

State of the Bible 2022



**Wyc/iffe
Bib/e
Trans/ators**

**Record-breaking year
for Bible translation**

The work of Bible translation is accelerating!

It's been another year of remarkable progress in Bible translation activity, as revealed in the annual Bible translation statistics (released 30 September). In fact, many areas of the work have seen significant acceleration.

We see the favour and hand of God on translation projects and teams, enabling them to help create a world where everyone can know Jesus through the Bible.

The number of language programmes that Bible translation teams are working on has seen its biggest leap on record, with new programmes starting at a rate of one per day.

Also, Bibles and New Testaments have been launched at a rate of almost one per week.

There is so much to be thankful for and be encouraged by.

- | This year has seen the largest increase on record of languages where work has commenced, representing a new language programme starting for every day of the year...
- | More people have God's word in their language...
- | More languages have a Bible than ever before...
- | More languages have a New Testament than ever before...

All this means that **God's word is available to millions of people in their own languages for the first time.**

It also means more individuals and communities are being transformed by the life-changing message of Jesus.

A Tennessean man avidly reads his newly launched New Testament.

The Tennessean New Testament was launched in South Sudan on 23 January 2022.

Bible and New Testament launches are exciting and watershed moments for the people who speak the language, but it is crucial to ensure that post-launch they are read and used, and become an integral part of community and church life.



724 languages have a full Bible

1,617 languages have a complete New Testament



Highlights

Highlights from this past year include:

- | There has been the largest increase on record in one year of **367 languages where work has begun**. That's a massive 13% increase in one year – representing a new programme being started every day!
- | There has also been the biggest increase on record of **52 languages with portions of Scripture** available for the first time.
- | A **newly translated Bible or New Testament** has been launched for almost every week of the year.
- | Add portions of Scripture to this, and **Scripture has been published in a new language at a rate of almost two per week**.
- | The number of languages with a **complete Bible** has risen by 7 to **724** (from 717 last year).
- | The number of languages with a **complete New Testament** has risen by 35 to **1,617** (from 1,582 last year).
- | A further **1,248** languages have **portions of the Bible** translated (up 52 from 1,196 last year).

* When a Bible is launched its corresponding New Testament is no longer included in the count of available New Testaments. In this past year 7 Bibles were launched; the count of available New Testaments has risen by 35 to 1,617 but actually 42 (35 + 7) New Testaments have been launched.

All this in the context of there being **7,388 languages** in active use today.

The increase in translated Bibles and New Testaments means a further 49 languages now have the Bible or New Testament in their language for the first time in 2022!*



'When I read God's word in my own language, I don't need a lot of extra explanation. I understand it better in my language than I do in French, even though I am educated.'

Djerambeté Samuel, a Migaami Christian

The Migaama New Testament was launched in Chad in December 2021.



1,248 languages have some portions of the Bible

3,266 languages have work in progress

That means many millions of people have begun reading these life-transforming books in their language for the first time in this past year.

As one woman in Asia said recently, on hearing the Lord's Prayer being read in her own language for the first time:

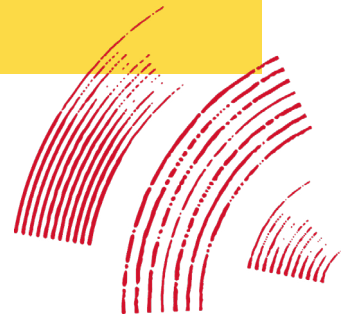
'I have heard this prayer many times before in the national language, but this is the first time I heard it in my own language. For the first time, I feel I'm speaking to my Father.'

That's the sort of difference it makes to have God's word in your own language... and the reason that Bible translators do the work they do.

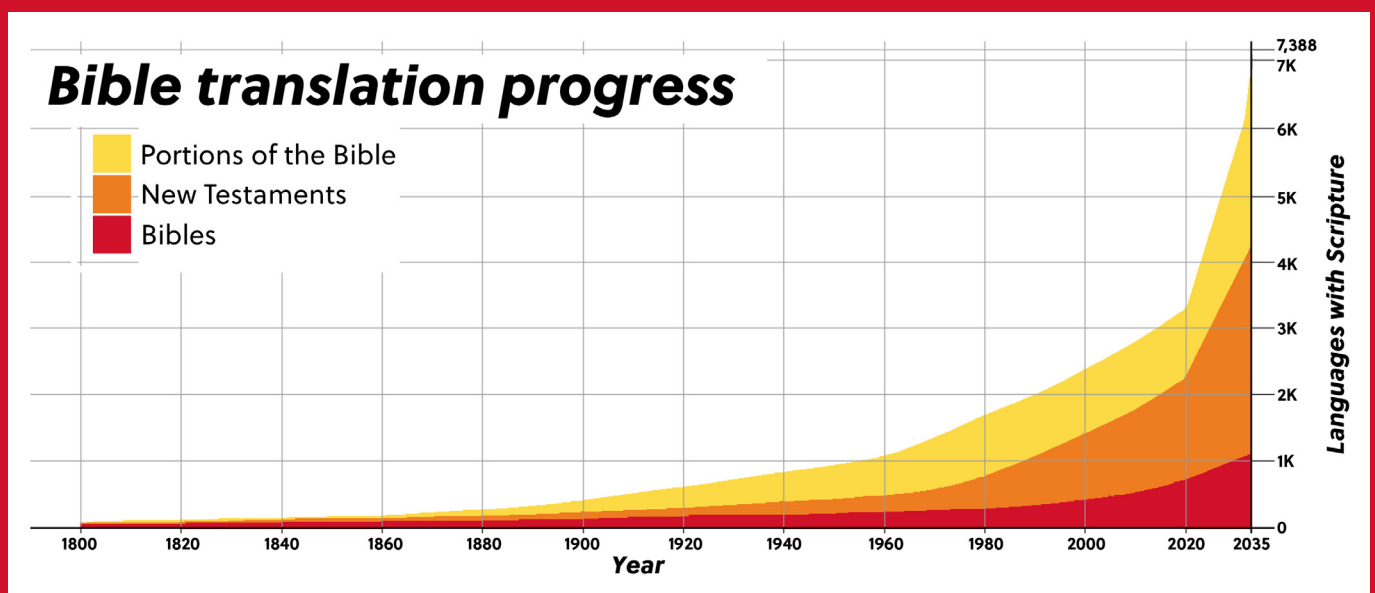
James Poole, Executive Director of Wycliffe, says: 'Yet again we are so thankful to God for all he has done this year.'

'During these past 12 months, we have seen the highest increases on record in terms of new translation work starting, meaning people will begin to read God's word in their language.'

'This year, a Bible, a New Testament or a significant portion of the Scriptures has been made available in over 100 languages, which means that the people who speak these languages now have access to the transforming word of God in their language for the first time.'



The accelerating curve of Bible translation work



Building a head of steam

We rejoice with the people who now have the Bible or New Testament in their language, celebrating that they can read the Scriptures and fully understand them. Just think what a transformation that will bring to their communities!

But just as exciting is the increase in the number of languages that have portions of Scripture or where active translation work has begun. In 2022, **52 people groups** have some portions of Scripture in their language for the first time. At the same time, work has begun in **367 languages**. Both these figures are records for one year, and are indicative of the acceleration that is happening.

The number of new Bible translations in progress is on a rapidly increasing curve, meaning that in future years we will see the benefit as greater and greater numbers of New Testaments and Bibles are launched each year.

James comments: 'With 1 in 5 people worldwide still waiting for the Bible in their language, we see an urgent need to make God's word available.'

'Three-quarters of global Bible translation activity is linked to Wycliffe and our partner organisations. Thanks to our supporters, this year we have started work in more languages than in any previous year. This is all part of the increasing acceleration that is happening – and that will bear much fruit in the future. The day when almost all people have the Bible in their own language is getting closer.'



'He preaches in our language. People sit up and listen when he preaches. We young people are tired of going to church and not understanding. When he preaches we understand!'

A young man commenting on a preacher using the Fanamaket Scriptures

The Fanamaket New Testament was launched in Papua New Guinea in November 2021.

367 languages where work has begun

13% increase – a new programme for every day of the year





'Today, God has made a New Covenant with the Ngbugu people! Zacchaeus had to climb a tree to catch sight of Jesus – we don't! You can find him right here, in the pages of this book. He has come to your house today.'
Blaise de Pascale Yankombona, a Ngbugu Christian

The Ngbugu New Testament was launched in the Central African Republic in February 2022.

- | Increasing number of local translators – ie people from the language group – being trained, equipped and released into Bible translation.
- | The recognition by a number of other mission agencies that the lack of Scripture in languages is the greatest need in, and biggest obstacle, to world mission.
- | Ongoing developments in technology and software continue to increase the productivity of Bible translators.

James comments: 'This feels like a really important moment in the history of Bible translation. God is at work, drawing together a host of factors and building momentum. The day when everyone has at least some Scripture in their language is looking ever more achievable. My hope is that these figures will inspire and motivate people to get involved in the urgent and vital work of Bible translation. In the meantime, Wycliffe remains committed to helping create a world where everyone can know Jesus through the Bible.'

Reasons to be cheerful

God is clearly at work, initiating and strengthening Bible translation efforts across the world. We can see a number of exciting reasons for the acceleration that is happening:

- | God is raising up increasing numbers of people to support this vital work.

1 in 5 still waiting

The momentum is building, but there is still much to do. And we don't want to see that momentum stall.

James continues: 'This past year has seen such encouraging progress, and we rejoice with all those who have the Scriptures in their language for the first time. May their lives and communities be transformed by the power of God's word!'

1 in 5 people are still waiting for the Bible in their language

7,388 languages are spoken in the world



'However, despite this progress, the fact remains that 1 in 5 people still do not have access to the Bible in their language. That's around 1.5 billion people. This is why translation teams across the world continue to work with urgency to put this right, and why we continue to support them in their work so that the desperate needs of those without can be met.'

Play your part

In some ways this has been a year of record-breaking progress in translating

the Bible for those people who do not yet have it in their language. A key factor in this progress is the generosity and prayers of people like you.

We are so thankful for your support.

In order to keep the momentum going, please do stay fully up to date with the latest news from the world of Bible translation.

If you aren't already, please sign up to receive our emails:

[wycliffe.org.uk/email](https://www.wycliffe.org.uk/email)

and our quarterly *Words for Life* magazine:

[wycliffe.org.uk/wordsforlife](https://www.wycliffe.org.uk/wordsforlife)

And to donate to this life-giving work, visit:

[wycliffe.org.uk/donate](https://www.wycliffe.org.uk/donate)

Thank you for your support for and interest in the work of Bible translation.



The Gbeya New Testament was launched in the Central African Republic in February 2022.

It was part of a triple launch event held in the capital, Bangui. The other two New Testaments launched that day were for the Kaba and Ngbugu languages.

'Now Tendet people are able to read their language through the written word of God. When they preach now, they will listen and understand.'

'I was a doubting Thomas, thinking that the Bible would not be available in Tendet. But now I know that it is real!'

Two Tendet speakers at their New Testament launch



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About Wycliffe

Wycliffe Bible Translators has a big vision for:

***A world where everyone can know Jesus
through the Bible.***

***We serve local partners worldwide as they bring God's word to their
communities in the language which speaks to them best.***

For over 60 years Wycliffe has been working so that people can know Jesus through the Bible.

Currently Wycliffe has over 360 people from the UK and Ireland serving over 470 million people speaking over 350 languages in over 70 countries.