



First Old Testament

Overview

This project will translate the Old Testament for a Vietnamese ethnic minority* to join the recently translated New Testament and complete the first full Bible for this marginalised community.



The Need

These people are one of the most influential ethnic groups in the mountainous areas of North Vietnam. The growth of Christianity among the people is slow, perhaps because the current New Testament in use by the churches was translated by a diaspora group of the same ethnicity. While similar to their language, it cannot express and communicate God's word naturally for the people living in Vietnam.

Many of this ethnic minority, especially the young, cannot read the ancient text of their language and there is currently no Scripture in their contemporary language for them to read. There is a great need for Bibles to be translated into today's language.

The local people requested a New Testament in their language from Bible Society Vietnam, which was completed at the end of 2023 after four years work. To complete the full Bible, the ethnic group need the Old Testament in their language so they can use it to preach, study, and share their faith.

848,000

people belonging to this ethnic minority live in Vietnam

0.17%

are Christians, approximately 1,400

Jesus answered, 'It is written: "Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God!"'

Matthew 4:4, NIV

Goals

The goal of this project is to complete the Old Testament translation by 2030 and print it the same year. In addition to this, Bible Society Vietnam will give permission for Faith Comes By Hearing to record an audio version, and by uploading it to the Digital Bible Library, the Scriptures in this minority language will also be accessible online through YouVersion.

In 2024, the goal is to complete the translation of Genesis 1-50, Exodus 1-40, Leviticus 1-27, Numbers 1-36, and Deuteronomy 1-29. Additionally, there will be internal reviews, Translation Officer checks, community reviews, and consultant checking at various stages for these translated sections.

In addition to this, the goal is take the completed book of Genesis, do an audio recording for YouTube, and print and distribute 1,000 copies in 2024 – 2025.

Impact

The total number of people this project aims to impact is all those who speak this ethnic minority language in Vietnam.

A short-term impact of the project will be that on listening to and reading the completed book of Genesis, the people will feel connected to the new translation and begin using it.

In addition to this, the translation team members will be impacted by their training and work on Bible translation, and will be equipped to lead Bible study groups, Sunday schools, and inspire their communities to love the word of God as well as to follow it.

The ultimate impact of this project is that Christians in this ethnic minority will be strengthened by reading and understanding the Bible in their own language, and will love God more, love one another, and love their neighbours.

Testimony

“We seize the opportunity to study God’s word more, to have a solid foundation for our faith and to be able to answer those who ask about our hope ... but the Bible we have is written in the Vietnamese language. I would love to have a Bible in [my language]. Reading something in [my language] is easier to understand. Romans 10:17 is my favourite and I live by it ... ‘Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word about Christ.’ Though I remember the verse in Vietnamese, I still prefer it in [my language]. Should I have a Bible in [my language], I would share it with my family ... At least they would not perceive Christianity as some foreign religion but feel for themselves that God does speak to them, in their own language.” — Linh Tran*, 22-year-old wife and mother

Prayer Needs

- Please pray for the setting up of the translation team for the Old Testament work, and for the project to go smoothly.
- Please pray for successful outcomes in the translation workshops, leading to the adoption of best practices and the enhancement of the team's translation skills.
- Please ask for God's protection and wisdom for the Bible Society Vietnam and the translation team throughout the project.
- Pray too for God to strengthen, encourage and protect Christians and the churches of this ethnic minority.
- Pray that the Holy Spirit would soften the hearts of the people in this ethnic minority towards Christians so they will be receptive to God's word.

*Names omitted or replaced for security reasons.