

THE JOURNEY TO PARTNERSHIP

Dear Prayer Partners,

Twenty-eight years is a long time to stick with someone.

No, I'm not talking about marriage. I am talking about people who have partnered with my wife and me ever since we first joined Wycliffe.

Shortly after we married, we decided to leave our jobs and take an initial two-year assignment with Wycliffe. We began building a team to stand with us. We sent out letters telling our friends and churches what God was doing through Wycliffe and why we were excited to be a part of it. We asked if people would be willing to partner with us—through prayer or finances or both. Those first letters began a great journey that has lasted to this day.

Although our list of partners has changed some and grown over the years, I still marvel at how many have been with us since the beginning. And while it is a fact that we could not have journeyed this far without so many people contributing to Wycliffe for our ministry, I probably underestimated the value of people's prayer and friendship with us way back then. But in retrospect, these have been the most critical pieces in sustaining us all these years.

Our partners have blessed us in huge ways. Many of them, along with their kids, pray for us regularly. They have prayed us through daily life as well as tough challenges. We've also seen how God sometimes uses them to provide for us financially through unexpected gifts at the very time we have had surprise expenses. And we were recipients of great love each time we returned to the States from Africa, as churches and family and friends helped us ease our way back into U.S. culture. Sometimes these were in very practical ways. People loaned us cars and helped provide discounted medical care. Friends in churches routinely helped us with winter clothes for our growing children.

Each and every Wycliffe missionary builds a partnership team when they first join the organization. And the blessings of these partnerships really go in both directions. Over the years, we have had opportunities to pray for



our own partners, help their kids with homework questions about foreign cultures, and most importantly, give them a glimpse of what God is doing around the world through Bible translation. Building a partnership team can be a daunting task at first, but it is well worth it.

Thank you for reading through this issue of the *Intercessor* in order to better understand the blessings as well as the challenges missionaries face in building a partnership team. And thank you, as always, for partnering with us in this work through your prayers.



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

Partnership Development

From top to bottom, Wycliffe is an organization built on faith in God. Consider Wycliffe's Vision 2025—to see a Bible translation program in progress in every language still needing one by 2025—it is a God-sized task. Today, estimates suggest around 180 million people speaking 1,919 languages need a Bible translation. There can be no doubt that Wycliffe, as an organization, is wholly dependent on God. So too, are the individuals and families who comprise Wycliffe's membership. God's provision is seen not just in the completion of a new Bible translation, but also in the day-to-day prayers, giving, advocating, and encouragement that makes each Wycliffe member's ministry possible. The majority of

Wycliffe's workers rely on God to provide for their living and ministry expenses through the gifts of individuals and churches that come alongside them and partner in their ministries. For Wycliffe's personnel, partnership development—the process of building partnership teams—is both a critical and faith-building activity.

Relationships Matter

Throughout their Wycliffe career, but especially when they first join, staff members seek to build and retain a team of partners that will sustain them during their entire ministry. Often these partners include family, friends, and local churches. But partnerships also form as a result of large group speaking engagements, small group presentations, forwarded prayer letters, ministry blogs, or any number of other divine appointments. These mutually beneficial relationships built during partnership development become a source of blessing for members, their partners, Wycliffe, and ultimately, the Bibleless communities around the world.

- **Praise God** that, for decades, He has consistently been faithful to provide for the needs of thousands of Wycliffe missionaries!
- Partnership development is the first step for new Wycliffe recruits. There are currently more than 100 new members in the process of building a full team of prayer and financial partners. **Pray** for clarity and God's wisdom as they work with coaches and mentors to establish ministry budgets that fit their job assignments.
- As members engage more people in the partnership development process, **pray** for a spirit of confidence, that they would not be timid in sharing God's call on their lives. **Ask God** to give them joy, strength, and guidance.
- **Pray** for members to clearly articulate their needs to prospective partners as well as how their job roles are designed to impact the worldwide Bible translation team. **Pray** for favor among those with whom they are relating, and peace with God's timing.
- For those who have limited networks of people, **ask God** to bless them with creative ideas. **Pray** for open doors as they look for ways to develop relationships with coworkers, fellow students, neighbors, and others.
- **Pray** for fully supported ministries, that staff members would find partners who want to contribute financially as well as a team of dedicated prayer partners who will consistently lift them up in prayer.
- The average time it takes Wycliffe staff members to reach 100 percent of their partnership development goal is



Building life-long relationships to share in the work

nine months. **Pray** for endurance for those in the process. There are no guarantees as members embark on this faith journey. **Pray** for spiritual rewards no matter what the result. **Pray** that God would continue to confirm His call each step of the way.

- **Ask God** to use these times to prepare new members for their service with Wycliffe. **Pray** for hearts and minds that are open to God's leading and His plans.
- **Pray** for strengthened faith in Christ, renewed daily.

Faith in Action

During their years of ministry, Wycliffe staff will likely have the privilege of serving in many different roles, completing a myriad of jobs. Partnership development is the one job they will have throughout their entire career.

- Maintaining partnership teams requires hard work and dedication. **Pray** that staff members will be able to effectively relate to current and potential partners through various kinds of communication—phone, email, social media, newsletters, blogs, and more. **Pray** for wisdom and strength as they visit partnering churches and individuals, prepare for presentations, and step out in faith to engage new audiences.
- When members lose prayer or financial partners, it can become an urgent need to find others to take their place. Sometimes this may mean leaving work in a far-away country to return home and rebuild partnership teams. For those who must evaluate circumstances like these, **pray** for wise decisions.
- Currently, there are 23 partnership development coaches helping staff members through their partnership team building. **Pray** for good communication and effective coaching.
- It is not uncommon for challenges to arise in the midst of building partnership teams. Health issues,

either personal or those affecting other family members, can greatly affect partnership development activities. **Ask God** to heal and help those facing such obstacles.

- **Pray** that each and every Wycliffe staff member would have affirmation that God has wired them to do what He has called them to do. **Pray** that this knowledge would help many to weather life's storms and times of waiting.

Building Partnership Teams

While every Wycliffe member could benefit from prayer for their partnership development efforts, here are some examples of current and specific needs:

- George and Dotty have accepted an assignment to serve at JAARS, a Wycliffe partner organization. But first, they must complete their partnership development. Both have struggled in many ways over the last ten months. Dotty's father has been in and out of the hospital and George's dad passed away unexpectedly. **Pray** for God's wisdom and peace as they deal with these difficult family situations. **Ask the Lord** to give them boldness as they approach possible partners and as they share the needs of the Bibleless and Vision 2025. **Pray** for the Holy Spirit to work in every meeting, phone call, and letter.
- Peter and Linda are new Wycliffe members assigned to Brazil. Peter is a pilot. **Pray** for clarity as they work through visa, document, and medical requirements to get to Brazil.
- Jeremy and Jessica are from Georgia and are preparing to work in a sensitive country, a location considered potentially unsafe. This strictly limits what they can write in newsletters. Yet, stories about the needs in the countries where they and others plan to work will inspire people to pray. This can be a serious block to finding prayer and financial partnerships. **Ask God** to show them how to share from their hearts. **Pray** for His guidance in their communications—what to share, with whom, and how to share it. **Pray** for strong prayer partnerships.
- Sisters from Kansas, Michelle and Nicholle, have received confirmation from their church and friends that God is calling them to work in literacy in Tanzania. However, their parents are opposed to their going. Michelle and Nicholle are heartbroken by the strained relationships, but must move forward as God has called them. **Pray** for God's grace and a change of heart in their parents.
- Nate and Elizabeth, who will help with translation and building construction in the Central African Republic, have many prayer and financial partners already. The country where they plan to work continues to suffer from war, and Bible translation personnel are not able to return to the country for long-term work. **Pray** that as they continue preparations to go, including French language study, that God would reopen doors to this country that has been closed due to civil strife.
- **Pray** for Jonathan and Jenny, as they seek to grow financial partnerships in order to progress with their plans to complete Bible translation training and depart for Papua New Guinea. This has been a difficult year for them since they lost their baby in January, just a few weeks before she was due to be born. Jonathan is working a full-time job, studying in preparation for his assignment, and trying to cast the vision for Bible translation among churches and individuals in an attempt to gain partners for their ministry. They need to have at least 50 percent of their financial partnership pledged by July so that they can complete the rest of the training needed for their assignments. **Pray** that they would have most of their partnership pledged by that time so that when they complete their training in early December, they will be ready to head off to Papua New Guinea the following month.
- Adrienne, who is planning to work in Papua New Guinea, hopes to begin an assignment as a linguist and translator. Before she can go, she needs to average an increase of at least \$305 a month of new financial partnership in order to proceed to Dallas, Texas to complete her training. **Pray** for open hearts among the people she speaks to about the importance of Bible translation; may they see the value of her ministry.
- Brenda has been working with Wycliffe for a few years now. In her exuberance to begin her ministry with Wycliffe, she used money from her retirement funds to help supplement her needs. The resources have stopped, and there is now a financial hurdle. **Ask the Lord** to provide the financial partnership she needs to enable her to continue serving in her critical role with Wycliffe—gathering data that will help formulate strategies to speed Bible translation around the world.
- Nate is studying linguistics at Moody College in preparation for his role as a linguist and translator for a sensitive country in West Asia. He and his wife Carrie plan to attend the University of North Dakota this summer for more training, but their old car has died. **Pray** that God would provide them with a reliable and affordable vehicle as well as financial partnerships to enable them to serve when they complete their training.



RACE TO 2025 *Wycliffe USA's Adventure Fundraising Race with Eternal Impact!*

The Mission: To see a Bible translation in progress in every language that needs it by the year 2025.

The Race: Participate in an experience that bridges the craving for an adrenaline rush and the extreme challenge to which Jesus calls His church - to make disciples of all nations.

- Climb, rappel, paddle, pedal, race!
- Enjoy beautiful outdoor locations.
- Overcome physical, mental, and spiritual challenges.
- Hear from missionaries who've been there and done that!

NEXT RACE: HUME, CALIFORNIA OCT. 24-26, 2014

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Wycliffe Bible Translators
P.O. Box 628200
Orlando, FL 32862-8200

1-800-WYCLIFFE
(1-800-992-5433)
www.wycliffe.org

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- Rachel is completing her training at the Graduate Institute of Applied Linguistics in Dallas, Texas for her assignment as a language surveyor in Papua New Guinea. She is also developing a team of prayer and financial partners to meet her ministry budget needs. While in training, she learned that her home church in Oregon had to close down. **Pray** for another local church to fully partner with her in this ministry.

Voices for the Bibleless

Partnership development is about more than building relationships. It is also a platform from which Wycliffe staff can inform audiences about the plight of the world's Bibleless peoples, often opening eyes and hearts to see

for the first time the remaining need for Bible translation. It also gives people an opportunity to play a key role and have a part in something with eternal significance.

- **Pray** that Wycliffe staff members will use partnership development activities as a way of casting vision for Bible translation, not just their individual ministries. **Pray** that they will be a voice for the Bibleless who can't speak for themselves to the Church in the U.S.
- **Pray** that their invitations to partnership would be clear and strong. **Ask God** to use these invitations to move the hearts and minds of those who receive them. **Pray** that as a result even more people will receive the call to full-time ministry.