

Topic 1 – COBT Session 1

J - Welcome back to Wycliffe Associates Bible Translation Educator series. If you have not heard the introduction to this series, you may want to listen to it before continuing, as it will give you an idea of what to expect from these sessions.

T – Let’s start our first session with a conversation about Church Owned Bible Translation.

J – Whether you’re a translator yourself, or just starting on this exciting journey, an understanding of what it means for the local church to own their scripture translation is important.

T- It may help to consider your own community’s experience as a starting point: Who has been responsible for guiding and completing Bible translation in your heart language?

J- If your language group had to wait on outside sponsorship and approval, do you think you would have a New Testament project underway today?

T- The idea of the local church owning their people’s Bible translation, rather than an outside organization, is what inspired Wycliffe Associates to develop Mobilized Assistance Supporting Translation, or MAST, as our primary method for Bible translation.

J- MAST is founded on the belief that the local church is both qualified and responsible for Bible translation into the heart language of her people.

T - So let’s talk about that a little bit. What do we mean when we say “The local church is qualified and responsible for Bible translation into her heart language”?

J- In order to answer that question, let’s look to a historical event of the 1500’s that sparked Bible translation as a global movement.

T - Martin Luther, a German monk, refused to accept the word of the established religious authorities about what the Bible said. He rejected the belief that the Bible could only be taught through a human mediator. As a local German believer, he took the responsibility for translating God’s Word from the Greek and Hebrew into his own heart language.

J - He did not do it alone, however. Luther reached out to others who had various skills—knowledge in the Greek language, for example. And he went into the community to listen and learn from how the peasants talked to one another. Luther and the other believers of his day had all the qualities they needed and took responsibility for the translation of the Bible into their heart language.

T - Your community of local believers also has a responsibility for Bible translation. A group from your language has partnered with Wycliffe Associates to receive MAST training and the resources necessary to steward your Bible translation.

J - Local leaders have developed a team with the qualities and abilities needed to translate effectively. This team is translating Scripture, checking the translation, receiving feedback for improving the translation, and developing a plan for your community to access the holy Word of God. This is church owned translation.

T - However, sometimes when we talk about the **church** owning the translation project, everyone waits for the “**church**” to direct. Since the local church is a broad concept, not a specific, physical individual, it’s important to remember that the church is made up of humans. The local church refers to a gathering of believers in a community. These believers are then individually and corporately responsible for the Scripture translation.

J- When we say the local church is responsible for Bible translation, we don’t mean that the local church has to do it alone. Instead, the local church must direct the translation and manage it. Other global believers can partner with them, as the local church seeks that partnership.

T- Wycliffe Associates has a role on the team, not as the ultimate authority who approves or directs, but a partner who provides support through on-the-ground training and access to resources.

J - But if Wycliffe Associates were not a part of the team in these ways, do you believe that God would provide that support from somewhere else? We do.

T- Yes! Imagine for a moment that a language community in your region does not have Scripture (and you probably don’t have to make this up. It’s likely the reality.) But they do have a body of believers who long to have the Bible in their heart language. How could they get a translation?

J – Do they need to wait for an outside organization to come and start a project? Or can God use **you** to help empower others, as he has empowered you?

T - What if you and the other translators on your team can fill the gap for that language community, by showing them how to begin a translation?

J – What a blessing that could be! Take a moment between sessions to consider how you and your local church might serve others in this way.

T – We’ll join you again in session 2 of our first topic, Church Owned Bible Translation.