

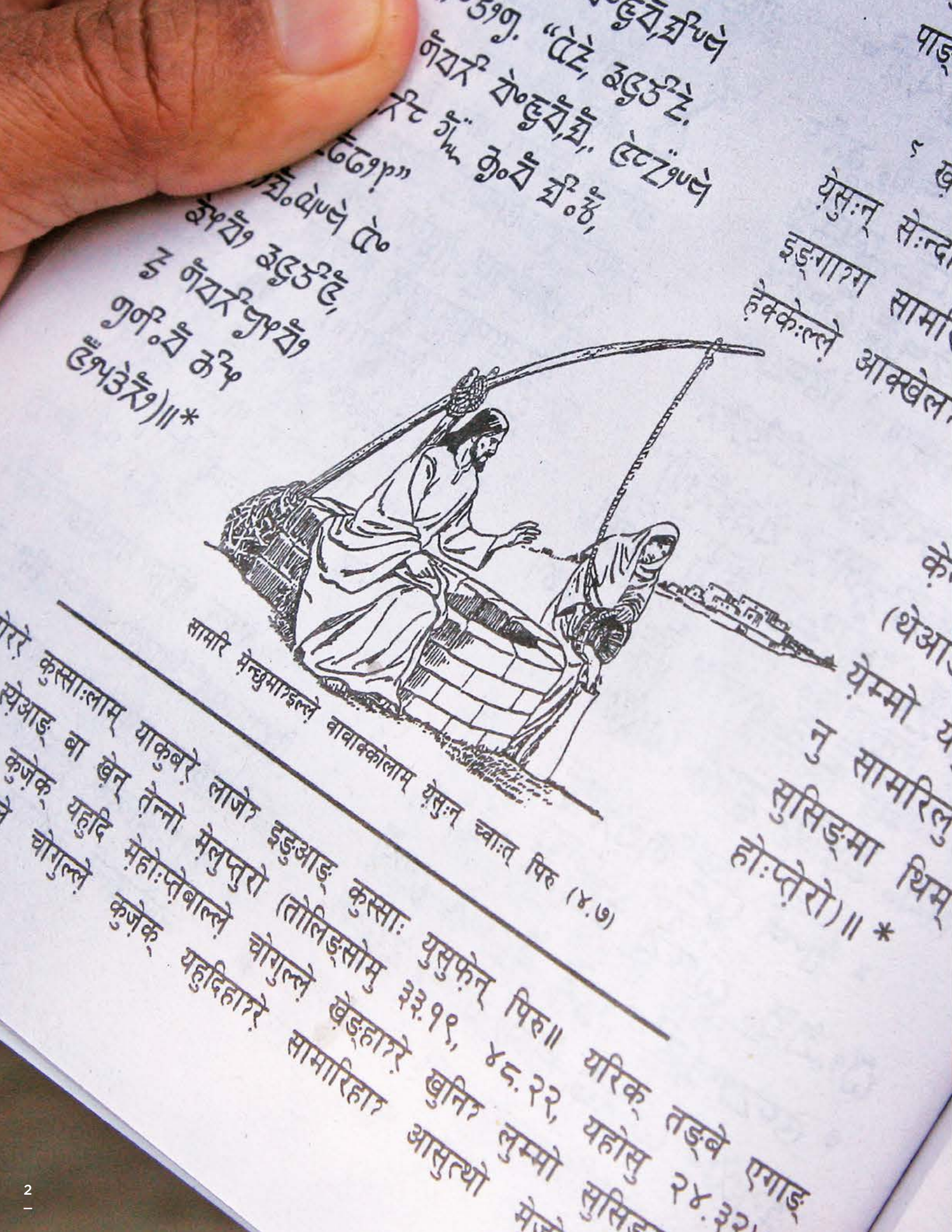


Seed Company™
Bible Translation. Life Transformation.



imagineZero

ANNUAL REPORT | 2017



GREETINGS IN JESUS' NAME

SAMUEL E. CHIANG
 | President and CEO

We praise God for Fiscal Year 2017.

God provided. God increased our ministry reach. God paved the way for truly unprecedented partnership. And God steered us through difficulty where there seemed to be no good way through.

During all of FY17, we watched God shepherd Seed Company through innovation, acceleration and generosity. We invite you to celebrate with us and focus upon God.

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Seed Company continues our relentless pursuit of Vision 2025. I am reminded that the founding board prayerfully and intentionally recorded the very first board policy: *The board directs management to operate Seed Company in an outcomes-oriented manner.* Thus, we continue to align people, resources and process toward outcomes, and we intend to continue to allocate resources so that outcomes before God, men, women and churches are accountable and transparent.

With 2025 fast approaching, we are praying that imagining Zerø will soon become the reality of Zerø — as in Zerø languages needing Bible translation to begin. We look forward to Vision 2025, when all languages will have access to at least portions of Scripture from both testaments, which narrate God's redemption story in Christ and the Church, empowered by the Holy Spirit.

Seed Company is celebrating our 25th year of serving the Bibleless. You have invested into each of the Bibleless languages so that each language will receive a portion of Scripture, or the New Testament, or the full Bible. We are thankful to God for your investment.

Reflecting on FY17, I think of the individual lives and stories that have been impacted through Seed Company's work. Every numerical goal achieved represents a community receiving Scripture: light invading darkness, the Word of God moving into the neighborhood.

God's gracious guidance saw us through the exciting breakthroughs and serious challenges that defined FY17. With regard to project starts, the numbers were encouraging. We saw 140 new language starts in FY17, well above the 125 we had targeted for the fiscal year. FY17 also saw 90 First Scripture engagements, which exceeded our ambitious goal of 88. We give thanks to God for His enabling of our colleagues to bring forth this result.

UNEXPECTED GRACE

Financial

Our organization has witnessed and felt God walking with us through some harsh difficulties.

In the very first month of FY17, the illumiNations 2016 gathering was canceled because of Hurricane Matthew, casting an uncertain shadow upon Seed Company. Interestingly, Matthew in the original Greek means "gift of God." We were lifting our eyes to see what exactly God had in mind for this organization. Nearing the end of Q1, we estimated the year's revenue shortfall would be 10 to 15 percent. As an exercise of faith, we redoubled our efforts to meet our revenue goals.

With the unaudited numbers in, I'm humbled and happy to report that FY17 contribution income totaled \$35.5 million — a \$1.1 million increase over FY16, despite the immense loss of the illumiNations 2016 gathering.

A New Day in Nigeria

In the first and second quarter of FY17, a series of unfortunate events led Seed Company to dissolve its partnership with a long-term partner in Africa. However, from a grievous and very trying situation, God brought redemption that only He could provide.

When the dissolution of the partnership was completed, we naturally assumed we would have to curb our involvement in Africa's most populous nation, home to more than 500 living languages. God had other plans.

The Lord surprised us. We watched the Lord stir new things into motion for the sake of Bibleless people groups in Nigeria, one of our most active fields of service and one of the countries with the most remaining languages needing translation.

In this uneasy environment, the number of partnering relationships has actually increased. We are thankful to God for enabling the indigenous Church to stand and participate in the work of Bible translation. In July, Seed Company leaders met with the leaders of these organizations. In those partnering meetings, the organizations provided a more accurate list of the remaining Bible translation needs within Nigeria. In all, they provided a list of 325 people groups (potentially more, with dialect studies) who have no access to Scripture in their language. How inspiring to think that these leaders will be key to seeing all these languages reached!

Our work in Nigeria continues with new and different partners. May God be praised that He made a way where there seemed to be none. Thanks to these new opportunities, the future of Bible translation in Nigeria looks brighter than ever.

ACCELERATION

Looking through that lens of God's sovereignty has been helpful as we surveyed the past 12 months. We looked intently and honestly at how far we've come and how far we have to go to reach Zerø by 2025. It is easy to manage the future by spreadsheet, but what if we were to stress-test this timeline, exercise faith and look at conditions differently?

Using a time-compression technique, I commissioned a team, and we hypothetically set the goal as 2020, not 2025, for reaching all remaining Bibleless people groups. We explored which opportunities might be offered, which obstacles might rear their head and which processes we must discard as we progress in the future. As the team explored, there were unique discoveries. We are praying and pondering how to deploy those discoveries into Vision 2025.

In the process of exploration, and in a general picture beyond Seed Company, we also recognized global complexities — for example, the deteriorating political-religious situation in India and China, and security threats to Christians posed by radical Islam in multiple places worldwide. As we do that, we are humbled by the size of the Bible translation task.

Clearly, realizing Zerø will require three things: prayer, continuous innovation and increased partnering. We can't slow down. We must, and we will, intensify our efforts.

Bible Scholar Initiative

We were excited this past year to celebrate the graduation of 19 students from our new Bible Scholar Initiative. These representatives can help Bible translators check their translations for faithfulness to the original biblical languages. The work of these scholars will free Bible translation consultants to serve additional Bible translation teams as we press on toward Zerø.

We now have programs started in Nigeria and Indonesia, two of the countries with greatest remaining need for Bible translation.

Re:Imagine Missions: A 25-city Tour

For Seed Company, acceleration also means a renewed effort to engage the Church in Bible translation. Thus, in our 25th year, we are launching a 25-city tour called “Re:Imagine Missions — A Great Commission Leadership Summit.” The tour will begin after Easter 2018 and continue for most of the calendar year.

Mark Matlock, former Seed Company board member, will emcee each event. During the three-hour meetings, attendees will hear new research from The Barna Group about “The State of the Great Commission in America.” Seed Company commissioned the Barna Group to conduct this special study, and the results will be unveiled at the meetings. As attendees sit for lunch to discuss what they’ve heard, they’ll be asked a question to spur their thinking about Bible translation: “How would you envision you and your community getting involved?”

We are praying that by offering godly leaders the opportunity to think and collaborate about their roles in achieving Vision 2025, we will set the stage for partnering with their churches in unprecedented ways.

INNOVATION

Avodah Labs

In FY17, God also gave Seed Company the opportunity to innovate in an unprecedented way. After much prayer, exploration and discussion, we took the step of launching a research lab. The Seed Company Board unanimously decided to explore the idea of using both Google artificial intelligence and cutting-edge research in cognitive neuroscience to accelerate sign Deaf language Bible translation.

This mindset of acceleration plus innovation has resulted in the creation of Avodah Labs. Avodah (pronounced ah-vo-DAH) is a Hebrew term that means “work-worship-service.”

The impetus for establishing Avodah Labs, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, was largely the same as what drove Bernie May to begin Seed Company 25 years ago: filling an obvious and pressing need in the Bible translation movement.

Translation progress in a typical sign Deaf language project is a few dozen to a few hundred verses a year. At the current pace, for almost 270 sign Deaf languages, a full sign Deaf language Bible for any language could take more than 200 years. In addition, the full cost per verse for sign language translation ranges from \$190 to more than \$700. That cost is largely attributable to the decoding demands of sign Deaf languages, which require much more labor and

time than audio or text translations. If all sign Deaf languages were to receive a full Bible, the cost could well be over \$1 billion.

Clearly, though, the most critical aspect is not the cost. It is looking at the catalysts that will accelerate cracking the code to translating sign Deaf languages. It could also mean vastly decreasing the number of years required to finish a translation and scaling it into almost 270 sign Deaf languages.

We thank God for the speed in which Avodah Labs was set up as an entity, for the world-class talent that is a part of that organization and for the initial funds that have been raised. We look to the future with excitement, expectant of what advances will be made as we bring translation to sign Deaf languages.

Oral Strategies

Another booming area of Bible translation is orality. Seed Company is leaning hard into developing greater global capacity to support oral Bible translation, including a stronger budget allocation and plans to increase staffing in FY18.

Interest in oral Bible translation, especially using the Render software application developed by Faith Comes By Hearing, continues to grow. To support that, Seed Company’s Oral Strategies department is creatively conceiving ways to take the application to scale. Faith Comes By Hearing is so committed to Render for oral-to-oral translation that they are funding continual upgrades so that Seed Company and other Bible translation organizations can accelerate Scripture translation with excellence.

Scalability is key as we think about our oral Bible translation effort. Both the Render technology itself and the methodology for using it were developed in a series of carefully controlled, single-language projects. Now we must find ways to apply the lessons we have learned to a much wider swath of projects in less labor-intensive ways.

One very promising example is the Esther Oral Bible Storytelling Initiative. The Esther Initiative continues to prosper in both India and Ethiopia. The equipping of women for Bible storytelling ministry is a Seed Company initiative that creates immediate, measurable impact. We are looking to scale these proven projects.

GENEROSITY

CORD

As we celebrate advances into previously unknown areas of the world, we also praise God for opportunities to use our technology expertise to further Bible translation. As always, generosity here at Seed Company has as much to do with our expertise as with the funds God provides.

In April 2017, Chief Information Officer Shawn Ring and I had a conversation about the CORD platform we are building. The name CORD (taken from “the cord of three strands” analogy in Ecclesiastes 4:12) was chosen to signify the platform’s function as a central information hub for both Seed Company and other players in the Bible translation movement. As we peered into the future, we projected it could take another 18 months before we would fully know how we might serve as that central hub. However, the activities of the Bible translation movement have since accelerated, and so have we.

As we looked across the technology landscape, we noted that Apple, Alphabet, Alibaba, Facebook and Amazon have all created successful platform companies, enabling and inviting companies and end users from around the world to connect in unprecedented ways. Seed Company also is in a full build-out of CORD, a new platform that, in the spirit of full generosity, will serve the entire Bible translation movement as well as our own field needs. In short, CORD will help to:

1. Streamline communication from translation partners in the field. With this functionality, we hope to push reporting much closer to real-time functionality.
2. Allow partners to use the system through the use of APIs (application protocol interfaces).
3. Leverage greater usage and exposure, which will invite even greater numbers of people to use the system. By networking like this, we hope to use CORD to communicate Bible translation needs and opportunities to our financial, prayer and ministry partners worldwide. We praise God for giving us the resources, the expertise and the vision to build CORD. With His help, CORD technology will serve to propel Bible translation work like never before. The deployment of this platform has already extended beyond Seed Company and into the Bible translation movement.

Global Initiatives

As we share our services through CORD, Seed Company's Global Initiatives team continues to share its knowledge to a growing group of Bible translation agencies, as well.

In the latter part of FY17, Global Initiatives broadened its capacity with the addition of new internal and external consultants. We are seeing prosperous relationships with our five existing clients: Bible Translation Association of Papua New Guinea; Ghana Institute of Linguistics, Literacy, and Bible Translation; Wycliffe South Africa; Kartidaya (Indonesia); and UNTI (Mexico). We also are on track to sign MOUs with Deaf Bible Society, NLCI (India) and Wycliffe Russia. In all, Global Initiatives partners initiated 23 Bible translation projects in FY17, exceeding their goal of 16. Nine of those 23 were First Scripture projects.

One partner that illustrates the aspirations of Global Initiatives quite well is Wycliffe South Africa. Karen Floor, CEO of Wycliffe South Africa, reports that through their recent process of organizational development, they have been able to align their field programs, fundraising and operational services for greater service to churches and partners in southern Africa. The results have been astounding, including a 26-fold increase in local fundraising in just the past three years, to \$245,000 USD this past year. Wycliffe South Africa currently manages translation projects in 30 languages, and they envision at least 100 more.

We praise God for the opportunity to serve and develop Global Initiatives partners like Wycliffe South Africa, who are working diligently and effectively to increase translation of God's Word across southern and Lusophone (Portuguese-speaking) African nations.

Collaboration with IMB

In May, Larry Jones, our senior vice president of Bible translation, attended a StoryTogether seminar in East Asia, sponsored by the International Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention. He was impressed that the IMB training reflected careful disciplines of quality assurance in Bible translation. IMB storytellers practice these disciplines so well that we now count them as trusted partners in assuring the faithfulness of translated stories in East Asia.

IMB has requested that the Seed Company mentor certain staff members in how to check translations of Scripture. They also have requested Seed Company's help in building their capacity to check oral translations of the Bible in audio recordings and how to do checking in clusters. A growing collaboration with IMB could build capacity in that area for bringing Scripture to remaining Bibleless people.

The Course for Zero

Having served four years on the Board of Seed Company, I am presently into the third year of stewardship as chief executive officer. I am honored to serve with each one of our global colleagues, in partnership with you, with a laser focus of bringing Scripture to the remaining Bibleless people groups.

As we enter an active FY18, we are thankful for your journey and investment into the Bibleless people groups through Seed Company. We are rolling out new initiatives that will add value to your investment. Join us and pray that God gives His global Church a fresh burden, strength and creative energy to press on with the task of Bible translation. The world must know the Gospel by engaging His Word in the language they know best!

With renewed vigor, we set our sights on the day when Zero people groups are waiting for God's Word to be translated into their heart language.

Until There Are None,



Samuel E. Chiang
President and CEO



Thank You for Making the Way

Our Father in Heaven, we hallow Your name as we are in awe of Your activity among us.

You take our breath away. How can we begin to thank You for the generosity, protection and progress You established during this year? You have made a way where there seemed to be no way! Your ways are higher than our ways:

“For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways and My thoughts than your thoughts.”

— ISAIAH 55:9 (NKJV)

“Behold, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs forth; do you not perceive and know it and will you not give heed to it? I will even make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert.”

— ISAIAH 43:19 (AMPC)

“God is my strength and power, and He makes my way perfect.”

— 2 SAMUEL 22:33 (NKJV)

You have used Your sons and daughters to do unprecedented things, contributing to the furthering of Your kingdom built on Earth as it is in Heaven. There is no lack of truth in Heaven. May it be so here! May Your kingdom come.

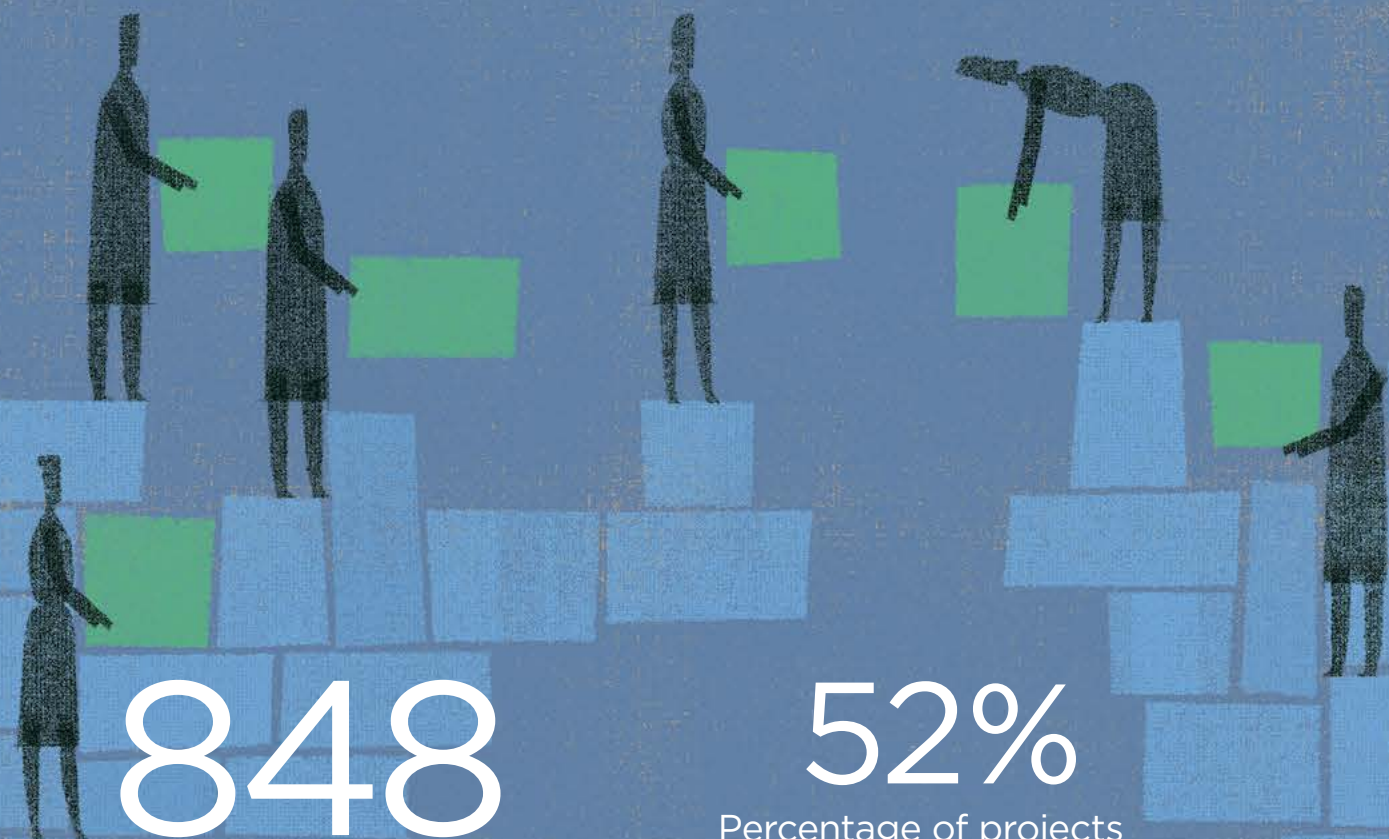
Our Strength, please give us our daily bread to replenish the warriors. Empower us to forgive and ask forgiveness as we forgive and release others. Protect us from the temptation of fear, lies, pride and unbelief.

Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory, so deserved, now and forever.

Amen

Every Number Tells a Story

It represents a community receiving Scripture: light invading darkness, the Word of God moving into the neighborhood.



848

Total translations in progress

52%

Percentage of projects in sensitive locations — the highest in our history

140

New translations

35,013

Prayer and Financial partners (since 1993)

101

Countries we are serving in

1,636

Number of languages still waiting for BT to begin

SEED COMPANY FIELD AREA:

New Engagements and First Scripture by Region

	NEW ENGAGEMENT	FIRST SCRIPTURE
› AFRICA - Anglophone East	5	2
› AFRICA - Anglophone West	11	11
› AFRICA - Congo Basin Area	23	17
› AFRICA - Sahel Area	9	4
› AFRICA - Southern	8	3
› AMERICAS	7	5
› ASIA - Islands	14	12
› ASIA - Mainland	12	9
› ASIA - South	29	12
› EURASIA	14	9
› PACIFIC	8	6
GRAND TOTAL	140	90

90

First Scripture translations started

1,466

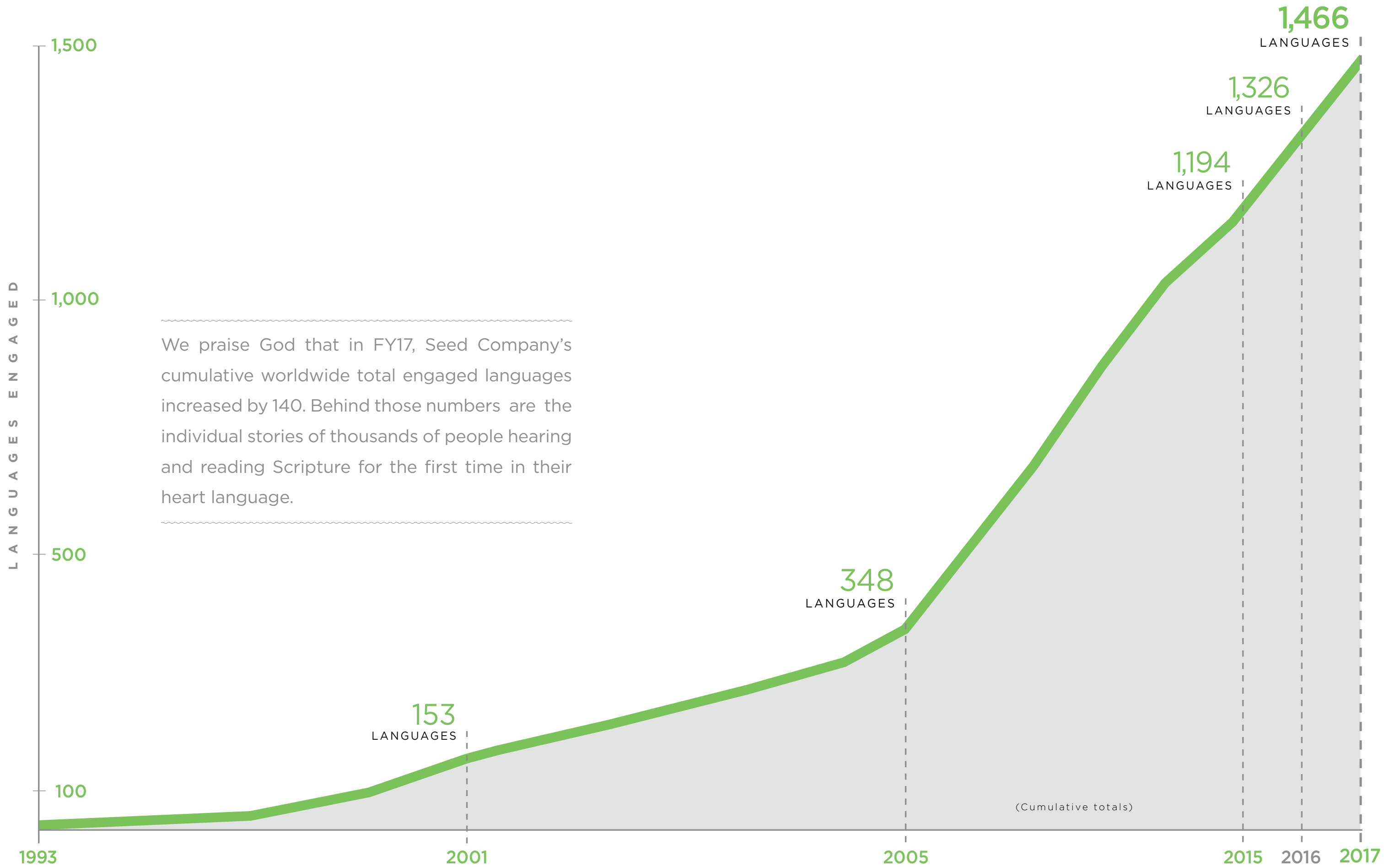
Languages (TOTAL IMPACT SINCE 1993)

1,593

Active Local Partners

140

New translations





ASIA

Let us hold fast
the confession of our hope
without wavering,
for He who promised
is faithful.

— HEBREWS 10:23 (NKJV)



Acceleration is written into Seed Company's DNA. It's what we've done since our inception, and it continues to define how we view the world and the Bible translation task.

Acceleration means making inroads to people with no Scripture in their heart language faster, with all the accuracy of previous Bible translation methods. And when translated, consultant-checked oral Bible stories take root among a people group, it can quickly pave the way for full oral Bible translation.

Acceleration

That's what Oral Bible Storytelling does — it accelerates the pace at which the Word of God penetrates previously unbroken territory. Through efforts like Seed Company's Esther Initiative, women in hard-to-reach places are learning dozens of Bible stories that they can share in their heart language with their families and neighbors. Women trained to tell stories can then train other women how to tell those stories, and the process spreads like wildfire. In places like South Asia and Ethiopia, Oral Bible Storytelling is speeding the rate at which biblical truths get heard and lives get transformed by the Holy Spirit.

When we accelerate Bible translation through initiatives like Oral Bible Translation, we make imagining Zerø a reality that much sooner.



SOUTH ASIA

“TODAY, I SEE HOW CONFIDENT THE ESTHER WOMEN ARE. THEY ARE COMPLETELY CHANGED. COMPLETELY CHANGED.”

— Dr. MARGARET*, a healthcare professional and a board member for the local ministry

Oral Bible Storytelling

Giving oral communicators new tools to effectively reach their own people with God’s Word

Seed Company encourages Bible translation partners to incorporate both oral and written strategies for one key reason: Oral learners make up 80 percent of the world’s population, according to the International Orality Network.

Oral Bible Storytelling (OBS) is an entry point for bringing God’s truth to people without written Scripture. When literacy rates are low, OBS is a relevant method to communicate God’s Word to those in the community. Hand-held audio players, cell phones and radio broadcasts allow people to listen to stories again and again, multiplying the effect.

In 2014, Seed Company partnered with a local ministry in South Asia to pilot the Esther Project, an OBS initiative tailored to engage more women in Bible translations ministry in their own language communities. The pilot project launched with 23 women from different language groups, social classes and ethnic backgrounds. The first workshop was more than a little bumpy, according to one organizer.

“When I met these ladies, they were so timid. It took at least a half an hour before they started talking,” said Dr. Margaret*, a healthcare professional and a board member for the local ministry. “I had the impression they were hindered by customs, community practices and other social limits.”

During the next two years, the women crafted 40 Bible stories and learned the Book of Ruth. They told accurate Bible stories in their own languages during church services, in personal evangelism and in-home gatherings. They ate together and prayed together. They learned that God loves women, even women with limited skills and education.

By 2016, the women had begun more than 200 weekly listening groups, reaching more than 2,100 people. As the women prayed, many were healed of physical ailments. Hundreds more found new hope.

“Today, I see how confident the Esther women are,” Margaret said. “They are completely changed. Completely changed.”

The Bible stories became permanent possessions for these women, available for them to use anytime. In fact, many of the women could easily recall and repeat the stories from memory.

If there’s a dominant guiding theme behind accelerating Bible translation, it’s urgency. People are dying without God’s Word. OBS is giving communities faster access to usable Scriptures, meeting felt needs in a way that comes naturally to them.

**Pseudonym*



“THE BIBLE STORIES
BECAME PERMANENT
POSSESSIONS
FOR THESE WOMEN,
AVAILABLE TO THEM
TO USE ANYTIME.”



PACIFIC

The works of his hands
are faithful and just; all his
precepts are trustworthy;
they are established forever
and ever, to be performed with
faithfulness and uprightness.

— PSALM 111:7-8 (ESV)



Seed Company honors innovation and creativity. It's one of our guiding principles for a reason: Innovating solutions to real-world problems, under God's direction, creates new opportunities to put the Word of God into the hands of people who would not otherwise get it — at least not as quickly.

Innovation

Breakthrough solutions like Render promise to transform oral Bible translation into a streamlined method of translating Scripture for people who prefer oral communication over written. Render, created by Faith Comes By Hearing, works through the same steps as traditional written translation projects, with one vital difference: at no point does a Scripture need to be written. For people who are not yet literate, or who prefer spoken words to writing, that will make all the difference.

Render is just one of the innovations Seed Company and our partners are using to drive us closer to Zero than we've ever been.



Oral Translation, Technically Speaking



When Emmanuel looks at Render working on his tablet, he sees more than a tool for oral Bible translation.

He sees spiritual hope for 50,000 Gawali* people. Emmanuel and his wife, Esther, have worked among the Gawali people in eastern Africa for eight years. Emmanuel and his team of 16 people (mostly from the predominant major religion) have used the Render app since September 2016 to translate the Book of Luke into the local language. The project comes on the coattails of an Oral Bible Storytelling project that translated 29 major Bible stories into Gawali.

Emmanuel considers using Render to do oral Bible translation the next logical step for his adopted people.

“We are very excited by the progress we have made on the Render project, because we have translated over half of the Book of Luke,” says Emmanuel, team leader for the Gawali translation project. “Not only that, but the people who are involved in the project also are very excited about their language being preserved.”

Emmanuel says he and the team chose to do oral Bible translation because, like most Africans, the Gawali prefer to communicate orally rather than in writing.

Render makes it easier for people with little or no formal education to participate in the translation process. All they need to know is how to speak their native language. Translations are community checked for naturalness and consultant checked for accuracy.

So even if a translator has never read a Bible

verse, the end result is as reliable as traditional written translations.

The app also is easy to use, even for people who haven’t touched a computer. It uses icons on a tablet touchscreen to walk users through first-draft recordings, checks and edits, all the way through to finished Scripture passages. In none of the steps do translators have to write or type anything. Every word is captured and checked orally.

“It opens up the world to a whole new set of people who have been excluded until now,” says Sandy Gould, Seed Company’s vice president of translation administration. Last year, Seed Company worked with four Bible translation projects using Render. This year, the number will increase exponentially.

The Gawali translation team is split evenly into four groups of four people. Using Render, the groups act as sort of a pre-check on each other, making sure that the verses sound just like a Gawali person would say them.

Emmanuel and his team got several community and church leaders involved in the project from the start. The idea is to give them ownership of the project so that they become active users of the Scripture once it is translated. Community leaders also are happy that their language is being preserved, Emmanuel says.

“This was a significant part of their acceptance of the project,” he says. “For this reason, there is a bigger chance that they will want to use the finished translation.”

* For security reasons, the exact location of this story cannot be given, and a pseudonym is used for the people group.



“IT OPENS UP THE WORLD
TO A WHOLE NEW SET OF PEOPLE WHO HAVE
BEEN EXCLUDED UNTIL NOW.”

— SANDY GOULD, *Seed Company*



MEXICO

Mexico's National Association of Indigenous Translators (UNTI) holds a meeting.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world ...

— EPHESIANS 1:3-4 (ESV)

Generosity has functioned as Seed Company's ethos from Day One. From our inception, the central tenet of Seed Company has been to give away our expertise and our resources to worthy partners who could lead Bible translation efforts around the globe.

One manifestation of that generosity ethos is illumiNations, the annual event that represents the combined efforts of 10 Bible translation agencies that account for the vast majority of Bible translation projects around the world. Together, the 10 illumiNations agencies are working toward the day when every language on Earth has at least some portion of translated Scripture.

Generosity

Generosity also led Seed Company several years ago to launch Global Initiatives, a team devoted to consulting, advising and empowering key international partners like Ghana Institute of Linguistics, Literacy and Bible Translation (GILLBT), Wycliffe South Africa and the National Association of Indigenous Translators (UNTI) in Mexico. To bolster the viability of Bible translation worldwide, Global Initiatives focuses on helping partners cut their dependence on Western funding and control. That, in turn, creates more opportunities for partners to grow their organizations and capabilities in ways that Seed Company could never foresee.

The key is a willingness to give away what God has given to us: finances, time, talents and expertise. All for our Bible translation partners, all for the glory of God.





Together for the Gospels

Unprecedented unity among Bible translators transforms giving

AMERICAN BIBLE SOCIETY

BIBLICA

DEAF BIBLE SOCIETY

LUTHERAN BIBLE TRANSLATORS

PIONEER BIBLE TRANSLATORS

SEED COMPANY

SIL INTERNATIONAL

THE WORD FOR THE WORLD

UNITED BIBLE SOCIETIES

WYCLIFFE USA

This fall, 10 Bible translation agencies are inviting givers to visit a single website to see how Bible translation is progressing around the world and to join in this effort by making their contributions. Rather than competing against one another for website visitors, the agencies will allow the collaborative site to connect visitors to the initiatives and organizations that best fit their interests.

That sort of others-centered cooperation is unprecedented in the Bible translation sector, said Dal Anderson, former chief operating officer of Seed Company and Every Tribe Every Nation. As of late 2016, this network of 10 heavyweight Bible translation agencies and several resource partners was involved in 90 percent of the translation work done globally.

“Those of us working in the Bible translation world know how big of a miracle this is,” Anderson said. The dramatic shift toward collaboration has delighted givers, who are looking for proven leadership, extraordinary vision and clear momentum, said David Wills, president emeritus of the National Christian Foundation, one of the largest privately funded nonprofits in the United States.

“If you add collaboration to the mix, the attraction and potential for growth becomes exponential,” he said.

In fact, this time the givers led the way.

“The investors have really challenged us on this,” said Bob Creson, president and CEO of Wycliffe Bible Translators. In some cases, large givers were being pitched by several translation agencies for nearly the same work.

“They patiently said, ‘I love what you’re doing. Please get your act together,’” he said.

The vision of an opportunity larger than any

agency could accomplish alone was first articulated by Mart Green, who founded Mardel Christian Bookstores and chairs the Hobby Lobby board. He gathered several big givers and the heads of three Bible translation agencies, then laid out a vision for a central digital Bible library. That way, all translations of Scripture would be available to anyone, instead of siloed in separate systems.

While working on the library, the agencies learned to trust each other, and givers were intrigued, Green said. The library launched in 2010; since then, it has gathered more than 1,100 Scripture portions and versions.

“It [didn’t] take too long for them to figure out, ‘Okay, I’m sure glad we didn’t build 10 digital libraries,’” he said.

Meanwhile, Todd Peterson, a former professional football kicker who was Seed Company’s interim CEO and former board chair, was also communicating a bigger goal.

“I got a clear vision for inviting our most influential, affluent friends to join us for a weekend and really be challenged with the huge vision of providing for Bibleless people,” he said.

At the first weekend gathering, Seed Company financial partners raised a few million dollars, and the organization repeated the event over the following few years. In 2014, celebrating the beginning of the 1,000th language project, more than 100 couples gave a total of \$21 million.

“That had never been seen before in the fundraising world for missions,” Peterson said.

Part of the gathering’s success was its focus on those without access to the Bible and on Jesus’ kingdom instead of the Seed Company’s needs or the fame of its staff, speakers or musicians, he said. And that sparked an idea in Peterson.

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“That was a paradigm shift. I said, ‘This isn’t about Seed Company.’”

Peterson suggested that Seed Company share its weekend gathering format and community of substantial givers with the larger translation network, banding with them to cast a unifying vision of working together to translate the Gospel into every existing language. He called Green to start a dialogue.

“There’s no way Seed Company will go for it,” Green told him. “But you’re the former chair and acting CEO, so I guess if anybody could get away with it, you could.”

In 2015, Seed Company opened up the event — which is now its best fundraiser — to fellow translation organizations. At the gathering, donors would be exposed to the global need for translation and matched with the most appropriate translation agency based on their passions for particular regions or people groups, even if that agency was not Seed Company.

Building the level of trust to pull off such an event took countless monthly meetings on the part of a steering committee, consisting of agency CEOs and other influencers, directing the coalition. A commitment to transparency was key in an environment where adding an agency to the alliance or even a change in executive leadership could throw off trust. “Transparency goes out the window, and people are reluctant to talk,” Anderson said.

Trust was also built through a commitment to working together through snags and disagreements that has now trickled down to efforts to cooperate at the implementation level.

Today, the coalition’s magnetism has introduced an unanticipated problem, Anderson said. Forming a partnership with the coalition can be more attractive to field partners — the individual missionaries, local churches and other organizations on the front lines of Bible translation work — than working with one of the organizations alone. So the group has had to choose its engagements carefully, he said. For example, consideration of one prospective partnership continued over a year, with members of the team holding different positions.

“At the end of the day, it’s an environment that looks for unity more than plurality,” Anderson

said. The coalition chooses its commitments and endorsements unanimously, or not at all.

The unity on display at the 2015 joint fundraiser clearly inspired givers. Of those who attended, roughly 60 couples gave just under \$20 million — about half the attendance but nearly the same amount of money as the 1,000th language celebration the year before.

That means the average gift of \$200,000 to one agency in 2014 rose to an average of \$300,000 toward Bible translation in 2015, Peterson said. “We saw a \$75,000 commitment from the 2014 weekend turn into \$600,000 in 2015. We saw \$300,000 turn into \$1.5 million, and \$1 million turn into \$3 million.”

The rising tide lifted all of the translation agencies involved, Peterson said. “That was a miracle. God had given us a fresh new vision. He brought unity we had never seen before. And all of a sudden, the donor community was responding with stunning generosity.”

The collaboration popularized a name — illumiNations, a reference to the foretelling of nations coming to the light in Isaiah 60:3 — and is still picking up steam. The cooperative agencies are joining their efforts to create a software system to track in real time which languages are being translated and how much of the work is left to do, which will be added to the coalition’s website, illuminations.bible.

“We’ve adopted a ‘better quality, faster, cheaper’ mindset,” Peterson said. “Everybody in the conversation is saying, ‘We’ve got to do this excellently because this is God’s Word. But we also have to do it as quickly as possible because people are dying every year. And also inexpensively, because that’s just good stewardship.’”

Collaboration, not competition, is the best way to achieve that, he said.

The illumiNations template could be applied to other areas like clean water, anti-abortion efforts, or poverty relief, Peterson said. “It’s the Holy Spirit’s prerogative, but there is a lot of biblical vernacular here — generosity, humility and integrity leading to greater unity.

“I wonder if we could challenge the church to have more of these experiences,” he said. “If I was seeing this kind of unity in other ministry areas, I’d be excited, and I’d give more.”

“WHATEVER IT IS, WE CAN ALL REFLECT
THE GENEROSITY OF GOD BY WORKING TOGETHER
WITH A GENEROUS SPIRIT.”

— KAREN FLOOR, CEO of Wycliffe South Africa

Global Initiatives: Building partners and partnerships

The purpose of Seed Company’s Global Initiative Group is to catalyze our partners’ capacity to lead Bible translation efforts in their own countries in a way that fosters sustainable transformation.

The first organization to enter an official partnership with Global Initiatives was Wycliffe South Africa, in February 2015. As the three-year agreement neared its end, Wycliffe South Africa produced a report outlining several outcomes that this partnership has enabled. These outcomes included their staff capacity growing from 26 to 50 people and their annual income growing from just more than 714,000 South African Rands to 7,176,000 Rands.



Karen Floor, CEO of Wycliffe South Africa, spoke about the impact of this partnership.

I remember the day our vision for Southern Africa came into view. We were so excited to see how Wycliffe South Africa could be a part of covering this part of the continent with His Word. Then the dawning moment came when we realized, “How can we do it? We don’t have the capacity — we don’t have systems in place.” When the partnership with Global Initiatives became a possibility, we wanted to avoid getting into a dependency syndrome. We had a sense that if we could just get a little nudge to get over the hump, then we could be on our way. That’s what Global Initiatives did for us.

This partnership infused our team with a sense that our vision mattered and that it seemed worth investing in. Our team had the encouragement that God heard our prayers. He brought people alongside us — real people with a real heart. The joining of their hearts with ours has been just a joy.

I can’t say I’ve ever experienced a partnership like this before. We’ve made commitments to one another, and we have really sought to honor those commitments. But never once did I feel that from Global Initiatives’ side there was any prescriptive or manipulative or self-interested approach. The agreements that were made were there to serve the purpose of helping us realize the vision that we as Wycliffe South Africa felt God had put before us.

Generosity has been the signature of our partnership with Global Initiatives — and this should never be measured in financial terms only.

Generosity is measured by how big the heart is. This makes it possible for absolutely everybody, every key player, every stakeholder to be defined as generous. Even a partner with limited resources can express generosity, because we have all freely received, and we all have something to give. The question is not what generosity am I in need of? Rather it is what have I received that I can freely pass on and be generous with? Some are blessed with financial resources, some are blessed with skills and experience, some are blessed with wisdom, and some are blessed with time.

The generosity of Global Initiatives extends beyond the disbursement of catalyst funds and formalized sharing of expertise. Every exchange at the personal level has infused the arduous process of comprehensive organizational development with strength and joy, making it a most memorable journey of kingdom friendship.



Publish his glorious
deeds among the nations.
Tell everyone about
the amazing things he does.

—PSALM 96:3 (NLT)



Bible translation's progress can be measured by chapters, verses and testaments, of course. But the deeper progress of our work is best measured in people's stories. When they receive God's Word, He creates observable change in their lives. The change may be personal, spiritual, cultural, economic, social ... usually a few of those things in combination.

Impact

That's impact: God's Word transforming people's lives, and often whole communities' culture, because now they have His power and truth to guide them. Impact is Seed Company's true return on investment. The stories reveal God's glory through His work in the world, and they inspire His Church to celebrate and engage in that work.

Ethiopia is one nation seeing widespread impact of Bible translation through Seed Company's partnerships. Here are two short stories worthy of celebration.



ETHIOPIA

“IT IS VERY IMPORTANT TO READ THE BIBLE IN ONE’S OWN LANGUAGE BECAUSE IT IS UNDERSTANDABLE. AS YOU CONTEMPLATE OVER IT, IT SINKS INSIDE. IT HELPS ME TO EVALUATE MY LIFE.”

— AKWAY OCHUDU, *Ethiopia*

God’s Word Changes Families, Communities and Cultures

› Akway Ochudu and Didumo Akway have been married more than 65 years. They’ve raised five children and have 13 grandchildren and eight great-grandchildren.

Their perseverance in marriage has positioned them to teach young believers in Ethiopia’s Gambela region about God’s view of marriage. And that is the result of having Scripture in their mother tongue, Anuak.

“Young believers are learning from us and following God’s way,” Akway Ochudu says. “Many of the believers’ marriages are now good because of what they learn from our relationship.”

He became a believer two years into their marriage and left his wife with her family so he could temporarily move to a place where missionaries could teach him the Bible. After learning about Adam and Eve, Akway called his wife to come live with him.

Like others in her community, Didumo would get drunk and pass out on the ground, which is a sign of wealth in their culture. Akway’s relatives wanted him to divorce Didumo. He refused, and faithfully taught her what he was learning from God’s Word.

After 30 years of marriage, Didumo stopped drinking. “And now, as we are old,” he says, “we are getting ready for God to take us. We have a culture of praying together.”

Their example is impacting a community where Akway says marriage is being corrupted by adultery, abuse and quick divorces.

“It is very important to read the Bible in one’s own language because it is understandable,” Akway says. “As you contemplate over it, it sinks inside. It helps me to evaluate my life.”

› Genet Elias knew of a woman near her church suffering through prolonged swelling and pain in her left leg. After undergoing training in Bible storytelling through the Esther Project Ethiopia, Genet sensed that the woman might connect with the story about the woman who had experienced constant bleeding.

Genet eventually visited the woman and learned her name — Shanochi Sego. She told Shanochi the story from Luke 8 and invited her to church. Shanochi’s husband had lost a hand during his military service, forcing her to support their family. She made money by boiling and selling *arekai*, a local alcoholic drink. The heat from the fire aggravated her leg condition.

“When Genet came to my home to tell me what Jesus did for the lady who was bleeding for 12 years,” Shanochi says, “I was surprised and happy to learn that God cares for those who suffer and are lonely.”

Shanochi then shared the story with her husband, and they both began attending church. Based on what she has learned from God’s Word, Shanochi has stopped selling alcohol. Now, she makes a living selling cheese and butter. Spending less time around fire has helped her leg improve, and her church continues to pray for healing.

Shanochi’s life changed after hearing just one Bible story from Genet.

Genet says her training has given her boldness to tell Bible stories to people like Shanochi. She also now has confidence to pray for the sick.

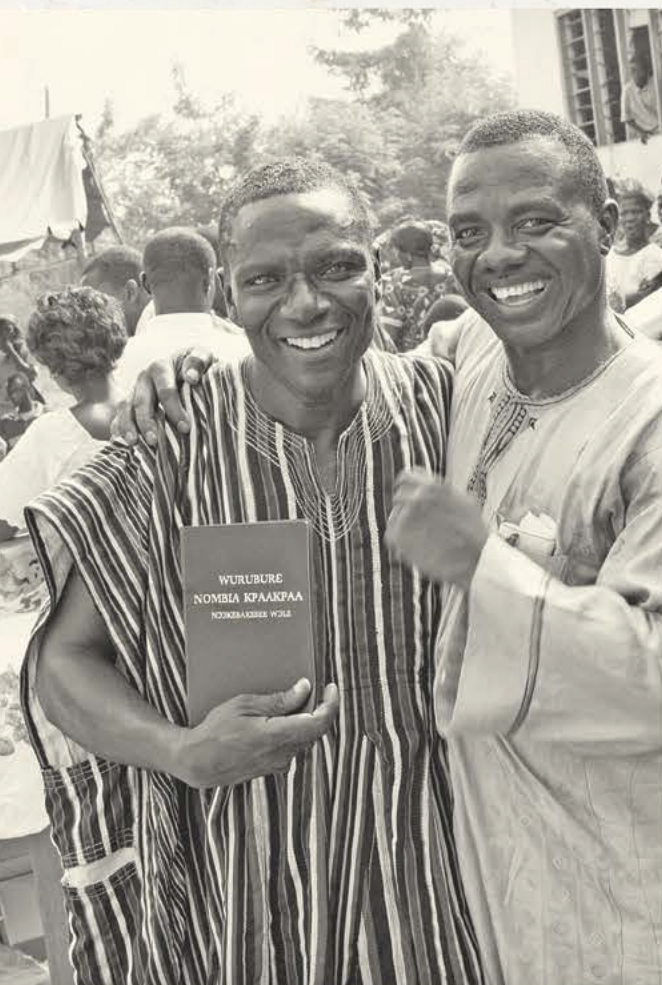
“Up until this training,” Genet says, “my eyes and hearts were not open to people’s need.”

Top photo: Akway Ochudu (left) and Didumo Akway.
Bottom photo: Shanochi Sego (left) and Genet Elias.



ETHIOPIA





Anticipating Many More

Over the past 25 years, God has guided Seed Company through highs, lows, amazing breakthroughs and daunting challenges. Through it all, He has shown Himself faithful time after time after time. To celebrate what the Lord has done and the myriad ways He has worked through Bible translation efforts worldwide, we count it a privilege to publish *Until There Are None: Bible Translation, Life Transformation, and Seed Company's First 25 Years*. Due to hit shelves in February 2018, *Until There Are None* tells Seed Company's story with an anthology of 25 impact stories, including a retrospective of Seed Company Founder Bernie May and the early days of the agency. The following is an excerpt from that chapter, "Seed Company Beginnings."

As the 1990s began, John Bendor-Samuel was nearing the conclusion of his term leading SIL International and surveyed Bible translation's long-term needs. He saw that Africa was different from other locations, already strong in linguistics and with advanced capabilities for Bible translation. Accelerating Bible translation in Africa and, subsequently, other regions would require a new strategy. In 1991, John pitched his final challenge to the joint board of directors for Wycliffe and SIL: find a way to fund the national organizations. Those boards soon turned to Wycliffe USA to develop a program to provide that funding. The Wycliffe USA Board knew Bernie could find a way. "A brilliant visionary," Hyatt Moore, Bernie's replacement as Wycliffe USA President, called him. "Bernie May," said David Bendor-Samuel, SIL Vice President at the time and John's brother, "was very open to opportunities which didn't really look like opportunities."

Bernie took an eight-month sabbatical to pray and travel the United States with his wife, meeting with donors he had developed relationships with through [Wycliffe Bible Translators]. They were mature Christians, he said, who understood missions. He intentionally sought the input of what he called "outsiders" — successful business leaders

working outside of Bible translation yet also involved in and knowledgeable of the movement. Bernie leaned heavily on [Wycliffe USA Board Chairman Peter] Ochs and Roger Tompkins, who, like Ochs, was a businessman who had chaired the Wycliffe USA Board. A strategy began to develop, and each person Bernie visited encouraged him to move forward with his vision.

I'll do it, Bernie decided.

With Hyatt's full support, a new organization spun out of Wycliffe USA for the purpose of accelerating Bible translation.

On January 1, 1993, an experiment began that would become known as Seed Company. Bernie led the way from his desk inside a converted broom closet at Wycliffe USA headquarters in California. And it launched on a model drastically different for the Bible translation movement: funding projects rather than missionaries through individuals capable of investing, in some cases, 100 times the typical contributions that supported Wycliffe's work.

Investing was a key word. During his sabbatical, Bernie had noticed Wycliffe's donor base changing its collective mindset. Donating was giving way to investing, and Bernie's strategy included an outcome-based framework with increased accountability. Project management became a priority. "An investor expects to be part of the process and see results," he said.

The new model centered on partnering with national Bible translation organizations. Locals would help lead — and would own — projects to translate Scripture into their heart languages. "I had a sense that's what God wanted us to try," Bernie said. "I could sense God in it."

Lower right: Translator Naphtaly Mattah stands with Suba schoolchildren in 2011, when the Suba New Testament was dedicated. **Lower left:** Seed Company Founder and longtime pilot Bernie May. **Middle left:** Kwame Nkrumah (left), director of field operations for the Ghana Institute of Linguistics, Literacy and Bible Translation (GILLBT). **Upper left:** A group of Tharaka schoolchildren in Kenya. The Tharaka New Testament project began in 1993. **Upper right:** A woman celebrates at the dedication of the Digo New Testament in Kenya in 2007.



Imagine

a world where everyone has
Scripture in their language.



Samuel E. Chiang
President and CEO



Shawn Ring
Chief Information Officer



Lori Miller
Chief Administrative Officer



J.R. Thompson
Chief Financial Officer



Bill McCoy
Chief Field Officer



Mike Toupin
Chief Advancement Officer



EXECUTIVE Leadership

TEAM

As servant leaders who are committed to prayer and their teams, our Executive Leadership guides Seed Company's activities, all of which are focused on fulfilling our role in the Great Commission. President and CEO Samuel E. Chiang directs the team in its executive-level decisions, determines Seed Company's corporate strategies and oversees organizational initiatives — all under God's direction and provision.



Joyce Williams
2010 - present
Board Chair
Board Member
Cornerstone Trust



Jason Baker
2012 - present
Board Vice Chair
Principal/Owner
Baker Katz, LLC



Jeff Johns
2009 - present
CEO
Impact Foundation



Jill Anschutz
2016 - present
Freelance
Communications
Strategist



Michel Kenmogne
2016 - present
Executive Director
SIL International



Rick Britton
2009 - present
President
Digital Monitoring Products



Andrea Levin Kim
2016 - present
Partner
Diamond McCarthy LLP



Kent Bresee
2017 - present
Managing Principal
Gap Capital, LLC



Matthew Mancinelli
2014 - present
CEO
Soar Detroit



Bob Creson
2003 - present
President and CEO
Wycliffe Bible Translators USA



Robby Moser
2015 - present
President
Clark Construction
Group, LLC

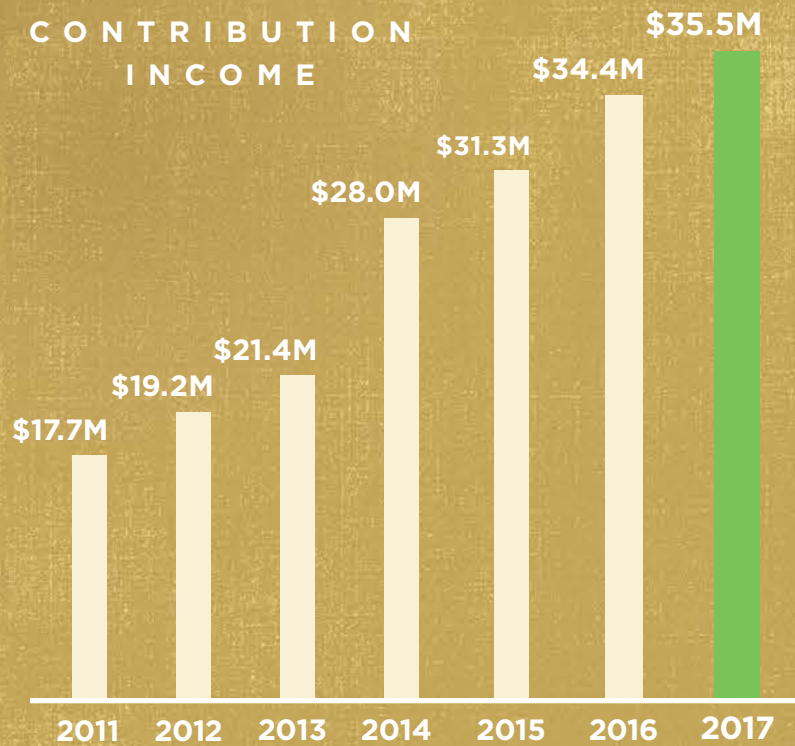


BOARD OF Directors

Seed Company's Board of Directors has 11 members, all of whom have been blessed with extensive experience across many vocational fields. Their blend of business knowledge and passion for Bibleless people helps our board members assess the best direction for Seed Company while providing insight, strategy, guidance and innovative leadership.



Humility • Courage • Generosity



81%
Translation Expenses

19%
Administrative Expenses

Eighty-one percent of all gifts to Seed Company translation projects are used for translation expenses. This includes 6 percent for our First Bible and Momentum funds.

Financials

Seed Company seeks to honor the Lord through its commitment to integrity, humility and accountability. The Lord has blessed that commitment by giving us a deep relationship of trust with our financial partners. These relationships are bolstered by our transparency and our track record. Again in FY17, our financial partners embraced God's vision for Bible translation and Seed Company's part in that by helping us break previous contribution income records.

As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace... – 1 PETER 4:10 (ESV)

THE WYCLIFFE SEED COMPANY, INC. STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES For the Year Ended September 30, 2017

With Comparative Totals for the Year Ended September 30, 2016

	Unrestricted	Temporarily Restricted	2017	2016
SUPPORT AND REVENUE				
Contributions	\$ 6,321,904	\$ 27,734,622	\$ 34,056,526	\$ 32,441,475
Gift in kind contributions	71,945	-0	71,945	57,585
Support from affiliates				
Wycliffe contributions	36,883	1,385,654	1,422,537	2,002,883
Member support	5,130,187	-0	5,130,187	5,096,300
Service income	978,407	-0	978,407	743,240
Investment income	758,278	-0	758,278	541,423
Other Income	(3,482)	-0	(3,482)	40,597
Net assets released from restrictions:				
Field operations assessments	5,028,620	(5,028,620)	-0	-0
Administrative assessments (19% administrative & fundraising)	5,413,862	(5,413,862)	-0	-0
Satisfaction of program restrictions	17,569,060	(17,569,060)	-0	-0
TOTAL SUPPORT AND REVENUE	41,305,664	1,108,734	42,414,398	40,923,503
EXPENSES				
Program services - Bible translation	29,571,755	-0	29,571,755	29,291,159
General & administrative services	4,637,044	-0	4,637,044	3,903,130
Fundraising services (Includes communications, marketing)	5,074,955	-0	5,074,955	5,636,951
TOTAL EXPENSES	39,283,754	-0	39,283,754	38,831,240
CHANGE IN NET ASSETS				
Net Assets, Beginning of Year	10,574,354	18,679,124	29,253,478	27,161,215
NET ASSETS, END OF YEAR	\$ 12,596,264	\$ 19,787,858	\$ 32,384,122	\$ 29,253,478

NOTE: All financial figures cited in this document for FY17 are unaudited as of press time. Audited numbers will be available after February 15, 2018, and can be viewed at theseedcompany.org.



The Seed Company is a member of the Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability (ECFA) and complies fully with its rules for Christian ministries, including an annual independent financial audit.

“Jan and I have been involved with Bible translation for a long time, but serving on the board keeps the need front and center in our life. We see firsthand the time, money and people it takes to get the Word of God into the heart language of a people group and see the impact it makes on their entire world.”

— RICK BRITTON

President of Digital Monitoring Products

“Serving on the Seed Company Board has continually moved Loretta and me to desire to see everyone have God’s Word in their heart language. Each time we tell the story, or I give up family time to get on a plane for a board meeting, or we write a check, we are reminded that we get to be part of a story that’s much bigger than our own, and we are so grateful to be part of it!”

— MATTHEW MANCINELLI

CEO of Soar Detroit

“I have learned through serving on the Seed Company Board that ‘the time is now!’ There is an urgency to translating Scripture for those who do not have God’s Word in their heart language. We are the generation that will end Bible poverty through partnerships, national churches, technology and hard work.”

— JOYCE WILLIAMS

Seed Company Board Chair

“Serving on the board of the Seed Company has held me accountable with merging the work of the kingdom of God into my everyday work. What a gift it has been to me and my family to invest not only our financial resources but also our resources of time into the Bibleless peoples of the world. From the friendships I have made, to the mentors who have challenged me, to the Word of God that has sharpened me, I have received much more through being a board member than I have ever given.”

— JASON BAKER

Seed Company Board Vice Chair



SOUTH ASIA



imagine Zerø

Photos: Cover and pages 2, 48 Stephen Payne, pages 3, 10, 26, 28, 34, 38, 51, and back cover Esther Havens, page 18 Daniel Peckham, page 20 Jim Stahl, page 22 Tim Harold, page 36 Zetseat Fekadu.
Illustration: Pages 12, 44, 45, 46 Jim Frazier/
Illustration Source.



MEXICO



ETHIOPIA



Seed Company™

Bible Translation. Life Transformation.

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Arlington, TX 76018

theseedcompany.org

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