

Daily Devotional 5

‘We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed. We always carry around in our body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body.’

(2 Corinthians 4:8–10)

Sometimes the most important stories are the one we can't tell you

Today we're writing about a special area of Wycliffe's work that you've possibly not heard about before. This is deliberate.

It's what we call Sensitive Projects – and it describes work that might be dangerous, particularly for our local partners. For example, it might include work based in countries where sharing the gospel, translating the Bible, or even being a Christian is illegal, and punishable by imprisonment or even death.

In total, we are working to make God's word accessible to over 22 million people in areas where the Church is persecuted. It's an important, and growing, part of the ministry.

While we can't talk about most projects, there are exciting stories to tell of work that has been completed. An audio recording of Luke's Gospel was completed this year in the Zam* language of West Asia, spoken by roughly two-and-a-half-million people. For many, Zam is the only language they speak, and because of the danger working there this is the first Scripture they will be able to access. But it's been at a great cost; one of the early translators was martyred for his faith.

The risk is real, but so is the need.

Video resource

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Prayer focus – the persecuted Church

- Pray that God would protect and bless all those working to translate the Bible in countries that are hostile to their work.
- Pray for the Christians within these countries, that in the midst of persecution they might see God's goodness, and find peace and hope in his grace.
- Pray that the power of the word of God would reach those living in fear and that with God's help those who know him might share their faith boldly with those around them.

International focus – Pacific

The power of technology

Many cultures around the world have primarily oral rather than literary traditions and so audio Bibles suit them better than printed ones.

Once the Bible is recorded in a local language, the gospel spreads and its impact is multiplied through inexpensive, solar-powered digital players built to last. Cheap smartphones are becoming remarkably widespread in most developing countries, and providing phone-friendly Scripture has proved an extremely effective strategy when it comes to spreading the gospel.

A man called Toli cried tears of frustration when he was given a copy of the Bible in his own language – he wanted to engage with God's word but he couldn't read. Later, he received an audio player, which he spent hours and hours listening to.

The result? Toli says: 'Now the message is clear.'

The people group Toli belongs to – the Pinai-Hagahai of Papua New Guinea – have a history of being a lawless community who were especially hostile to outsiders. But the launch of the audio Bible in 2008 led to transformation and societal change. According to the Pinai-Hagahai, hearing the Bible in a language they fully understand changed their behaviour towards each other, brought community transformation and opened up new opportunities.