try and work on the easier ones first).

OLD TESTAMENT FOR KONO!

Praise God with us! Komba Ngekia, the Kono man who finished translating the New Testament into Kono, recently told us that the United Bible Societies has approved the project to translate the Old Testament into the Kono language.

Please remember Komba in your prayers. He is now responsible for both the literacy work in Kono, and for this new translation project. As he said in his email, "Please keep praying for me as people keep increasing their expectations of me." Please pray that God will give him wisdom and strength, and pray that God will move many other Konos to be involved in this work.

PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

It hardly seems possible that we have served with Lutheran Bible Translators (LBT) for more than 25 years. In order for other language groups to benefit from those years of experience, LBT is giving me (Jim) the opportunity to pursue a Doctor of Ministry degree. This will allow me to serve as a consultant (probably in Africa) in the future. I have just been accepted into the Doctor of Ministry program at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary. I will be attending there because they have a specialized track in Bible translation, and their program allows me to study at home in Michigan.

This is a part-time degree program, so I will continue to work with the Chaldean project while I am studying. I will begin in 2010, and hope to finish in 2012.

THANK YOU!

Thank you for your partnership with us in making God's Word accessible to the Chaldean people. Your prayers and generous gifts make it possible for this to happen.

Our current level of financial support is not covering our budgeted needs, so we are trying to develop partnerships with new congregations and groups. We have been busy speaking in Michigan the past few months. In March, I (Jim) will travel to Minnesota and will be speaking to groups there about our ministry (contact us for a list of places I will be).

If you would like us to come and speak to your church, group, or school, please contact us, and we will be happy to arrange it.

ADDRESSES

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