

The Incarnate Word

“Incarnate” literally means “in the flesh.” The heart of Bible translation is to continue in the footsteps of Jesus, the Word made flesh, who translated the love of God for the entire world through His death on the cross.

Over the next two weeks, as we celebrate the Word made flesh and prepare for a new year, we will learn about the different “skins” Scripture wears in languages and cultures around the world. You’ll meet one African community that has a special word for “darkness,” an Asian pastor who fully understands a prophecy about Jesus for the first time, and a woman in the Americas who now understands her worth and beauty in God’s eyes through Song of Songs. Each language and culture has its own beautiful way of making God’s truth come alive.

As we prepare to enter 2025, we recognize that more than 1 billion people still don’t have the full Bible in their language, and millions are still waiting for a single verse. As the global church, we will not rest until the love of Jesus is translated and incarnated in each community around the world, no matter how far, perilous, or small.

Pray With Others	Get More Resources
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Pseudonyms may be used for names and locations in areas hostile to Christians.

Saturday

PRAYER UPDATES FROM AROUND THE WORLD

Praise God for the recording of the Gospel of Mark, 1–2 Thessalonians, and Philemon! Pray for complete healing for translator Millie, who has had foot problems, and for additional space for the translation team to work, which will be needed in the next few years as we grow. [See a photo of the team.](#)

— the Choctaw team in the United States

The Ndali community depends only on farming and livestock. Please pray for reliable rainfall so the Ndali community can harvest enough food. Please pray for the consultant check of Genesis 1-25, which is expected to be finished soon, and for safe travel for the translation consultant.

— the Ndali team in Tanzania

Let us pray that the Lord will give peace of heart to the Baycawara people. They are constantly under attack by terrorists, and a village chief has been killed, as well as several people from the villages. Let us pray that the Lord will preserve the Baycawara people from terrorist attacks.

— the Baycawara team, part of the [Mandara Mountain Cluster](#) in Cameroon

With Selmira's death, the team has struggled to find a new person to help with [back translation](#). Please pray for that person, and that the Word of God continues to spread throughout the Napo region.

— the [Napo](#) team in Peru

Zero Is a Promise

[Revelation 7:9](#) speaks of “a vast crowd, too great to count, from every nation and tribe and people and language, standing in front of the throne and before the Lamb.” One day, Jesus will receive worship in *every language*.

The question is, when?

In 1999, Wycliffe USA cast the vision of beginning Bible translation in every waiting language by the end of [2025](#). This vision, which has since been adopted by many others, could be thought of as “the first Zero.”

Today, more than 800 languages are still waiting to start translation, according to [Progress.Bible](#). But we also know *nothing* is impossible with God. What if, by next Christmas, we are celebrating this “first Zero”? Lord, may it be!

Then, there is the “second Zero”—the day when the *whole world* has access to the *whole Word* in their language. When they’ve not only begun translation, but they’ve also finished it. Many people aim to have this “second Zero” within reach by [2033](#).

God alone knows the times and seasons. Whether we’re focusing on 2025 or 2033, Revelation 7:9 is the only “Guaranteed Zero.” So no matter what happens in the next year or 10, *that* is the vision we pray for and work toward. A vision that is God’s idea.

Sunday

FROM EURASIA

After this I saw a vast crowd, too great to count, from every nation and tribe and people and language, standing in front of the throne and before the Lamb. They were clothed in white robes and held palm branches in their hands.

— Revelation 7:9 (NLT)

How Would They Pray Differently?

By Angela B., a [Translation Consultant](#)

Almost all Awan people follow another major world religion. They live in a hot, dry, dangerous land where house churches and translators are at high risk. In recent decades, life has become increasingly difficult for the average Awan family. Depression and suicide rates have climbed sharply. Many adults struggle to make ends meet, even while working two or three jobs.

While translator John was working on Revelation, he noted the prayers being broadcast throughout the neighborhood. They were praying for the return of the prophet that their religion teaches will bring the final victory. He thought, what a difference it would make if they knew that God is not planning a victory for just one nation!

“Everyone here is praying for peace,” John said. “That is on everyone’s mind: that our country will not be at war. Jesus called every nation to himself. His gospel is for *everyone*. These verses in Revelation say how every people and language and culture is with Him. How would Awan people pray differently if they knew the truth of God?”

PRAY

- For the Awan community as they receive the New Testament. May it open their eyes to the identity of Jesus as Savior and Lord.
- For peace in the Awan area—not just political peace, but holistic Shalom peace as people respond to the gospel.

Monday

FROM ISLANDS ASIA

Dear brothers and sisters, when troubles of any kind come your way, consider it an opportunity for great joy. For you know that when your faith is tested, your endurance has a chance to grow. So let it grow, for when your endurance is fully developed, you will be perfect and complete, needing nothing.

— James 1:2–4 (NLT)

So Let It Grow

By Roger Hanna, a Translation Consultant

As a translation consultant, I have the joy of mentoring teams as they grow both in their translation skills and in their walks with Christ. Toward the beginning of this year, I was working with a team in Southeast Asia when one young translator named Pira shared with me how God had spoken to her while checking James 1:2–4.

Pira knows that God wants to use the trials in our lives to help us grow in spiritual maturity. But when she is in the village, she struggles with feelings of isolation. In her language area, which borders another country, the drug trade is thriving, and it is destroying the lives of many young people. In general, young people in her area are apathetic toward the gospel and church.

PRAY

For God to help Pira, and others like her, to stand strong in their walks with Jesus and persevere with joy despite isolation and loneliness. Sometimes Bible translators are the first believers in their communities. Sometimes their own family members do not even know about their translation work or their newfound faith.

Tuesday

CHRISTMAS EVE: FROM MAINLAND ASIA

Then Simeon blessed them, and he said to Mary, the baby's mother, "This child is destined to cause many in Israel to fall, and many others to rise. He has been sent as a sign from God, but many will oppose him."

— Luke 2:34 (NLT)

A Pastor Equipped to Share About Jesus

It's not easy leading a church in the Iroso area, where traditional animism and ancestor worship affect every aspect of life. Many people believe ancestors can come back to either harm them or bring blessings, depending on if they've been properly honored.

Anyone who chooses to follow Jesus faces persecution from their family, friends, and the government. Yet, despite these obstacles, nearly 10% of Iroso people have chosen to follow Jesus. Pastor Bob shepherds a small flock of Iroso believers. They keep a low profile, meeting at inconspicuous places for Sunday worship so as not to attract notice.

When Pastor Bob encountered Luke 2:34 in his own language, he finally understood figurative terms like "fall," "rise," and "sign," and felt better equipped to share this important prophecy with others. He shares his hope that, as more Scripture is translated, "God's love will spread to everyone in the Iroso community, so that many more people can hear about God and believe in Him."

PRAY

Can you imagine being a pastor and only having access to the Bible in your second or third language—which you and many members of your flock may not understand or speak very well? That is the reality for many pastors around the world. Today, let's pray for pastors and shepherds all over the world to be equipped with Scripture in their own language as well as other resources they need to be able to lead their people in the Truth.

Wednesday

CHRISTMAS DAY: FROM ANGLOPHONE WEST AFRICA

The angel answered, “The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God.”

— Luke 1:35 (NLT)

The Word of God, Born of the Spirit

An interview with Alan, who trains oral Bible storytellers in an area of Africa where there is great tension between Muslims and Christians. Courtesy of [Ruth Ferguson](#), a Seed Company writer.

“Around Christmastime, we chose to work on the story ‘The Birth of Jesus.’ It talks about how the angel appeared to Mary the mother of Jesus and told her what would happen. She accepted it. Then, the angel told her, ‘You will be pregnant by the Spirit of God.’ And it happened. She became pregnant not because of any man, not through any man, but through the Spirit of God. And she delivered the Son, the Word of God, as a result of the Spirit of God.

“I asked the Muslim story crafters, ‘Can you see why Christians say Jesus is the Son of God? From the stories, we have seen that He did not have a human father. He is directly from God, by the Spirit.’ They agreed and said that they’d misunderstood the Christian teaching about Jesus. Even the leader of a mosque said Oral Bible Storytelling has given him great understanding and will help him relate with Christians in an understanding manner.

“It’s always difficult for us to approach Muslims and tell them Jesus is the Son of God. This generates some anger and problems. But with Oral Bible Storytelling, Christians are better equipped to communicate this truth in areas that are predominantly Muslim.”

PRAISE

For the ways Oral Bible Storytelling is opening doors for better communication and understanding between Muslims and Christians.

PRAY

For God to bless and equip Alan and others around the world like him, who train oral Bible storytellers to be confident in sharing God's Word in their language.

Thursday

FROM THE CONGO BASIN

And the city has no need of sun or moon, for the glory of God illuminates the city, and the Lamb is its light.

— Revelation 21:23 (NLT)

Toombe Kiankobo

By Paulian T. Petric, [Residency Translation Consultant in Training](#)

As we were checking the Gospel of Matthew with the Manianga team, we were discussing how to translate [22:13](#): “...outside, into the darkness,” when one of the translators shared this phrase: “toombe kiankobo.”

North of the Congo River, when it's night and there is no moon, it's so dark outside that people can pass by each other without knowing. There is no source of light; it's the most profound darkness that one can imagine. They describe that darkness with this phrase “toombe kiankobo.” It is a powerful picture that links the biblical text to their life and reality.

The Light Shines in the Darkness

Outside of God's presence, it is indeed “toombe kiankobo.” By choosing to reject God, we embrace the utter darkness—for this life and the life to come. For the believer, however, the same phrase speaks about the light that God has brought into our lives through His Word and our hope for the Heavenly City that “does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp” (Revelation 21:23).

This is what takes us and inspires us through our journey of faith on this earth; this is the faith that each one of us is called to embody in their own language and culture. We are a people redeemed out of darkness! If we truly know this, let us continue to witness to others. If we truly rejoice in this, let us continue to translate for other people groups and their language the same words that give us peace for this life and hope for the life to come.

For you are the fountain of life, the light by which we see.

— *Psalm 36:9*

PRAY

For all 4,000+ languages, like Manianga, that are currently in the process of Bible translation. May God grant the translators wisdom to find the right words to help people understand the depth of darkness without Christ and the light that is only found in Him.

Friday

FROM EURASIA

Restore us, O Lord, and bring us back to you again! Give us back the joys we once had!

— Lamentations 5:21 (NLT)

A Heartfelt Lament

The Gali Deaf are part of a people group with a long history of being displaced, marginalized, mistreated, and even killed for their ethnicity. But the Deaf have felt marginalized not only by outside cultures but even by their own, as they've been left out of festivals and rituals that bind the Gali community together and give them a shared identity.

Bible translation is helping to bring change. When Gali people recently gathered to commemorate a dark time in their history, for the first time, Deaf people could join in the public reading of Lamentations by watching a filmed sign language translation of Jeremiah's lament over Jerusalem.

For years, Deaf people had been going to worship services, but they'd barely understood the text. One Deaf man signed, "I have finally seen the meaning of the words come alive." Together, the Gali Deaf signed a prayer from Lamentations 5:21 (NLT): "Restore us, O Lord, and bring us back to you again! Give us back the joys we once had!" May God answer this prayer, strengthening Gali people amid adversity and leading them to Jesus.

PRAY

For peace among the Gali—not only physical peace, as attacks from neighboring countries continue to threaten their lives—but the perfect peace that can only come from receiving Jesus as Messiah and Lord.

Saturday

FROM THE AMERICAS

*You have captured my heart,
my treasure, my bride.*

*You hold it hostage with one glance of your eyes,
with a single jewel of your necklace.*

— Song of Songs 4:8 (NLT)

The Aukan People of Suriname

In the South American country of Suriname, many African slaves escaped the cruel, inhumane conditions of Dutch plantations to form their own communities in the jungle. One of these groups is the Aukan [AHW'–KAHN] people. For over 300 years, the Aukaners have lived in relative isolation from the outside world.

Aukan people see God as stern and far off. They believe that God became disgusted with mankind (especially the Aukan people) and removed Himself from their presence. They struggle with concepts of mercy or salvation by grace through faith. Anyone who gives their lives to Christ is seen as a threat to the Aukan way of life and often moves away from the traditional village. Nevertheless, a few thousand Aukan people have come to Christ.

Aukan Women Find Worth in Scripture

In Aukan culture, polygamy is common, and it is rare for men to publicly say they love their wives or express affection for them. Marriage is a contract in which the woman agrees to bear the man's children, and the man agrees to provide materially for his wife.

So while reading through the new translation of Song of Solomon, one Aukan woman named Rinia was very moved. She said, "I am astonished to read how this man is praising his wife, saying how much he loves her and how beautiful she is. Now I know that we as women are valuable in God's eyes."

Another Aukan woman loved verse 1:5, which says, "I am dark but beautiful." Given her people's history and continued status as an ethnic minority in Suriname, this verse affirmed her value and beauty in the eyes of God.

PRAY

For more Aukan people's eyes to be opened to the only God who sees them and can save them, and for more women like Rinia, both in Suriname and around the world, to discover their worth in God's eyes through Scripture in their languages.

Sunday

FROM EURASIA

From now on, those who are married should not be thinking only about their marriage.

— 1 Corinthians 7:29 (translated back into English from Awan)

“Is That Really What It Says?”

By Angela B., a [Translation Consultant](#)

When translator John of the Awan team first encountered 1 Corinthians 7:29, which literally reads, “From now on, married men should live as if they don’t have wives,” he grew uncomfortable. He remarked, “This is a big problem in our city already. Men get married, but they go out every night as if they are still single and ignore their wives. If they see that Paul has said this, they will feel they are doing the right thing!”

In their home country, women are often treated as inferior and unworthy of privileges that men enjoy religiously, politically, and socially. The gospel resonates among women there because of the freedom that Jesus offers.

One Awan woman, Sarah, even became a Bible translator specifically to help other women know their true identity and value in Christ. She says proudly, “I pray and study the Bible and speak openly about what God is teaching me—that I am his daughter! More women in my country need to hear this and know their value in His sight!”

Examining the Context

So the team looked more deeply at the *context* of 1 Corinthians 7:29. They noted that the whole chapter is devoted to whether Christians should be married. They concluded that, whatever a believer's marital status, Paul's goal is "to promote good order and to secure your undivided devotion to the Lord" (1 Corinthians 7:35).

Finally, the team arrived at the translation, "From now on, those who are married should not be thinking only about their marriage." This seemed a good way to show that Paul was not condoning infidelity but rather *faithfulness* to God above all else.

PRAY

For translators who live in contexts with stark gender inequality and oppression. May the Lord give them wisdom in understanding His Word and translating it in a way that resonates with its readers and hearers, leading to all people being treated with equal worth and dignity.

Monday

FROM SOUTH ASIA

There is no longer Jew or Gentile, slave or free, male and female. For you are all one in Christ Jesus.

— Galatians 3:28 (NLT)

The Gospel Bridges Gaps in Indian Culture

Most of the nearly 36 million Malayalam speakers adhere to Hinduism and the caste system that goes with it. One Malayalam speaker named Jom was exposed to the harsh realities of this system at an early age. Some people, proud of their high status, would look down on and insult those they deemed inferior. As a child, Jom wondered: *Who will bridge the gap between people at different status levels?*

“I found myself deeply engaged in exploring the meaning and purpose of life. I felt a great emptiness inside me,” Jom remembers. “Then, in 1992, desperate for answers, I first heard the gospel. I confessed my sins, responded to God’s Word, and committed my life to Christ.”

Partnering with Christ

“I experienced a whirlwind of emotions,” Jom continues. “Although I wept, I felt an overwhelming sense of joy, unlike anything I’d ever known. It was as if a whole new world had opened up to me, and I felt compelled to share this experience with others. From that day forward, I began spreading the message of Jesus to everyone around me. I found profound happiness in sharing the gospel and embraced the belief that the Holy Spirit can dwell in anyone, regardless of background.

“Over time, the emptiness that had plagued me was gone. In 1999, I dedicated myself to a full-time career as an evangelist. By God’s grace, I now contribute to Bible translation. He has entrusted me with a special task. I feel a deep sense of satisfaction and happiness in this work.”

PRAY

For people across India, like Jom, to be set free as they encounter the gospel in their own language. Ask God to grant Jom and evangelists like him grace to communicate the gospel clearly, leading to individual and ultimately social change.

Tuesday

NEW YEAR'S EVE: FROM MAINLAND ASIA

“Look, I am sending you out as sheep among wolves. So be as shrewd as snakes and harmless as doves. But beware! For you will be handed over to the courts and will be flogged with whips in the synagogues. You will stand trial before governors and kings because you are my followers. But this will be your opportunity to tell the rulers and other unbelievers about me. When you are arrested, don’t worry about how to respond or what to say. God will give you the right words at the right time. For it is not you who will be speaking—it will be the Spirit of your Father speaking through you.

— Matthew 10:16–20 (NLT)

As Shrewd as Snakes and Harmless as Doves

Surrounded by followers of another major world religion in a country that is largely opposed to Christianity, Yelo house churches eagerly await more Scripture in their language. There are no more than 100 known believers among about 500,000 Yelo speakers. The Yelo New Testament is now complete, and translators are working on the Old Testament.

When local authorities launched an investigation into religious activities, visiting church members to intimidate them, translator John and his coworker were placed under house arrest and forced to pay large fines. They were warned that their activities would be monitored and told never to gather with church members again.

In this environment, we praise God that John and other Yelo believers have Jesus’ words in [Matthew 10](#) in their own language to strengthen and encourage them.

PRAY

- For John and all Yelo believers to be shrewd as serpents and innocent as doves, and to not worry about how to respond or what to say when they are brought before authorities, trusting that God will give them the words.
- That as we enter a new year, it would be a new dawn for John and other believers in his country. Only the Holy Spirit can open doors and change hearts in this area that is so hostile to the gospel. Pray for God's favor and protection for John and for the entire Yelo church, that the Lord would strengthen their faith and give them wisdom to navigate persecution and harsh government restrictions.

Wednesday

NEW YEAR'S DAY: FROM EURASIA

... and to keep you from being shaken by the troubles you were going through. But you know that we are destined for such troubles. Even while we were with you, we warned you that troubles would soon come—and they did, as you well know.

— 1 Thessalonians 3:3–4 (NLT)

Though Troubles May Come

By Angela B., a [Translation Consultant](#)

The Awan team happened to be working on 1 Thessalonians while another translator in their region was facing charges of going against the morality of society, which can be punished with fines, flogging, and/or prison time.

They were disturbed by [1 Thessalonians 3:3–4](#), which says “we are destined for such troubles.” They said, “This makes it sound like we have no choice but to suffer. Is there something different we can say?”

I wish I could ask Paul the same question, I thought. Do we have to go through all of this? Isn't there an easier way?

But I said, “That’s what the text says; you have it right. Paul is saying that’s part of being a believer.”

They nodded and said nothing.

Then, they continued on to translate the following words in verses 7 and 8: “So we have been greatly encouraged in the midst of our troubles and suffering, dear brothers and sisters, because you have remained strong in your faith. It gives us new life to know that you are standing firm in the Lord.”

PRAY

For all Bible translators who are currently being scrutinized or questioned by authorities. Ask for peace that passes understanding, protection, and wisdom in what to say before their accusers. Pray 1 Thessalonians 3:7–8 for them, that they may be greatly encouraged in the midst of their troubles and suffering, and that they may remain strong in their faith—whatever may come in the year ahead.

Thursday

FROM MAINLAND ASIA

The voice said to me, “Son of man, eat what I am giving you—eat this scroll! Then go and give its message to the people of Israel.” So I opened my mouth, and he fed me the scroll. “Fill your stomach with this,” he said. And when I ate it, it tasted as sweet as honey in my mouth.

— Ezekiel 3:1-3 (NLT)

Eat This Scroll, Give Its Message

Opposition to Christian faith is a daily reality for believers in the Tumah homeland, who comprise less than 1% of the population of 1.8 million. Because the government actively tries to stifle Christian activity, translation work must continue in great secrecy. Even so, Tumah believers keep their eyes open for opportunities to share God’s Word.

One day, when translator Mela was letting her 5-year-old grandson play outside, she started chatting with other women who were complaining about difficult people not being held accountable for their actions.

Mela and the team had been working on Ezekiel, and she was reminded of chapters 2 and 3. In that passage, God gives Ezekiel a scroll with words of rebuke for Israel, which he eats. Ezekiel eating the scroll likely represents him fully accepting and obeying the words of God (as Ezekiel 3:10 says, “Son of man, let all my words sink deep into your own heart first. Listen to them carefully for yourself”). Mela used this passage to tell the women that the Most High God will not let sin go unaddressed.

An Important Cultural Connection

For Tumah speakers, “eating words” has special significance. They have an expression that literally means “Speak utterances, eat utterances.” This phrase is used to convey the idea of someone doing what he says and standing by his word; it isn’t used lightly.

This image of “eating God’s words” caught one woman’s attention and convinced her that the Most High God is committed to true justice. She asked Mela to tell her more about the Bible and the book of Ezekiel.

PRAY

For more Tumah speakers to “fill their stomachs with God’s Word,” and for it to taste as sweet as honey in their mouths, like Ezekiel 3:1–3 says. May God continue to protect Mela and others like her, who take great risks to translate and share God’s Word in their communities.

Friday

FROM EURASIA

“The time promised by God has come at last!” he announced. “The Kingdom of God is near! Repent of your sins and believe the Good News!”

— Mark 1:15 (NLT)

The Kingdom Is Near

Roughly 7.6 million people speak the Tama language, but only 0.02% are Christian. Most Tama speakers have never had a chance to see a Bible or hear the good news about Jesus, but Bible translators are working to bring them faithful, clear Scripture that resonates within their culture.

One expert in Scripture interpretation who works with the Tama team was asked, “Has the way you read or understand Scripture changed in the course of your work?” Mark 1:15 came to mind: “The Kingdom of God is near! Repent of your sins and believe the Good News!”

In English, the word “kingdom” might recall images of knights on horseback or grand stone castles. But in Tama, it’s closer to “divine sultanate,” which brings to mind colored fabrics, fragrant spices, merchants selling food on carts, and “endless wonder and sounds of life coming from every direction—not unlike a scene from the live-action *Aladdin!*”

The team member explained that, as a result of this image, “we were all in wonder at the future God has for us—a place that will be full of beauty and life.” They concluded, “The Tama translation not only brings life to Tama speakers but enriches our collective vision of God’s plan for His world.”

PRAISE

For this colorful, vibrant imagery of the kingdom of God that has been brought to life in Tama.

PRAY

For many Tama speakers to enter God's kingdom, full of beauty and abundant life, as they receive His Word in their language.