



Dear friends of Hugh and Becky Paterson:

I would like to express my support for Hugh and Becky Paterson and their work with Wycliffe Bible Translators. I've known them both for several years as part of the SIL-UND program, which prepares members of Wycliffe for field service. Both have been students and served on our staff.

Hugh's service has mostly been in the area of computer support. He's made a lot of things run more smoothly so that we can better serve prospective members of Wycliffe and other missions. I was pleased to supervise him in a linguistics readings course this spring, where he demonstrated creativity, resourcefulness and ability to think outside the box. That sort of independent thinking is very important these days, as Wycliffe is in a time of transition in meeting the worldwide challenge of providing the Scriptures to everyone in the language they understand best.

The challenge is this: How do we support speakers of local languages so that they can take a greater role in translation work themselves, rather than relying as heavily on expatriates as in the past? Wonderful things are happening—God is raising up hundreds and thousands of indigenous people to join the Bible translation movement. They are motivated and intelligent, but they still need training. But, this is training of a different type than SIL has delivered in the past, so we need a new breed of trainers to provide it—and the demand for teachers is outstripping the supply.


This is where Becky comes in. We do a very good job at getting people ready to serve on the field the first time, but preparing people to be trainers and consultants is harder. The further professional growth required is very individual. It needs careful monitoring. It must continue throughout a person's years of service. Once the Paterson's financial and prayer support team is in place, Becky will be developing a new program for promoting the professional growth of Wycliffe members working in the Americas, helping them to better serve the swelling tide of people eager to do Bible translation.

In addition, Becky is a gifted teacher herself. For the past two summers, she has taught Field Methods at SIL-UND, which is a difficult class to teach well. When doing fieldwork, Wycliffe workers need to learn how to choose when to stop on a project rather than waiting until the work is done—because there is always more to do. This is a spiritual as well as an academic challenge, to learn when to finish our part, rest, and trust God for the results. Becky has been very successful in imparting this attitude to her students.

But, we needed to get special permission for her to teach this summer, because they still do not have all their necessary financial support. We have 20 students who need this course, most of them to prepare for field service themselves—and there was no one else available to teach them. The critical need for trainers is hitting close to home as well as on the field.

We need Hugh and Becky to be free to begin their assignments with the Americas Area of SIL. We need their gifts and talents to serve the worldwide Bible translation movement. Their level of promised support needs to rise from 78% to 100% very quickly, or they may not be able to serve at all. I hope you will pray seriously about whether you can become part of their support team. I can assure you, it will be an investment in God's kingdom that will bear much fruit.

Sincerely yours,


J. Albert Bickford, Ph.D.
Director, SIL-UND