

St James News: Thought for the day – Monday 21st September 2020

Slow Growing Fruit – Rev John Marshall

Church Mission Society - Slow growing fruit

I have come back to the CMS prayer diary.

Andrew and Maria Leake, advocating for justice for marginalised indigenous communities in land and environmental conflicts in Argentina.

Their calling is to Bible translation and environmental advocacy and action, results only became clear over long periods of time. They looked back over 30 years of service with Tear fund, then South American Missionary Society, CMS and more recently Compassion International, it is abundantly clear that the fruits of their service, combined with that of many other people and organisations, tend to come over the long haul.

With Tear fund they spent 4 years in Honduras, seeking to establish and develop a programme that would enable indigenous communities to secure legal rights to their ancestral lands and forests. Nothing was acquired then; but unbeknown to them and 23 years later, those claims they helped start resulted in the Honduran State ceding communal land titles to more than 10,000 square kilometres of jungle covered territory. Some of their work contributed to the creation of the Patuca National Park, something they had not considered in their wildest dreams.

Bible translation is another of those tasks that requires a commitment to the long term. Andrew's grandfather started to translate portions of the Bible into Toba in the late 1930s. Here again, these efforts, with support from SAMS and CMS, have yielded significant fruits only after decades of effort. The New Testament has been translated into Toba and Chorote, and the whole Bible into Wichi. Interestingly the work around these tasks, which in the case of the Toba translation of the Old Testament are still ongoing, has also served to strengthen the recognition of indigenous languages and cultural identity.

Let us pray for Andrew and Maria's work and give thanks for all those who have worked for justice; and those who have translated the Bible.