

Title: **The Alliance Looks Ahead to 2025**

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Before I start sharing about what we anticipate for 2025, I want to express our gratitude to God for the ceasefire deal in place between Israel and Hamas.

- Our prayer is for the released hostages and their families, and also for the families of hostages who have died in this event. We pray for restoration for them, and that they may have their lives rebuilt.
- Our prayers go out to the Palestinian families who have lost loved ones and livelihood. We also pray for restoration for them, and that God will meet them in their lives and their pain.
- We pray that the ceasefire will hold, as it is fragile.
- We pray for peace for the whole Middle East region. It is vital to the stability of the world. It is vital to our own ministry of Bible translation, as we have seen how quickly many things can fall into disarray when one region of the world is in pain.
- Our prayer goes out for the Whole Word Institute and also Jerusalem Seminary, our two Alliance organisations in Israel. We thank God for them and the way in which they have continued to minister. How they have expanded their ministry during this time, and how they have navigated a very volatile situation. We thank God for the leadership we have there and the way they continue to gracefully serve.
- Let us remember our other war-stricken areas: Russia-Ukraine, Sudan, things in Bangladesh are still very volatile, and other parts of the world as well.

As we look toward 2025, on 13 November we will celebrate (virtually) what God has done in the context of Vision 2025.

- We will celebrate with every community that has a translation start, or Scripture in their language.
- We will commit those to our Lord who are still waiting for a translation to start.
- We will celebrate lives transformed through God's Word. Because that is in essence what Vision 2025 was about. Not necessarily the start of translations, but that communities will be transformed through God's love and his Word in the languages people are speaking.
- We will acknowledge and celebrate some of the countless ways in which God has transformed Bible translation movements as we responded to Vision 2025.

- We will commit to our ongoing desire for God to continue his transformative work within the Alliance, as we respond to his mission calling.

During 2025 we will concentrate on three areas of importance—namely Bible translation, Alliance organisations and the legal entity we call the Alliance. Let me offer just a few comments on these:

- We will continue to be vigilant to the global context in which we work. In the first four years of my directorship, we referred to this as ‘influences on the Bible translation movement’. And we will continue in our desire for Alliance organisations to collaborate well. By the way, our new book, *Collaborative Missional Leadership*, has just gone to press. We trust that we will soon see a publication that describes some of this collaboration taking place between Alliance organisations and the ministry of Bible translation.
- We desire to see thriving organisations that can give their best to God’s mission and the ministry of Bible translation. God has gifted each organisation to fulfil its role in this ministry, and we want to see them doing it well.
- We will always remain dedicated to the ministry of Bible translation, to see lives of individuals, communities and nations transformed through God’s love and Word expressed in their cultures and languages.

With regard to Bible translation itself, I want to highlight six areas in which we will give energy. Obviously there is a lot of stuff happening underneath each of these areas.

- We will emphasize and give energy to issues relating to full Scripture translation, training/equipping and consultancy. The Alliance leadership team and our staff, together with Alliance organisations, are gaining good ground on all three of these areas.
- We will focus on and grow in the area of multimodality translations and products, which include oral, written and sign languages. When we communicate on this area, it is important for us to understand that multimodality Bible translation is not only the product we are after, such as Scripture being distributed orally or in written text or in sign languages. But the whole process of translation in these areas needs much attention. It is critical that we understand that written, oral and sign languages cannot all be translated in the same way.
- We will embrace helpful technology, including artificial intelligence (AI). You might have noted the new companies – Stargate in the USA is putting over \$500 billion US into artificial intelligence development, and DeepSeek in China has burst onto the scene recently as well. So, we will continue in discussions to understand and emphasise the missiological and ethical implications of using AI in Bible translation.
- We will continue to work with global mapping efforts such as ProgressBible, and also—this is very important— with local communities to understand the remaining translation

needs. We are seeing lots of leadership in this area in the Americas — mesas, or roundtables being held in various nations within Latin America.

- Together with Alliance organisations, we will give attention to moving focus from the ‘translation start’ era toward the era of completion and revisions. I do believe we will have translation starts for many years to come, but those will be minimal. As focus shifts to completion of translations and revisions, what does this mean for Bible translation movements?
- We will continue to respond to the reality of churches that are growingly engaging in Bible translation efforts.

So those are the main areas of focus as it relates to Bible translation directly.

We desire thriving Alliance organisations.

We are grateful to see that in general, our Alliance organisations are thriving and finding healthy ways to respond to their local and global contexts. A number of Alliance organisations need more assistance than others. We remain indebted to the dedicated boards and executive/ administrative leadership within our organisations.

With this in mind, there are three areas that I wish to highlight:

- As the landscape of Bible translation continues to change with regard to strategies in Bible translation (this includes AI, growing local and church participation, staffing requirements, financial resourcing, reduction of translation starts, etc.), we are working with Alliance organisations to assist them in responding to these realities. It means different things for different Alliance organisations. The situation in Africa, for example, with these issues impacting Alliance organisations, is different from the way they are impacting our European Alliance organisations. For some organisations, this means a total rethink of both their mission and their business model. We will continue to assist our Alliance organisations to think through these issues.
- Changing staff and leadership is a reality that all organisations face. This often means that organisations don’t understand well how they fit in the bigger picture of multiple Bible translation movements, even in the Alliance. We now have a platform named WAIT. It doesn’t mean that you are going to slow down. It’s just an acronym for Wycliffe Alliance Informal Training. This is managed by Wycliffe Singapore and some of our Alliance staff. This platform will provide the opportunity for orientation to the Wycliffe Global Alliance for Alliance organisations, staff and new leaders. This is a helpful tool. Organisations can make use of it at their own pace, and any Alliance organisation staff member can participate in making use of this platform.
- Each of our Areas will address matters that are unique to their contexts. Our areas differ. They have different challenges. And each of our Alliance organisations within our different regions have issues that they need to face. I am grateful for our Area Directors, together with the Alliance Leadership Team and our staff, for giving leadership to these unique issues that will be addressed in each context.

Speaking of our leadership and staff, let me briefly highlight how this works. The Alliance Leadership Team (ALT) includes:

- The four Area Directors
- Four specialists in various areas
- A managerial group which includes the CFO, Director of Operations, my assistant and myself.

These ALT members and their respective teams, such as Prayer Advocacy and Communication, serve as a “backbone” in providing assistance to our Alliance organisations, and the Bible translation movements within the Alliance, to flourish. As with all Alliance organisations, this “backbone” covers matters such as board functions, finances, staffing, contracts, MOUs, etc. I will only mention a few of the activities that this group will focus on in 2025 for Alliance organisations and Bible translation movements:

- We will soon start with the re-signing process of the Covenant/Statement of Commitment, which will be in place for 2026-2030. We appreciate all Alliance organisations that have contributed to reviewing the new version of the Covenant. And also thanks to Phil Prior and the Communication team for doing the final edit. It is now being translated and we trust that we will be able to start rolling this out very soon.
- Further, we have initiated two global missiological discussions. One is a discussion with church leaders on their desired involvement in Bible translation. This will augment our previous conversations on the Alliance and the church. The other discussion is on Power in Mission, in which we want to understand power dynamics in mission and how we as an Alliance and Alliance organisations can navigate those.
- Our new book, *Collaborative Missional Leadership* is at the printer. We hope to purchase the rights to make this available for free soon at Wycliffe.net. This book is a reflection on what we have learned as an Alliance over a number of years, as we have tried to understand how to work collaboratively with one another. There is an implication from a missiological perspective on this as we provide leadership collaboratively.
- Global Gathering 2024 largely met the needs that were expressed by Alliance organisations. My leadership team is in a process of crystalising the learnings from Global Gathering. That is partly what we will be doing in our meeting in February. We will bring all of those learnings into our strategic direction as we continue on our journey with God and with each other as God builds his kingdom.
- And then lastly, a lot of our energy will also be spent this year on the winding down of Vision 2025. It will culminate in the (virtual) celebration of Vision 2025 on 13 November this year.

So ... there you have a thumbnail image, based on what we know today, of our plans for this year. Of course, God orders our steps, and his plans could look very different. We have seen things move very quickly and unexpectedly in recent years. But through everything, the Lord has shown himself to be completely trustworthy as we navigate our unknown and volatile world. Please make dependent prayer a priority, personally, for your organisation and for the communities we serve.

Thank you.

Stephen Coertze
Executive Director