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Why Worldwide Bible Translation Grows Exponentially*

The number of languages into which the Bible has been translated has grown exponentially during the past 2,300 years. The history of Bible translation can be divided into three periods of growth, each with its distinct limiting and driving forces. In the low-growth period between 260 BCE and 1814 CE growth was constrained by the rise of Islam and later by the information monopoly of the Catholic Church. The year 1815 was the inflection point, at which annual growth rates rose from below 1 to above 1 per cent. The century 1815–1914 was a period of substantial growth due to the co-occurrence of three driving forces: Christian revivalism, internationalisation, and industrialisation. This was followed by a third period—the era of explosive growth between 1915 and today—in which information technology and the organisational structure of translation agencies have spurred growth. An array of multinational organisations of Anglo-Saxon origin have created a quasi-monopoly for worldwide Bible translation. The exponential growth of worldwide Bible translation can be modelled by a mathematical function. Using this function and assuming the continuation of current trends, it is possible to project the end of the history of pioneer Bible translation sometime between 2026 and 2031.

The Phenomenon

In a complex system, an entity is regarded as growing exponentially if its quantity increases by a factor of more than one over a given time interval. For example, annual compounded interest of more than 1 per cent on capital invested in a bank account will cause the amount to grow exponentially. Self-reproducing organisms, from bacteria to humans, have the potential for exponential growth. In the same way, industrial capital such as machinery may follow an exponential growth pattern. However, the translation of the Bible into new languages has followed a similar pattern, with growth rates exceeding 1 per cent.

* This article draws on a wide range of data sources. I am particularly grateful to Liana Lupas (Nida Institute, American Bible Society) and Ines Galliani (United Bible Society) for allowing me to access the Scripture Language Reports and the Scriptures of the World. I would also like to express my gratitude to Melinda Lyons (ISO 639-3, Summer Institute of Linguistics), Rob Hess and Steve Moitozo (both Ethnologue, Summer Institute of Linguistics) for their kind permission of using the translation dates of Ethnologue.

Matthias Gerner is Professor of Linguistics at the Department of Linguistics and Translation, City University of Hong Kong, and Director of the Research Foundation of Language and Religion, Germany.
path by virtue of the fact that machines are used to produce new machines. System theorists like Meadows and her colleagues\(^1\) call the growth of self-replicating entities “inherent exponential growth.” The growth of non-self-replicating entities may also be exponential, if these depend on a self-replicating entity. This second type of growth is called “derived exponential growth.” Food production and resource use, for instance, are driven by human population growth and may rise (and indeed have risen) exponentially.

The question of whether the number of human languages, currently at around 7,000, has increased exponentially over thousands of years has no definite answer. The historical linguist Trask seems to argue against exponential growth. He dates any increase in the number of languages back to human prehistory. After the initial peopling of our planet, the total number of languages would have remained constant, at roughly “between 5,000 and 10,000.”\(^2\) A mathematical model of the growth pattern in human languages would require the dating and counting of hundreds of proto-languages, which is an endeavour on which linguists gave up some time ago.\(^3\) Theoretically speaking, it is possible for the number of human languages to grow exponentially, as such growth depends on populations and their actions. As human populations expand and migrate to new areas, spatial separation causes the speech patterns of two or more communities to change in different ways. The accumulated changes result in different dialects, and ultimately in mutually unintelligible languages. Additionally, new languages may be formed by the process of creolisation in which two languages merge into a hybrid language. Thus, the potential for exponential growth does exist, but the actual growth pattern of human languages is notoriously difficult to establish.

The number of languages for which a translation of the Bible, in whole or in part, is available, on the other hand, has risen exponentially, as we demonstrate in this section. The canon of the Bible was formed after the number of languages on Earth had stabilised. The first attested translation of Scriptures\(^4\) was the Septuagint. The ancient historian Josephus links the Torah portion of the Septuagint to the year 260 BCE. According to our own count, the total number of languages into which Scriptures have been translated reached the 2,850 mark in 2013. This enumeration is based on a particular definition of what constitutes a human language, namely that reflected by the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) in Geneva, Switzerland. The ISO 639-3 standard is a registry of 7,881 language codes and language names published in 2007.\(^5\) The registry represents each language by a unique three-letter code (e.g. “eng” for English; “yor” for Yoruba) (Tables 1–2).

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3. In 1895, the *Bulletin de la Société Linguistique de Paris* announced that it would reject any paper that attempted to reconstruct the ancestor language of all human languages.
4. I employ the term “Scriptures” in this article as a shorthand for “translated Bible portions.”
5. The registration authority of ISO 639-3 is the Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL), a missionary organisation. The ISO 639-3 standard grew out of the list of codes established in the *Ethnologue*, the flagship publication of SIL. *Ethnologue* appeared first in 1951 and its nineteenth edition was published in 2016.
Some linguists have criticised the ISO 639-3 standard, even going so far as to question its usefulness. We argue that the case for a language identification system can be made and that its benefits greatly outweigh any deficiencies. A summary of this debate is provided in Appendix 1.

We compiled the dates of Scripture translations from various sources, for example from web-searches and from publications of the United Bible Societies (UBS): *The Book of a Thousand Tongues*,6 *Scriptures of the World*,7 and the *Scriptures Language Reports* (1991–today).8 We also used information included in the *Ethnologue* of the Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL) and data obtained in personal communication. Although these datasets overlap, each has translation dates contradicting the others or not reported by the others. To the best of my knowledge, these datasets have never been integrated before. The growth curves for different Scripture categories are displayed in Figure 1.

The yellow curve, representing the cumulative number of translations, has the hockey stick shape characteristic of exponential curves. The process of Scripture translation has inherent exponential growth, not derived from

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**Table 1 Languages per category**

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**Table 2 Languages per continent**

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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
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anything that grows exponentially. It is self-replicating by virtue of the fact that translations are used to produce other translations. The red dashed line is a mathematical model of the growth curve for which we calculate the formula in the section Predictions. An important paradigm shift occurred

Figure 1 Growth in languages with Scriptures (260 BCE–2013 CE).

Figure 2 Growth in languages with Scriptures (1815–2013).

9. For example, the Syriac Peshitta was used in the translation of the Armenian Bible; the Peshitta and Armenian Bible were then used in the translation of the Georgian Bible.
between 1789 and 1830 that pushed the annual growth rate from below 1 per cent to above 1 per cent, with the year 1815 marking the inflection point of the exponential curve. In the next section, Enabling Factors, we identify three enabling factors for this paradigm shift that are still at work today. Figure 2 magnifies the data for the last 200 years, showing an explosive and ever-accelerating rate of growth.

System theorists have described exponential processes in terms of positive and negative feedback loops.10 A feedback loop is a chain of cause-and-effect relationships resulting in changes of the original base. A positive feedback loop produces runaway growth, while a negative feedback loop keeps growth in check, holding the total quantity within a certain range. The translation of Scripture into new languages, including its enabling factors, forms the positive feedback loop of the current stock of Bibles. Bible versions that are not updated and drop out of use form the negative feedback loop. In the nineteenth century, for example, Bibles were translated into several Chinese dialects that European standards regard as unintelligible languages. With the rise of Mandarin Chinese in the twentieth century, the Mandarin Bible supplanted most dialect versions.

Enabling Factors
The history of worldwide Bible translation can be divided into three eras: a period of low growth (260 BCE–1814 CE); a period of sustained high growth (1815–1914); and a period of explosive growth (1915–today). The years between 1789 and 1830 constitute a time window for a paradigm shift that enabled the rapid growth of the latter two eras.

Low Growth (260 BCE–1814 CE)
Ancient geopolitics constrained the growth of the number of languages with Scriptures over the 2074 years following the Septuagint. Before the seventh century CE, transcontinental trade routes were under Roman control or were decentralised. After the seventh century, Islamic polities checked all major trade routes and confined Christianity to Western Europe as the only region in which it developed majority status. Before the rise of Islam, Bible portions were translated into eleven ancient languages, all scattered along major trade routes. On the most important trade track, the Silk Road, translators produced Scriptures in the following languages (from west to east): Aramaic (120 BCE?),11 Old Syriac

10. See Meadows et al., 31.
11. When the Jews returned from the Babylonian exile around the year 532 BCE, they spoke Aramaic, the official language of the Babylonian Empire, not their ancestral Hebrew language. They needed an interpretation when they listened to the Hebrew Bible (see Nehemiah 8:7–8). This translation into Aramaic, called Targum, was initially oral and was written down later, probably starting around the year 120 BCE. After the dissolution of the Babylonian empire, the Aramaic language broke into Western and Eastern dialects that quickly developed into two unintelligible languages and then into two groups of dialects. Jewish Palestinian Aramaic in which the Targum was written is an Eastern Aramaic language.
12. Old Syriac or Classical Syriac was the Eastern Aramaic language spoken in Edessa, modern-day Şanlıurfa in Turkey, from 100 BCE to 1400 CE. Portions of the Old and New Testament were completed by unknown translators as early as 110 CE. The New Testament is mentioned for the first time in 160. The Syriac Bible, called Peshitta, became the standard version of the Syrian Orthodox Church in the fifth century. The Peshitta formed the basis for all translations into languages spoken along the Silk Road.

13. The conversion of the Armenians to Christianity in 301 is attributed to Gregory the Illuminator, who was consecrated as the first Catholicos of the Armenian Church. In 406, the Armenian linguist Mesrob Mashtots created the Armenian script, and in 411 he and Catholicos Sahak translated the Classical Armenian Bible, basing their translation on the Peshitta. After accessing the Septuagint and the Greek New Testament, they revised the whole Bible in 434.

14. According to Christian tradition, the Georgians accepted the Christian faith in the early fourth century because of St Nino, a slave woman. The Bible was translated into Old or Classical Georgian using a special alphabet that was reformed later in the eleventh century. The earliest Bible manuscripts date from the fifth century and show that both the Syriac Peshitta Bible and the Armenian Bible were used as the basis for translation (see M. V. Songulashvili, “The Translation of the Bible into Georgian,” The Bible Translator 41 (1990): 131–34).

15. Middle Persian or Pahlavi (Indo-European language family) was spoken in the Sasanian kingdom from 300 BCE to 800 CE. After the ninth century, Pahlavi survived as the liturgical language used by Zoroastrian priests. The only extant Bible fragments in Pahlavi are Psalms 94–99, 118, and 121–36, which were discovered in the ruins of the Nestorian monastery in Bulayiq near Turfan (China). The Babylonian Talmud (Megillah Tractate 18a) alludes to the Elamite and Median languages in which it was permitted to recite the Book of Esther on the Day of Purim. One of these languages probably refers to the Pahlavi language, suggesting that the Book of Esther too was translated into Middle Persian (see F. K. Andreas, “Bruchstücke einer Pehlewí-Übersetzung der Psalmen aus der Sassanidenzeit,” Sitzungsberichte der Königlich Preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften: Sitzung der Philologisch-Historischen Klasse 41 (1910): 869–72; see also W. Sundermann, “Mittelpersisch,” in Compendium Linguarum Iranicum, ed. R. Schmitt (Wiesbaden: Dr. Ludwig Reichert Verlag, 1989), 138–64, especially 138).


17. Middle Chinese was the vehicular language of the Táng dynasty and spoken during the period 0–900 CE. In 1625, a stela was excavated in the city of Xi’an, the former capital of the Táng dynasty, and is now held at the Xi’an Béiling Museum 西安碑林. The Chinese text on the stela mentions the arrival of Nestorian missionaries in 635 and the translation of Bible portions, none of which survive. Horne translated the text of the stela into English (see C. F. Horne, ed., The Sacred Books and Early Literature of the East, in Medieval China, vol. XII (New York: Parke, Austin and Lipscomb, 1917), 381–92. The translation is also available online: www.legacy.fordham.edu/halsall/eastasia/781nestorian.asp).


(480?) in the south. Rome, the home of the Latin Vulgate (405), was reached from the Middle East via the Mediterranean Trade Routes, and Gothic (350?) was attained from Cappadocia.

After the Islamic conquests and during the Islamic Golden Age (650–1300), Eastern Christianity was marginalised in its own territory and the supply of missionaries and translators dried up. Travel along the trade routes was unsafe for Christians. Except for one Asian language, the only region in which Scriptures were translated between 650 and 1400 was Europe with ten new languages. For 300 years (900–1200), translation projects were mostly frozen without any known output of Scriptures. Three factors explain this inactivity. First, Europe was linguistically fragmented with hundreds of vernacular languages that had proliferated after the fall of the Roman Empire. These vernacular languages showed extensive regional variation, making communication impossible between people living more than 300 km apart. The sovereign of each polity represented one language variety but did not promote this variety with a consistent language policy. Most languages did not exhibit a single obvious variety upon which a translation could be based. Second, the Popes developed a negative attitude toward translating the Vulgate into the vernacular languages of Europe that culminated in prohibitions, at the Councils of Toulouse (1229) and Tarragona (1234), against reading and translating the

20. Ge’ez (or Ethiopian), a Semitic language of the Afro-Asiatic family, was the official language of the Aksum kingdom in Ethiopia during the period 100–940 CE. According to tradition, the Syrian-Greek missionary Frumentius converted Ezana, king of Ethiopia, to Christianity in 383. The exact date and sources of the Ge’ez Bible are uncertain. A number of Syrian missionaries moved to Ethiopia in the fifth century, suggesting that the Peshitta might have been the source, but specialists relate most of the Ge’ez Bible to the Septuagint and to the Greek New Testament. Since the tenth century, Ge’ez has been used as a liturgical language of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church (see G. Mikre-Sellasie, “The Early Translation of the Bible into Ethiopic,” The Bible Translator 51 (2000): 302–16; and see also R. Zuurmond, “The Ethiopic Version of the New Testament,” in Ehrman and M. Holmes, 142–56).

21. Jerome was the only translator of the Latin Vulgate Bible completed in 405. He spent considerable time in Bethlehem to access the original Hebrew text.

22. Gothic was an Eastern Germanic language that became extinct before the ninth century. The Goths populated the areas of Bulgaria and Ukraine where they were reached by missionaries in the mid-third century. The conversion of the Goths is generally attributed to Wulfila (311–382), who was consecrated as Bishop of the Goths in 342. Wulfila created the Gothic alphabet and translated the Bible. A few manuscripts survive, of which the Codex Argenteus now conserved at the University of Uppsala is the most famous. The University of Antwerp hosts the Wulfila online project with various Gothic language resources (see E. Rhodes, “Secondary Versions: Arabic to Old Slavonic,” in A History of Bible Translation, ed. P. A. Noss (Rome: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 2007), 91–104, especially see 101–2).

23. The ten European languages in chronological order are the following: Mondsee Gospel in Old High German (810); Vespasian Psalter in Old English (850); Methodius Bible in Church Slavonic (884); Stjórn Old Testament in Old Norse (1205?); Cathar New Testament in Old Provençal (1250?); “Bible Historiale” in Old French (1297); Augsburg New Testament in Middle High German (1350); Hernse Bible in Middle Dutch (1360); Wycliffe Bible in Middle English (1384). Furthermore, in 1307 the Catholic papal envoy to the Mongol court, John of Montecorvino, translated the New Testament into the Old Uyghur, the lingua franca of the Mongol elite in China. No manuscript has been preserved, but John reported his achievement in letters to the Pope (see H. Yule, ed., Cathay and the Way Thither: Being a Collection of Medieval Notices of China, vol. 3 (London: Hakluyt Society, 1914), 45–58).

Third, the intellectual climate at the turn of the first millennium was not conducive to major endeavours such as Bible translation. The information monopoly of the Catholic Church, the corruption of the Popes, and, as some have argued, apocalypticism of the year 1000, held intellectual activity in bondage.

In the age of scholasticism, critical thinking was gradually (re)introduced, but this did not substantially increase the number of Scripture translations, at least not between 1200 and 1400. In six out of eight new languages, local authorities or kings sponsored the translation, while in two languages (Old Occitan and Middle English) the establishment repressed the translators. These translators represented the first challenge to the information monopoly of the Catholic Church.

25. This prohibition is included in Canon 14 of the Council of Toulouse of 1229 (see E. Peters, Heresy and Authority in Medieval Europe, The Middle Ages Series (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1980), 195) and in Canon 2 of the Council of Tarragona of 1234 (see P. M. Simms, The Bible from the Beginning (London: Macmillan, 1929), 162).

26. The information network of the Catholic Church in the Middle Ages consisted of three levels. At the top tier the Pope and his high-ranking cardinals decided on the type of information the European public was allowed to know. In the second tier were monasteries, seminaries, and later universities that received, archived, and transmitted this information in Medieval Latin to the literate elite. At the third level was this elite, consisting mainly of priests educated in Latin, who translated the information into the vernacular languages of Europe to make it available to the illiterate masses (see L. Dudley, The Word and the Sword: How the Technologies of Information and Violence Have Shaped Our World (Cambridge, MA: Basil Blackwell, 1991), 146; see also E. C. Hanson, The Information Revolution and World Politics (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2008), 14).

27. Between 924 and 1048, the Roman Popes were installed and controlled by two factions of a Roman noble clan, the Tusculans and Crescentii, both consisting of descendants of Theophylact (864–924), a high curial officer. Theophylact’s wife and daughter influenced the appointment of Popes between 924 and 974. The Crescentii installed their Popes between 974 and 1012 and the Tusculans theirs between 1012 and 1048, before the German king Henry III finished their scheme (see K. G. Cushing, Reform and the Papacy in the Eleventh Century: Spirituality and Social Change (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005), 61–62). The 124 years between 924 and 1048 have been called the “Dark Age” by Catholic Church historians since the sixteenth century (see J. C. Dwyer, Church History: Twenty Centuries of Catholic Christianity (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1998), 155).

28. The Book of Revelation 20:3–5 teaches that the last judgment will occur after a period of 1,000 years in which the devil is held in captivity. In a certain version of the post-millenarian doctrine, the year 1000 was the earliest point in time that the last judgment could have occurred. Burr (1901) summarised the view of European historians that the year 1000 had not generated any apocalyptic fervor, while Landes (2000), one hundred years later, defended the existence of end-time expectations in the run-up to the year 1000. See G. L. Burr, “The Year 1000 and the Antecedents of the Crusades,” American Historical Review 6 (1901): 429–39; and R. Landes, “The Fear of an Apocalyptic Year 1000: Augustinian Historiography, Medieval and Modern,” Speculum 75 (2000): 97–143.

29. For example, the Stjórn translation of the Old Testament into Old Norse was supported at some point by the king of Norway (see I. J. Kirby, Bible Translation in Old Norse, Publications de la Faculté des Lettres XXVII (Genève: Université de Lausanne, 1986); and see also I. J. Kirby, “Stjórn” in Medieval Scandinavia: An Encyclopedia, ed. P. Pulisano, K. Wolf, P. Acker, and D. K. Fry (New York: Garland Publishing, 1993), 611–12). The Cathars, a Christian dualist movement that was violently suppressed by the Catholic Church, translated the New Testament into Old Occitan/Provençal around 1250; see L. Clèdat, Le Nouveau Testament traduit au XIIIe siècle en language provençale suivi d’un rituel Cathare (Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1887). John Wycliffe, the translator of the Bible into Middle English, was a dissident Catholic priest who is viewed today as a precursor of the English Reformation, see B. Bobrick, Wide as the Waters: The Story of the English Bible and the Revolution it Inspired (New York: Penguin Books, 2001), 30–31.
Two pivotal events made an impact on the history of Bible translation: the invention of the printing press by Johann Gutenberg in 1455 and the discovery of the New World by Christopher Columbus in 1492. The emergence of the printing press undermined the information monopoly of the Catholic Church in two ways. Firstly, it enabled Martin Luther and other Reformers to disseminate their views by circumventing the censorship of the Catholic Church. Secondly, the printing press signalled a move away from Latin toward vernacular languages. Although the first printed book was the Vulgate, a stream of printed Bibles in twenty-five European and five Asian languages followed suit in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. These vernacular Bible translations initiated different processes of language standardisation driven by the printing press. Since Latin was only available to a minority of intellectuals, printers and booksellers actively created a market for books in vernacular languages by shaping standard language varieties that would be comprehensible to a wide readership. Benedict Anderson called the commercial interest of printers the “logic of print capitalism,” which dictated that more books be printed in the speech of ordinary people.

The discovery of the New World by Christopher Columbus in 1492 inaugurated a period of exploration, conquest, and colonisation and led to the rise of global trade. It put an end to European isolation by Islamic polities that had dominated strategic parts of the Old World (Europe, Africa, and Asia) for centuries. Nevertheless, it took over 300 years before the end of European isolation led to a substantial increase in translated Bibles. Between 1600 and 1814, Scriptures were translated into approximately forty new languages, nearly the same quantity (thirty languages) as in the period 1400–1600. This low growth is due to the fact that the early discoveries were made by Catholic nations that operated under the information monopoly of the Catholic Church. In response to the challenges of the Reformation, the

30. See Hanson, 15.
32. At an early stage, printers undertook the task of standardisation. For example, the English printer William Caxton (1422–1491) chose words in his publications that had widest circulation in different British dialects (Trask, 166); in Germany, a similar role was played by Lucas Cranach the Elder (1472–1553) who printed pamphlets for Martin Luther.
34. Irish (1602); Lithuanian (1625); Malay (1629); Samaritan (1632); Latvian (1637); Sami (1648); Wampanoag (1655); Nogai (1659); Siraya (1661); Modern French (1667); Upper Sorbian (1670); Vlaxian Romani (1670); Estonian (1686); Võro (1686); Lower Sorbian (1709); Tamil (1714); Sinhala (1739); Modern Georgian (1743); Inuit (1744); Deccan (1747); Manx (1748); Western Frisian (1755); Gaelic (1767); Berbice Creole Dutch (1781); Negerhollands (1781); Modern Turkish (1782); Mohawk (1787); Bengali (1800); Bosnian (1804); Urdu (1805); Hindi (1806); Marathi (1807); Sanskrit (1808); Gujarati (1809); Odia (1809); Labrador Eskimo (1810); Classical Chinese (1810); Malayalam (1811); Telugu (1812); Kannada (1812).
Council of Trent (1545–1563) restated the importance of the Bible and made the Vulgate the official Catholic Bible, but remained neutral on the issue of vernacular translations. Pope Gregory XV founded the Propaganda Fide in 1622 with the aim of bringing all Catholic missionaries under one unified administration. In 1655, the Propaganda Fide prohibited by decree the publication of books by missionaries without prior permission. This decree made Bible versions in vernacular languages almost impossible. Requests made by Catholic missionaries to publish vernacular translations were routinely turned down, which resulted in a number of aborted projects and unpublished Bible versions. The only new languages into which Scriptures were translated between 1600 and 1814 were either (smaller) European languages or languages in America or Asia reached by the nascent Protestant missions (Table 3).

The inflection point in the history of worldwide Bible translation occurred in the year 1815 when eight new languages were added to the set of languages with Scriptures. Starting from that year, annual growth rates were constantly above 1 per cent.

The Paradigm Shift (1789–1830)
The inflection point from low to high growth in Bible translation is due to the co-occurrence of three factors: Christian revivalism, internationalisation, and industrialisation. The nations that contributed most to worldwide Bible translation in the nineteenth century were those that had experienced revivalist movements and at the same time dominated successive waves of internationalisation and industrialisation. In the eighteenth century, Christian revivalism and secular enlightenment were two independent reactions to the authoritarian excesses of the state and the church. One sought solutions in

36. The full name is Sacra Congregatio de Propaganda Fide (Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith). Pope John Paul II changed its name to Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples in 1982.
38. This happened, for example, to the Missions Etrangeres de Paris in 1670, which requested permission to translate the Bible into Chinese but was refused in 1673 (see Kowalsky, 31–32). When Father Jean Basset died in 1707, he had translated 80 per cent of the New Testament into Chinese, but his version was not authorised for publication (see N. Standaert, “The Bible in Early Seventeenth-Century China,” in Bible in Modern China: The Literary and Intellectual Impact, ed. I. Eber, S.-K. Wan, and K. Wolf (Sankt Augustin: Institut Monumenta Serica, 1999), 31–54, particularly 31–38). There are also reports of a New Testament translated into Japanese by Jesuits in 1613, but no copy survived as it does not appear to have been published (see D. Soesilo, “Bible translation in Asia-Pacific and the Americas,” in A History of Bible Translation, ed. P. A. Noss (Rome: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 2007), 163–81, particularly 164).
39. The first language of the New World into which Scriptures were translated was Wampanoag, an Algonquian language spoken in Massachusetts and New Hampshire. The Puritan missionary John Elliot translated the whole Bible between 1655 and 1663. Albert Cornelisz Ryul of the Dutch East Indies Company translated the Gospel of Matthew into Malay in 1629, which was the first portion of the Bible completed in an Asian language in early modern times. This translation was commissioned by the Dutch Reformed Church.

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divine resources, the other in human resources; one legitimised spiritual authority by biblical revelation, the other secular authority by human reason; one shaped the attitudes requisite for worldwide Bible dissemination, the other the attitudes required for an internationalisation of human relations.

Church historians have characterised revival movements by their commitment to the *Sola Scriptura* principle of the Reformation and by their sense of mission to reach out to the local community, the wider society, or distant peoples.40 Both this regard for the Bible and this sense of mission impel people to engage in Bible translation. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, dozens of Christian revival movements swept across Europe and North America. Many were started by a prominent revival preacher and resulted in the formation of a mission or Bible society. In particular, the UK revival movements of the eighteenth century led to the formation of the Baptist Missionary Society in 1792,41 the London Missionary Society in 1795,42 the

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<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>800–1000</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<td>1400–1600</td>
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<tr>
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<td>18</td>
<td>15</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


41. The Baptist Missionary Society (BMS), established in 1792 by twelve Baptist ministers in Kettering, UK, sent William Carey to India in 1793 as its first missionary. The missionary station that Carey established in Serampore organised the translation of Bible portions into more than twenty-three Asian languages during 1815–1914, bringing the total number of world languages with direct BMS involvement to fifty-two in this period. See G. Smith, *The Life of William Carey, D.D: Shoemaker and Missionary* (London: John Murray, 1885). (It was republished by Cambridge University Press in 2011).

42. The London Missionary Society (LMS) was founded in 1795 by a group of evangelical Anglicans and Congregationalists. Prominent LMS missionaries in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries were Robert Morrison (China), David Livingston (Africa), and the 1924 Olympic Games gold medalist Eric Liddell (China). The LMS translated Scriptures for the first time into twenty-six languages.
Church Mission Society in 1799, and the British and Foreign Bible Society in 1804. North America saw the establishment of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions in 1810 and the American Bible Society in 1816. The revival movements are difficult to quantify due to their interconnectivity and uneven spread, but together they created a sea change in the attitudes toward Bible translation as a mass movement.

In the narrow time window between the French Revolution (1789) and the beginning phase of the Concert of Europe (1830), two philosophers, Jeremy Bentham and Emmanuel Kant, developed visionary ideas about international relations. For both, the space of the “international” was lawless and desperately in need of regulation. The Englishman Bentham, who coined the term “international,” advocated a system of laws that would bind the conduct of nations. Against the backdrop of the disorder of the French Revolution, Kant went a step further and argued in his essay Zum ewigen Frieden [Perpetual Peace] that the international space should be shaped by a law of nations backed up by a federation of free

43. The Church Mission Society (CMS) was created in 1799 by a group of Anglican and evangelical Christians centred around William Wilberforce, a member of the British Parliament. Its original name, Society for Missions to Africa and the East, was changed to Church Missionary Society in 1812. Between 1815 and 1914, the CMS supervised the translation of Bible portions into at least fifty-two languages. See J. Murray, Proclaim the Good News: A Short History of the Church Missionary Society (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1985).

44. A group that included William Wilberforce and Thomas Charles formed the British and Foreign Bible Society (BFBS) in 1804 to supply affordable Bibles to the people. From the outset, as its name indicates, it was not intended to serve only the churches in the United Kingdom, but to extend its agency into other parts of the world. The BFBS rarely engaged in Bible translation itself: BFBS employees translated portions of the Bible into only five languages between 1815 and 1914. During this period, however, the BFBS was the sole or main publisher of Bible portions in about 184 languages. It organised the publication process in about 150 languages by using printing facilities around the world. The BFBS set up ten auxiliary Bible societies in Australia, Canada, India, and Indonesia responsible for publishing Bible portions in an additional thirty-four languages. Most of these auxiliary Bible societies turned into national Bible societies. For example, the Calcutta Auxiliary Bible Society of 1811 became the Bible Society of India in 1950, and the New South Wales Auxiliary Bible Society of 1827 became the Australian Bible Society. In the first seventy-five years of its existence, the BFBS published Bible portions in 33 languages before accelerating its output to 151 languages between 1880 and 1914.

45. The American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM) was formed in 1810 by alumni of Williams College in Massachusetts who were part of a series of revivals in Northeast America at the beginning of the nineteenth century. The ABCFM, of Congregational origin, was the largest American mission agency of the nineteenth century. Missionaries of the ABCFM translated Scriptures into twenty languages for the first time.

46. The American Bible Society (ABS) was founded in 1816 by several people, mainly politicians, including Elias Boudinot, Frederick Theodore Frelinghuysen, Daniel Coit Gilman, and John Jay. The ABS published Bible portions in languages in which American missionaries evangelised the native population. Like the BFBS, the ABS used printing facilities all over the world for its publications. According to The Book of a Thousand Tongues, the ABS printed Bible portions or whole Bibles in sixty-five languages for the first time. The Encyclopedia Americana of 1918 (Vol. 1, p. 501) mentions the translation of Scriptures into 164 languages by 1915, which also includes languages in which Scriptures were already translated. See E. G. Rines, ed., “The American Bible Society,” The Encyclopedia Americana, vol. I (New York: Lyon Company, 1918), 501.

states. Bentham and Kant’s ideas inspired the architects of the Concert of Europe (1815–1878), which was mankind’s first truly international institution. Its establishment by the Congress of Vienna in 1815 in the wake of the Napoleonic Wars was a watershed in international relations. Although the Concert of Europe eventually failed, it became the reference point for continuous internationalisation efforts until the present day. Mark Mazower admirably describes in his chapter Under the Sign of the International how the Concert of Europe appealed to the aspirations of the European public and opened an era that aroused interest in international affairs.

The First Industrial Revolution (1780–1840)—the transition from hand to machine production made possible by innovations in steam power and fuel techniques—primarily affected textile production and metallurgy. Innovations originated in the United Kingdom and were exported to the European continent after a short delay, first to Belgium, then to France, Germany, Scandinavia, and so forth. Although this first wave of industrialisation had no direct effect on the number of Scripture translations, it laid the ground for the Second Industrial Revolution (1870–1914), which directly enabled an increase in Bible translations.

Sustained High Growth (1815–1914)
Between 1815 and 1914, Scriptures were translated into a total of 478 new languages, five times more languages than had been accomplished in the preceding 2,000 years. The total number of languages with Scriptures grew to 572 by the year the First World War broke out.

In the nineteenth century, the most important structural unit for missionary outreach was the nation state not the mission agency, while in the twentieth century this hierarchy was reversed. The reason for this shift lies in the gradual acquisition of international experience. For the purpose of war prevention, the Concert of Europe worked reasonably well until the Crimean War broke out in 1853 and pitted member states against one another, the Russians against the British and French. For projects like exploration, trade, and evangelisation, the concept of a nineteenth-century-style corporation like the Concert of Europe appears insufficient. Such endeavours require a high level of mutual trust between nations, which did not exist in the nineteenth century. It was more effective to use the infrastructure of each nation state. European key players thus expected to gain more from pursuing colonial empires than from seeking a synergism of forces.

49. Klemenz Wenzel von Metternich and his colleagues were also influenced by Lord Grenville, Prime Minister of the United Kingdom during 1806–1807, who had drawn up plans for institutionalised meetings of European politicians. See J. M. Sherwig, “Lord Grenville’s Plan for a Concert of Europe, 1797–1799,” Journal of Modern History 34, no. 3 (1962): 284–93.
Historical data for 1815–1914 demonstrate a correlation between the number of Bible translations on the one side and the number of revival movements, the degree of internationalisation, and the degree of industrialisation on the other side. The more revival movements a country experienced, the higher its degree of internationalisation, and the greater its level of industrialisation, the more languages there were in which missionaries of that country produced Bible translations (Figure 3).

A country’s degree of internationalisation can be measured by the extent of its colonial possessions, or even better by the number of languages spoken in its colonies. This number provides an upper limit of the Scripture translations the missionaries of a country could have achieved in the best of all possible worlds. A country’s level of industrialisation is more difficult to quantify. The Second Industrial Revolution (1870–1914) was characterised by technological innovations that improved the mobility of people, information, and goods. The construction of steamships and railroad networks enabled Bible translators to travel easily to their target areas. The installation of telegraphic cable networks overland and undersea provided missionaries, among other beneficiaries, the opportunity to exchange

Figure 3 Idealized Scattergram.

51. The colonies varied in their potential for Bible translation. Greater-Siberia, for example, an area of 13,100,000 km², was part of Russia from the seventeenth century, while Indonesia, a country of only 1,904,569 km², was a Dutch colony until the Second World War. With a population speaking 43 languages, Siberia’s potential for Bible translation, despite its greater size, was much smaller than Indonesia’s, where 701 indigenous languages were spoken.

52. The electric telegraph using Morse code gave rise to the first global communication system. The first telegraphic device, put into operation in 1844 between Washington and Baltimore, led to a surge in investments by colonial powers to forge closer links with their colonies and, not incidentally, to exert greater and more effective colonial control. The first undersea electric cable linked Britain to the European continent in 1851. Other cables connected Europe to the USA in 1866 and France to North Africa in 1871. The United Kingdom dominated the submarine cable business until the First World War. This dominance concerned other European powers as it strengthened the British grip on the commercial and financial networks (see Hanson).
timely information. The use of mobile steam-driven printing presses increased the circulation of translated Bibles. While these technologies enhanced the prospects for Bible translation projects, control and access to them was unevenly distributed. Countries fall into three categories:

1. **Traditional countries**: countries with no or limited access to the technologies (e.g. Brazil, China, Iran);
2. **Sovereign countries**: countries with access to the technologies and with the ability to build transport and information networks in the territory they controlled (e.g. Western European countries, USA);
3. **Hegemonic countries**: sovereign countries that additionally dominated the networks built between nations and empires (i.e. United Kingdom).

Table 4 presents a list of the countries that contributed to the translation of Scriptures between 1815 and 1914. The queen in this league is the United Kingdom: it experienced the highest number of revival movements, it had access through its colonial empire to the highest number of languages, it was the hegemon of the international communication networks, and, in keeping with the pattern of the historical data, it was also far and away the most productive country in terms of Bible translation (for a breakdown of the data in Table 4 see Appendix 2).

Worldwide Bible translation in the nineteenth century is thus strongly dominated by Anglo-Saxon countries, with 67 per cent of all new translations, roughly 315 of 472, produced by translators of these countries.

**Explosive Growth (1915–Today)**
The number of languages into which Scriptures have been translated quintupled in the last hundred years, numbering 2,850 in 2013, compared with 572 in 1914.
Bible portions or whole Bibles were completed in 2,278 languages between 1915 and 2013, a phenomenal acceleration. The Anglo-Saxon supremacy has become even more overwhelming with 83 per cent of all new language translations, approximately 1901 of 2,278, accomplished by Anglo-Saxon agencies.

The dynamics of these increases differ from those of the nineteenth century. Christian revival movements no longer constitute a measurable force for two reasons. Firstly, while the twentieth century saw two major revival movements—the Pentecostal and Charismatic movements—that led to the formation of missions such as the Assembly of God Mission—these movements contributed only a small share of the total Scripture output, about 14 out of 2,278 new translations. Second, due to global migration and information technology some conversion movements among unevangelised populations fed back to Western countries. The boundary between cause (revival in base country) and effect (conversion in target country) thus became blurred. For these reasons, variation in revival movements cannot be used to explain variation in the number of translated Bibles.

The spread of information technology is one important factor that has contributed to the rapid growth of Scriptures. Three types of technological innovations particularly fostered translation projects by industrialising parts of the procedure and reducing the time required to produce a translation: personal computer technologies (e.g. word processing, database management); encoding technologies for writing systems (e.g. based on ISO 8859 or Unicode); and internet and mobile technologies (e.g. traffic of texts, data,
audio, and video). These technologies have had a measurable effect on the time needed to complete a given translation project. New Testament projects begun after 1980 took half as long as those initiated before 1980. For complete Bible projects, the time savings are even more dramatic: one third of the time needed before 1980 is required for the same task after 1980 (Table 5).

US companies have quasi-monopolies over most of these technologies. This has given Bible agencies based in North America, in particular the Summer Institute of Linguistics and the United Bible Societies, the advantage of building translation applications ahead of others. Bible translation became a multi-skill profession, for which traditional missions were increasingly unable to provide infrastructure. This explains in part why a wide range of Christian missions dropped out of the business of Bible translation after 1980 and why a few Anglo-Saxon agencies have come to dominate the field (see Table 6).

The second important factor for runaway growth in Bible translation is the degree of internationalisation of the translation agencies. Nineteenth-century-style colonialism artificially inflated the European nations by temporarily injecting the resources of another population. Colonialism eventually carries the seed of war. After the horrors of two world wars, the world needed a new Concert of Europe. The call was answered by the formation of many international institutions: the League of Nations, the European Union, the United Nations, and countless IGOs (e.g. International Organization for Standardization) and NGOs (e.g. Greenpeace). Emmanuel Kant’s 200-year-old vision of a federal union of states that would govern the lawless space of the “international” came closer to fulfilment, but it was a gradual and uneven process. For Christian

58. During 1980–2013, internet and mobile technologies developed in a series of cascading innovations (Hanson, 48–69). The first satellite was launched into a geosynchronous orbit in 1963; ARPANET (Advanced Research Projects Agency Network), the first computer network which was operated by the US Department of Defense, began service in 1969; the first fibre-optic cable across the Atlantic Ocean went into service in 1988; the World Wide Web was invented by Tim Berners-Lee (CERN) in Switzerland in 1989; handheld mobile telephones were first developed in the early 1990s. These technologies transformed the process of Bible translation. Revisions of a Bible text, for example, can be easily exchanged, video-conferencing can bring together a translation committee scattered over three continents, and so forth.

59. The length of a New Testament/Bible project is calculated as the publication year of the New Testament/Bible minus the publication year of the first book. The mean length is the mathematical mean of all project lengths (see Table 5). It is also interesting to note that the standard deviation of the means has constantly decreased in the past 200 years. The standard deviation is a measure of how much individual translation projects differ from the mean project length. The standard deviation for New Testament projects is as follows: 41 (1815–1914); 16.75 (1915–1979); and 6.1 (1980–2013). For Bible projects the standard deviation is: 41.36 (1815–1914); 18.94 (1915–1979); and 6.17 (1980–2013). The decrease of standard deviation reveals how technology use has formalised the translation projects by reducing time variation among them.
missions and Bible societies, three organisational models surfaced in the twentieth century, reflecting different degrees of internationalisation.

1. **Mononational organisations** are founded in one country with a workforce recruited from that country. Almost all mission agencies not based in an

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organisation</th>
<th>Translated languages</th>
<th>Country of origin</th>
<th>Degree of internationalisation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Christian and Missionary Alliance</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>USA/Canada (1897)</td>
<td>Mononational</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sudan United Mission</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>UK (1902)</td>
<td>Mononational</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church Mission Society</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>UK (1799)</td>
<td>Mononational</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methodist Missions Society</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>UK (1932)</td>
<td>Mononational</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sudan Interior Mission</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>USA (1893)</td>
<td>Mononational</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Africa Inland Mission</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>USA (1895)</td>
<td>Mononational</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Anglo-Saxon Missions</td>
<td>163</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>Mononational</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other non-Anglo-Saxon Missions</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>Mononational</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SIL/Wycliffe/JAARS/Seed</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>436</td>
<td>Multinational</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[World Home] Bible League</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>248</td>
<td>Multinational</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Bible Society</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>Multinational</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Tribes Mission</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>Multinational</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institute for Bible Translation</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>Multinational</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Bible Societies</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>--- (1946)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bible Society of Papua New Guinea</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>Papua New Guinea (1985)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indonesian Bible Society</td>
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<td>38</td>
<td>Indonesia (1814)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bible Society of India</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>India (1811)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bible Society of Cameroon</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Cameroon (1959)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bible Societies of other countries</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>--- (1946)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Anglophone country have been operating as mononational organisations in the twentieth century (e.g. the German Rhenish Missionary Society). Many agencies established in the UK or USA started as mononational organisations but later shifted to a multinational mode. The African Inland Mission, for example, was formed in the USA in 1895 and employed almost exclusively North American missionaries until 1970, when it opened recruiting centres in ten other countries including Hong Kong and Brazil.

2. **Multinational organisations** are established in one country with a workforce recruited from many countries. These organisations emerged in the twentieth century in the USA and to a lesser degree in the UK. The pattern is almost always the same. A person with a clear business model or an inspiring life story establishes a dynamic home base. After several years, recruiting centres open in Europe, generally beginning in the UK, next moving to the Netherlands or Germany and then to other European countries. When the European centres operate successfully, new bases are established on other continents depending on the field of activity and on a country’s general orientation. Although the North American staff usually outnumbers the personnel from all other countries combined, organisations tend to apply to themselves the label “international” or “global.” This, for example, is the story of the Wycliffe Bible Translators, the most productive translation agency of all time (see Appendix 3).

3. **Confederal organisations** are international organisations established by organisations from different nations united for the purpose of common action. Confederal organisations, in contrast to multinational organisations, deserve the title of “international” in the sense that Jeremy Bentham originally envisioned. The only confederal Bible agency is the United Bible Societies, established from 152 national Bible societies (see Appendix 3).

Table 6 presents the most active organisations in each category in terms of translation output. A noteworthy shift occurred in the late 1960s. Mononational organisations, in spite of their continued existence, became unproductive and stopped translating Scriptures into new languages (with some exceptions). On the other hand, multinational and confederal organisations that were non-existent or insignificant before 1970 became important contributors thereafter (for a breakdown of the data in Table 6 see Appendix 3).

Table 6 clearly shows that multinational organisations from the United States (in particular SIL/WBT) have been more efficient than mononational and confederal organisations (i.e. United Bible Societies). This trend mirrors other areas of international activity in which multinational corporations from the USA pull the strings. Some authors portray this dominance as “minority rule” and warn against a future backlash. As far as Bible translation is concerned, there is indeed a tension between the status quo and one central doctrine of the Bible. The dominance of Anglo-Saxon agencies in the twentieth century suggests that the nationality of the messenger

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60. Confederations allow their members to retain their independence, whereas federations are close unions whose members surrender their autonomy.

matters, whereas the Bible assures the reader that it is not so ("there is no difference between Jew and Greek," Romans 10:12). In spite of this tension, it is too early to draw a conclusion as the history of worldwide Bible translation is still ongoing.

In summary, the positive feedback cycle for translation growth in the twentieth century includes two enabling factors: firstly, Anglo-Saxon dominance of Bible projects built upon Anglo-Saxon dominance in information technologies; secondly, the multinational and confederal structure of the translation agencies. A third factor, Christian revivalism, may have played an additional role, but cannot be measured.

Predictions
The graphs in Figure 1 are based on empirical quantities compiled for each year. The number of translations resembles an exponential curve for which we can calculate the formula. Here is the definition of an exponential function.

Definition
A quantity \( q \) depends exponentially on time \( t \), if there are real numbers \( a > 0 \) and \( b > 1 \) such that \( q(t) = a \cdot b^t \).

Parameters
- \( a = q_s \) is the initial quantity at starting time \( t_s \) (260 BCE).
- \( b \) is the constant growth factor by which the amount \( q \) increases per time increment \( c \).
- \( c \) is the constant time increment in which the quantity \( q \) increases by factor \( b \).
- \( t_s \) = starting time, when the Septuagint (260 BCE) was completed: \( q_s = q(-260) = 1 \).
- \( t_i \) = time of inflection point (1815 CE). We have \( q_i = q(1815) = 102 \).
- \( t_e \) = time of endpoint (currently 2013 CE). We have \( q_e = q(2013) = 2,850 \).

An exponential function is sufficiently specified if two time-quantity pairs are provided, for example the quantity at the inflection point and the quantity at the endpoint. The inflection point\(^{62} \) is the point of a curve at which the direction changes, in this case the point at which the number of translations accelerates significantly. Annual increments below 1 deliver low growth, increments above 1 lead to high growth. The endpoint is the time at which the growth process stops, either by necessity or by convenience. The current endpoint is the year 2013, the last year for which we have data.

\(^{62}\) In mathematics, the inflection point of a curve \( f(x) \) is the point \((z, f(z))\) where the second derivation \( f''(z) = 0 \). In general, there might be no, one, or more than one inflection point. In our case, the second derivation of an exponential function cannot be zero and an exponential function thus cannot have an inflection point in the mathematical sense. However, we use the term "inflection point" here in a more colloquial sense. The inflection point of a curve \( f(x) \) is the point where growth accelerates from a gradient below 1 to a gradient over 1. In other words, it is the point \((z, f(z))\) where the first derivation \( f'(z) = 1 \).
Let us determine the inflection point. For a differentiable function \( q(t) \), the inflection point is the point \( t_i \) such that the first derivation \( q'(t_i) = 1 \). However, since our empirical data are discrete, we must look for the time \( t_i \) at which the gradient switches from less than 1 to greater than 1:

For almost all \( t < t_i \), the gradient \( m < 1 \), or more precisely \( m = \frac{q(t+1) - q(t)}{(t+1) - t} < 1 \)

For almost all \( t \geq t_i \), the gradient \( m \geq 1 \), or more precisely \( m = \frac{q(t+1) - q(t)}{(t+1) - t} \geq 1 \)

A computer program that we developed establishes 1815 CE as the inflection point. Between 260 BCE and 1815 CE, the annual increments are consistently below 1 with very few exceptions. Beginning in 1815, the number of Bible translations grows annually with increments of more than 1, again with very few exceptions.

Now, we can determine the exponential function \( q(t) \) and its inverse logarithm function \( t(q) \). Choosing \( b = 2 \) as the base in order to express the growth process as a doubling process yields the following formulas:

**The Calculation of \( q(t) \) and \( t(q) \)**

The constant \( a \) and \( c \) can be calculated with fairly standard mathematical methods and formulas. For the two time-quantity pairs \((t_i, q_i) = (1815, 102)\) and \((t_e, q_e) = (2013, 2850)\), we have

\[
a = q_i \cdot \left( \frac{q_e}{q_i} \right)^{\frac{t_i}{t_e-t_i}} = 6.23... \cdot \frac{10^{12}}{10^{12}};
\]

\[
b = 2;
\]

\[
c = \frac{t_e-t_i}{\log_2 \left( \frac{q_e}{q_i} \right)} = 41.33399...
\]

**The Formulas of World Wide Bible Translation**

i. Time-Quantity Function

\[
q(t) = \frac{6.23}{10^{12}} \cdot 2^{\frac{t}{41.33}}
\]

ii. Quantity-Time Function

\[
t(q) = 41.33 \cdot \log_2 \left( \frac{10^{12}}{6.23} \cdot q \right)
\]

In the history of worldwide Bible Translation, the number of languages with Scriptures has doubled every 41 years. If current trends continue, then by 2026, 3,500 languages will have a portion of the Bible
translated; by 2072 all 7,881 languages on earth will have Scriptures available.

**Conclusion**

We have argued for the rise of Islam and the information monopoly of the Catholic Church to be mainly responsible for the low growth in Scripture translation between 260 BCE and 1815 CE. After 1815, the number of languages with Scriptures has substantially risen due to a combination of three factors: Christian revivalism, internationalisation, and industrialisation. In the twentieth century, growth has been explosive because of the emergence of new information technologies and the creation of a quasi-monopoly by a few Anglo-Saxon translation agencies.

The history of pioneer Bible translation ends when the last language in need of Bible translation has access to a native version. It is difficult to establish the exact number of needy languages as many small languages are undergoing rapid transformation in the twenty-first century. According to cautious estimates, the number might lie between 3,500 and 3,800 languages, two targets that might be reached between 2026 and 2031 respectively if current trends persist.

---

**Table 7 Definition of language in E16/E17/E18**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intelligible</th>
<th>Shared ethnolinguistic identity</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dialects</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dialects</td>
<td>−</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Languages</td>
<td>−</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Languages</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>−</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Languages</td>
<td>−</td>
<td>−</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Appendix 1

In a comprehensive review of the *Ethnologue* sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth editions (E16, E17, E18),63 Hammerström64 evaluates this reference work positively but points out the lack of information sources for many data. E16, E17 and E18 use “mutual intelligibility” and “shared ethnolinguistic identity” as definitional criteria for drawing a distinction between dialects and languages. In the application of these criteria, there were a number of difficult cases. The linguists Morey, Post, and Friedman65 criticised the ISO 639-3 standard for cutting through languages and dialects in cases where the boundary between speeches is rather fuzzy. Controversial cases are tinted grey in Table 7.

In a brief note, Haspelmath66 further questions the usefulness of a language identification system67 and in particular whether the industrial ISO Corporation has the required expertise and authority to oversee such a system. We do think that the case for a language identification system can be made and that its benefits greatly outweigh any deficiency. Firstly, the problem of using clear-cut models for inherently fuzzy entities such as human language has been debated since at least the nineteenth century when August Schleicher proposed the tree model and Johannes Schmidt the wave model for representing genetic relations of languages. In the past 150 years, linguists have preferred the tree model’s simplified clear-cut representation over the faithful but messy wave model. In a similar way, a language identification system like the ISO 639-3 standard is a simplified clear-cut model of the reality. Secondly, metalinguistic information such as population numbers, degree of endangerment, L1/L2 user percentage (and also Bible translation dates) is available for virtually all languages on the planet. A language identification system is needed to map this wealth of data accurately. Finally, the

67. Haspelmath does not make a detailed case, but the only reason I can think of why linguists would question the need for an identification system is the following. In their research, comparative linguists make claims about all human languages by working on representative subsets of languages, generally consisting of 100–400 languages. Since grammatical descriptions are only available in about 15 per cent of the 7,000 languages, research needs to be conducted this way. Linguistic scholars structure their corpus by selecting languages that are genetically relatively distant from each other. Almost never would they choose dialects of the same language. In this line of research, the need for an identification system is obviously limited.

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controversy over which institution should supervise the language identification system is not a scientific but a political one and must be settled as such.

Appendix 2
The data of Table 4 (“Translated Scriptures and associated factors during 1815–1914”) are summarised from a wide range of sources which we detail below.

**United Kingdom**
Eight major revivals took place in the United Kingdom (England, Wales, Scotland): (1) John and Charles Wesley together with the Anglican preacher George Whitefield led the Methodist revival in the UK with open-air evangelism during 1740–1755. They first worked within the Anglican Church but gradually became independent.

(2) In the 1790s the Anglican Church experienced a revival movement related to John Newton, an English cleric, and William Wilberforce, an influential Member of Parliament who helped form several missionary societies.

(3) Another local Methodist Revival movement started in the industrial counties of Yorkshire and Nottinghamshire in the 1790s.

(4) The Scottish clergyman Robert Haldane led the Scottish Revival of the 1810s by establishing eighty-five churches in Scotland and Ireland. He influenced revival movements in France and Switzerland.

(5) The Plymouth Brethren Revival started in the 1830s and was led by John Nelson Darby. The movement extended into France, Switzerland, and Germany where churches were planted.

(6) After 1840, the international Holiness Movement in the UK, the USA, Germany, and Switzerland led to the formation of several denominations and Mission Societies such as the World Gospel Mission in 1910.

(7) The Salvation Army Revival, an evangelistic charity movement that targeted the poor in London in the 1860s, was led by William Booth. Using a military structure, it extended into 127 countries and translated Bible portions into two Asian languages during 1815–1914.

(8) The dramatic Welsh Revival of 1904–1905 is due to the Methodist preachers Joseph Jenkins and Evan Roberts. The revival saw about 100,000 converts, mostly from the working class. The revival was carried abroad to other European countries.

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There were 2,998 languages spoken in the British Colonial Empire: Aden 7 (languages); Anglo-Egyptian Sudan 76; Ascension Island 1; Australia 400; Bahamas 1; Barbados 1; Basutoland 1; Bechuanaland 25; British Antarctic Territory 0; British East Africa/Kenya 60; British Guiana 12; British Honduras 5; British Hong Kong 3; British Leeward Islands 4; British Malaya 40; British Somaliland 4; British Western Pacific Territories 89; British Windward Islands 4; Brunei 7; Burma 111; Canada 77; Ceylon 5; Egypt 10; Falkland Islands 0; Gambia 7; Gibraltar 1; Gold Coast 5; India, Pakistan, Bangladesh 519; Heard Island and McDonald Islands 0; Ireland 4; Jamaica 1; Maldive 1; Malta 2; Mauritius 2; Muscat and Oman 4; Newfoundland 0; New Zealand 2; Nigeria 500; North Borneo 25; Northern Rhodesia 25; Nyasaland 12; Papua 839; Sarawak 5; Seychelles 1; Sierra Leone 20; South Africa 20; Southern Rhodesia 16; St. Helena 0; Swaziland 1; Trinidad and Tobago 3; Trucial States 1; Uganda 39.

**USA (British Colonies)**

Seven major revivals occurred in the USA (British Colonies): (1) The Northampton Revival of 1734–1735 in Massachusetts was the first of the so-called Great Awakenings. Puritan preacher and theologian Jonathan Edwards played the leading role in this movement.76 (2) The Northampton Revival extended into the Methodist Revival of 1740–1755, when the Anglican preacher George Whitefield visited the thirteen British colonies. John Wesley’s travel to the colonies during 1735–1737 and his contact with the Moravian missionaries impacted the Methodist movement in England and later in America. The Massachusetts Missionary Society of 1779 was formed by Samuel Spring, a minister of the first Congregational Church in Uxbridge.77 (3) The American Restoration Movement had two streams, the first founded in 1801 by Barton Stone in Cane Ridge, Kentucky, and the second established in 1809 by Thomas Campbell in Pennsylvania and Virginia. As both movements agreed on the need to restore the early church, they merged in 1832. In 1876 the Foreign Christian Missionary Society was formed. Its missionaries translated the Bible into one African language in the twentieth century.78 (4) A series of local revivals in western and central New York in the early 1800s created what Charles Grandison Finney dubbed in 1876 the “Burned-over District”—an area so heavily evangelised that no unconverted souls (fuel) were left to convert (burn).79 (5) During the Chicago revival of the 1850s, Dwight L. Moody who was associated with the Holiness movement founded a church and a Bible college, later named after him.80 (6) The

77. See Smith, *The First Great Awakening*.
Prayer Meeting Revival of 1857 in New York initiated by the businessman Jeremiah Lanphier converted 800,000 people.\textsuperscript{81} (7) The Azusa Street Revival of 1906 in Los Angeles was the first Pentecostal movement led by the Afro-American preacher William J. Seymour. The movement did not set up mission societies initially, but individuals associated with the revival spread to many countries.\textsuperscript{82}

There were 235 languages spoken in the USA Colonies: Alaska 18; American Samoa 1; Guam 1; Hawaii 2; Midway 0; Nicaragua 9; Palmyra Atoll 0; Panama Canal Zone 2; Philippines 175 (1898–1946); Puerto Rico 2; Sultanate of Sulu 25; and Wake Island 0.

**Germany**

Germany experienced three major revivals: (1) The Pietist Revival of 1700–1720 was related to August Hermann Francke, a theology professor at the University of Halle in Germany. This movement founded the Canstein Bible Institute of Halle to provide low-cost Bibles to the poor in Germany and Eastern Europe. It was a precursor of modern Bible Societies.\textsuperscript{83} Johan August Urlsperger founded the Deutsche Christentumsgesellschaft [German Society of Christianity] in 1780 which became the main platform of the Pietist movement in the nineteenth century. (2) The Moravian Revival of 1727 in Herrnhut, Germany, was supported by Count Nicolaus von Zinsendorf. Between 1727 and 1792, the Moravians sent 300 missionaries to far-off countries.\textsuperscript{84} According to *The Book of a Thousand Tongues*, the Moravian Mission translated Scriptures into twelve languages worldwide.\textsuperscript{85} (3) The Gemeinschaftsbewegung [Congregational Movement] is a revival movement in the National Protestant churches in Germany after 1850, but has no ties with the Congregational Churches in the USA. As a national movement it is not tied to a particular place. The Rhenish Mission founded in 1828 and the Liebenzell Mission founded in 1899 have ties with the Gemeinschaftsbewegung.\textsuperscript{86}

There were 491 languages spoken in the German Colonies: Cameroon 275; Caroline Islands 14; German East Africa 119; German New Guinea 16; German South West Africa 22; Gilbert Islands 1; Mariana Islands 3; Marshall Islands 1; Togo 40.


\textsuperscript{83} See G. R. Sattler, *God’s Glory, Neighbor’s Good: A Brief Introduction to the Life and Writings of August Hermann Francke* (Chicago: Covenant Press, 1982).

\textsuperscript{84} See S. Hirzel, *Der Graf und die Brüder* (Stuttgart: Quell Verlag, 1980).


Russia
At least two major revivals took place in Russia in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries: (1) Siluan Kolesnikov led the Doukhobor revival of 1755–1775 that took place in the Yekaterinoslav Governorate (now a restructured area within Ukraine). In 1900, 7,500 converts of the Doukhobor community migrated to Canada.87 (2) The Molokan revival happened around 1800 when Semen Matveev Uklein evangelised the settlements along the Volga River and Russia’s south-eastern frontier, spreading the Molokan faith to Orenburg, Saratov, and Astrakhan provinces and organising congregations until 1809.88 The Russian Bible Society was formed in 1813 as platform for the Russian Bible at the request of Tsar Alexander I. (The Tsar was influenced for a time by the Baltic German widow Juliane von Krüdener, who converted in 1804 and became a member of the Pietism movement in Germany; von Krüdener is said to have influenced the Franco-Swiss Réveil in 1815.) In the nineteenth century, the agents of the Russian Bible Society translated Bible portions into Russian (1815), Aleut (1840), and Ossetian (1848).

There were 133 languages spoken in the (former) Russian Colonies: Adygea 1; Åland Islands 0; Altai 1; Armenia 5; Azerbaijan 14; Baltic provinces 8; Bashkortostan 2; Bessarabia 2; Buryatia 2; Chechnya 1; Chukotka 0; Chuvashia 1; Dagestan 11; Dnieper Ukraine 6; East Karelia 4; Emirate of Bukhara 2; Georgia 16; Grand Principality of Finland 7; Ingushetia 2; Kabardino-Balkaria 2; Kalmykia 1; Karachay–Cherkessia 4; Khakassia 1; Khanate of Khiva 2; Komi 2; Mari El 2; Mordovia 2; Ossetia 4; Outer Manchuria 6; Russian Poland 1; Russian Turkestan 6; Tannu Uriankhai 2; Tatarstan 1; Udmurtia 1; Yakutia 8; Yamalia 3.

France
France saw one major revival in the nineteenth century: The Franco-Swiss Réveil began in 1815 when the Scottish minister Robert Haldane preached in Geneva. The revival was carried to the Waldensian valleys in 1825 by Félix Neff. It also crossed the border into France where it affected the Reformed Church of France. The Paris Evangelical Missionary Society (SMEP) was founded in 1822 by adherents of the Réveil.89 Missionaries of the SMEP translated Scriptures into five languages during 1815–1914.

There were 926 languages spoken in the French Colonies: Algeria 14; Clipperton Island 0; Comoros Islands 3; French Equatorial Africa 285; French Guiana 7; French India 20; French Indochina 185; French Morocco 9; French Polynesia 7; French Somaliland 2; French Southern and Antarctic

Lands 0; French West Africa 339; Guadeloupe 1; La Réunion 1; Madagascar 12; Martinique 1; New Caledonia 34; New Hebrides 1; Saint-Pierre-et-Miquelon 0; Shanghai French Concession 1; Tunisia 2; Wallis-et-Futuna 2.

Australia
Revival movements were imported to Australia: Immigrants from Great Britain brought revival movements to Australia in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. In addition, the Wesleyan Methodist Church of Australia experienced an internal revival during 1857–1864 when membership increased significantly.90 The Wesleyan Australian Missionary Society functioned as an auxiliary of the British Wesleyan Missionary Society, and its missionaries translated Scriptures into three languages of Papua New Guinea. Furthermore, missionaries from the Australian Presbyterian Church translated Scriptures into eight South Pacific languages. There were fourteen languages altogether into which Australian missionaries translated Scriptures during 1815–1914.

One indigenous language is spoken on the Norfolk Island, a former Australian Colony.

Netherlands
One major revival occurred in the Netherlands in the nineteenth century: the Dutch intellectual Willem Bilderdijk established the movement Het Réveil in the Netherlands around 1810 with the aim of equipping Christians for the challenges of the French Revolution. His disciples included Abraham Capadose, Isaac da Costa, and Willem de Clercq.91 The Netherlands Bible Society (NBS), formed in 1814 at the initiative of the British and Foreign Bible Society, published Scriptures in nineteen languages during 1815–1914.

There were 714 languages spoken in the Dutch Colonies: Curaçao and Dependencies 1; Dutch East Indies 701; Sint Eustatius and Dependencies 0; Suriname 12.

Italy
Italian translators completed Scriptures in ten languages: when Italy was reunified in 1861, there was a relatively short-lived effort to translate Scriptures into ten Italian languages and dialects. These translations were all completed by Italian translators.

About twenty languages were spoken in the Italian Colonies: Italian Aegean Islands 2; Italian Concession of Tientsin 天津 1; Italian Eritrea 4; Italian Libya 4; Italian Somaliland 9.

Other European Countries

Scriptures were completed by translators of other European countries in thirty-eight languages: Albania 1 (alone) | 1 (joint); Austria 4 | 0; Bulgaria 1 | 0; Denmark 0 | 1; Faroese 1 | 0; Finland 1 | 1; Greece 0 | 1; Malta 1 | 0; Norway 2 | 2; Poland 1 | 0; Slovakia 1 | 0; Spain 2 | 0; Sweden 4 | 5; Switzerland 8 | 3; and Ukraine 1 | 0.

Five major revival movements occurred in other European countries:
(1) The revival of the Schweitzer Christentumsgesellschaft [Swiss Society of Christianity] was a Pietist movement of the 1780s that extended from Germany into Switzerland. The Basel Mission was founded in 1815 as a direct consequence of this revival. Missionaries of the Basel Mission translated Scriptures into three languages worldwide. Another mission formed at that time was the St Chrisehona Mission in 1840.92 (2) The Franco-Swiss Réveil of 1815, a movement in the Reformed churches around Geneva, started after the Scottish minister Robert Haldane visited the city.93 The Baltic German widow Juliane von Krüdener influenced the movement for some time and had connections with the Russian Tsar Alexander I.94 (3) During the Revival of Hungarian Baptists in Transylvania in the 1890s, many thousands of people were baptised. Its leaders were uneducated laymen, so-called “peasant prophets.”95 (4) In the early 1800s, an Evangelical Revival swept the Reformed State Church in Sweden. The Svenska Missionsförbundet [Swedish Mission Alliance], formed in 1878, translated Scriptures into two languages during 1815–1914.96 (5) As in Sweden, a revival movement affected the Reformed State Church in Norway in the early 1800s.97 In the aftermath, the Norwegian Missionary Society (NMS) was formed in Stavanger in 1842 and sent missionaries into fifteen countries.

Other European countries had colonies in which 526 language were spoken. Portugal (total 119): Fort of São João Baptista de Ajudá 0; Portuguese Angola 33; Portuguese Azores 0; Portuguese Cabinda 2; Portuguese Cape Verde 1; Portuguese Guinea 17; Portuguese India 3; Portuguese Macau 1; Portuguese Madeira 0; Portuguese Mozambique 40; Portuguese São Tomé and Príncipe 3; Portuguese Timor 19. Spain (total 195): Cape Juby 1; Ifni 1; Philippines 175; Rio de Oro 1; Saguia el-Hamra 1; Spanish Guinea 12; Spanish Morocco 4. Austro-Hungarian Empire (total 2): Bosnia and Herzegovina

92. See M. Brecht, Die Basler Christentumsgesellschaft (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1982).
93. See Stewart.

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Africa
Translators of African countries completed Scriptures in two languages: In both African languages, the native translator dominated the project, while the Western missionary played the role of an assistant. The Yoruba Anglican Bishop Samuel Crowther, for example, guided the translation project in the Yoruba language. There are two cases of this type: Mauritius 1 (alone) | 0 (joint); Nigeria 1 | 0.

Translators of American countries completed Scriptures in six languages: Canada 1 (alone) | 2 (joint); Costa Rica 0 | 1; Mexico 1 | 0; and Saint Kitts and Nevis 1 | 0.

Asia
Translators of Asian countries completed Scriptures in fifteen languages: Armenia 0 (alone) | 1 (joint); Cambodia 0 | 1; India 1 | 6; Indonesia 1 | 0; Mongolia 0 | 1; Philippines 1 | 1; and Turkey 0 | 2.

Appendix 3
The numbers and data of Table 6 (“Translated Scriptures per agency during 1915–2013”) are backed up by information we provide below.

Christian and Missionary Alliance
Albert Benjamin Simpson (1843–1919), a minister of the Canadian Presbyterian Church, founded the Christian and Missionary Alliance (CMA) in 1897 after he moved to New York to start a ministry among the urban population. He conceived the CMA with two kinds of addressees, one was the North-American townspeople and the other the unreached peoples worldwide. The CMA opened support branches throughout the USA and Canada which by 1930 were run like churches. The CMA established itself as an independent Protestant denomination after 1965, first in North America and then across the world, wherever missionaries had planted churches. According to the annual report of the Christian and Missionary Alliance of 2013, members number 454,734 in the USA alone. Between 1915 and 1968, the CMA contributed the translation of Scriptures into about thirty-one new languages by recruiting translators almost exclusively from North America.

Sudan United Mission
The German-born Karl Krumm (1875–1930) founded the Sudan United Mission in Great Britain in 1902. Its original name Sudan Pioneer Mission was changed to Sudan United Mission (SUM) in 1904. During its 87 years of existence, the SUM was active in a vast territory spanning from the coast of Nigeria and Cameroon in the west to Chad and Sudan in the east. It took its name from the idea of Greater-Sudan. Most of its missionaries and translators were recruited from the UK.100 The SUM translated Scriptures into about thirty new languages of Sahel and Sub-Saharan Africa.

Church Mission Society
The Church Mission Society (CMS), established in London in 1799 by evangelical Anglicans including William Wilberforce, is the only organisation with a substantial share of new Scripture translations in both the nineteenth and twentieth centuries: fifty-two new languages during 1815–1914 and thirty new languages during 1915–1968. Half of the missionaries between 1800 and 1825 were Germans trained in Berlin and Basel. In 1922, a conservative evangelical wing split away from the CMS and formed the Bible Churchmen’s Missionary Society. Throughout the twentieth century, CMS members were increasingly enrolled from countries in which mission stations had been established in the nineteenth century.101 In spite of these tendencies, the overwhelming majority of Bible translators in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries were recruited from Great Britain.

Methodist Missions Society
Between 1804 and 1818, a group including Thomas Coke (1747–1814), the first Methodist Superintendent, formed the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society (WMMS) in London. The WMMS set up mission stations in dozens of countries worldwide and its missionaries translated Scriptures into twenty-four new languages during 1815–1914. Several smaller denominations seceded from the Wesleyan Methodists in the UK and founded their own missionary societies: the Methodist New Connexion (1797), the Primitive Methodists (1810), the Bible Christians (1815), and the United Methodist Free Churches (1857). In 1907, the Methodist New Connexion, the Bible Christians, and the United Methodist Free Churches reunited as the United Methodists. In 1932, the Wesleyan Methodists, the Primitive Methodists, and the United Methodists merged to form the Methodist Church (of Great Britain). The mission societies of these different denominations reunited, too, and became the Methodist Missions Society (MMS) in 1932. The MMS

contributed translated portions of the Bible in twenty-one new languages between 1915 and 1968. Most of its translators were recruited from the UK.\textsuperscript{102} In the newly-formed USA, John Wesley commissioned Thomas Coke to set up a Methodist Church. The Methodist Episcopal Church was established at a convention in Baltimore in 1784. Missionaries of the American Methodist Episcopal Mission, formed in the early nineteenth century, translated Scriptures into about seven new languages between 1830 and 1914 and five new languages between 1915 and 1968. The Methodist Episcopal Church merged with the Evangelical United Brethren Church in 1968 to form the Methodist Church (of the USA).

\textit{Sudan Interior Mission}

The Sudan Interior Mission (SIM) started in 1893, when three American missionaries, Rowland Bingham, Walter Gowans, and Thomas Kent landed in Nigeria to set up a mission station. After their arrival, Gowans and Kent died from fever, and Bingham returned to North America to bring in other missionaries. After another failed attempt, he succeeded in establishing a base in 1902 that later branched out into other countries of Sahel Africa. At the turn of the twentieth century, the name “Sudan” was taken to refer to the area of Sahel and Sub-Sahel Africa. By 1942, SIM appointed 400 missionaries to West Africa who planted hundreds of churches and translated portions of the Bible into nineteen new languages between 1915 and 1968. These missionaries were recruited from North America. After 1982, SIM merged with two other missionary societies and extended their activities to other continents. The acronym SIM was maintained with a new wording, Service in Mission.\textsuperscript{103}

\textit{Africa Inland Mission}

Peter Cameron Scott (1867–1896), whose family emigrated from Glasgow (UK) to Philadelphia (USA), founded the Africa Inland Mission (AIM) in 1895. He and six co-missionaries established four mission stations in Kenya whereupon Scott suddenly died from blackwater fever in 1896, leaving the mission he founded in disarray. Charles Hurlburt took leadership of the mission and expanded the missionary work to other countries. Between 1915 and 1968, missionaries of the AIM, most recruited from North America, translated Bible portions into seventeen new African languages.\textsuperscript{104} After 1970, the AIM opened recruiting offices in nine countries worldwide including Korea, Hong Kong, and Brazil by keeping its ministry focus on Africa.


Other Anglo-Saxon Missions

Scriptures translated by the American Baptist Foreign Mission Society: 16 (1915–1968) | 0 (1969–2013); Brethren Mission 15 | 1; China Inland Mission/Overseas Missionary Fellowship 10 | 0; Un evangelized Fields Mission 8 | 2; Christian Missions in Many Lands 9 | 0; London Missionary Society 9 | 0; Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society 7 | 0; United Christian Bookstores 0 | 7; North East India General Mission 6 | 0; American Presbyterian Mission 5 | 0; British and Foreign Bible Society 5 | 0; Central American Mission 5 | 0; Asia Pacific Christian Mission 0 | 4; Bible Churchmen’s Missionary Society/Crosslinks 3 | 1; Borneo Evangelical Mission 4 | 0; Mennonite Mission 4 | 0; South Africa General Mission 4 | 0; American Lutheran Mission 3 | 0; Baptist Missionary Society (British) 3 | 0; Central Asian Mission 3 | 0; Church of Scotland Mission 3 | 0; Gospel Missionary Union 3 | 0; Scripture Gift Mission 0 | 3; Seventh Day Adventist Mission 3 | 0; Universities’ Mission to Central America 3 | 0; United Presbyterian Mission 3 | 0; Watchtower Bible and Tract Society 0 | 3; South American Indian Mission 3 | 0; South American Missionary Society 3 | 0; American Methodist Mission 2 | 0; Congo Balolo Mission 2 | 0; Congo Evangelistic Mission 2 | 0; Lutheran Brethren Mission 2 | 0; South Sea Evangelical Mission 2 | 0; Ubangi Evangelical Mission 2 | 0; Un evangelized Africa Mission 2 | 0; World Literature Crusade 0 | 0; American Evangelical Alliance Mission 1 | 0; Anglican New Guinea Mission 1 | 0; Church of God Mission 1 | 0; Dutch Reformed Church Mission 1 | 0; New Hebrides Mission 1 | 0; Society for the Propagation of the Gospel 1 | 0; Welsh Presbyterian Church 1 | 0; World Missions 1 | 0; Worldwide Evangelization Crusade 1 | 0.

Other non-Anglo-Saxon Missions

Scriptures translated by Yayasan Sumber Sejahtera Indonesia: 0 (1915–1968) | 23 (1969–2013); Roman Catholic 16 | 3; Cameroon Bible Translation Association and Literacy 0 | 16; Various Swedish Mission 6 | 0; Basel Missionary Society 5 | 0; Paris Evangelical Mission Society 5 | 0; Universitas Kristen Indonesia Tomohon 0 | 5; Brazilian Bible Press 0 | 4; Netherlands Bible Society 4 | 0; Sweden Lutheran Mission 4 | 0; Mission Oubangi-Chari (France) 3 | 0; Berlin Missionary Society 2 | 0; Moravian Mission 1 | 0; Vandsburger Mission 1 | 0.

SIL/Wycliffe/JAARS/Seed

William Cameron Townsend (1896–1982) and associates founded a network of complementary organisations with the aim of translating and disseminating the Bible in un evangelised ethnic groups—the Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL) in 1936, the Wycliffe Bible Translators (WBT) in 1942, the Jungle Aviation And Radio Service (JAARS) in 1948, and the Seed Company (SC) in 1993. After Townsend translated the New Testament into the Kaqchikel languages of Guatemala during 1917–1930, he set up summer camps in the USA for teaching linguistic courses to translators prepared to work among the Indians in Mexico. These summer camps were formalised
as the Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL) in 1936. Townsend established WBT for funding the linguistic and translation projects by churches. When SIL/WBT expanded into South America in the 1940s, Townsend established JAARS for the easy transport of missionaries into impenetrable areas such as Amazonia. In 1993, at the initiative of the former WBT president Bernie May, the Seed Company (SC) was formed to sponsor projects led by native Bible translators. The typical project sponsored by WBT is pioneered by a non-native translator who often leaves the area upon completion of the New Testament. The SC continues to sponsor the native members of the committee initially formed by the foreign translator with the aim, for example, of translating the Old Testament. Before 1960, SIL and WBT recruited mainly North American missionaries. After the 1960s, SIL/WBT opened offices in Europe, for example in Germany in 1962 or in the UK in 1964. While SIL/WBT numbered 4,512 members recruited from 31 countries in 1982, it grew to more than 6,000 members from more than 50 countries in 2013. No other organisation has translated Scriptures in more languages than SIL/WBT: 608 languages in 2013.105

[World Home] Bible League
The American Home Bible League started in Chicago in 1938, when its founder, the businessman William Chapman, purchased 1,000 Bibles to pass on to his neighbours. The name of the organisation was subsequently changed to World Home Bible League and eventually to Bible League (BL). The BL set up bases, offices, and partnerships in over forty countries. It coordinates translation committees that produce “Easy-to-Read” Bible translations and also publishes Scriptures translated by others. According to our counting, the BL translated or published Bible portions in about 248 new languages between 1969 and 2013. The BL particularly teamed up with Wycliffe Bible Translators to make Scriptures available in about seventy-one small languages.

International Bible Society (Biblica)
The New York Bible Society (NYBS), the predecessor of the International Bible Society (IBS), was founded in New York in 1809 by a small group including Henry Rutgers, William Colgate, and Theodorus Van Wyke. The NYBS absorbed the New York Auxiliary Bible Society in 1819 and experienced several splits and mergers until 1840 when it joined forces with the Marine Bible Society. It remained a local Bible publisher for the first 160 years of its existence. In 1968, the NYBS started to sponsor the committee of what later became the New International Version (NIV), a contemporary-English Bible translation. When the costs exceeded the estimates, Zondervan Publisher in Grand Rapids, Michigan, agreed to fund a

portion of the costs in return for commercial rights. NIV royalty returns enabled the NYBS to shift its tasks to worldwide Bible publishing in the 1970s. The NYBS adopted the name New York International Bible Society in 1974, which was shortened to International Bible Society in 1988. The IBS merged with Living Bibles International in 1992 and with the UK-based Send the Light in 2007. It changed its name to Biblica International Bible Society in 2009. The headquarters of the IBS have been located in Colorado Springs since 1988. The IBS coordinated translation committees and funded publication in about 108 new languages between 1975 and 2013. According to its own website (www.biblica.com), the IBS cooperates with local partners in fifty countries from where it recruits translators.

*New Tribes Mission*
Paul Fleming founded New Tribes Mission (NTM) in the USA in 1942. The mission specialises in establishing churches and producing Bible translations for small-population groups worldwide. The mission endured a series of deadly accidents of its personnel in the 1940s and attacks by guerrillas on its missionaries in the 1990s. NTM has recruiting bases in eight countries: the USA, UK, Canada, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, New Zealand, and Norway. According to the website www.MinistryWatch.com, the USA branch of NTM sent out 2,500 missionaries in 2016, while the other seven national branches combined contributed 800 missionaries. NTM has translated Scriptures into forty small languages worldwide since 1942.

*Institute for Bible Translation*
The Institute for Bible Translation (IBT) was founded in Stockholm in 1973 by Borislav Arapović, a Croat writer from Bosnia Hercegovina who emigrated to Sweden in 1965. The IBT targets the non-Slavic languages of the former Soviet Union (now CIS) spoken by 85 million people, and engages only in Bible translation not in evangelisation. In the 1970s, the IBT republished Bible portions the British and Foreign Bible Societies had published in the nineteenth century: a Gospel in Kalmyk (1815), a Gospel in Tartar (1866), and the Psalms in Yakut (1897). The IBT opened a branch in Helsinki in 1983 to cover the twelve Uralic languages in Russia, but the most important move was in 1995 when it inaugurated a centre in Moscow at the St Andrew’s Monastery of the Russian Orthodox Church. An international and inter-denominational team oversees a network of dozens of translation teams and prepares manuscripts for publication. The translators are recruited from Russia and other countries. Since 1973, the IBT has published Scriptures in thirty-five new languages (our counting) and about seventy-five languages in total (according to the IBT website http://www.ifb.nu/): complete Bibles in ten languages, complete New Testaments in thirty languages, and Bible portions in thirty-five languages.

106. See B. Arapović, *Bibelns Sidenväg [The Bible’s Silk Road]* (Stockholm: Institutet för Bibelöversättning [Institute for Bible Translation], 1998).
**United Bible Societies**

The United Bible Societies (UBS) is an association of 152 Bible societies, each of which represents a different country or territory. The UBS was established in 1946 by thirteen national Bible societies. The British and Foreign Bible Society (BFBS) played a particularly important role in the making of the UBS. The BFBS was established in 1804 and systematically set up Auxiliary Bible Societies throughout the British Empire in the nineteenth century. When the colonies gained independence, the Auxiliary Bible Societies turned into National Bible Societies which then became members of the UBS. The predecessor of the Bible Society of India, for example, was the Calcutta Auxiliary Bible Society formed in 1811; the Bible Society of Indonesia developed from the Java Auxiliary Bible Society founded in 1814. In the past 70 years, the UBS has coordinated efforts to translate Scriptures into new languages. Although Bible portions were translated into twenty-three languages under the direct auspices of the UBS, the preferred method has been to channel projects through national Bible societies. The UBS assists national Bible societies in three ways to accomplish the task. Firstly, the UBS has published aids for translators (including the journal *The Bible Translator* and the handbook *A Guide for Translators and Revisers*). Secondly the UBS provides translation advisers who cooperate with national translation committees. Thirdly, the UBS exchanges information about translation needs among its member societies. Since the 1950s, the UBS and its member societies translated Scriptures into 279 new languages.
