

SPRING 2019

WORD **alive**

Special Edition:
Annual Report 2018

Vision 2025

Pursuing the goal

New Horizons

Global challenges and opportunities

Engaging at Home

Canada and First Nations



Wycliffe
BIBLE TRANSLATORS



From Roy Eyre, Wycliffe Canada President Greetings in Jesus' Name



Think of how it feels to know you are made in God's image ... that the Good Shepherd who relentlessly pursues His sheep pursues you.

Now imagine living your whole life without knowing that you matter to God. Imagine believing that God doesn't even speak your language.

As I reflect on the past year, I think about people whom the world has pushed to the margins. I think about Bible poverty — the unavailability of Scripture, any Scripture, in their languages. I think about trends in our own country that could eventually lead to Bible poverty even in a land of plenty.

Wycliffe Bible Translators works with partner churches and organizations in hard places. Some are scattered around the globe; some are right here in Canada. We work with anticipation of what God's Word will mean to people who have never before felt significant. The thought, God speaks my language, gets to the heart of the gospel: God pursued me. He loved me so much that He sent His Son to die for me.

It changes everything. Suddenly a person doesn't feel so marginal anymore.

Finished Scripture is our tangible product, whether in print, digital or oral form. What we're ultimately about, though, is transformation — deep change, societal and personal, that happens when people get God's Word. We want to see communities thrive in every area of life. As we work in literacy, community development and all the things that go along with Bible translation, we pray that people will find dignity, hope and meaning as they meet the God who loves them.

On behalf of our entire staff, it's my honour to offer you this 2018 Annual Report for Wycliffe Bible Translators of Canada. We're going with a longer-than-usual format this year, so that we can slow the pace of information and allow you to pause, reflect and pray as God speaks to you. I'll serve as your guide as this letter walks through the year's major highlights and challenges. Along the way you'll find key statistics, stunning photography and, I pray, excitement about God's global work.



Democratic Republic of Congo.
Photo by Alan Hood

Dry and Thirsty

In Fiscal Year 2018, I got several up-close views of what Bible poverty looks like. I traveled to “closed” countries and talked with people serving in sensitive, restricted areas. They told me about the risks being taken, both by local people and by expat Canadians, to get Scripture to their communities.

Bible translation typically sounds like a safe, esoteric, academic pursuit. That is, until you realize it costs people their lives. In one country, a man was describing for me the incredible hunger he sees among his people for God’s Word in their language.

“My land is a very dry and thirsty land,” he said.

This man spent years searching for a copy of the Bible in the language of wider communication for that country. Now, at great personal risk, he wants to be part of translating it for his own language.

2,163 languages are waiting for Bible translation to begin. That’s 180 million people who today don’t have a single verse of Scripture.

Vision 2025

Against that backdrop, I’m pleased to report to you that Fiscal Year 2018 moved Wycliffe closer to our goal of Scripture in every living language by 2025. The waiting list actually grew last year; as I write this, 2,163 languages remain with no Scripture at all.

Wait, what? The countdown went backwards? Well, not really. It just became more accurate. With more Bible translation organizations pooling their knowledge and resources, we have been rebuilding our statistics from the ground up. We have a far better picture now.

Despite the momentary disappointment of seeing the number rise, it’s fantastic to have real data and to have confidence in it. Vision 2025 remains very much in play for Wycliffe and for the entire Bible translation movement, but it will still take a real work of God.

Two major factors made the number go higher. We added more than 200 sign languages, previously uncounted. At the same time, some organizations discovered projects that had been marked as “started,” but where no translation work had actually begun. So we had to put those back on the waiting list.

Timely Help

We had a good year for funding, expanding our global reach. One of the things I’m most excited about is a fund we started called the **Priority Projects Fund**. We initially thought this would serve as an emergency fund, just to make sure we could meet our commitments. But we had a great end of calendar year 2017, which gave us money we could use to engage with field partners in opportunities as we heard about them.

When violence flared again in the Democratic Republic of Congo, people in the northeast took boats to neighbouring Uganda or gathered in refugee camps in Bunia. A denomination there asked us to fund a trauma healing workshop. Preparing for one of these typically takes two to three months. They wanted the workshop in two weeks. The Priority Projects Fund allowed it to happen.

Scripture-based trauma healing helps lift the burden of grief and pain. It reveals relevant Scriptures. As people read about others in the Bible who went through pain ... as they read the Psalms ... they realize Scripture doesn’t just stay on the surface. It goes to the deep, human condition. It reaches pain and forgiveness and grace. The Scriptures come alive.

One trainer watched another person leave the workshop at the end of the day. “I knew this person but I did not recognize him,” he said. “His countenance was different—just from one day of this workshop.”

Doing that type of work in a refugee camp is exactly the kind of impact the Bible translation movement can have. Again, it’s the heart of the gospel: taking God’s Word to people in their raw need, rather than making them go look for it.



Democratic Republic of Congo.
Photo by Alan Hood

Hard Places

More than one-third of Canadian Wycliffe members assigned overseas are working in difficult places. Access may be restricted politically or geographically. The area may be war-torn. And, the predominant religion there may be hostile to Christianity. That's a lot of opposition, both physical and spiritual. It reminds me that our members and their local partners need constant prayer and support.

Working in those cultures illuminates the critical importance of translating the Old Testament as well as the New. People use Old Testament stories as a bridge between what they have learned in their own religion and the Bible, where they ultimately will be introduced to Jesus Christ.



Democratic Republic of Congo.
Photo by Alan Hood

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Grassroots Funding

Wycliffe's biggest growth area in FY2018 was project funding—money specifically targeted toward translation work in a specific language or group of languages. This year we exceeded \$1 million in donations for projects with our field partners. That's exciting.

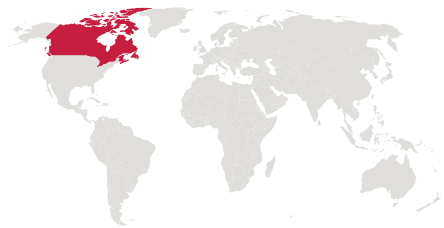
We have seen a funding combination of some major donors and foundations, plus other good results from direct mail and online. And then the diaspora church—people who have migrated to Canada—has started Kingdom friendships with churches in places like Peru and Thailand. They're enthusiastic about wanting to help do and fund the work.

We continue to see an incredible outpouring of generosity from our donors, and I'm so excited about the groundswell that's happening. A few of our donors are new, while others are long-time partners whose vision for their connection to Bible translation is growing. Daniel Genest (our National Director of Development) and I have gotten to know many of our generous donors, and we're amazed at how they've responded.

In previous years we've typically received a single, big gift for which we are grateful. This year I'm also encouraged by the growing number of "small" and medium-sized gifts. Our diversifying funding base builds financial stability.

Then there are the fun surprises, like Richmond Hill Christian Community Church outside Toronto. They're one of the largest Chinese churches in North America. A few of their members went to a PEACE Plan missions conference at Saddleback Church in California, and they saw a display for a program where people can sponsor Bible translation one verse at a time.

So they came back to Canada and asked, "Can we do the same thing with Wycliffe?" We said, "Sure. Let's run the campaign." And so during November 2017, their church raised \$58,000, more than covering the remaining need for the New Testament in the Bali language in the Democratic Republic of Congo.



Translation in Canada

Much Bible translation work remains here in Canada, too. I'm excited to see work moving ahead with the Cree people, and to see how the Canadian Church has engaged. Two new Wycliffe couples arrived in their assignments last year, one to join existing work among the Oji-Cree and the other to help start new work among the Western Swampy Cree. In 2015 the Truth and Reconciliation Commission issued its report. Thirty-six percent of Canada's indigenous languages were listed as critically endangered. Several of the report's 94 calls to action were targeted at the faith community. A strategy to "remove the Indian from the child" through the residential schools can only be described as cultural genocide. Drawing attention to our role in the residential schools has motivated the Church.

This reminds me of conversations I've had both here in Canada and around the world that it's often easier to care for people overseas than those who live next door.

Canadian Christians have responded over the past two years, funding First Nations work through Wycliffe and other organizations. I love that we get to play a somewhat prophetic role helping Canadians see and respond to this need.

Working with the Cree people here in Canada puts Bible translation directly in front of us all. We realize that our neighbour in need of God's Word isn't just somebody overseas. It's somebody right here in Canada, too. We believe God still calls us to exercise compassion and care for our neighbour who is close, and where it is complicated.



Southeast Asia.
Photo by Alan Hood

Emerging Challenges

Wycliffe is known for sending people to the mission field. Yet, last year we sent out just four new missionaries. That is not nearly as many people as we are capable of sending, and I'm concerned.

Good indicators exist, though. Our linguistics partner, CanIL, is busting at the seams and has been recruiting effectively. They're training new Bible translators, but those people are several years from being able to step in and participate.

We're also going through a generational change at Wycliffe. We have lots of young people ready to step into roles. But we also need to honour those who have served for many years, and then we need to manage the gradual handoff to a new generation. It takes time to do that well.

Our leadership teams are strong. We're listed among the Best Christian Workplaces. Certainly we're not perfect, but as we work to see Bible translation advance globally, we also want our people to thrive.

“

The greatest missionary in the world is the Bible in the mother tongue.”

- WILLIAM CAMERON TOWNSEND (1896-1982),
FOUNDER OF WYCLIFFE BIBLE TRANSLATORS

The National Picture

It's no secret that parts of the Canadian Church are in decline, both in attendance and in commitment to missions. This has Church leaders understandably concerned, and we share those concerns—especially when we see statistics that fewer people are engaging with the Scriptures.

When Canadians set aside church or Bible reading, their respect for and confidence in the Bible declines. When they don't value the Scriptures for themselves, how will they ever value them for people overseas?

Canada's political climate is becoming more challenging for religious organizations, too. An organization with the unmistakable name Wycliffe Bible Translators, operating as overtly as we do, could face more opposition.

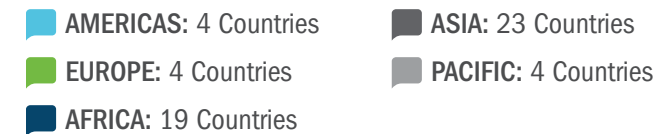
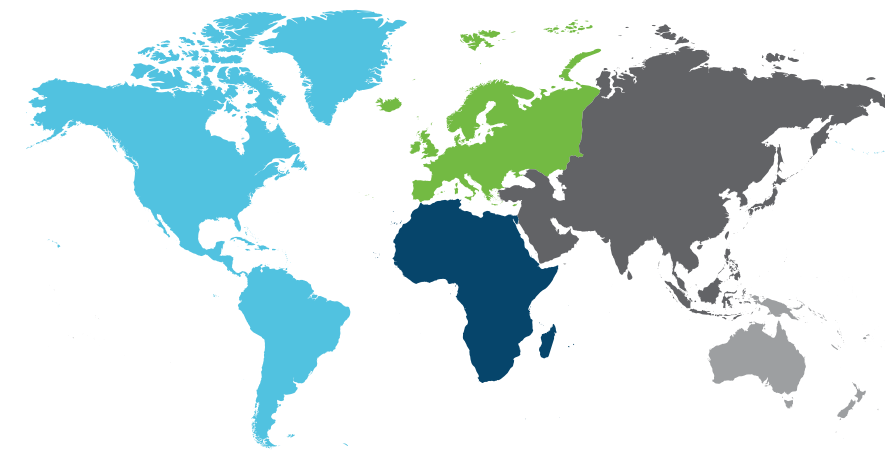
All of this means, of course, that our support base is in significant transition and is at risk of becoming smaller. But I'm not discouraged. There's also good news within these trends. Researchers tell us that the decline in attendance equates mostly to a decrease in those who are Christian in name only. Where there is growth, it's coming from immigration. Within mainline churches, where attendance loss is greatest, the bright spot is Korean churches. And we know that church attendance and reading the Bible rise and fall together. We haven't lost religious freedom yet in Canada; we've lost privilege—privilege which quite possibly softened us and weakened the Church.

As privileges and status get curtailed, the Church will survive and even thrive. The death of Christendom and nominalism is not the death of Christianity. We look ahead not with fear, but with hope and with fervent prayer. As Susanna Muntz, our Vice President of Engagement, says:

“We have not yet found the generation where God doesn't call His people.”

In other words, He is Lord of the harvest in every generation, not just those past. Right now, today, He is calling and sending people for the mission. Our work is to pray, perceive it and bless it.

Wycliffe Bible Translators of Canada are engaged today in 304 languages in 54 countries:



Potential impact:
303,456,603
people!

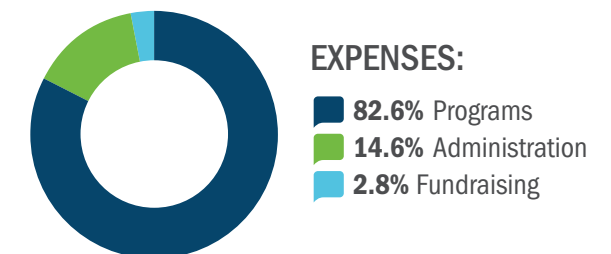
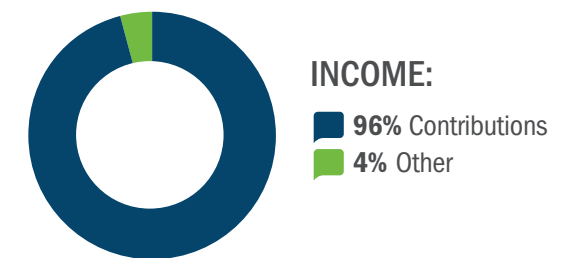
54 countries represented
by those languages

Financial Summary

These figures show financial activity for Wycliffe Bible Translators of Canada Inc. for the fiscal year ending August 20, 2018. Complete audited statements are available at statements.wycliffe.ca.

Statement of Operations and Changes in Fund Balances (thousands of dollars) over 12 months.

Income	Aug. 2018	Aug. 2017
Contributions income	17,089	16,411
Other income	275	67
Gain (Loss) on sale of assets	396	(4)
Expenses		
Wycliffe approved programs	14,068	13,384
Administration	2,478	2,394
Fundraising	486	1,124
Net Excess (Deficiency) of operations	728	(428)
Fund balances at beginning of year	3,077	3,505
Fund balances at end of year	3,805	3,077





Peru. Photo by Victoria Koehler

A Long War

The credibility I have in leading Wycliffe Canada boils down to this: Do I have a message from God? Have I spent time with God? And do I have a clear direction of where we should go because of that time I've had with God? So, I've been trying to shift my own leadership, spending more time in prayer and more time with the Word.

I spent about three months in FY2018 studying Exodus 17. It's the familiar passage where Moses goes up on the hill while Joshua fights the Amalekites. There's a lot more in there than I had noticed before. It was like peeling an onion. I kept going back to it again and again, trying to understand some of the nuances of what was going on there.

This passage attracted me, I think, because my role as Wycliffe President is shifting a little. More and more, I am turning day-to-day operations over to our very strong team. I need to spend more time on future-focused leadership, on global issues that I think Canada can speak into, and in spiritual leadership.

One of the things I noticed in Exodus 17 was the scene where Moses comes down from the mountain. I'm sure Joshua was saying, "Hey, did you see what happened? We won!" But Moses tells him that this war with the Amalekites is going to continue from generation to generation.

I love leading an organization and digging into some of the details, so that's not to say that I won't be engaged. But I also love thinking about the future and where we're going. I love spending time in God's Word. The challenge is then to come back and work with our leadership team to bring them along, so my thinking doesn't get too far out ahead of the organization's. We want to be able to lead together.

And Joshua was probably thinking, "Wait, what? Didn't we just beat them? They're going to be back?" It had to be deflating.

How did Moses know all of this? He wasn't just up there seeing the battle in front of him. He was hearing from God, longer-term.

Earnest Prayer

Quite a bit of my prayer time these days centres on world events. A few countries are seeing huge upheaval. And we're wondering, what is God doing there? Pala, Indonesia is one example. I was there in early 2018. To see it so devastated by the September earthquake and tsunami was just heartbreaking. Our partners around that nation have experienced real tragedies. One had a kids' camp that lost about 200 kids in the earthquake. So my prayer has been: How can we best support our partners in that situation?

I also spend a good deal of time praying for our donors and about the proposals we have made. As one of Wycliffe's former vice presidents used to say: Because money can be abused, you have to spend more time in prayer over it. If we aren't prayerfully careful, money can change our attitudes and become the driving force.

God has also improved the relationship between Wycliffe and OneBook, one of two organizations that spun out of Wycliffe in 2009 (CanIL was the other). We have differed over mission philosophy and organizational culture and methods, but we're experiencing real reconciliation and excellent ideas for collaboration.

Division is a luxury. When you're united by a common enemy and when pressures rise, then you start thinking differently.

Many have prayed a lot over Wycliffe's relationship with OneBook and CanIL, asking God, "How do we work together well as three organizations in Canada who are focused on Bible translation?" He is answering those prayers.

It's especially easy to forget that in Bible translation, the greatest work of all is prayer. Would you join me in thanking God for such a fruitful 2018? Would you thank Him for the countless lives and communities He is transforming, and ask Him to transform multitudes more? And would you ask that He continue to use Wycliffe staff, volunteers, donors and prayer partners to humbly advance His Kingdom?

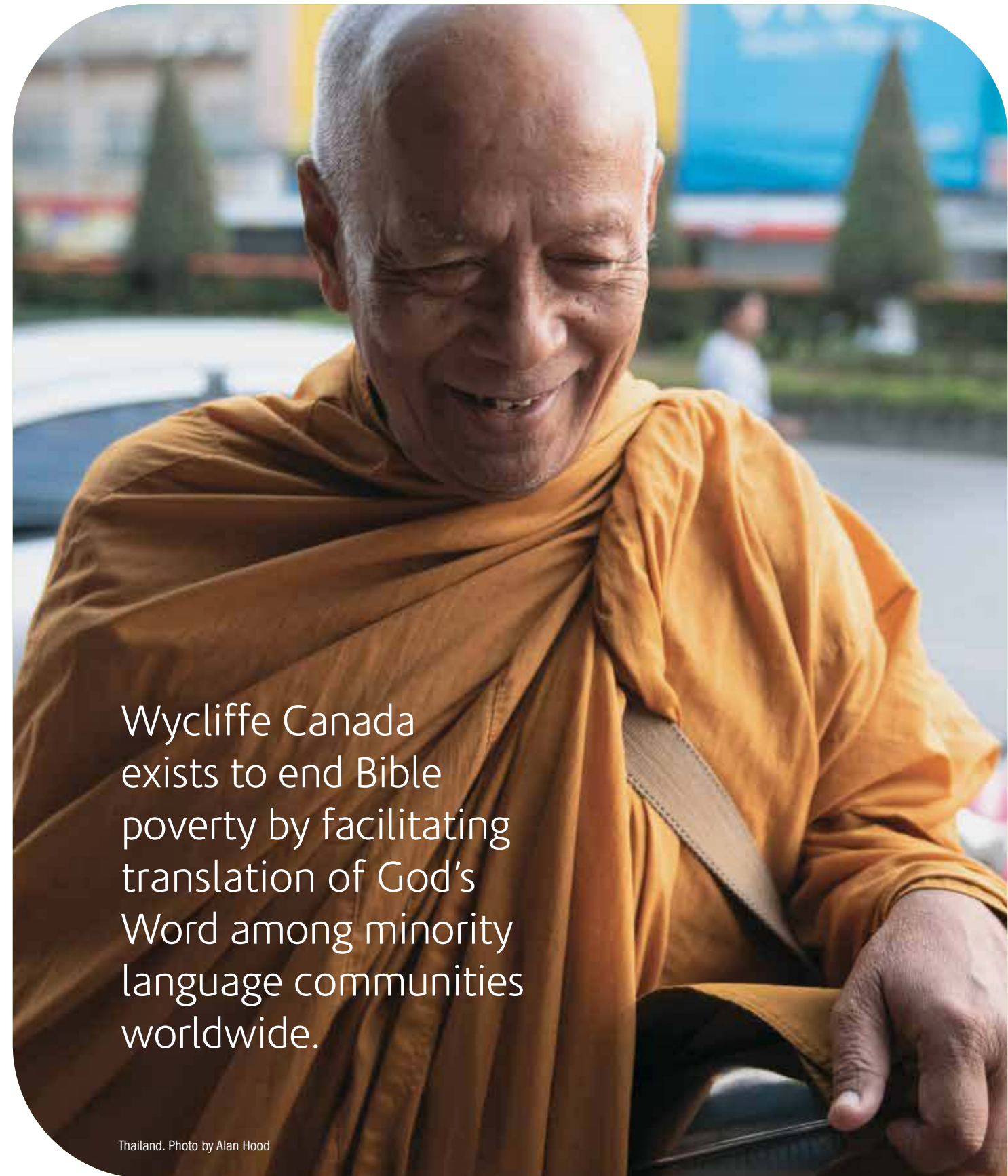
Only in His strength,

Roy Eyre
President
Wycliffe Bible Translators of Canada

Looking Back

Throughout 2018, with our Board of Directors, staff and donors, we celebrated Wycliffe Canada's 50th anniversary. It was a time to turn our focus backward as well as forward, and that's important. Bible translation has accelerated exponentially over the past three decades. For the first time in history, our goal of reaching every language is truly in sight. Our generation will see every nation, tribe, people and language engaged in Scripture.

That's incredibly exciting. But when we talk about being a favoured generation, pride can rear its head, too. It's easy to forget that nothing we are doing today would have been possible without the service, sacrifice and prayers of so many, over so many years. Since mid-December we've lost a few of those pillars of Wycliffe Canada, people like former director Jim Dean and 50-year veteran Ruth Thompson. Celebrating their lives reminds us of what we owe them for their contributions to the success we enjoy today.



Wycliffe Canada
exists to end Bible
poverty by facilitating
translation of God's
Word among minority
language communities
worldwide.

Thailand. Photo by Alan Hood



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