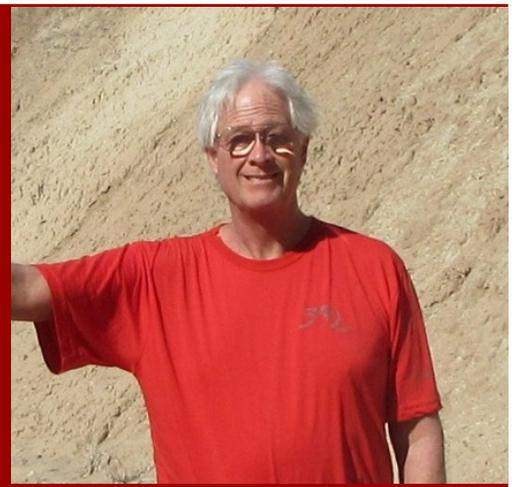# *Bits from Bill*

Using Information Technology to Help Bring the Word of God to the Indigenous Peoples of Brazil

December, 2022



### *Jesus' Coming*

This is the time of year when we celebrate the first coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Born in a stable in Bethlehem, God Incarnate grew up, lived a sinless life, and died to pay the price for our sins. Then He rose from the dead and ascended into Heaven.

Someday, He will return.

Many people believe this will happen soon. Others believe that He will probably tarry a while longer while He finishes building His Church. But whether soon, or not for hundreds—or even a thousand—years, we can rest assured of one thing: He *will* return. The current order of things will not last forever. Someday, Jesus will reign on His Throne, and then the world will finally experience true peace and righteousness.

So join me in giving thanks for Jesus' first coming, and in looking forward to when He returns.

### *On-line Learning*

On-line learning has become quite the thing. Even without a bug going around and scaring people, it is still a useful tool. It gives access to many opportunities for study that would otherwise be difficult to obtain. On-line learning comes in many forms, from simple personal research and reading, all the way to formal courses.

A few months ago, the Courses department at ALEM asked me to set up an on-line learning system, using a tool called Moodle. Moodle is open-source, and therefore free, which is a definite plus. It is also widely used, which is a strong recommendation in its favor.

At the time, the available version was not compatible with the Linux server that I set up to host it. However, a compatible version came out at the end of November, and I was able to download it. After some initial hiccups, I was able to install it and do the basic configuration.

Once I got it working, and logged in, I discovered that Moodle is quite complex! This is actually a good thing, because it also means that it is very versatile. At this point, I am still learning how the system works. The Courses department will not need this tool until some time next year, so I have time to go through the learning curve. After that, I will need to teach the department personnel how to use it.

Please give thanks for this tool, and pray for me during this time of learning how to use it.
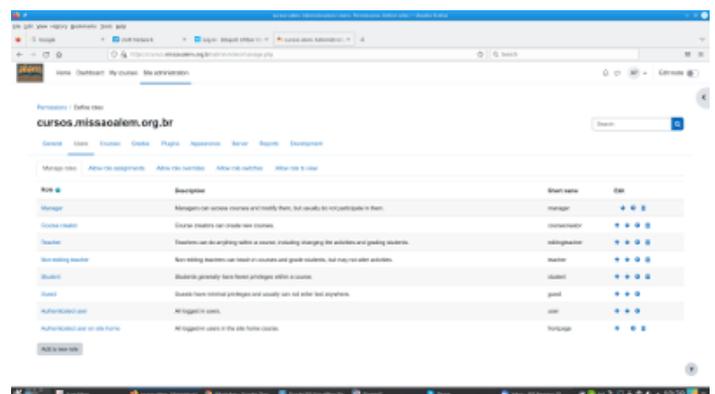
### *Adapting a Translation*

As I mentioned in my last Prayer & Praise Update, I had the privilege of helping an indigenous translator here in Brazil get started with an adaptation project. His people live in both Brazil and Peru, and the entire Bible has already been translated into his language in Peru. The project is to take the Peruvian translation and adapt it to communicate to his people here in Brazil.

Simple, right?

Well, not exactly. While the indigenous language remains the same, the influences on it are different. Take Biblical names, for example. They are not native to any indigenous language, but are brought in from the national language instead. The national language of Peru is Spanish, while here in Brazil, it is Portuguese. In addition, there are differences in orthography. In each country, the writing system used in indigenous languages is based on the national language, and Spanish and Portuguese use diacritics in different ways.

Many of these issues can be handled through general search and replace functions. However, that is only a good beginning. Afterward, the translator will need to go over the entire text from beginning to end, to make sure that nothing was missed—and to catch other issues that cannot be handled *en masse*. So, while doing an adaptation is much faster than doing a translation from scratch, it still takes time in order to do it right.

And it is essential that the adaptation be done right, because if God's word is to speak to people's hearts, then it must speak clearly and understandably. Please join me in praying that this adaptation would be properly done.



*Screenshot of Part of Moodle Configuration*

## Praise

- That Jesus came, and that someday He *will* come again.
- For on-line learning tools such as Moodle, which expand opportunities for study.
- For the already-existing indigenous Bible translation in Peru, which can be adapted for use by the same ethnic group in Brazil.

## Prayer

- That all would hear the Good News about Jesus' first coming—and be ready for His return.
- For me and the Courses department as we work to make Moodle a practical learning tool.
- That the adaptation of the indigenous Bible from Peru would be done in a way that faithfully and clearly transmits God's message.

May the new year bring many blessings, and may it bring you closer to the Lord,

Bill

*For if the trumpet makes an uncertain sound, who will prepare for battle?*

**I Corinthians 14:8**

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