

04 Statement of Faith (S of F) – Walkthrough

(White board; slide deck; Appendix A may be used for translators to sign – 30 min.)

Intro: This session is about the defining beliefs of WA and the people we partner with. We want to talk about this, because these beliefs guide the things we do and how we serve God. When a team of translators begins to work on a translation, they are asked to sign the Wycliffe Associates statement of faith. This is a short statement of our core beliefs that we must agree on to work together.

Ask: What do you think of when I say the word *value*? (We talk about values in this session as guiding convictions that define the way we live and serve God. You may get ideas that are very different from your own understanding of values. That's why we ask this question.)

- Make note on the white board of any defining terms they use that fit with our definition.
- Explain that when we talk about values we mean the beliefs that define and guide the way we live.

You have heard a little of the history of Wycliffe Associates, and now I want to share with you the beliefs that have guided the organization and continue to guide us as we serve God in the world.

- We believe that the Bible is the Word of God. (Share a verse such as 2 Timothy 3:16.)
- The Bible changes lives and advances God's kingdom. (Share a verse such as Romans 10:17 or Psalm 107:20.)
- We believe in the power of the Holy Spirit in the lives of believers. (Share a verse such as John 16:7–8 or 1 Corinthians 12:7.)

Because we believe those things, we have a vision: *A Bible in Every Language*. And we have a mission: *Involving people in the advancement of Bible translation*.

Ask: How do our vision and mission statement connect with our values?

- Since we believe God's Word changes lives and builds His kingdom, we think every language should have access.
- Because God has empowered every believer with His Spirit, we believe He will use His whole body to get Scripture to the world.

Ask: What do you think of as a “statement of faith”?

- This is a list of the core beliefs that a community agrees to.
- As believers, our statement of faith is a list of primary beliefs from Scripture. (Remember we believe Scripture is God's Word.)

WA seeks partners who share our core values and beliefs. We ask them to sign a simple statement of faith that clearly states the essential beliefs of the Christian faith as we understand them from Scripture.

- Our core beliefs come from God's Word.
- Many Christians have non-primary beliefs that vary from one another. (Example: baptism by immersion or sprinkling.) Differing in these non-primary beliefs will not keep us from working together.
- The statement of faith provides us with common ground—defining what is most important, building unity, and creating a foundation for us to work together.

Show the 6 Statement of Faith beliefs from Appendix A. *(This can be done by further progressing through the slide show, by printed handouts of Appendix A, or by writing on the board.)* Go through each item directly and clearly. (Do not get into deep theological discussions.)

Ask: Does anything on here surprise you? Are there any items that confuse you?

- Remind them that the statement is of primary beliefs, and that secondary or non-primary beliefs are not included, because we understand and accept that many Christians disagree on those areas. Our goal is to work with like-minded Christians, regardless of denominational affiliation.

Confirm: The translators who sign the statement of faith should understand and agree with what they are signing, in order to take full ownership of the project.