

UBS Scripture Language Report 2009



The Bible in eight new languages! The New Testament in 35! The statistics contained in the 2009 *Scripture Language Report* * show that the United Bible Societies and other organisations involved in Scripture translation continue to make significant progress with enabling people to engage with and understand God's Word in their own language.

Thanks to their efforts, Scriptures are now registered in 2,508 different languages and dialects. However, this still leaves over 4,000 languages without even one book of the Bible.

The beginning, not the end

On average, it takes 12 years to translate the entire Bible. The publication and launch of the completed translation do not mark the end of the process, however. Indeed, this is where the purpose of translation really begins: the translation becomes the community's vehicle for hearing and understanding God's Word.

So, while the statistics such as those in the *Scripture Language Report* are a useful measure of progress, the ultimate goal of Scripture translation is not numeric: it is about enabling people to engage with, and absorb, the Scripture, shaping Church life and the faith of individuals for generations to come.

* *This report provides a statistical summary of Scripture publication languages of the world as of December 31, 2009. It includes all items registered for the first time by the United Bible Societies during 2009. Languages are registered when copies of printed Scriptures of at least one complete book of the Bible are received in the library of either the American Bible Society, the British and Foreign Bible Society or the Bible Society of Brazil.*

Joyful launches

The launch of a translation is always a time for great rejoicing for those who have yearned for many years to have God's Word in their own language. Each launch is special and unique, often accompanied with great celebration, ceremony and thanksgiving.

Statistical summary

A summary, by UBS Area and type of publication, of the number of different languages and dialects in which publication of at least one book of the Bible had been registered as of December 31, 2009:

Area	Portions	Testaments	Bibles	Bibles+DC ¹	Total
Africa	223	335	173	(34)	731
Asia-Pacific	354	516	182	(38)	1,052
Europe-Middle East	109	40	61	(50)	210
Americas	148	322	42	(10)	512
Constructed languages	2	0	1	(0)	3
Total	836²	1,213	459	(132)	2,508

¹This column is a sub-section of the Bibles column - for example, there is a translation of the Deuterocanon for 50 of the 61 languages of Europe in which the Bible has been translated.

²The total number of Portions registered can decline from year to year, since a Portion in a particular language is removed from the Portions column once the whole New Testament is available in that language. This 'upgrading' process also applies when a New Testament is replaced with a full Bible: eight New Testaments listed in the 2008 *SLR* became full Bibles in 2009.