

Is the End Near? Wycliffe Reports 2,000-Plus Bible Translation Projects Underway

Wycliffe Bible Translators announced new statistics illustrating the dramatic progress in Bible translation efforts around the world. There are now 2,075 Scripture translation projects in progress and just 1,967 languages still in need for a translation project to begin.

Wycliffe, along with partners and affiliated organizations like The Seed Company and SIL International, exists to eradicate Bible poverty so that all language communities will have the opportunity to be transformed by God's Word and ultimately reflect God's glory. Toward that end, they are committed not only to beginning new projects, but to completing the ones underway, engaging people with the Scriptures, and meeting holistic needs of communities with materials in their mother tongues.

"These statistics are very important in showing progress toward our goal of seeing a Bible translation in progress in every language community needing it by 2025," said Bob Creson, president of Wycliffe USA. "They demonstrate, not only to ourselves, but to those who invest in us, and those we invite to join us, that what we are doing is making a difference in the pursuit of our God-given mission."

An estimated 5.4 billion people now have access to at least some of the Bible in their first language. The languages that may have a need for Bible translation to begin represent an estimated 209 million people worldwide. The 1,967 languages still in need of a Bible translation represent less than 29 percent of the estimated 6,800 languages spoken around the world.

“Every generation before us has seen the numbers increasing as more and more languages were discovered, and more translation needs were verified,” Creson said. “Now that trend has been reversed.”

New technologies and strategies have helped expedite the process of translation—which often involves first working in partnership with local communities to create a written form of the language. By using new creative approaches (team-based approaches that employ computer and satellite technology), Wycliffe, along with partners, has been able to translate the Bible more efficiently.

The majority of the remaining translation needs represent minority languages—relatively small people groups, many of which struggle to maintain their identity in the shadow of majority cultures. Translation projects lead to better health, economic growth, the acquisition of marketable skills and the preservation of unique cultures via written history. More importantly, Bible translation brings people closer to God Himself—the One who transforms their hearts.