

# Wycliffe® Intercessor

*Intercessor is a bimonthly prayer letter  
published by Wycliffe USA Prayer Ministries*

**JANUARY / FEBRUARY 2012**

## FROM START TO FINISH

*Dear Prayer Partners,*

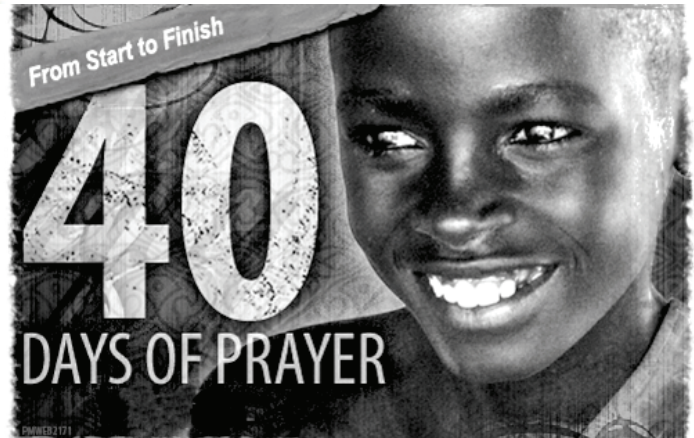
As you may or may not know, our department authors a prayer blog\* called *PrayToday*. It typically features the current and sometimes urgent prayer needs facing Wycliffe and the worldwide Bible translation team. New prayer requests are posted to it five times a week. (\*[www.wycliffeprayer.wordpress.com](http://www.wycliffeprayer.wordpress.com))

A few months ago, we decided to do something special on *PrayToday*. We invited our readers (and subscribers who receive *PrayToday* posts by email) to join us for a 40-day journey that focused prayer on the Bible translation process *from start to finish*. During those 40 days we looked at the scope of the vision, the major parts of a Bible translation program, and prayed for the many challenges along the way. Topics were loosely arranged in order of how a Bible translation program progresses from beginning to end. Each day of this series highlighted a different part of the process and included several ways to pray.

Over the weeks that followed, our readers and prayer partners learned about the areas with the greatest translation needs; the tasks of language survey and language development; the importance of literacy; the spiritual impact of Bible translation; and so much more.

Wow. The response was tremendous. In addition to the many people already receiving *PrayToday* posts by email, we saw a spike in subscriptions—the largest single increase of any previous month. As more people participated in the 40 days by email, others followed the prayer blog online. At the end, we were pleased and encouraged to receive responses like these:

*“40 Days of Prayer’ from Wycliffe has opened my understanding of the many agencies and skills needed to provide a complete translation of God’s word to*



*Bibleless people of the world. Thank you for blessing me and I pray for the over 2,000 groups of people still waiting, that God will provide His Word to them through all means available.”*

*“It was a blessing to read and pray through these 40 days of prayer. I learned more about Wycliffe and appreciated to an even greater extent what this ministry does. I do believe God uses prayer in mighty ways....”*

In this issue of the *Intercessor*, we’ve included highlights from the 40 Days of Prayer, and we hope you will join us in praying for the Bible translation process—from start to finish.

Until all have heard,



*Todd Nelson  
Vice President for Prayer Ministries  
Wycliffe Bible Translators USA*

### **Want to participate in Wycliffe’s 40 Days of Prayer?**

It’s not too late. Begin whenever you’re ready!  
Simply type the following address into your browser—  
<http://wycliffeprayer.wordpress.com/40days/>

## *Beginning with Prayer*

The first connection to Bibleless people groups is a spiritual one. With a firm belief in the power of prayer and its place as the starting point for all future Bible translation projects, Wycliffe's Bibleless Peoples Prayer Project (BPPP) seeks to match new prayer partners to people groups that do not yet have God's Word.

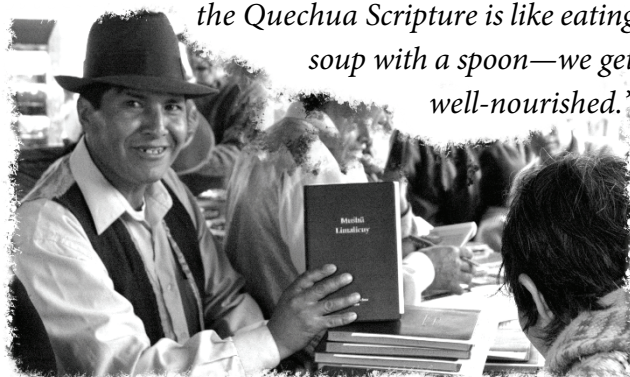
Today, BPPP has more than 14,000 participants. These dedicated intercessors lay a prayerful foundation for future translation programs.

- **Pray** that Bibleless people would hunger and thirst for God's Word in their own language! **Ask God** to provide every person in the world with His Word just as He has already provided it for us—translated in the heart language.
- **Pray** for the safety of Bibleless people. Many are residents in, or displaced from, countries with poor political and social conditions.
- **Pray** for Wycliffe's BPPP staff as they seek to encourage and communicate with thousands of prayer partners who have committed to pray for people groups around the world.
- **Ask God** to raise up even more prayer partners to join BPPP. **Pray** for faithfulness and perseverance in prayer.

Current estimates by Wycliffe suggest that around 350 million people speaking 2,040 languages may have a need for Bible translation to begin. Many of these language groups are small minorities living in areas dominated by national languages. Others may in fact be very large people groups but live in areas that are difficult to access.

- In particular, Wycliffe has identified three areas of the world that contain the greatest numbers of translation needs. They are Central Africa and Nigeria; Mainland and Southeast Asia; and Indonesia and the Pacific islands. **Pray** for open doors in each of these areas, and for translation work to quickly gain momentum.
- For Central Africa and Nigeria, **pray** for unity across organizational partnerships as many local and inter-

*“Getting our spiritual food from the Spanish Bible is like trying to eat soup with a fork. We can get a little taste, but cannot get nourished. Using the Quechua Scripture is like eating soup with a spoon—we get well-nourished.”*



national groups must work together to accomplish the work of Bible translation.

- For Mainland and Southeast Asia, **pray** for the protection and encouragement of translation personnel who often work in sensitive areas and sometimes in isolation.
- For Indonesia and the Pacific islands, **pray** for safety in travel as many translation teams must navigate throughout this large, rugged, and remote region.

## *Moving the Work Forward*

The process of translating God's Word into the minority languages of the world can be a long and arduous journey. In order to accomplish Vision 2025—to see a Bible translation program started for every language that needs one by the year 2025—it is estimated that more than 2,000 languages must first be surveyed. Language surveyors gather data that will guide strategic planning for future translation programs.

- As there are only about 60 language surveyors currently operating worldwide, **pray** for more people to do this critical work.
- The lifestyle of a surveyor can be unpredictable, uncomfortable, and stressful. **Pray** for perseverance for all surveyors, as they endure periods of travel as well as focused times of entering and analyzing data for detailed reports. **Pray** that even when the work is difficult it will not overwhelm their joy for it.

Once the need for a Bible translation is confirmed, the broad and complicated work of language development begins. For many Bibleless language groups this can mean developing an alphabet and writing system for the first time, which in turn will lead to the production of dictionaries, health books, literacy materials, and ultimately the mother-tongue Scriptures.

- **Pray** that as language development specialists work alongside minority language groups, members of those communities would learn and understand that their language and culture are loved by God. **Pray** that their hearts would long to know God, too.
- **Ask God** to provide gifted mother-tongue translators for each translation project. These colleagues are essential members of the worldwide Bible translation team. Trained mother-tongue translators, assisted by experienced Wycliffe advisors and consultants, help ensure that God speaks their language clearly.

### *The Goal is Changed Lives*

Every Bible translation project is a shared effort, accomplished by teams of people working together. It's the process of drafting, checking, polishing, and producing a final version of vernacular Scriptures for publication.

- Translations must be accurate, reproducing as exactly as possible the meaning as God intended in the original Scriptures. They must also be natural and readily understood by local speakers. **Ask God** to provide all that translators need—for strength and clarity in drafting a translation; for accuracy in checking and revising; for endurance through the publication process; and for God's direction and guidance through it all.
- Bible translation is a broad and technical process. Computers, specialized software, and digital technology have greatly impacted the work, and as a result the pace of translation has quickened. **Pray** for wisdom for translation personnel working to harness the power of technology to speed the pace of translation work.
- The ultimate goal of Wycliffe and its partners is to see God's Word made available to every person in

their heart language, so that they can know the truth found in Scripture, freedom from the bondage of sin, and changed lives as a result of knowing Jesus Christ. **Pray** that individuals, communities, and nations would be transformed through God's love and His Word expressed in their languages and cultures.

### *Finishing Strong*

Scripture translation is a demanding task and needs constant prayer support from start to finish. Translators whole-heartedly believe that prayer makes a difference. One team in Africa agreed saying, "...especially as we are in the last stages of the work, which many translators have found to be a difficult time. It is inevitable that the enemy will try to prevent and destroy the work that would make the Scriptures accessible to another people group."

- **Praise God** who is advancing His kingdom, no matter what happens during the translation process, including the final stages that often see the most challenges.
- **Pray** that translators will keep their focus on Christ when they are stretched and experience things that detain them from getting their part of the work done.
- **Pray** that they will remain steadfast in their trust of Him for guidance and wisdom each day.

As soon as the translated Word becomes available, the work of engaging individuals and communities with newly completed Scripture begins. Scripture-use workers promote its accessibility through radio broadcasts, videos and films, and other media.

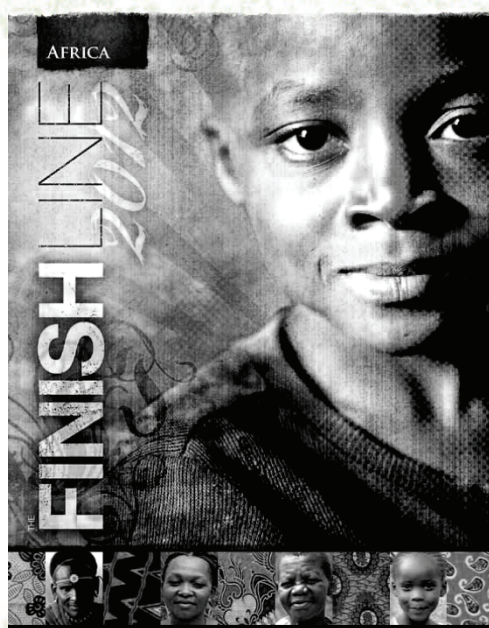
- **Praise God** that through the efforts of Scripture-use workers, people understand that they can relate to God in their own language.
- **Pray** that Scripture-inspired dramas, songs, and other artistic creations help awaken people to the truth of the Word.
- **Pray** for more Scripture-use workers to help with the immense task ahead; **ask God** to call people who enjoy planting the Word and seeing the fruit of their labor. **Pray** for wisdom and strength as they seek to connect people to God's Word and its relevancy to their lives.



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Address Service Requested



## *The Finish Line is coming soon.*

The 2012 edition of *The Finish Line* will be available in early January. With this annual, four-volume publication, you can pray for translation projects that are nearing completion for people groups in your favorite area or areas of the world: Africa, Asia/Europe, Pacific, or Americas. These projects need your prayers as they persevere to the end.

Send your request for the new edition to the following address: **Prayer\_USA@wycliffe.org**. Please include the areas of the world that you would like to receive.

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Intercessor

### *Scripture Celebration!*

When people receive the newly published Scriptures in their language, a Scripture celebration or dedication ceremony is often held. Before a Bible translation project began for any language group, they were a Bibleless people, but now the community celebrates the arrival of the finished, printed Scriptures in their own language. Local people gather together for an event unlike any other, and praise God for what He has done. Boxes of the newly printed Bibles are opened and the books distributed. This is the moment when

people joyfully clutch their New Testament or Bible for the first time.

- **Pray** that God would be glorified as individuals experience the joy of receiving His Word for the first time! **Ask Him** to prepare hearts for His Word and draw more people into His kingdom.
- **Pray** that guests attending these celebrations who already have God's Word in their language will be engaged by the vision and excited to join in the mission of Bible translation. **Pray** that they, in turn, will help reach out to other Bibleless people groups.