

Assemblies of God Postpones Decision on Wycliffe Partnership

The Assemblies of God is postponing its decision on whether to continue its partnership with Wycliffe Bible Translators until it receives recommendations from a review panel appointed by the World Evangelical Alliance.

The Assemblies of God World Missions Executive committee initially set a May 15 deadline to determine whether it would continue partnering with Wycliffe. According to AG News, the dispute came after the Bible translating organization and its affiliate Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL) announced that in an effort to make Scripture more easily understood by Muslims, it would in some instances use other terms for "Father," "Son" and "Son of God."

AGWM openly agreed with Wycliffe's decision and met with their representatives twice in hopes of resolving the issue. It has postponed its decision with the creation of the WEA review panel.

"If, after the WEA panel review is complete, Wycliffe's position concerning familial language is compatible with AGWM's," states AGWM Executive Director Greg Mundis, "we will gratefully continue what has been a long-standing and effective partnership." However, Mundis emphasizes that AGWM's position on using the terms "Father," "Son" and "Son of God" will not change.

"We're grateful to the Assemblies of God for waiting with us while the independent panel convened by the World Evangelical Alliance reviews our translation practices and makes its recommendations," a Wycliffe spokesperson told Charisma News Friday.

AG states its position in a paper titled "The Necessity for Retaining Father and Son Terminology in Scripture Translations for Muslims."

"Muslims, due to false teachings from their holy book the Quran, reject Jesus as the 'Son of God,'" the paper states. "Proponents of specialized 'translations' argue that the phrase 'Son of God' and the related terms of 'Son' and 'Father' must not be literally translated in the Bible, since to do so conveys incorrect and inaccurate meaning to Muslim readers."

Wycliffe and SIL denied the claims in statements earlier this year.

"Wycliffe personnel are committed to working alongside language communities and other partners to translate God's Word with great care from the original languages of Scripture into the languages of the world's people so that all may know the redeeming love and glory of God—Father, Son and Holy Spirit," the statement read.

An internal SIL statement said: "SIL does not support the removal of the divine familial terms, 'Son of God' or 'God the Father' but rather requires that Scripture translation must communicate clear understanding of these terms."

Still, Wycliffe put the controversial projects on hold pending the WEA panel's recommendations as an outcome of the investigation.

"We have given much thought and prayer in this process, and we continue to trust the Lord for a mutually acceptable resolution with Wycliffe," Mundis said.

The AG currently has 34 missionaries working with Wycliffe. AGWM said those missionaries' status will remain unchanged for the time being, but no new missionaries will be assigned to Wycliffe "unless and until its position concerning Biblical

terminology is finally believed to be compatible with that of AGWM.”