

## Without wings, even an aeroplane can't fly!

When a new Bible Translation is published, it is normal for the translators to be mentioned by name, and usually we also talk about how long it took for the Word of God to be completed in that particular language. We tend to hear less about the fact that today a Bible Translation is not just a result of the work of one or two people, but rather the result of *team-work*.

This team is not just composed of the translators – behind them stands an army of so-called *support workers*, whose work is essential in order for a translation to be completed. These colleagues perform many tasks that free up the translators to concentrate fully on their work. I will never forget the story that I heard many years ago on one of my linguistic courses. The story was about a pilot who used to take Wycliffe missionaries to back-of-beyond places that could not be reached by road. This person, even though he was a pilot, always introduced himself in the following way: *'Hi, I'm Bob, I fly aeroplanes and translate the Bible'*. This short story illustrates well that Bob was clear about the purpose of the task God had entrusted him with. Of course, he was not a real Bible translator, sitting over his books and

his notes, yet with his knowledge, skills, and commitment he gave of his best to that task. Without his contribution, the work would have proceeded much more slowly.

Perhaps not all our readers are aware that in one sense they are also Bible Translators. Many of you pray for us and give financially to our ministry – in other words you play an active part in helping to make the Word of God available in every language. In the Lord's work there are no important and less important tasks, although sometimes it seems that even in Christian circles, people are trying to persuade us that this is true. It is our responsibility to use the gifts and abilities that God has given us – however insignificant we might think them – to build His kingdom. If we humbly bring our *two fish and five loaves* to our Master, we can be absolutely sure that He will bless them and use them.

In this edition of Wycliffe News, the main article is a presentation of a slice of overseas ministry through the eyes of a support worker. The article is by *Zsuzsanna Lukács*, who returned to Hungary at the beginning of June.



I am shortly coming to the end of my one year of service in this distant South-East Asian country, which is one of the fastest developing countries in this region. I can still remember how the humidity hit me on my arrival, and how I was enraptured as I admired the amazing aspects of

this town which lies on the seashore: the sight of the wonderfully green vegetation, the beautiful tropical flowers, the fantastic view, the Asian faces and the wide variety of nationalities. Numerous combinations of different cultures can be found here, due to the presence ►

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► of people of Chinese, Indian, Malay, Filipino, Indonesian, Japanese and Korean origin, as well as those from other Asian countries. Walking about, one also regularly meets tourists, known in the local language as *'orang puti'*, from Europe, Australia and the US. It is not only the people, but also the language and the religion that are very varied. Alongside the official state religion of Islam, which is in the clear majority, one can also find Buddhists, Hindus, Christians and representatives of other religious groups too. As well as the mosques with their crescent moons, there are also Buddhist temples and Hindu shrines in the town. Surprisingly there are also many Christian churches, and most of the different Christian denominations are represented. I should add that this is only true of the town in which I have been working; the rest of the country is almost overwhelmingly dominated by the Muslim religion.

Our team has been working in this country for 24 years, but is still the smallest in Asia with only 42 staff. The team itself is also multicultural, with members from 14 different countries. The work predominantly consists of linguistics, alphabet preparation, dictionary making and adult literacy. Because of the political situation, translation work can only be done on a small scale. My colleagues organize various courses to try and raise awareness amongst the different language groups of the importance of written language in the mother tongue. They hold many workshops in which they demonstrate the phonetic and grammatical differences between the national and minority languages. With the assistance of local language helpers, they produce an alphabet in the given language, and then prepare literacy primers, dictionaries and picture dictionaries. Currently linguistic work is going on in 15 different language groups. Of the 108 languages currently spoken in the country, approximately 56 still require translation work, but survey work has still not been completed.

I came to this country *to do support work*. The linguists and translators need our team of support workers to deal with all the administrative details and problems, and to maintain contact with sending Wycliffe offices, so that they can be free to concentrate on their work. Alongside the national director, therefore, there

is a team that works in the local office. Amongst my colleagues there are some who direct the linguistic work and others who plan the courses and workshops whenever they find a need for them. We also have a computer expert, a financial manager and an administrator-secretary.

My main responsibility was to look after the personnel needs of the members and to maintain contact with them. Throughout the past year I have been in regular contact with all our members, their sending Wycliffe offices and the International Headquarters. Whenever I had the opportunity I visited them in the village locations where they work, and I even managed to visit those who live in a different state. I was available to listen to their problems, and I tried my best to offer them help support and encouragement.

It was wonderful to see and experience the way in which God opens doors, and how He showers us with His love and His grace. We were excited to hear the reports of our colleagues when we met with them. I will never forget the morning when one of the women came into the office, and with great excitement and joy shared about the tremendous desire in the hearts of many in her village to be able to read the Word of God in their mother tongue. This woman has wanted to translate the Bible into her mother tongue since she was a young girl, but until now there had been no opportunity to do so, and therefore she had never told anyone of her plan. Finally the time has arrived when the translation work can be started! The first step is to establish a translation committee of villagers who will take responsibility for the work and to identify those who will be able to work on the translation. Alongside this, there are more and more women in the village who would like to learn to read and to take the literacy courses.

Let's pray that the Lord will enable this small but promising shoot to survive and thrive – and that, with the help of the Holy Spirit, more and more people will know the truth and be able to read the Gospel, and be present among those who will one day stand before the throne of God in worship.

*Zsuzsanna Lukács*

*(On her return to Hungary, Zsuzsanna took the decision to resign her Wycliffe membership. We congratulate her on her recent marriage and pray that God will bless her future ministry.)*

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