

New Bible Translation Method Cuts Time ... By Decades!

In South Asia, there is a community desperately in want for translations of the Bible. Luckily, Wycliffe Associations came to their rescue with a new test program to translate the Bible faster than ever.

Through the recently developed program referred to as MAST (Mobilized Assistance Supporting Translation), Wycliffe Associates has been able to help meet the needs of Christians where translations of the Bible are lacking.

MAST took form by using a different type of training approach to Bible translations combined with crowd sourcing. This method brought together the village's local Christians to bring about a translation of the New Testament in their native language. The translation portion took two weeks!

After word got out about the speedy translation, MAST took off like wildfire. Now, over 200 language communities are seeking Wycliffe Associates assistance in translating the New Testament. This wildfire, however, is not in danger of being extinguished as more and more communities find out about MAST.

"We're looking toward next year to seeing at least 300 new translations started. I mean, if that number itself doesn't sound crazy enough, the high side could be as many as 500 new translation starts next year," says Wycliffe Associations President and CEO Bruce Smith.

However, many outside the MAST program have expressed concern about the accuracy of these translations. Fortunately, the Bible translations' quality matters greatly to all involved.

"The great thing is that these Christian communities care as much about the quality of Bible translation as we do. So

they're engaging their pastors, they're engaging their denominational leaders, they're engaging their church networks, they're engaging professors from seminaries, they're engaging mature Christians from their communities as well as new Christians and merchants and people that represent the cross section of their community that will be receiving God's Word for the first time."

Not only has MAST accelerated the Bible translating process, it has created a community to check the translations. "On a given day, any number of translators, their individual goal would be to translate about 35 verses each in a single day. And then the community itself engages in the checking process right after the drafting occurs. So again, there [are] no delays in the process like we were describing earlier, and this is part of what has gotten Scripture to these communities at a much faster pace than previously."

Through this process, Smith feels assured the translations coming out of MAST are of good quality.

"This has always been the way quality has been assured by engaging a broad number of people with a range of experience in knowing what Scripture says and how to use Scripture. And so we're really duplicating that same process but in a much shorter period of time by getting people focused on working together during a workshop setting during a couple weeks, or during a couple months, during a year." Furthermore, Smith says the translations go through a final translation check by experienced Bible translation consultants.

Wycliffe Associations looks ahead to a busy next 12 months. As they connect more with these communities who lack Bible translations, Wycliffe Associations plans to continue their work using the MAST program. It has especially proven to be an encouragement and help to others who have lost their momentum in the translation process.

For those looking to get involved, please consider praying for those who are part of the Bible translation process, especially when learning of disheartening news stories. "Bible translations are often behind the scenes ... to bring God's Word to those circumstances."