

State of the Bible **2024**



Two a week!

**Bibles and New Testaments launched
at a record-breaking rate in 2024**

**Wycliffe
Bible
Translators**

Two a week!

Launch rate of Bibles and New Testaments highlights progress

In another exceptional year of growth in Bible translation, records have been broken and new highs achieved.

2 a week

Extraordinarily, together Bibles and New Testaments have been launched at a rate of 2 a week. **That's one launched, on average, every 3.5 days!** It's by far the fastest rate ever. Compared to last year (which had a rate of one every 5.5 days), it's a massive step up.

6 billion

The number of people with access to the Bible in their language has broken through the 6 billion barrier. Over a third of all languages now have the Bible or the New Testament – the highest proportion ever.

Over half of all languages

A tipping point has been reached: **for the first time in history, over half of all languages have some Scripture.** This is a major milestone for Bible translation and many people groups, who can now access some of God's word in their own language.

Soon they will have the precious word of God in their language

More than 4,000 languages

Work is taking place in more than 4,000 languages. **That's an increase of 270 languages since last year** – promising exciting times ahead as those programmes develop and begin to get Scripture in their language.

As this *State of the Bible 2024* report highlights, we are seeing tremendous progress towards fulfilling the vision of Wycliffe Bible Translators – to create a world where everyone can know Jesus through the Bible.

More people than ever have the complete Bible in their language. Many have the

New Testament for the first time, or have experienced the joy of hearing or reading the first words of Scripture in their language. And many communities have taken the first steps towards translation, knowing that soon they will have the precious word of God in their language.

We are thankful! **We are thankful to God for his continued blessing** on this worldwide movement. We are thankful to you, our dedicated supporters, for your encouragement, prayers and

continued on page 4

108 Bibles and New Testaments launched in the past year...

at a rate of 2 a week





First Scriptures for 40 languages in Nigeria

The Mark Road is an initiative to translate the Gospel of Mark into 40 languages in Nigeria over the next four years, bringing God's word to 1.5 million people in their languages for the first time. None of these languages has had any work done on writing them down, let alone translating the Scriptures. So work for each language is starting from scratch.

Recently, some of the translation teams went to their first workshop (pictured below), where they began to create biblical stories in their languages – an initial step towards translating Mark. Two of the teams tell what happened on their return to their communities.

Their first-ever words of Scripture

'That day, when evening came, he said to his disciples, "Let us go over to the other side.'"

These are the first-ever words from the Bible that the Nteng community heard in their language: the first verse of Mark's account of Jesus calming the storm. That short story is only seven verses, but already it has brought huge joy and great encouragement.

People are excitedly sharing about hearing God speak in their language in church services, in schools and even in the marketplace, while those in the community who can read are reading it aloud to those who can't.



A thing of pure joy

Team member Philip was playing the recording the team had made on Bluetooth speakers at a house in the village. Children had gathered outside. Philip called into the darkness and asked them if they were listening. They responded in unison, 'Yes!'

Philip continues: 'We asked them to come to where we were, and both Christian and Muslim children came forward. We played the recordings twice, asking them what they liked about what they heard, and they said the fact that they were listening to their language being played on audio. It was a thing of pure joy watching these children hear a story in their language and tell it back in a language we understood. Praise God!'

The images are of the Shang Mark Road project. Photo credits: SIL Nigeria

Front: A Kwamashi woman holds her Kwamashi New Testament at the launch in Zambia on 10 August 2024. Photo credit: Mubi Mebelo



'We've seen the impact that having the Scriptures in the Konni language has had on the Koma community. As the Koma Church has grown confident in using the Scriptures in their own language, so people have been transformed. And as the Koma people have learnt to read and write in their own language, they have then used their language in educational and public settings, so new life opportunities have opened up.'

Sylvester Kwame Nkrumah

The Koma Bible was launched on 22 June 2024 in Ghana. The Koma people speak the Konni language

generosity. And we are thankful to all our partners who work tirelessly to ensure that people have God's word in the language they understand best.

Together, we are not just translating words; we are bringing the transformative message of hope, love and salvation to people, churches and communities around the world.

Impact

The headlines are exciting, but the **impact on people and communities is even more profound:**

| In the **20 languages where the Bible has been launched**, people are able to access the entire Scriptures with full understanding for the first time.

| **The launch of 88 New Testaments** means 11 million more people are able to read and hear all the stories in their language for the first time.

| **41 million people have Scripture portions**, such as the Gospels, in their language for the first time.

| **13 million people have Scripture** (even if it is just a few verses, such as in the Mark Road story, p3) in their language for the first time. That's the equivalent of the populations of Greater London and metropolitan Birmingham combined.

| **4,012 languages have work taking place**. That means all the speakers of these languages are on the path to having Scripture in their language, as

756 languages have a full Bible

1,726 languages have a complete New Testament





1,274 languages have some portions of the Bible

4,012 languages have work in progress

well as the many benefits that Bible translation brings, such as having their language written down for the first time, being able to read and write, and having access to medical resources in their own language.

Those still needing work to begin has shrunk by 67.1 million (spread across 283 languages). That's a **two-thirds drop compared to last year.**

James Poole, Executive Director of Wycliffe, says: 'This year has been a landmark for the ministry of Bible translation. We've seen remarkable progress as more people than ever

before have the Scriptures in their own language, with entire communities being transformed as they encounter the word of God for the first time.

'This year has been a landmark for the ministry of Bible translation'

'In the past 12 months, millions have gained access to the Bible or New Testament, and countless others are now on the path to having it. For the first time in history, over half of the world's languages have at

least some Scripture – a milestone that brings us closer to the vision we share at Wycliffe: **a world where everyone can know Jesus through the Bible.**

'We give thanks to God for this incredible momentum, and to our partners and

'The Kaluli Bible dedication is a really big thing. God marked this day and date as a special day for us Kaluli people. I'm very happy to see it. To see it and receive it. Because the Word of Life is there in the Bible.'

Wano Hemide, a member of the Kaluli Bible translation team, at the Kaluli New Testament launch in Papua New Guinea on 17 February 2024

Pictured: Kaluli women listen to the Kaluli New Testament on an audio player





A New Testament for the most spoken local language in Papua New Guinea (PNG)

The Enga New Testament was launched in a variety of formats at events across the Enga Province in PNG, because Enga is the most spoken local language in the country.

The first launch event was held on 2 July 2024 in Wabag, the capital of Enga Province.

At the event, Alice said all she wants to do is meditate on God's word, it builds her up and is the only thing that fills her up. She bought an Engan Bible, an Engan-English Bible, an audio Bible and an SD card so she can have the word with her all the time!

supporters whose prayers and generosity have made this progress possible.

Together, we are witnessing God's hand at work in a way that is changing lives and communities around the globe!

A whole Testament or two

The launch of a record number of Bibles and New Testaments is a wonderful story in itself. People from communities as far away from each other as the Nobonob people (Papua New Guinea), the Rangi people (Tanzania), the Nyaneka-Mwila people (Angola), the Southwestern Tlaxiaco Mixteca people (Mexico), and the Singuth* people (Central Asia) – as well as all the peoples in this report – are just some of those who now have a Bible or a New Testament in printed and/or audio forms in their language.

Each of these programmes is a story of dedication and commitment, with many highs and lows, spread across years and invariably decades. The local translation teams and their communities have worked through many struggles to bring their translation programmes to fruition.

The first steps towards translating the Rangi New Testament began in 1997. Since then the translation team has faced many challenges and difficulties. But on 30 August 2024 – 27 long, hard years after those first steps were taken – the Rangi people were able to celebrate the launch of the New Testament in their own language.

Emilia Issaka says: **'I feel very peaceful and happy to have the word of God in my language.** I think a lot about what

God has done for the Rangi people. It started to look like the work would not finish after Maingu [one of the main translators] died and the work slowed down. But I thank God for those who fought and worked very hard to make sure the New Testament was completed in the Rangi language.'

We thank God for every one of these local translation teams and their communities, who have worked tirelessly and faithfully to bring God's word to their people in their language. Truly they are heroes of the faith.

Along the way these teams have had international partners working alongside them, providing expert advice, as well as funding and prayer support. These teams and peoples are – like us – so thankful for all those – like you – who supported these and other programmes through donations and prayer. Without these, many Bibles and New Testaments would have been delayed or abandoned. Without you, these programmes couldn't have happened. **You too are heroes of the faith!**

As Konlan Kpeebe, from the Koma Bible translation team that celebrated the launch of the Koma Bible this year, says: 'We owe Wycliffe an unspeakable debt of gratitude for being there at the start of the Koma Literacy and Bible Translation Project, through the dedication of the Koma New Testament in 2006, and now to the completion of the whole Bible...

Without you, these programmes couldn't have happened



'I feel very peaceful and happy' – Emilia Issaka with her Rangi New Testament

the Koma people say thank you for a job well done. We cherish your partnership.'

We praise and thank God for his faithfulness, for inspiring and sustaining his work across many communities and through many people so that they can have the privilege and blessing of getting to know him better.

For these communities, the goal is not the book in itself: it is what God will do through the book. James

Pooler comments: 'God's word changes lives. While every translation effort is crucial, our ultimate goal is to witness the profound transformation that occurs when individuals and communities get the word of God in their own languages and come to know Jesus.'

270 languages where Bible translation work has begun – a rate of almost one a day





'I am so joyful in my heart that I have God's word in my own language. When I read the Krung New Testament it's easy for the people to understand – because they hear their own language.'

Pastor Saruen, who leads the church in Krala, Indonesia, where the Krung New Testament was launched on 10 February 2024

'I love the reaction'

Wycliffe and its partners are working toward a day when everyone can know Jesus through the Bible in their own language. For many people groups, though, there will be small landmarks along the way, as a few verses or a whole chapter of a book are translated, then a whole book, and then several books.

Take the Roma people of Romania. The Standard Romani team translated John's Gospel last year, and this year has been translating Mark's Gospel and the book of Acts, as well as publicising the translated Gospel of John. Project director Robert Tompi often takes the translated Scriptures into Roma schools and churches, and reads them aloud. The responses are astounding. Robert says:



Roma schoolchildren react to Robert reading the Standard Romani version of the Gospel of John

'Recently, we visited churches in Buzău and Târgu Neamț. They responded very well to the Standard Romani translation. The visit to the ProRoma School in Tinca filled our hearts with joy. The children heard the word of God in their language, and were genuinely excited. **I love the reaction of children when they hear the gospel in their own language for the first time.** From now on they are going to be able to read it and use it.'

'God values our language and culture'

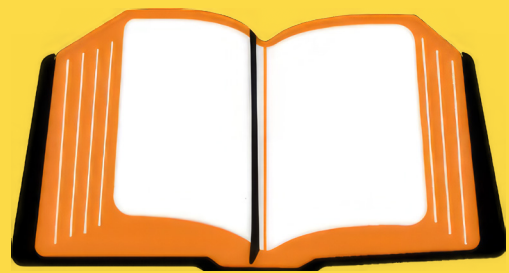
The tremendous growth in the work of Bible translation is most apparent in the 'work in progress' programmes.

In these programmes the work might be preparation work before the translation work can begin. So, for instance, in an orally based language, working with the community to write down the words for the first time, and creating a dictionary.

But sometimes, as the Mark Road initiative shows, this work can involve getting on with translating a few verses very quickly. The impact of those first few words of Scripture translated into your language is profound. Donnatus David Yagallong, from the Nteng Bible translation team, is excited

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

7,396 languages are spoken
in the world



about the first few words of Luke in the Nteng language and what it means:

'Having the Bible translated in Nteng makes me feel seen, heard, and loved by God. **It is like he is speaking directly to my heart in our own language.** It also shows the world about the Nteng people. *Naan kyel weel mu* – "God has heard our cry."

'It is a treasure that brings hope, comfort, and guidance to my life and the life of the entire community. **Having Scriptures in Nteng is a reminder that God values our language and culture,** and wants to speak with us in a way that is very intimate and personal. It will help us to grow in our faith, forgive others, and love our community more and more.

It will also give us a sense of purpose and responsibility to share God's word with others, so they can experience the same transformation we have.'

The work must continue

It has been another remarkable year of gathering momentum in the work of Bible translation.

James Poole says: 'Reflecting on another year of incredible progress, we are filled with hope for the future. Within the next 10–20 years, we could reach a landmark moment where 95% of people have the complete Bible in their own language, and almost everyone has the New Testament. **This would be a monumental achievement in world history!**

'As the translation progresses, we realise how much God loves our community and people. First, we thought we were going to have only some portions, now we see more portions getting translated. It feels very precious that God communicates to us in our language.'

Rashid*

Gerad* is a language in an isolated part of Asia where Christians face persecution. Translation work has begun, with the Gospel of Mark ready for publication. The language has never been written down, so the work includes creating a writing system.

*name changed for security reasons





'It's both an honour and a privilege to bring the word of God to our people in song, dance, spoken word, drama, and in our heart language. It's humbling and awe-inspiring knowing that we bring messages of hope, healing, restoration, and validation to our people.'

Lizette, one of the 'Alive in Kaaps' team that is writing, recording and performing the Psalms in the Kaaps language for the 'Psalms that Sing' project in South Africa

'However, we are not there yet. Currently, **1 in 5 people still do not have access to the Bible in their language.** This gap represents a deep injustice that we are committed to addressing. There are still many who cannot access the Scriptures in their own language.

'This ongoing challenge is why local Bible translation teams around the world are working with such urgency. It is also why your continued support – through donations and prayers – is so vital. Together, we can help make God's word accessible to everyone, in the language they understand best.'

Be part of the team

This year has again seen record-breaking progress in translating God's word for people without it in their language.

We are so grateful for your support

That progress has only been possible through team work – a vital part being the prayers and generosity of people like you. We are so grateful for your support.

There is much to do, however: 1.5 billion are still waiting for the Bible in their language. **So the work of Bible**

translation is as crucial and urgent as it has ever been.

Please consider supporting Bible translation through giving and prayer.

To get the latest Bible translation news, please sign up to receive our emails:

wycliffe.org.uk/email

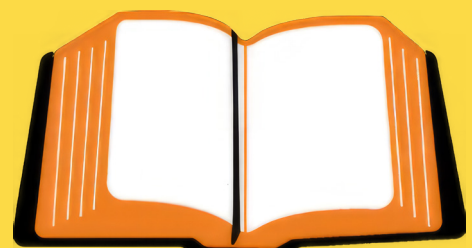
To donate to the work, please visit:

wycliffe.org.uk/donate

Thank you for your support for the work of Bible translation.

985 languages* with no Scripture and no work in progress...

BUT that is a reduction of 270 languages in the past year



*This figure does not include languages that are considered unviable.

Nyengo / Kpeego / Befang / Kuk / Banda-Banda
 Mundabli / Gula / Jonkor Bourmataguil / Tamki
 Aizi, Tiagbamrin / Sénoufo, Shempire / Limba, East
 Kusu Sign Language in Djibouti / Dogon, Ben Tey
 Phimbi / Biseni / Mvanip / Mlomp / Waimiri-Atroari
 Sign Language in Kassala / Jurúna / Nukak Makú
 Sivia Sign Language / Lopo, Southern
 Sign Language / the Inuit
 Mix-teco / Suriname
 Ishkar / Awu
 Hun / Yang
 Buy / uhi
 W / mi
 G / na
 M / to
 K / na
 Se / io
 Ur / ge
 Tai / ang
 Oma / cong
 Tai Yo / inggar
 Namonur / ari / Burui
 Dumo / Gai / kis / Kumalu
 Mehek / Icelandic / ge / Munit / Niksek
 Onjob / Pyu / Simbali / Tauya / Ulau-Suain
 Numèè / Awun / Wanap / Mer / Muyu, South
 Putoh / Yambes / Samoan Sign Language / Zokhuo
 Asilulu / Barapasi / Jo / Marino / Mulam / Pela
 Phupha / Agi / Kaki Ae / Angoram / Hoia Hoia



There's still much to do...
Here are some of the
languages needing
work to start

'We always thank God for all of you'

1 Thessalonians 1:2–5a in Kwamashi and English

²Twaa kandereranga kwa Nyambi thsikati thsothsihe mukaci k'enu mwahe no ku mi vurukanga mwirombero yetu. ³Oku tu rombera kwa Nyambi, aye Tata wetu twaa vurukanga etenda yenu yo thsitawo, ekwama yenu yo ku tunderera ku kushima, no ku-cithzua kwenu micima mukaci k'okurupero wenu kwa Fumu wetu Yesu Krisitu. ⁴Andengenu, tuna dimuka ci Nyambi aa mi shima karo naa mi hangura ci mwika-re anuenthzi. ⁵Inene uya na tu mi tongwera Muthzimbu o Uwa, shime twaa u mi tongwera kadi ko maywi pohuma, unone kokoro no ko Mupepo o Ukenu no ku rakwa shemwa ko kukuru.

²We always thank God for all of you and continually mention you in our prayers. ³We remember before our God and Father your work produced by faith, your labour prompted by love, and your endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁴For we know, brothers and sisters loved by God, that he has chosen you, ⁵because our gospel came to you not simply with words but also with power, with the Holy Spirit and deep conviction.

Wycliffe
Bible
Translators

PO Box 1643, Oxford OX4 9PB

wycliffe.org.uk

0300 303 1111

hello@wycliffe.org.uk



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.

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