



Worldwide

The United Nations estimates the world population will be 6.9 billion people in 2010 (UN 2008, Revision of World Population Prospects) with approximately 6,900 languages spoken amongst them (6,848 SIL Language Data Systems September 2009).

Of these language communities, 2,508 have some or all of the Bible in their mother tongue according to Scripture registered with the United Bible Societies as of Dec 31st 2009 (459 have an adequate Bible; 1,213 have an adequate New Testament; 836 have just portions of Scripture).

Of the remaining languages with no known scripture or a translation program in progress, current estimates suggest around 353 million people speaking 2,252 languages may have a need for Bible translation (Wycliffe International Sept 2009).

Wycliffe

Wycliffe is one of the key mission agencies involved with Scripture translation into mother tongue languages. Since it was incorporated in 1942, Wycliffe personnel have been involved in the translation of 735 New Testaments and 24 complete Bibles, potentially impacting around 107 million people.

Wycliffe, working in partnership with language communities and local organisations are involved in active programs for 1,363 languages/936 million people as of September 30th 2009. This is 68% of the known translation programs currently in progress across the world, which stands at 1,990 active programs.

Over the last year, Wycliffe staff have contributed to the completion of 2 Bibles, 25 New Testaments, and 26 New Testament revisions, affecting some 10 million people. Alongside translated Scripture, Wycliffe has also been involved in 6 JESUS film productions, 4 Luke Videos, and 4 Genesis videos. In 2009 Faith Comes by Hearing started production of audio New Testaments in 56 languages that involved Wycliffe personnel.

Since Wycliffe began its staff have also worked with others in the production of 118 Jesus films, 204 Luke Videos, 44 Genesis videos, 193 Faith Comes By Hearing audio scriptures, and helped produce over 11,300 literacy/education materials; 470 development related materials; and over 1,200 health related materials all in mother tongue languages.

As of November 2009 the 47 Wycliffe organisations have 5,906 staff reliant on the financial and prayer support of Churches and individual Christians across the world. Some of these include mother tongue individuals on the translation team. Several hundred other people work as full or part time volunteers. 34.2% of positions are in directly language related roles including translation and literacy, whilst the remaining 65.8% in support roles e.g. project managers, computer specialists, administrators. Like many other mission agencies, Wycliffe has a large number of vacant positions (2,328 as of November 2009).

*³⁷Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. ³⁸Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field."
Matt 9*

In 1999 Wycliffe and SIL (Wycliffe's international partner focusing on language development) were averaging 25 new language program starts per year. As people prayed we began changing the ways we work e.g. clustering languages, even greater training and equipping of others. By 2009 this average has risen to 75 a year over the 10 year period). The number of language communities needing translation is reducing but the challenges increase as those that remain include a greater proportion of the more difficult to access and the smaller communities.