An Unprecedented Opportunity: Asah'EL Bible Translation Program



WHOLE WORD INSTITUTE

The whole Word for the whole world

The Problem: The Huge Gap in Global Scripture Access

90% of the world's languages lack an Old Testament.

- For millions of believers the Old Testament is inaccessible, preventing full understanding of God and His ways.

- Even fully understanding the New Testament can be a challenge since on average every fourth verse is a reference, allusion, or quotation from the OT.

- **Pastors and teachers do not have the full Bible in the local language and must work from a bridge language.**



The Current Landscape

- **9 out of 10 translations today use intermediary (bridge) languages**, English, French, or other languages of wider communication (LWC) instead of working directly from the original biblical languages.

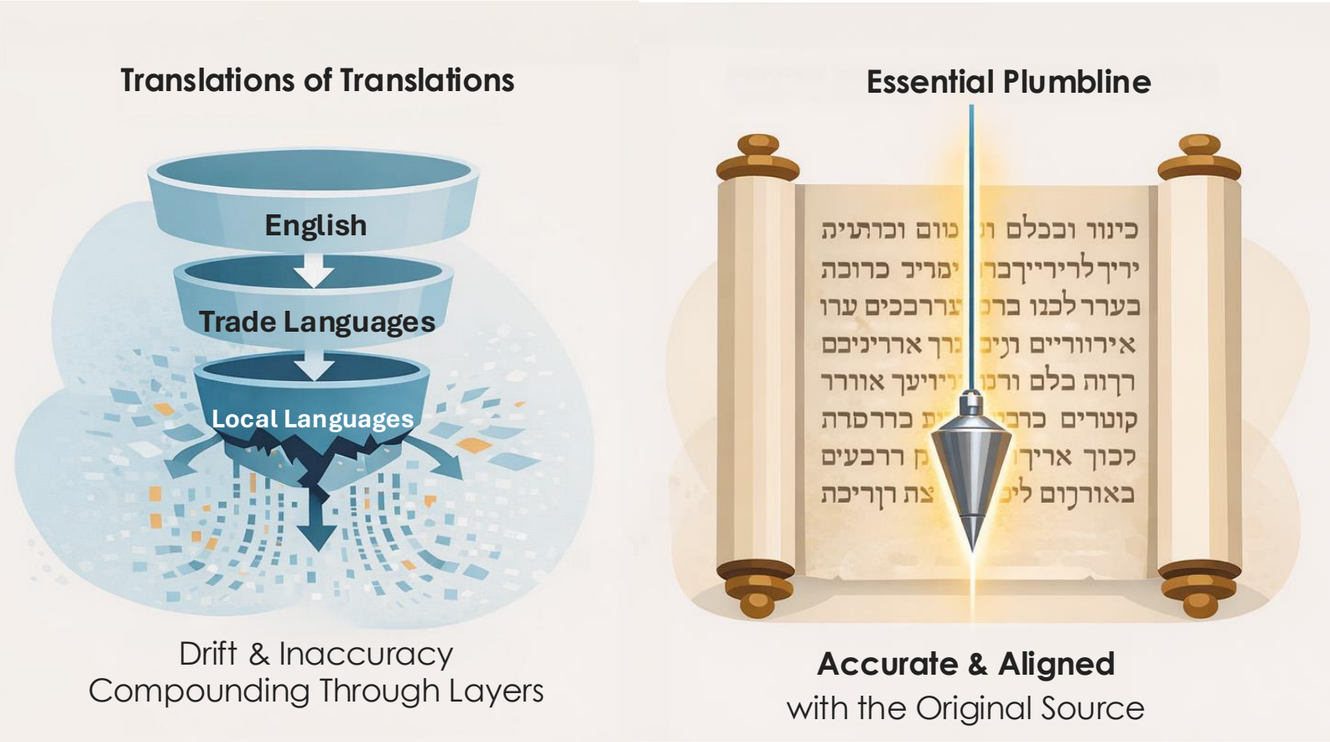
- To speed the process, new AI tools use these bridge language translations to draft translations in the local language (often referred to as Low Resource Languages).



"Bible translator Tom Nchama from Kenya told me that knowledge of the depth of the original biblical language and context is so vital that to translate from any other source is like a game of telephone, with meanings reduced in each rendition, wasting years of time.

Language is always rooted in a time and a place. If we only have major language sources, such as French and English, as the source text, we reduce translations to a copy of a copy. We lose the depth of the cultural and historical meanings. Dare I add, we lose the closest relationship with the Word, the logos, the divine reason and creative order."
—From Aria Swarr, "In Defense of Naming Roots"

The Missing Plumbline



Even as AI transforms Bible translation, a critical challenge remains: **AI is learning from translations of translations**, not from the original authoritative source.

- **Each translation layer introduces drift—**subtle meaning loss, or even misinterpretation that compounds over time.
- **Without the biblical Hebrew source as the plumbline, AI-assisted translations perpetuate these inaccuracies across generations.**

The original Hebrew provides an essential plumbline for faithful AI-assisted Bible translation.

The Challenge: Acceleration of Translation Without Compromising Scripture Integrity & Mission Effectiveness

- Without the original text as the authoritative reference, local churches in Bibleless communities lack the foundation necessary to confirm the faithfulness of Scripture translation in their own languages.

- When translations of the OT are done from the original languages, rather than from a language of wider communication, there is greater acceptance of the translations, especially in communities where Christianity is resisted as a "Western religion".



Whole Word Institute's Solution: The Asah'EL* Program



To meet the challenge Whole Word has developed ***the first biblical Hebrew based, AI-assisted program*** specifically designed to enable local churches and agencies to:

- translate Scripture *directly from the original Hebrew text into* the thousands of languages that lack a full Bible, *in record time* (see slide 13)
- safeguard Scripture integrity for Bible translation, interpretation, and application among Bibleless language groups
- produce exegetical and theological resources for generations to come

*Asah'EL – Named after King David's nephew whose name means "established by God" and who was reputed to run quickly (2 Sam 2:18).

Why Now?

For the first time in history, Biblical language training, AI technology, and locally based translation can work together to meet the demand for ***accelerated Bible translation directly from the original authoritative Hebrew Scriptures.***

Global Demand

Local church communities serving Bibleless language groups are actively seeking to build ***long-term biblical Hebrew capacities*** and to produce OT translations ***directly from the original text*** using AI tools.

Translation Optimization

Whole Word's training in biblical Hebrew and our ***Hebrew AI dataset tool*** enable translation directly from the original text into local languages in record time***. Hebrew training and recipient language data collection happen simultaneously.***

Multiplication Springboard

Hebrew trained human translators using ***Hebrew based AI drafts*** enable consistent quality translation done faster, lower long-term costs, and build local resource multiplication capabilities.

Hebrew based, AI-assisted translations improve and accelerate current and future translation projects.

Is This Possible?

This could seem like an impossible task, but 10 years ago, God in His infinite wisdom led a group of leaders to create a program in Jerusalem to train Mother Tongue Translators in biblical Hebrew.

Today, a launch pad of over 400 trained biblical Hebrew translators and teachers is spread around the globe, ready to engage with the innovative technology to accelerate whole Bible translation. With the Asah'EL program, these translators will become many, and translations will be exponentially accelerated.



A Scalable Program: Hebrew-trained, AI-assisted Translation Embedded in the Local Church

Phase 1: Intensive training with immediate translation application
Specialized biblical Hebrew immersion year in Jerusalem plus translation lab producing a 900-key verse dataset in each local language. AI draft produced of first OT books

Phase 2: Translation of community-selected passages or books
Editing and checking first OT books combined with advanced Hebrew study and completion of MA in Biblical Hebrew & Translation

Phase 3: Production
Real time release of each completed OT book, editing and community checking of remaining OT books with AI assistance

Phase 4: Celebration
Final publication of complete OT and community dedication ceremonies



One Translation Becomes Generational Impact

The Asah'EL program turns a one-time translation project into a permanent local capacity.

1) Start with authority

- Original Hebrew source
- Faithfulness preserved
- No language of wider communication drift

2) Build local capacity

- Hebrew-trained translators
- Certified checkers
- Hebrew instructors embedded locally

3) Multiply impact

- Future leaders trained
- Neighboring languages served
- Lower cost per translation

Traditional funding produces a translation. Asah'EL funding also builds local capacities that keep multiplying.

The Teams Behind the Vision



Whole Word Institute

Hebrew training, data collection & validation, program management:

- Through its renowned faculty and staff and extensive network of specialists, Whole Word brings academic, linguistic, and translation ability to the Asah'EL translation project.
- Whole Word's global network of Hebrew-trained graduates enables immediate field testing and rapid application to current and future translation projects.
- Whole Word's faculty provides **translation support for quality assurance.**

Whole Word Institute is actively partnering with

Technology Service Providers

- AI translation platform providers are responsible for dataset design, storage, and model development.

Local Church & Agency Partners

- Implementing partners provide local coordination and logistics, ongoing translator support, real translation outputs, and field validation.

International Translation Agencies

- BT partners provide cross-agency collaboration, funding accountability and reporting, publishing support and distribution.

Asah'EL Translation Program – Cost Structure Per Language

Training	Technology Services	Project Management & Implementation	Total
2-PERSON TRANSLATION TEAM (translation completed over 7 years):			
$189,540	$60,000	$316,620	$566,160
3-PERSON TRANSLATION TEAM (translation completed over 6 years):			
$241,840	$60,000	$264,930	$566,770

Investing in biblical Hebrew training up front delivers better translations faster without significantly raising translation costs.

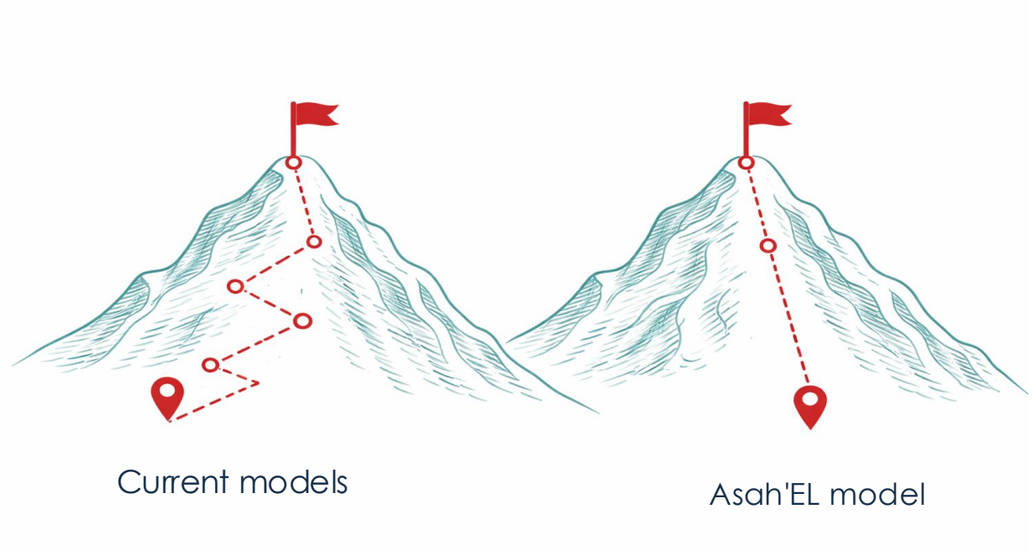
Current Models

- Translation from bridge languages
- 8 – 12 years per Old Testament
- Costs range from $24 to $32 per verse*, average = $28

Asah'EL Model

- Translation direct from biblical Hebrew
- 5 – 7 years** per Old Testament
- Costs range from $20 to $28 per verse*, average = $24

There are 23,000 verses in the O.T. The Asah'EL model can save upwards of $100K per translation, the equivalent of every 7th translation at no cost!



- ***The added value differentiator:***
  - Plumbline established for safeguarding Scripture integrity in Bible translation, interpretation and application
  - Local translators and leaders trained in the authoritative Hebrew text are equipped to build theological underpinnings of the church movement in their language, impacting generations
  - Local church capacities developed for resource multiplication locally and to other Bibleless languages

***Variables include number of biblical Hebrew-trained translators*

The Asah'EL program accelerates Scripture access, saves money, and provides the essential plumbline strengthening local church movements for generations to come.

Appendix



“…contend for the faith once and for all entrusted to the saints…” (Jude v.3)

- The Bible states that in the last days knowledge will increase and warns that lies and deceptions will multiply as well (Dan 12:4; 2 Tim 3:1-5; 2 Thess 2:9-11; 1 Tim 4:1).
- The foundations of truth and absolutes will progressively come under attack, and it will become increasingly difficult to know who to believe and what sources to trust.
- Having the ability to engage with the original authoritative text of Scripture, and translations made directly from it, will be critical for local church communities in combating the lies and deceptions they will face.

The Journey: From Hebrew Dataset to Old Testament Publication

Step 1 — Development of the Hebrew Dataset

Step 2 — Training of Mother Tongue Translators (MTT's) in Biblical Hebrew and Translation Tools

Step 3 — MTT's compile the recipient language dataset from the Hebrew dataset

Step 4 — AI generation of the "zero draft" of the Old Testament in the recipient language from the Hebrew and recipient language datasets

Step 5 — Hebrew trained translators edit the AI draft and community checking takes place
Translators regularly generate updated drafts with AI assistance in an iterative process

Step 6 — Independent review and quality checking by translation experts
Selected passages and/or books are released for use in the local church as they are translated

Step 7 — Completion of entire Old Testament translation ready for publication

Step 8 — Publication and Celebration