

Mart Green Partners With Wycliffe, Biblica, Bible Society on Digital Bible Library

The world's three major **Bible ministries**, working alongside leading Christian philanthropists, announced Thursday the launch of Every Tribe Every Nation (ETEN), a ministry alliance that will open Bible access for more than 6 billion people across the globe.

Leveraging the leading-edge technologies of **The Digital Bible Library**, hundreds of Scripture translations are currently available. More than 1,000 additional language translations will be ready for digital deployment in the next year and will reach over 2,000 in the next five years.

More than 1.2 billion people worldwide have no access to the Bible in their heart language and there are currently 2,000 languages that have no Scripture translation efforts underway. These sobering statistics shine a light on the reality of "Bible poverty" and the tremendous need to develop innovative new approaches to translation, distribution and evangelism. It is in response to this need, and with the aim of eradicating Bible poverty, ETEN is now launched.

Biblica, **Wycliffe Bible Translators** USA and American Bible Society—which, together with their international partners, account for 90 percent of the Bible translations in the world—formed ETEN to catapult Bible ministry into a new digital age.

The centerpiece of ETEN's effort is the mobilization of The Digital Bible Library, operated by the United Bible Societies, which will serve as the world's definitive digital Scripture

repository. Through The Digital Bible Library, Scripture texts are standardized, digitized, centralized and accredited. By drawing texts into one easy-to-access location, The Digital Bible Library will make Scriptures readily accessible to Christian organizations, ministries and missionaries, enabling them to share God's Word with those they serve in languages and formats these communities can engage. The Digital Bible Library will provide licensees the ability to access content from their mobile devices in a variety of formats, including audio, video, apps, websites, and print on demand.

"The Digital Bible Library will unleash God's Word for millions of believers, making it accessible on a multitude of digital platforms," Wycliffe President and CEO Bob Creson. "We invite other Scripture text ministries to join us at Wycliffe along with our friends at Biblica and American Bible Society in making their texts available through The Digital Bible Library so that access and engagement with God's Word can increase exponentially. Just as Gutenberg's printing press ushered in a whole new era for Bible distribution in the 1400s, Every Tribe Every Nation is on the cusp of another 'Gutenberg moment.'"

R. Lamar Vest, president and CEO of the **American Bible Society**, added: "There is a *kairos* moment when the activities of Scripture engagement and the breakthrough in technology meet for an extraordinary result. For all the work of our 200 years of Bible Society mission, I believe we are about to see the history of Bible outreach rewritten."

The Digital Bible Library offers a universal format for ease of publishing, ministry access and digital rights management, while employing a technology platform that combines usability, security, quality control and standardization. ETEN is an alliance focused on leveraging the resources of its ministry partners to enable access to texts for current and future frontline ministries around the globe. ETEN's funds will directly support projects that complete language translations

and digitize Scripture, further accelerating access to God's Word for millions of people.

"Every Tribe Every Nation is committed to leading the effort to quickly and efficiently add more Scripture texts to The Digital Bible Library so that ministries around the world can access the Bible for their kingdom work," said Doug Lockhart, president and CEO of **Biblica**. "This library is the key to unleashing ministry opportunities from South America to Asia. Because of the rapid expansion of the Web, social networks and mobile technology, more opportunities for spreading God's Word arise every month. We must work quickly to take advantage of these new 'roads' into places where people desperately need more than just food and water. They need to hear the Words of Life."

One of the first Digital Bible Library "cardholders" is YouVersion, a Bible app that has been downloaded onto nearly 70 million devices. Since the app's 2008 launch, users have spent more than 31 billion minutes reading the Bible on YouVersion.

"The biggest challenge YouVersion has faced to date has been gaining quick and efficient access to translations," said **Bobby Gruenewald**, founder of YouVersion. "What used to take a significant amount of effort and time, often several months, now can be accomplished in a matter of minutes as a result of having access to The Digital Bible Library to pull text from."

"**YouVersion** is just one example of an organization benefitting from the work of Every Tribe Every Nation as part of our work to increase Bible access and engagement for today's generation," he added.

Another early benefactor of The Digital Bible Library is BibleSearch (), which draws most of its 235 translations from the library for free display on its dedicated website.

The vision for ETEN was first cast by Oklahoma City,

businessman and philanthropist, Mart Green. Green's family owns retailer **Hobby Lobby**, and Green is the founder of Mardel Christian and Educational Supply, a 35-store chain.

Green's global travels showed him the void that exists in the areas of Bible translation and engagement, and highlighted the opportunity to leverage today's technology to meet these needs. He also recognized that the challenge was too great for any single person or organization to address. As a result, he called on the leading Bible ministries to join him in a first-of-its-kind collaborative effort with a unified mission: to provide God's Word in everyone's heart language in a format that they can engage with so their lives may be transformed.

"God put the issue of Bible poverty on my heart in a significant way, and He opened many doors to make this ministry alliance a reality," said Green. "Prior to the formation of Every Tribe Every Nation, Bible ministries were often working in silos. While they were making important progress in their individual efforts, it was clear that an opportunity existed for greater collaboration to more rapidly advance their individual efforts.

"The goal of Every Tribe Every Nation is to mobilize the necessary leadership and financial resources across our alliance partners so that by 2033, every tribe and every nation in the world has access to God's Word in their heart language," he concluded.