

Spanish Bible translation released

By Kenneth D. MacHarg

The International Bible Society, publishers of the popular New International Version that accounts for 53 percent of English Bible sales, has released the complete Nueva Version Internacional (NVI) in Spanish. Heading up a translation team of 20 Latin American biblical scholars was Dr. Luciano Jaramillo.

Pulse: Is this Bible a translation from the NIV?

LJ: No, we followed our own pathway. It is a brand new translation from the original text. The Spanish is fresh Spanish, contemporary Spanish. We hope it will be the Bible for the third millenium.

Pulse: Would it be fair to compare the NVI and the traditional Reina Valera Spanish translations with the NIV and King James translations in English?

LJ: Yes, in some ways. The traditional, very well accepted and loved translation for evangelicals in Spanish is the Reina Valera. It is more than four hundred years old and was first printed in Europe in 1569. The United Bible Society and others have revised it, the last time in 1995.

Pulse: There are a number of Spanish translations. What makes this one distinct?

LJ: In the history of the Spanish language there are 48-50 different translations of the Bible. Most of them are out of print and out of circulation. There are about 15 translations still in use today. Most of them were done by the Roman Catholic church. Only two or three of them were sponsored by evangelicals Protestants.

The NVI has different qualities that distinguish it from other translations. First, it is a brand new translation directly from the original languages, Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek. The biblical sciences--linguistics, biblical archeology, and semantics--have improved tremendously in the last century. We have the richness of hundreds and thousands of new manuscripts that have given biblical scholars the opportunity to develop a very accurate text.

Second, the Spanish language has changed a lot. Many expressions of the old translations are not very modern. We are trying to give a translation for the people of today. We think this new NVI will be the Bible for the present and the future, valuable for evangelization for the end of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st century.

Even though we are trying to speak today's language, contemporary Spanish, we want to keep the flavor, the dignity, the beauty of the biblical language. The Bible has to sound and look like a Bible. The language of the Bible is very majestic. This is important for worship and preaching.

Pulse: How long did it take to translate the NVI?

LJ: Usually a translation of the Bible takes 15 to 20 years. This one was done in a little more than 10 years. The reason (for the speed) is that computer tools help us a lot.

Pulse: What was the most difficult part?

LJ: There are books of the Bible that are more difficult to translate than others. For example, the books of the prophets are difficult. The most difficult part was the harmonization of the text between the New Testament and the Old Testament. That took us almost a year. You have a lot of Old Testament texts in the New Testament. Most of those quotations, even those quoted by Jesus, sometimes are not literal quotations. They left out a few words, and added others or just quoted half of the verse. The same thing happens in the harmonization of some historical books in the Old Testament.

Another difficult task was the rendition of the names such as geographical or proper personal names. Among all of the Bibles in Spanish there is not one that has the same names, inscribed the same way. Some follow the transliteration of the name from the original language, while others just follow the spelling of the original language.

Jaramillo said that he foresees several editions of the new Bible being published, including a Spanish-English edition as is now available with the New Testament.

Spanish Bible translation released, *World Pulse*, March 16, 1999