

message for all MAGAZINE

The last generation of Bible translators

Attila and Helen Kovács have been members of Wycliffe Bible Translators since 1998. They began their service in the Wycliffe Centre in England, and then worked in Ghana. They moved to Hungary in 2002, where Attila first of all became Wycliffe Hungary's P.R. coordinator, and then served as its director since his appointment in August 2003. Helen took on administrative and financial supervisory roles, and then from 2005 she also worked as personnel coordinator. They have three children, Daniel, Aron and Benji, with whom they are about to set off on another journey....

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Dear Helen and Attila, seven years ago, in the autumn edition of our newsletter (then called Wycliffe News), a short article appeared about you, entitled 'Welcome to our new colleagues'. You had just arrived in Hungary to get involved in Wycliffe's work here. Once again you are in the midst of big changes, because this spring you are once again 'heading abroad as missionaries' - you're moving to England. What's the reason for this?

There are many reasons for our move to England. Yet, besides numerous family reasons, I would highlight the fact that, in our opinion, we have completed the work that the Hungarian Board entrusted to us in 2002. We were given the task of assisting Wycliffe Hungary, which then was still very young, to strengthen and develop as an organization, so that it would have the capacity to involve as many Hungarian Christians and congregations as possible in the worldwide movement of Bible translation. Through God's grace we have been able to achieve many things in this regard since 2002. Therefore, we felt that it was time to pass on the torch to others in the Hungarian work, and to follow God's leading to a new challenge somewhere else.

What will your tasks be in England?

Let us say immediately that we're not leaving Wycliffe! We are going to serve with our partner organization, Wycliffe UK, in new roles. Attila was asked to join the organization's leadership team; in time, he will become the director for mobilization, and he will lead the team working in that field. This is one of the key tasks in order to recruit new members from England for the last generation of Bible translators.

For the last generation of Bible translators? What do you mean by that? At least 2,000 languages still require a translation... Has the work accelerated so much?

Yes, it has. When Vision 2025 was formulated (www.wycliffe.hu/future.htm), it was calculated that, at the 'rate of progress' at that time, Bible translation would begin in every language by the year 2150. ►





► However, thanks to Vision 2025, which was adopted ten years ago, major achievements have been made in the fields of partnerships and the organization of our work. According to current estimates, Bible translation will begin in every language that needs it, if not by 2025, probably by 2038. This is an almost inconceivably-huge step forward. This means that **many Christians today will still be alive when that time comes.**

It is abundantly clear how greatly God has blessed our efforts over the past decade. Without Him, all this would simply have been human exertion, but He was faithful to the vision He placed before our international organization. Therefore, continuing to trust only in God and in His grace, we can dare to say that **the generation of Wycliffe staff joining the organization now or in the coming years will be the last** – whatever country they come from – which in the coming decades will begin the translation in the remaining 2,000 languages. My task, together with my team, will be to assist British Christians to get involved in the work in the area in which God can use them the most.

I imagine there is a big difference between the two Wycliffe organizations...

Yes, there is a big difference between the size of the two countries, their characteristics, the spread of evangelical Christianity, and in their vision for mission abroad. Wycliffe UK has existed for more than 50 years, and it is one of the largest Wycliffe organizations in the world, with more than 500 members. At the same time our basic aims are the same as in any Wycliffe organization: we would like to give every person the chance to hear and read the Word of God in the language they understand the best – the language of their hearts.

Attila, who's going to take on the leadership of Wycliffe Hungary after you?

The question of who will be the next director hasn't been answered yet. Wycliffe Hungary's Board has been searching for my successor since last September.

All in all, how do you assess the years you spent serving with Wycliffe Hungary?

It is useful to place things in a wider perspective in order to make it easier to understand. Last year Wycliffe Hungary celebrated its tenth birthday, so it can still be said that it is very young. We can honestly say that, of this decade, the seven years

we spent here were in no way 'seven lean years'. Sometimes God gives those who serve Him the privilege of seeing the results and fruit of their work. We too have enjoyed such blessings on numerous occasions.

By now more and more Hungarian Christians and congregations know us and our ministry; they have heard of the global vision for Bible translation, and they support it through their prayers and gifts. When they hear Wycliffe's name, they think of an authentic foreign-missions organization that is embedded in and works closely with the Hungarian Church, and that is committed to its inter-denominational character, with equally-close relations with every Hungarian protestant denomination.

It is always uplifting and encouraging when a new Hungarian member of Wycliffe sets off for foreign missionary service from this country which struggles with so many problems. Thanks be to God, over the past years we were able to assist many Hungarian Wycliffe

members from various denominational backgrounds get involved in this work. Sending missionaries abroad is a privilege not only for rich nations! We Hungarians can actively contribute – in fact we must contribute – to the completion of the Great Commission. Thanks to God's calling and our work, more and more Hungarians agree with this and also want to carry out this work. ►

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► **Can you mention a few specific things from your years here which made a significant contribution to the development of the organization?**

Where should we begin, since there are so many examples that could be mentioned! Perhaps with a Hungarian slogan we like to use: 'We need a team'. We recognised the importance of this immediately when we moved to Hungary, so our first task was to build a team. We are grateful to God for blessing us with fantastic colleagues. The results achieved are never thanks to the work of 'one person', the 'great leader', but rather to the joint efforts of an enthusiastic, committed and talented office team, who support each other and complement each other's abilities, with whom it was a privilege to work together. It is this team of which we are the most proud, and which we will miss the most! We consider them the guarantee of continuity, so that the developments which we started together will not end with our departure.

Over the years we introduced numerous structural changes within the organization which – although not visible from outside – greatly assist the smooth 'governing' of the association. Moving the office from a provincial town to the capital was a very important step forward. Since then only a year and a half have passed, but already this step has brought many tangible results, primarily in the fields of partnerships and in how well we are known. Ever more clearly we've been 'put on the map', not just within Hungary but within the wider world of Wycliffe too.

We were very pleased with the cooperation agreement we signed with Operation Mobilisation (OM) Hungary, one of the results of which is our joint missions training day ('MINAP'), which is increasingly popular. This summer we will hold our 11th Wycliffe Mission Camp, to which many young people who are interested in missions always apply. In our communication – be it our webpage, presentations or other printed publications – we strove to present our global work in a professional way suited to the demands of the 21st century.

Due to the lack of time and space we have only mentioned the most important things, without seeking to give a comprehensive picture, but even from this it is clear that we have reason to give thanks.

How can we pray for you?

We would appreciate your prayers first of all for our children, for their adjustment to the new school system – and secondly for our financial needs. We require much more support so that we can start in our new positions as soon as possible and without any complications. Helen is still seeking to find the way in which she can best serve the Lord in the coming years.

What final advice would you give Wycliffe Hungary?

It is an enormous privilege and at the same time responsibility too to live in this period of history, when the Word of God is heard in many more languages than ever before in the history of mankind. The Great Commission was given to the Church, but it is Wycliffe's task, in its own specialized territory, that of Bible translation, to assist the Church to fulfil this command. Continue the work that has been entrusted to you, so that as many as possible in Hungary will join the last generation of Bible translators!

Zsuzsa Zentai

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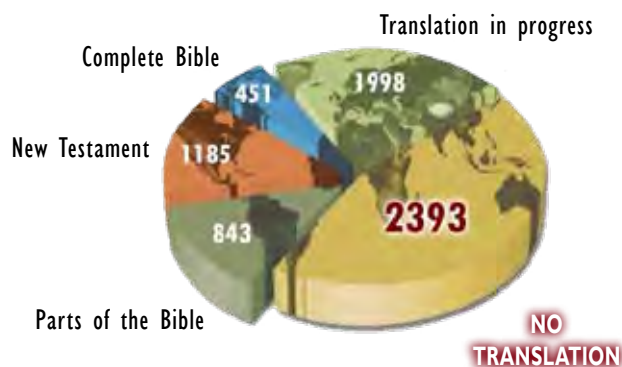
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LATEST STATISTICS

April 2009, number of languages



A unique opportunity in Hungary,
focusing on foreign missions:

Wycliffe Mission Camp 5-11 July 2009

This summer we're hosting a camp once again. There are about 30 places, some of which have already been taken, but we are still waiting for applications from those who **want to know more about foreign missions** and to gain a deeper insight into **Wycliffe's work**. This year our camp will be held on **5-11 July** at a beautiful location, the **'Lord's Field'** in **Órbottyán** (not far from Budapest). As in previous years, there will be the opportunity to meet Wycliffe members from Hungary and abroad, and to learn from their experiences.

If you are interested in where God wants to use you, if you would like to spend a week with us, and if you are not scared of challenges... **then take a step!** Fill in the Hungarian-language **registration form** that can be downloaded from our website (wycliffe.hu/tabor.htm) or get in touch with our office.

We look forward to hearing from you!

