

# The Story so Far

## Behind the scenes at Wycliffe Bible Translators

*Where we came from.  
What we believe.  
How we are financed.  
It's all here.*



### A very brief History

**1917** American missionary Cameron Townsend arrived in Guatemala to sell Spanish Bibles. These were of little use to the Cakchiquel Indians living there – few could speak Spanish, let alone read it!

One man said to him, "If your God is so great, why can't he speak my language?"

Townsend set about learning the language and after ten years presented them with a translation of the New Testament.

Leaving an emerging church in the hands of local leaders trained in the Scriptures, he then made the difficult decision to leave the Cakchiquels and begin translation again elsewhere. This required a place to train more workers.

**1934** Camp Wycliffe, later to become SIL was born. SIL International continues to provide specialist training not only for Wycliffe Bible Translators but for others wishing to use their expertise.

### Wycliffe Bible Translators in the UK and Worldwide

**1953** An SIL course was held at the London Bible College. The aim of the course was to equip rather than to recruit, but some of the students, feeling God's leading, applied to join Wycliffe.

The course was repeated in successive years and UK involvement increased.

**1964** Wycliffe UK was formed as a separate charity. Other Wycliffe Organisations were formed in Australia, Germany, and Canada. Today the Wycliffe Global Alliance ([www.wycliffe.net](http://www.wycliffe.net)) has grown to have more than 100 organisations associated with it in some way.

**2010** New Testaments have been completed in 745 languages. Now we aim to see a translation programme begun in every language that needs it by **2025**.



*"If your God is so great,  
why can't he speak my  
language?"*

[wycliffe.org.uk](http://wycliffe.org.uk)

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## A committed membership

### The people:

Some 450 UK members contribute to an active world-wide membership of over 6,000. Many more are currently preparing for service.

### Their finances:

Members are supported on an individual basis rather than through salaries paid from donations to a central fund.

They give approximately 10% of this to cover organisational expenses.

Half of this is spent overseas (according to needs as determined by local leadership) and half supports administration, education and recruitment programmes at home.

## How we work

Wycliffe members are generally seconded to SIL to carry out all aspects of our task. No two situations are the same so SIL works in different ways in different countries.

Our overall vision remains constant but our working practices must be tailored to the situations in which we find ourselves.

- Where possible we work alongside local Christians, frequently under the sponsorship of a local church.
- In countries where national Bible translation organisations have been set up we act as consultants and trainers, helping them as requested.
- In other countries we are sponsored by government or educational bodies who value our language research and literacy work.



## We believe...

... the Bible, the inspired Word of God, is completely trustworthy, speaking with supreme authority in all matters of belief and practice.

... in one God, who exists eternally in three persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit

... all people, being created in the image of God, have intrinsic value, but as a result of sin are alienated from God and each other, and therefore in need of reconciliation.

... that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, born of the virgin Mary, is fully God and fully human; He demonstrated God's love for sinners by suffering the penalty of death in their place, rose bodily from the dead and ascended to heaven where He intercedes for His people.

... all who repent and trust in Jesus Christ alone as Lord and Saviour are, by the grace of God, declared to be right with Him, receiving forgiveness and eternal life.

... the Lord Jesus Christ will return personally in glory, raise the dead, and judge the world.

... all people will rise from the dead, those who are in Christ to enjoy eternal life with God, and those who are lost to suffer eternal separation from Him.

... in the Holy Spirit who imparts new life to those who believe in Christ; through His indwelling presence and transforming power He gives assurance and equips believers for holy living and effective service.

... the Church is the body of Christ, the fellowship of all believers, and is commissioned to make disciples of all nations.

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