

A New Name



Wycliffe International has a new name, *Wycliffe Global Alliance*. This new “doing business as”¹ name, effective February 1, 2011, reflects organizational changes already underway and helps position Wycliffe for ongoing adaptability. An accompanying tagline/cutline, *partners in Bible translation*, serves as a reminder of Wycliffe’s unchanging focus on the minority language communities of the world who still need God’s Word in their “heart” languages. It clearly indicates the purpose of this Alliance.

As the worldwide Church and the awareness of the need for translated Scripture grow, so do the opportunities for more and more people to take part in this critical facet of God’s mission. The Wycliffe Global Alliance is helping create an environment for greater and broader participation. The new name reflects changes in structure, but also represents far more.

A New Name to Reflect a New Reality. When Wycliffe Bible Translators International (Wycliffe International) was conceived in 1980, the name was chosen to distinguish this Wycliffe “umbrella” organization from the numerous (now 40+) independent Wycliffe member organizations worldwide that were served by Wycliffe International. At that time, and until 2009, Wycliffe International’s office and administration was located in the USA in Dallas, Texas. See Wycliffe.net for more history.

During 2009-2010, Wycliffe International’s office was relocated to Singapore. At that time, Wycliffe International’s Global Leadership Team began referring to Wycliffe International and all it represented as being “in a global alliance.” In November 2010, Executive Director Kirk Franklin brought the issue of a name change to the Wycliffe International Board, stating that the Wycliffe International name no longer reflected who and what the organization had become. He gave the following reasons:

- 1) The word *international* in a mission organization’s name (and in the wider business world) usually means a US or UK agency that has offices and/or operates outside of the “home country” but whose operations are still primarily “Western” run or based. Wycliffe International’s primary office was, however, now in Singapore and the 15-person leadership team, originating from 10 nations, was spread across the globe.
- 2) Wycliffe International had grown to become an alliance of 105+ organizations. Forty-five carry the Wycliffe name in some way because of Wycliffe’s role in their beginnings. Most of the other 60+ organizations began as a result of local or national mission movements. These partner organizations adopted “Wycliffe’s” vision and have a wide range of agreements of cooperation and partnership with Wycliffe.

The Board quickly agreed that ‘Wycliffe Global Alliance’ was a more appropriate name. The name was officially registered as the “doing business as” name and official use will begin 1 February.

Motivation for Change. As stated above, it’s not just about a name change. In 2006, at a Global Leaders Meeting, leaders of Wycliffe Member Organizations provided ideas and discussed how

¹ The legal name remains Wycliffe Bible Translators International, but the new “doing business as” name Wycliffe Global Alliance is officially registered as well.

Wycliffe International's structure could change to better serve the member and partner organizations. The current leadership took this into account and also sought to discern how Wycliffe could best participate in the *missio Dei* (mission of God) and how Wycliffe could serve in effective partnerships. The leadership recognized the following realities:

- Rapidly changing social, political, cultural, economic and religious environments. Each aspect of this environment presents both opportunities and challenges. Each also has implications for and impact on the linguistic environments.
- Global missiological thinking is growing and provides new perspectives that Wycliffe needs to pay attention to and be a part of.
- Globalization trends around the world and local responses to those trends can and do have an impact on how we think and act.
- The Church worldwide is changing and diverse. These realities impact the Church's attitudes, strategies and involvement in mission.
- The growth of the Church and of theological reflection and development in Africa, Asia, and the Americas needs to be a part of Wycliffe's thinking.
- The holistic development of people and communities must be a part of Wycliffe's thinking and actions. This includes the need to address world issues such as spiritual hunger, quality education, extreme poverty, injustice, improved health services, sustainable environments and creation stewardship, clean drinking water, reduction of infant-child mortality and the prevention of the spread of HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases.

Recognizing these realities, the leadership team has positioned Wycliffe for a shift in emphasis and perspective in the following areas (see Appendix A for additional explanation):

Theological

- Proclamation → Integral Mission (proclamation and demonstration)
- Local → Glocal (both global and local) Church

Missiological

- Western/Northern Church → Global Church
- Task Partnerships → Kingdom Partnerships
- High Power & Control → Shared Power and Control

Wycliffe Global Alliance Structure and Strategies

- A 'Building' → A 'Journey'
- Individual Members → Organizations and Movements
- Western/Northern → Global
- Hierarchical Partnership Structure → Participatory Partnership Structure

The ability to shift perspectives in these areas would more closely align the Wycliffe Global Alliance with how God is working in and through His worldwide Church in the 21st century. It would also enable the Wycliffe Global Alliance to more effectively address its Board Goals.

Why Wycliffe Global Alliance? What Do the Words Mean?

Wycliffe – input from stakeholders across most of the world emphasized the value of the Wycliffe name and reputation and the, often instant, association with Bible translation and minority language communities. The Wycliffe name is a resource worth retaining.

Global – pertaining to the entire earth; not limited or provincial in scope. Transcending national borders, emphasizing commonality.

Alliance – an agreement (usually formal) between two or more parties, made in order to advance common goals and secure common interests.

Appendix

More on the Wycliffe Global Alliance and Change

In the transition of becoming a Global Alliance, we are in a process of ongoing change in several areas. The following provides background for understanding these changes:

Theological

- **Proclamation → Integral Mission (proclamation and demonstration).** We are called to witness God's glory—His greatness—summed up in the gospel. To witness is more than proclaiming the logic of the gospel. We are to show and tell it through word and deed. We should embody the gospel just as Christ incarnated the eternal Logos (John 1:14)
- **Local → Glocal (both global and local) Church.** We believe in the holy universal Church, as the Apostles' Creed rightly defines. God's Church finds its expression and impact locally, through the local church, which has an increasingly global reach. As an integral part of the Church worldwide, we are to be engaged with the glocal Church.

Missiological

- **Western/Northern Church → Global Church.** God's mission is global in scope. God's global mission should be, and will be, accomplished by the global Church – not by the western church, or the non-western church. It takes the nations to reach the nations. God's worldwide Church has been invited to participate in His mission.
- **Task Partnerships → Kingdom Partnerships.** God's mission should be done in God's ways. Mission is not about human ingenuity/ability/diligence to finish a set of tasks in our own ways. It is about our missionary God at work in His ways in His time. Kingdom partnership seeks God's ways of doing mission. Kingdom partnership puts priority on partnership over tasks, on building community over finishing tasks.
- **High Power & Control → Shared Power & Control.** We recognize that we "own" neither power nor control. Participation in God's mission depends on the leading of the Holy Spirit. Serving in unity as the Church also requires us to listen to and understand each other. Any God-given power or control is to be shared among global partners, together looking to God for direction.

Structure and Strategies

- **A 'Building' → A 'Journey.'** Our structure and strategies should allow for and encourage ongoing change, multiple partners, contexts and "climates." Traditional planning models were designed to "build" structures for stable, "controlled" organizations. The concept of planning for a journey will better help us facilitate movements.
- **Individual Members → Organizations & Movements.** God's mission is communal by nature, as mission belongs to the Triune God. We are to emulate God's communal mission by focusing more on organizations and movements rather than just on individuals.
- **Western/Northern → Global** (see notes in section above) Although Wycliffe's beginnings were primarily western; today's Wycliffe Global Alliance comprises diverse organizations around the world, representing many cultures, languages and nations.
- **Hierarchical Partnership Structure → Participatory Partnership Structure.** By employing the term "global alliance," we intend not to prescribe issues and strategies for others, but to bring various & multiple partners to the roundtable to work them out together. We are not a western organization expanding its territory worldwide, but an alliance of like-minded organizations & movements from around the world, united for the cause.