



**20
22**

FRAMING THE WAY FORWARD

A discussion of operational realities
in Bible Translation

Contents

And they sang a new song, saying:

*“You are worthy to take the scroll
and to open its seals,
because you were slain,
and with your blood you purchased for God
persons from every tribe and language and people and nation.”*

— REVELATION 5:9

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Intro

Eradicating Bible poverty. It's a BHAG – a big, hairy, audacious goal that even the most tenacious would find impossible without God's intervention. With trust that God would work through our united front, *illumiNations* has traversed this challenging and uncharted territory since its inception.

It's sobering to realize that 2033 is only 12 years away and we still have a lot of ground to cover. We find ourselves at a crossroads, at a pivotal point in time. If we stay the course on our current trajectory, we *will* fall short of our goal to provide Scripture access to all people.

It's time to accelerate our pace. It's time to shift our perspective. It's time to redefine our way forward into 2033.

These are necessary shifts that will require risk, resilience, faith and prayer, but we are **all in**. All in on getting God's Word to the ends of the earth. All in on believing that if God is for us, no one and no thing can be against us.

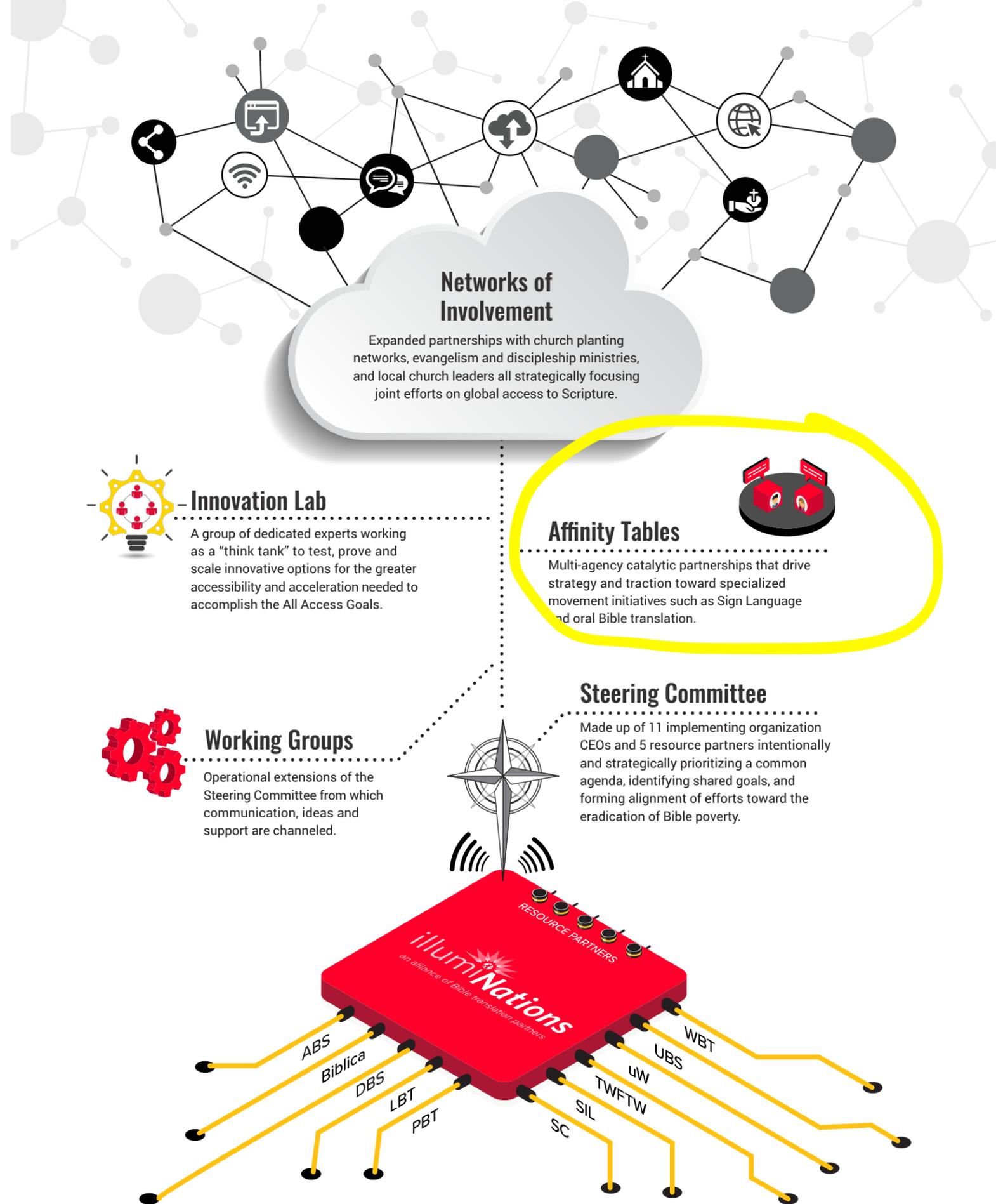
01 REFRAMING Who We Are

"The whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love." – EPHESIANS 4:16

BROADENING INVOLVEMENT

In 2010, several Bible translation organizations were challenged to evaluate the outstanding need for Scripture. They collectively grieved that, despite their individual efforts, millions of people still lacked access to God's Word in a language that speaks to their hearts. This deep concern led to the formation of the illumiNations alliance of 6 Bible translation organizations and 5 resource partners committed to eradicating Bible poverty.

Twelve years later, the landscape looks dramatically different. Not only is this collective impact alliance strategically guided by now 11 Bible translation agencies, but participation has expanded to include more venues for collaboration between organizations on strategy, implementation and operationalization of alliance initiatives.



02 REIMAGINING How We Work

"See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland." – ISAIAH 43:19

THOUGHTFULLY INTEGRATING INNOVATION

illumiNations has always been a pioneering endeavor. From the beginning, God has asked us to step out in faith and do things that have never been done. Today is no different.

Bible translation efforts continue to shift and evolve, and the transformation does not occur seamlessly. Proper change management is key in the pursuit of synergy between foundational, established ways of working and the fueling of emerging innovations.

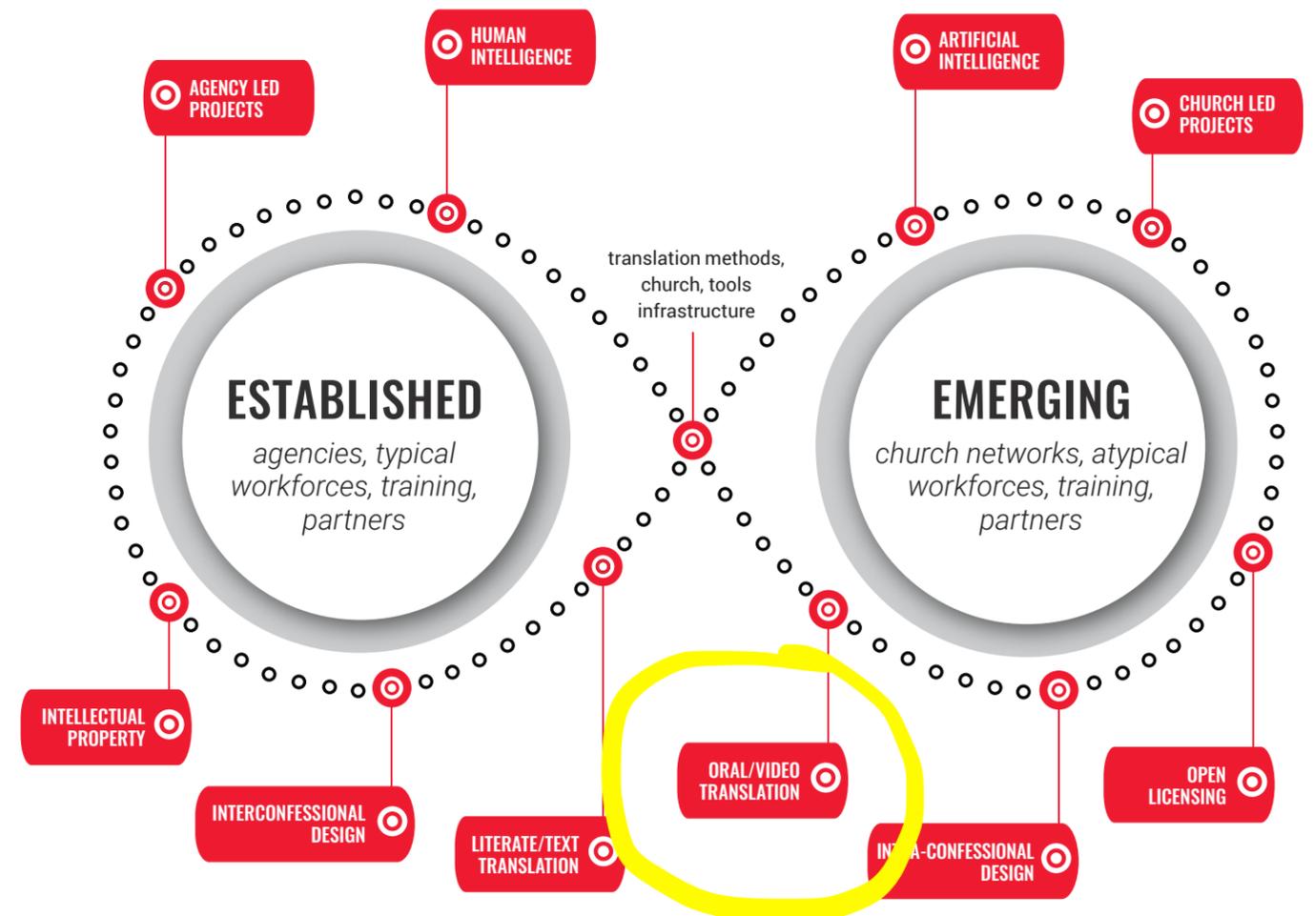
Advantages of established ways of working:

- Translation Quality:** Due to high engagement with the work and adequate resourcing, agency-led projects can enable appropriate training and checking, which in turn can help to ensure translation quality.
- Strategic Implications:** Bible translation needs can be optimally served when implementing and resourcing partners are strategically designing for impact (for example, targeting least reached groups or highest population groups).
- Projected Execution:** When project decisions are influenced by experts in the field of linguistics, Scripture engagement and translation, this source of knowledge and expertise can allow project goals, timelines and budget to be set with firmer confidence.

Possibilities of emerging innovations:

- Church-based Bible Translation:** When properly equipped, the indigenous Church can lead and complete translation from start to finish without the hands-on assistance of others.
- Artificial Intelligence:** For larger languages, tools using artificial intelligence can speed up the translation process by producing drafts for the indigenous church to bring to completion.
- Crowd-based Technologies:** Critical steps in the translation process, such as assessing the need for translation or conducting community-checks, can be accelerated by digital crowd sourcing.

The momentum of what *is* represents the foundation of what *is to come*. This is a "both/and" proposition, where the two paradigms are critical to attain 2033 goals.



03

RECALIBRATING Where We Stand

"Plans fail for lack of counsel, but with many advisers they succeed."
— PROVERBS 15:22

SHARPLY FOCUSING ON ALIGNING ENERGIES

There are over 7,300 languages globally and illumiNations advocates for every verse in every language according to the expressed need of the church. However, the operational goals of illumiNations are formed around a list of 6,000+ languages with an estimated vitality that suggests Scripture translation is needed. These goals are referred to as the **All Access Goals** and assert that by 2033:

95% of the world's population will have access to a Full Bible
Languages with greater than 500,000 speakers

99.96% of the world's population will have access to a New Testament
Languages with greater than 5,000 speakers and less than 500,000 speakers

100% of the world's population will have access to at least some portion of Scripture (approx. 25 chapters); *Languages with less than 5000 speakers*

The world's **100 most strategic written languages** will have access to two viable translations of the Bible, including critical revisions in 26 languages

The 2033 goals are only a milestone, not an endpoint in the Bible translation endeavor. There is much more to be accomplished but providing Scripture access to all people on earth is considered foundational to all future Bible translation efforts.

To put this in perspective, *every verse in every language if needed by the church* would represent approximately 8,600,000 chapters of Scripture, while the operational focus of illumiNations' *access for all* is about 1,800,000 chapters of Scripture. We believe that completing some Scripture in every language will offer more immediate access to the life-changing power of the Gospel and propel forward *every verse in every language* efforts.

Current All Access Goal Stats

70%

of languages have either completed their goal or are in progress

64%

of the top 100 languages in the world have fulfilled their All Access goal with 2 Bibles

53%

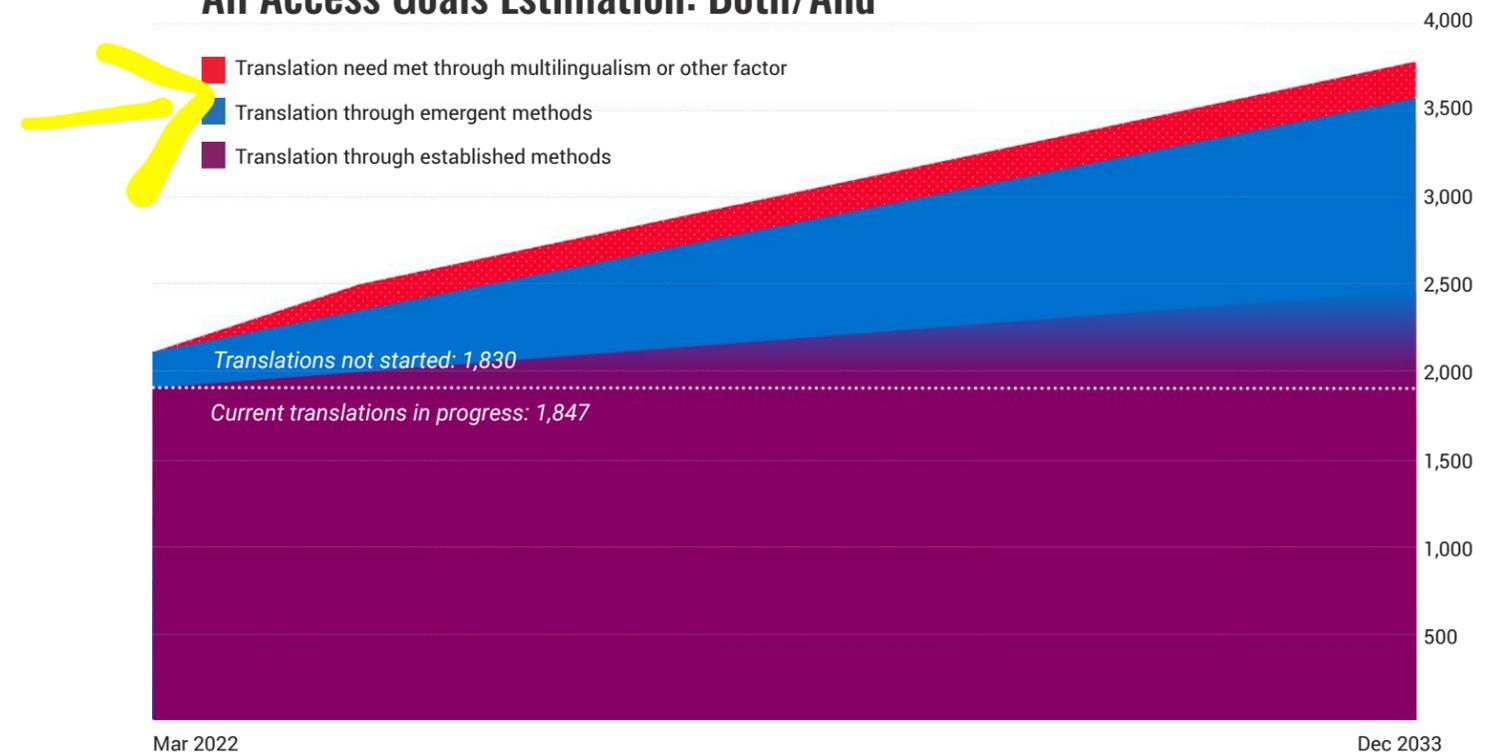
of the total chapters needing translation have been completed

Looking Ahead to the Future

Completing the All-Access Goals will require:

- equipping the current, typical Bible translation workforce with current, established methods of translation to continue full force
- equipping atypical workforces practicing emergent methods of translation to be further proven and taken to scale
- assessing languages where the need for access to Scripture is met through multilingualism or other factors

All Access Goals Estimation: Both/And



All nations will come to Your light.

— ISAIAH 60:3

REAFFIRMING Our Why

Eradicating Bible poverty. It is indeed a big, hairy, audacious goal, but that's not what this is all about. It's never been about the "goal". It's about love for the lost, the very least of these. It's about offering an intimate relationship with God to those that don't even know He exists. It's about letting them know that the Lamb of God came to take away *their* sins too.

Based on the astounding, ongoing expansion of *illumiNations*, the clear intersection of established and emerging Bible translation methodologies and the alliance's focused efforts to finish the task, eradicating Bible poverty by 2033 is still feasible! To ensure that it happens will require risk and resilience, change and steadfastness, faith and prayer.

As a Bible translation movement, we are watching the Gospel make unprecedented inroads among unreached people. Expectantly and hopefully, we await the day when everyone has God's Word in a language they know best.

God will have the ultimate victory, drawing all people unto Him!