Reimagining Frontier Mission

Cameron Townsend and the Radicalization of the Faith Mission Paradigm

by Boone Aldridge

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The global realities of our post-colonial 21st century are demanding changes in Christian mission structure and identity. The institutional tensions, ambiguities, and contradictions can appear obscure, but suddenly become vivid when grounded in the personality and entrepreneurial genius of a mission founder. The drama becomes relevant and can stimulate creativity with our mission institutions today. Such is the case with the 20th century mission pioneer, William Cameron Townsend, the co-founder of the dual missionary organization comprised of the Summer Institute of Linguistics and the Wycliffe Bible Translators (SIL-WBT).[1] He looked to break down barriers in reaching the linguistically isolated indigenous peoples of the world. The radical institutional change he introduced broke with some aspects of a modern faith mission paradigm while carrying other features to their logical conclusion.

An Emerging Vision

Townsend began his missionary career with the Central American Mission in Guatemala, but his initial tenure with the mission from 1918 to 1933 was an uneasy one. Contrary to the mission's policy of evangelizing in Spanish, Townsend insisted that Guatemala's indigenous peoples should be reached with the gospel in their own languages. In part, his argument rested on the firm belief that Guatemala's indigenous inhabitants would never achieve religious, social, and economic equality with the dominant Spanish-speaking *Ladinos* until they were instilled with some measure of respect for their own languages and cultures.[2] Toward this end, and with little official mission support, Townsend initiated indigenous education projects and translated the New Testament into Kaqchikel. When he completed the translation in 1932, the leadership of the mission pressed him to settle down and consolidate the work he had begun among the Kaqchikels. With visions of Bible translation dancing in his head, Townsend instead resigned from Central American Mission in 1933.

Following his resignation, Townsend embarked on a two-fold mission. First, he made an exploratory survey into Mexico, where he hoped to undertake Bible translation and social uplift projects among that nation's indigenous peoples. Second, in 1934, he established Camp Wycliffe, a summer course to train missionary-translators in the relatively new science of structural linguistics. In pursuing these overlapping aims, Townsend rewrote the book on what it meant to be a faith missionary.

And what did it mean to be a modern era missionary anyway? The language of mission: missionary, missions, missional, are terms that entered into common usage during the European expansion of Christianity, and are thus, in our post-colonial age, freighted with legacies of the past: crusades, colonialism, occupation, and center-periphery, to name but a few. Missiologist Michael Stroope has recently offered a thorough analysis and critique of the language of mission and its historical baggage. He has argued that the time has come to transcend the language of mission altogether. Stroope contends that the language of "mission" has been read into both the biblical and historical contexts "in order to accommodate a variety of agendas and to support a particular version of church history."[3] We are, as it were, enveloped within a conceptual paradigm that fails to do justice to the globalized realities of the twenty-first century. However, the language of mission retains a powerful grip on the imagination. "For many Christians," Stroope points out,

> mission language is emotionally charged and thus gives definition to how they feel about their place in the world… To critique the term raises uncomfortable questions about personal identity and life purpose.[4]

Cameron Townsend, as we will see, ran headlong into this very problem. The language and conceptual notions of mission were impediments to his new venture. He therefore crafted a partial solution that worked around the problem, and in doing so fundamentally reworked the modern mission paradigm.

Into Revolutionary Mexico

When Cameron Townsend set his sights on Mexico in 1933, the nation barred entry to new missionaries. This posed little obstacle to the enterprising and imaginative Townsend; he simply dropped his missionary identity. In a letter of introduction to Mexican authorities he introduced L. L. Legters—a colleague and SIL's co-founder—as a "lecturer, explorer and humanitarian," and himself as an "ethnologist and educator." He did not deny his religious aims, and proposed what he referred to as the "Mexican Society of Indigenous Translations." This

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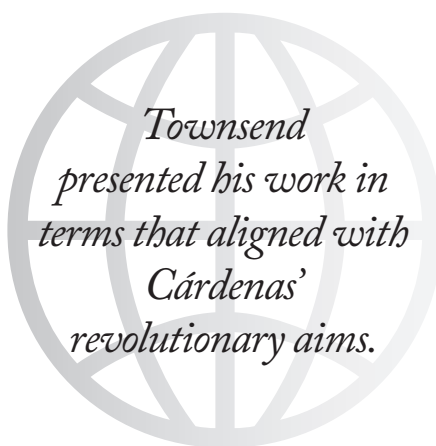
society would establish a program, he wrote, to "conserve for science a grammar and dictionary of each indigenous language" while also undertaking to "translate the New Testament in each language and publish it in bilingual edition."[5]

By way of some fast talking and the presentation of an old letter from Mexican educator and diplomat Moisés Sáenz, Townsend and Legters were allowed into the country, but only after promising not to preach. Legters, an inveterate pulpiteer, chafed at the restriction and soon returned to the US. Townsend stayed on and fell into the company of sociologist and social activist Frank Tannenbaum, who was suspected by the Federal Bureau of Investigation of associating with a "red cohort" of leftist intellectuals in Mexico.[6] The two men struck up a friendship, and Tannenbaum provided his new acquaintance with a note of introduction to Mexico's director of rural education, Rafael Ramírez, thus paving the way for Townsend to tour the country inspecting its educational system for several months.[7]

Townsend eventually convinced key Mexican authorities, such as Ramírez, that his overall intentions aligned with at least some of their revolutionary goals: undermining Roman Catholicism, developing indigenous languages, educating the nation's indigenous peoples, and integrating these people into mainstream society. Eschewing the classical elements of the missionary vocation, such as preaching, baptizing converts, and founding churches, Townsend set himself up in the village of Tetelcingo as a linguist and community developer. He also began learning the language in anticipation of translating the New Testament into a dialect of Aztec.

When Mexico's President Lázaro Cárdenas paid Townsend an unexpected visit in 1936, he was immediately impressed with the American's work, which reflected his own practical concern for Mexico's rural population. With much in common, the two men became friends. Townsend convinced his new benefactor that putting the Bible into the peasants' hands and teaching them to read it would tend to eliminate vice and superstition, while at the same time undercutting Catholicism's influence. To wit, Townsend presented his work in terms that aligned with Cárdenas' revolutionary aims. Following their meeting, Townsend wrote the president that

> before having the pleasure of knowing you, I loved and admired the revolutionary work of Mexico, now, upon knowing its highest representative personally I feel more intimately identified with her and more resolved and determined in service.[8]

Townsend proved his sentiment by stumping for Cárdenas in America after the president nationalized the assets of US oil companies operating in Mexico. A lasting friendship was forged between these two men, evidenced by Cárdenas serving as Townsend's best man at his second marriage in 1946, after the death of first wife.

Townsend's relationship with Cárdenas opened the way for him to channel his young Camp Wycliffe graduates into Mexico, where they engaged in linguistic research, carried out language and community development projects, and produced vernacular New Testament translations. And, following Townsend's precedent, they did not preach, baptize converts, or found churches under SIL's control. Thus, rather than entering Mexico as a classical faith mission, Townsend instead conformed his mission to Mexico's socio-political context in order to gain access to the indigenous population.

The Linguistic Approach

Back in North America, rural Arkansas to be exact, Townsend's upstart summer linguistic school proved a roaring success. By 1942, Camp Wycliffe had achieved sufficient academic standing to garner an invitation to partner with the University of Oklahoma at Norman, where it operated until 1988 as an adjunct department on a full credit basis. With the move to Norman, the Camp Wycliffe name was dropped and the school was absorbed into the Summer Institute of Linguistics. But, as we shall see, the Wycliffe name reappeared that same year as the name for an entirely new parallel organization to SIL.

To bolster the scientific credibility of SIL, Townsend encouraged his most outstanding students to expand their linguistic knowledge by pursing advanced degrees at places such as the University of Michigan, where two of his early recruits, Kenneth Pike

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and Eugene Nida, earned doctorates. Both men would go on to make their marks in linguistics and translation respectively. They also saw to it that SIL became a world-class institute of structural linguistics. While North American evangelicals viewed the organization primarily as a Bible translation mission, government administrators and linguistic scholars around the world knew and understood that SIL was much more, that it was also a leading player in the science of structural linguistics.

Of Service to All

As Townsend expanded SIL's operations into South America and beyond, the operating procedures established in Mexico became the guiding principles for the organization's field development. SIL henceforth entered other countries under government contracts as a scientific organization that engaged in language development and community service. Bible translation was of course on the menu, but it was couched in minimalist terms. For example, SIL's contract with Peru called for it to translate books of "high moral value," which was a moniker for Bible translation. Peru's government officials, as well as other Latin American government officials, were not unaware of SIL's religious ambitions; however, it suited their purposes to have SIL's contracts on a scientific basis, rather than on religious grounds, since this would ostensibly deflect criticism that they were sponsoring a Protestant organization at the expense of Roman Catholicism.

If the SIL strategy aimed to lessen the influence of Catholicism, Townsend nonetheless stipulated that SIL was non-sectarian and would therefore serve everyone regardless of their

religious belief or political persuasion. Thus, for example, Roman Catholic priests and nuns and liberal Protestants were admitted to the Institute's linguistic courses at the University of Oklahoma from the late 1940s. In 1958, Townsend said he hoped that SIL would one day have the opportunity to serve Muslims, Buddhists, Atheists, Jews and, as he put it, "everyone."[9] All of Townsend's efforts in the arena of universal service were, in one way or another, aimed specifically at gaining access to indigenous peoples in order to bring them vernacular translations of the New Testament, while at the same time improving their social standing within the nations in which they resided.

Clearly Townsend's mission was not a typical faith mission, and was thus at odds with its home base, where SIL relied upon the financial support of North American fundamentalists and other conservative evangelicals. This is where the Wycliffe Bible Translators side of the dual organization came into play. Formed in 1942, its purpose was to relate to the organization's North American constituency in ways familiar to churchgoers. In other words, Wycliffe looked and sounded like a typical faith mission. Its publicity focused heavily on Bible translation and the more religious aspects of SIL's work. Likewise it produced films that highlighted the spiritual transformation of indigenous peoples after the New Testament began to circulate in their communities.

The organization's personnel also took advantage of the dual structure. When in North America they presented themselves to the Christian public as Wycliffe missionaries; and when abroad, as linguists or members of the Summer Institute of Linguistics.

The dual SIL-Wycliffe setup allowed members to accent differing aspects of the total program depending on whom they were addressing.

But, the duality could also be a source of deep mental distress for some missionaries, especially those driven to telling the truth at all costs. One of these turned out to be none other than Eugene Nida, one of SIL's top linguists and charter board member. Nida gave as his primary reason for resigning from SIL and Wycliffe in 1953 that he could no longer condone the "degree of misrepresentation" that was entailed in "the explanation of the SIL-WBT program." In the main, he concluded that the organization seemed to operate "on the principle that the 'ends justify the means.'"[10] Others, such as Kenneth Pike, appeared unbothered by the duality, and he simply argued that Wycliffe and SIL were "for *accountability* to two different audiences."[11]

In any case, the dual-organizational structure provided Townsend just what he needed to pursue his radical vision of Bible translation as a scientific endeavor under the rubric of non-sectarian service. SIL in Latin America and beyond could legitimately function as a scientific institute—albeit one that engaged in both Bible translation and language development. At home in North America, Wycliffe could publicize the work, raise funds, and recruit candidates among fundamentalists and evangelicals with the usual faith missionary vocabulary familiar to churchgoers. In a word, all the trappings of a faith mission were maintained for the most part at home, but radically altered in practice on the field as needed.

Effects of the Strategy

Having described the general outline of SIL's and Wycliffe's early development, allow me to make some observations. First, by collaborating with governments, Townsend and SIL practiced what historian Todd Hartch referred to as "submission theology," a strategy "that emphasized submission to rulers as God's agents."[12] SIL not only took the modern nation-state as an artifact of historical development, but deeply involved itself in the development of the states in which it found itself, and this regardless of the political persuasion of the nation's government. Left or Right, SIL was there to serve. Indeed, service could at times be carried so far that it led to SIL fusing with the state. For example, in Peru, SIL's aviation program became so deeply integrated into the state apparatus that it functioned as an arm of the Peruvian military, even to the

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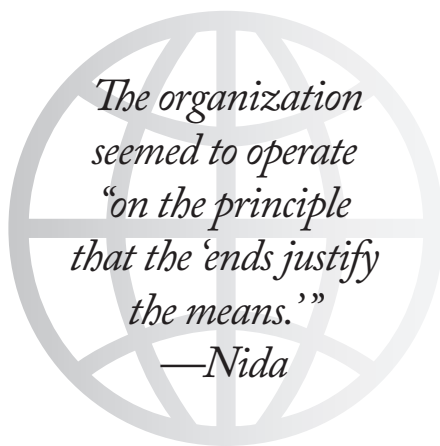
point of conducting military transport flights. SIL also had offices at the Department of Education in Lima. The line between SIL and the Peruvian government all but vanished.[13]

Second, SIL also had to live up to the research and language development expectations of the various states it served. Expansion of university connections beyond Norman, Oklahoma, also propelled SIL in a scholarly direction. Without these relationships, it would have been all too easy to lapse into ignoring research and scholarship and instead concentrating only on Bible translation. But SIL was contractually obligated to produce credible scholarship.

In the third place, SIL's wide-ranging linguistic, cultural and humanitarian program widened its understanding of the task beyond evangelization. Kenneth Pike summed this up when he wrote that the *"whole man,* we feel, must be affected by the Gospel—his spirit, intellect, and culture."[14]

Put simply, then, the deeper SIL moved into the "service of all" mandate, the greater the dichotomy between the SIL work in foreign parts and the recruiting and publicity efforts of Wycliffe in North America.

Repercussions

In the mid-1950s, some evangelical missionaries began to note that SIL workers were a rather different lot. It was observed that they attended diplomatic functions where liquor was served. Then there were all those monks, nuns, and priests riding around in SIL aircraft. Others remarked that SIL members sometimes seemed to downplay their true identity, referring to themselves as linguists rather than explicitly as missionaries. In 1956, a student reported that Harold Cook, a Moody professor of missions and author of the widely used textbook *Missionary Life and Work,* was criticizing the dual organization's "chameleon-like misrepresentation" in the classroom.[15] Africa Inland Mission's Ralph T. Davis complained to Townsend in 1958 that

> I have never been able to be convinced in my own heart that the primary purpose of you and Wycliffe, as such, was the spiritual purpose of your work rather than the scientific.

"Are you fish or fowl?" Davis wanted to know.[16] By 1960, the hue and cry within the conservative faith mission complex became so loud that Wycliffe pulled out of the Interdenominational Foreign Mission Association rather than risk ejection.[17]

The late 1960s brought new attacks on SIL as anthropologists took up the cause of indigenous peoples. In 1973,

the American anthropologist Laurie Hart castigated SIL in an article entitled "Story of the Wycliffe Translators: Pacifying the Last Frontiers."[18] Among a litany of other charges, Hart accused SIL of abetting internal colonialism. She argued that it was the organization's strategy to place indigenous peoples into a "decultured" state so that they could be reconstituted as citizens of the dominant culture. The first book-length condemnation of SIL-WBT arrived on the scene in 1981 under the title *Is God an American?* This was a collection of essays by North American and European anthropologists accusing SIL of everything from ethnocide to being a front for the CIA. In 1982, David Stoll, who made something of a career out of criticizing SIL, published a book-length analysis of SIL-WBT entitled *Fishers of Men or Founders of Empire?* Stoll was particularly exercised over the dual strategy, referring to it as "a versatile fiction."[19]

Weathering the Storm

Despite all the criticisms of Christian fundamentalists, the unrelenting denunciations of secular anthropologists and linguists—not to mention threats of expulsion from various countries—these controversies did little permanent damage to SIL and Wycliffe in the long run. Why was this the case? I suggest that it was, at least in part, a function of the dual-organizational structure, and its practical outworking in varied contexts.

First, a look at Wycliffe in North America. As already noted, SIL members were also Wycliffe missionaries. Thus, in North America, they faced their evangelical supporters as missionaries and Bible translators. Their sponsoring churches and supporters knew and trusted them as individuals and as Wycliffe missionaries. Therefore, whatever reverberations there were about SIL's field work could usually be allayed by individual missionaries communicating with their constituencies.

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Moreover, the Wycliffe brand carried weight. Wycliffe corporate publicity, always on the cutting edge of innovation, was very effective in presenting the fieldwork of SIL (aspects of which could go unmentioned when necessary) to the evangelical public.

And there is the very real fact that the evangelical public was probably more entertained by films and stories of Amazonian "savages" and "cannibals" than they were concerned by interagency politics and infighting. Indeed, Wycliffe went so far as to bring a former head-hunting chief from Peru, Chief Tariri Nochomata, to tour America in the early 1960s. Nochomata was made famous by the Wycliffe pavilion at the New York World's Fair, where a giant mural violently and graphically portrayed his transition from "savage to citizen" under the organization's tutelage.[20] The mural was so gruesome that fair officials at first questioned putting it on display.[21]

To sum up then: Wycliffe's publicity was probably far more interesting to churchgoers than any reported SIL irregularities trumpeted about by partisan fundamentalists.

What about SIL? How did it survive the sustained criticisms of leftists at home and abroad? In the first place, through its strategy of "service to all," SIL had made itself all but essential in many underdeveloped nations. This had been Townsend's aim all along, and it worked. He told the SIL board in 1953, speaking of Peru, that he wanted to make SIL "seem indispensable . . . to the Government." "I knew," he wrote, "that if people got to look upon us as indispensable it would be practically impossible for anybody who opposed us to cause us trouble." And he then went on to report that

> it is just a little embarrassing to Peruvians for us to have an air service that

goes where the Peruvian Air Force doesn't go, and has won a better reputation for safety.[22]

Across an entire range of services from aviation to language development to education, SIL was providing badly needed and widely appreciated goods and services to the nations in which it worked.

Likewise, the indigenous communities in which SIL worked often valued the organization's efforts to help them. In the mid-1970s, leftists in Peru seemed to have finally effected the ejection of SIL from the country. But SIL had many powerful friends. Dozens of leading figures: politicians, lawyers, businessmen, generals, admirals, academics, and writers—including the renowned Peruvian novelist Mario Vargas Llhosa—published a defense of SIL in Lima's two leading papers. Then came a delegation of twenty-five indigenous leaders knocking on the Peruvian president's door with a petition in hand, one with no fewer than 1500 signatories pleading SIL's case. With such resounding approval for the organization from both ends of the social strata, SIL's contract was renewed.[23] A few years later these events were reprised in Ecuador, only this time between 5000 and 6000 indigenous people made their way to the Ecuadorian Congress in support of SIL.[24]

The SIL-Wycliffe dual-organization was replete with paradoxes. What with Wycliffe and its classical missionary publicity—including talk of cannibals and savages transformed by the gospel on one side, and the deep appreciation and affirmation of indigenous cultures signified by SIL's language development and social concern on the other, it is no wonder that the organization came under fire. But the fact that SIL

was meeting real needs around the world made it difficult to dislodge or demolish. And it was producing translated scriptures, thus making good on the main goal emphasized by Wycliffe in its publicity. Depending on the public, the message shifted, and there was certainly some semantic ingenuity going on at times. However, on the whole, the goods promised were delivered.

For some evidence of this we can turn to David Stoll, perhaps SIL-Wycliffe's most vocal yet astute critic. Stoll eventually softened his criticism of the 1970s and 1980s after observing indigenous responses to SIL in Latin America. By the mid-1990s, he had concluded that SIL's strategies—and even its practice of the so called "submission theology"—were probably appropriate given the context within which it worked. "To protect its government contracts," Stoll wrote,

> the SIL adopted the policy of never criticizing host governments, no matter how they were treating the population under their control. Still, it must be acknowledged that the docile attitude of SIL missionaries was not necessarily a bad thing. By keeping their mouths shut, they could sometimes give hard-pressed native people medicine and schools they would otherwise not have had, not to mention the Bible translations that some have appreciated.

He also noted that SIL's deep involvement in indigenous communities could save lives. "In other cases," he wrote,

> events could have taken an even worse turn without the missionary linguists. Consider the Huaorani in Ecuador, whom the SIL pacified just ahead of advancing oil teams—and who otherwise could easily have been bombed by the national air force.[25]

The more mature David Stoll of the 1990s was clearly seeing SIL from a different angle of vision than he had in the overheated 1970s.

On the other hand, he lamented the fact that the organization seemingly tarnished its own reputation with its semantic prevarications. "Unfortunately," Stoll noted,

> the SIL itself had contributed to the confusion over its work. As a matter of policy, the group had long obfuscated the fact that aside from being a linguistic research organization it was also an evangelical Protestant mission.[26]

Although Stoll was given to overstating the degree to which the organization muddied the waters, there was at least some measure of truth to his assertion.

Conclusion

The central problem was that the language of mission and its connotations,

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> *—Stoll*
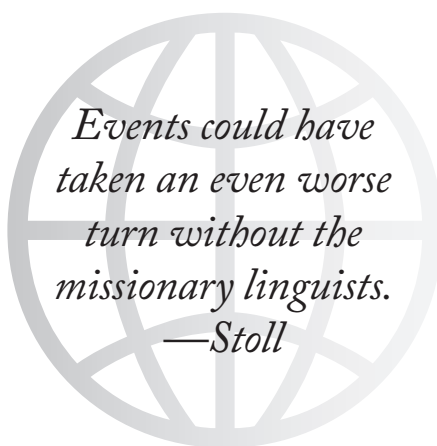
as understood by North American evangelicals, did not fit the SIL paradigm created by Cameron Townsend in Latin America.

The demands of Bible translation; the demands of the scientific and government relations strategies; and the demands of service to all; taken together, all this was simply too far removed from American evangelical experience for easy explanation. Rather than undertake the probably impossible task of educating American churchgoers in all the ways of SIL, it was far easier and more convenient to create Wycliffe and maintain all the vocabulary and machinery of the classical faith mission.

Whatever the merits or flaws of the dual-organizational structure, it was the brainchild of Cameron Townsend. And, it was a key in the success of his mission. It must not be thought, however, that it came about through studied reflection on first principles. Townsend was utterly pragmatic. He saw a crying need to reach indigenous peoples with the gospel in their own language, and he insisted that they should have the same dignity and benefits enjoyed by their fellow citizens. It was the Mexican context—and even the ideals of the Revolution—that also did much to shape his approach to mission. He simply cast aside what did not work and adapted, where and when necessary to obtain his goals. And SIL-WBT was simply following Townsend's path-breaking effort to overcome the obstacles of established tradition. "I yearn," he once wrote,

> for other organizations to begin to break loose from the time-honored shackles of churchianity and become all things to all men for the Gospel's sake.[27]

I suggest that the SIL-Wycliffe experiment provides an excellent case study for examining the problem of modern missions and the language of mission that Mike Stroope has brought to light for us. Perhaps the SIL-Wycliffe experiment also prefigures the many challenges that transcending mission might entail.

But it also suggests that the modern era mission—at least in some respects—can coexist with pilgrim witness. In many places where SIL members served on the ground, they were not really functioning as missionaries in the typical sense.

Translators spent many years simply learning the language and the culture of the people, functioning mostly as faithful witnesses and giving testimony to the reality of Christ Jesus through love and service. Translating was also done in community, not usually as an outside imposition. There were no

pulpits or sermons, no crusades, and no extension of western ecclesiastical structures. When Wycliffe missionaries dropped their missionary identity at the border to became SIL members or translators, it was in large degree appropriate. One can argue the ethics of this transformation—and it was debated inside and outside the organization for decades—but the shift of language was more than semantic. There were real fundamental shifts in perspective and approach.

Nevertheless, in Michael Stroope's sense, the SIL-Wycliffe experiment certainly had "mission" written all over it. Indeed, in some ways it represented the ultimate expression of "modern era mission," or what Andrew Walls called "Missions Incorporated." Of course, the degree to which the specialized craft of Bible translation calls for this kind of programmatic structure can be debated, but the highly-specialized task of scriptural translation would be very difficult without the mission superstructure to support it.

To sum up, then, the very fact that SIL-Wycliffe transcended mission in some areas, functioned as a classical modern mission in others, and sometimes went entirely outside any known paradigm, is what makes for a fascinating case study. The SIL-Wycliffe experiment to reach the least of these with the gospel—and to give them both dignity and a leg up in this world—is a compelling story.

And, no matter what one might conclude about the overall program, this unique approach did pave the way for pilgrim witness in otherwise inaccessible communities, where indigenous peoples were brought into deep and direct engagement with the scriptures in their own languages, after which they often came to know their creator, and were transformed by Jesus Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit. **IJFM**

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Endnotes

[1] The hyphenated "SIL-WBT" acronym refers to the dual organization in a historical sense. The two organizations are today legally and structurally separate entities with their own respective leadership.

[2] The term *Ladino* is derived from 'latino' and usually refers to the mestizo or hispanicized population. The demonym Ladino came into use during the colonial era and referred to the Spanish speaking population that did not belong to the colonial elite of Peninsulares or Criollos, nor to the indigenous peoples.

[3] Michael W. Stroope, *Transcending Mission: The Eclipse of a Modern Tradition* (Downersgrove, IL: IVP Academic, 2017), 27.

[4] Stroope, *Transcending Mission,* 23.

[5] Cameron Townsend to Al. C. Lic. José M. Soto, official mayor, Secretaría Gobernación, 6 October 1933, Townsend Archives (TA), Waxhaw, North Carolina, TA 2077, translation by William Lawrence Svelmoe, *A New Vision for Missions: William Cameron Townsend, the Wycliffe Bible Translators, and the Culture of Early Evangelical Faith Missions, 1896–1945* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2008), 241–42.

[6] Cameron Townsend to Elvira Townsend, 10 December 1933, TA 1718; 13 December 1933, p. 2, TA 1716; 20 December 1933, p. 3, TA 1717; quotation from Charles A. Hale, "Frank Tannenbaum and the Mexican Revolution," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 75, no. 2 (May 1995): 238.

[7] Cameron Townsend to Elvira Townsend, 20 December 1933, p. 2, TA 1716.

[8] Cameron Townsend to President Lázaro Cárdenas, 29 January 1936, Archivo General de la Nación, Mexico City, Fondo Lázaro Cárdenas, quoted in Svelmoe, *A New Vision for Missions,* 270.

[9] Cameron Townsend to R. J. Reinmillar, Vice President, Gospel Missionary Union, 6 July 1958, TA 14681.

[10] Eugene Nida to Wycliffe Bible Translators board of directors, 9 September 1953, pp. 1–2, TA 9256.

[11] Kenneth L. Pike, explanation of the dual organization to an unidentified inquiry, n.d., TA 42517, emphasis in the original.

[12] Todd Hartch, *Missionaries of the State: The Summer Institute of Linguistics, State Formation, and Indigenous Mexico, 1935–1985* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2006), 47.

[13] Boone Aldridge, *For the Gospel's Sake: The Rise of the Wycliffe Bible Translators and the Summer Institute of Linguistics* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 2018), 121–125, 129–142.

[14] Kenneth L. Pike, "IFMA Issue," Work Paper VI.1, September 1959, SIL Mexico Branch Archive, Catalina, Arizona.

[15] George Cowan to Cameron Townsend, 14 December 1957, p. 2, TA 12660; quotation from John W. Newman to Robert William Wyatt, 10 December 1957, TA 13681.

[16] Ralph T. Davis to Cameron Townsend, 3 November 1958, pp. 1–2, TA 15024.

[17] The organization's membership in the IFMA was formally with Wycliffe, the specifically religious side of the organization.

[18] Laurie Hart, "Story of the Wycliffe Translators: Pacifying the Last Frontiers," *Latin America and Empire Report* 7, no. 10 (December 1973): 16–31.

[19] David Stoll, *Fishers of Men or Founders of Empire? The Wycliffe Bible Translators in Latin America* (Cambridge, MA: Cultural Survival, 1982), 12.

[20] "From Savage to Citizen," brochure of Wycliffe Bible Translators Pavilion of 2000 Tribes, New York World's Fair, 1964–1965, copy in author's possession.

[21] C. W. Bendigo, "Headhunting Today Depicted at NY Fair," news release, c. 1964, p. 2, copy in author's possession.

[22] Cameron Townsend to Wycliffe and SIL board of directors, 20 March 1953, p. 1, TA 9027.

[23] Aldridge, *For the Gospel's Sake,* 215–217.

[24] Kathryn T. Long, *God in the Rainforest: A Tale of Martyrdom & Redemption in Amazonian Ecuador* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019), 264–265.

[25] David Stoll, "Missionaries as Foreign Agents," *American Anthropologist* 98, no. 3 (September 1996): 637.

[26] Stoll, "Missionaires as Foreign Agents," 636.

[27] Cameron Townsend to Philip E. Howard, Jr., et. al., "Discussion of the Wycliffe Policy of Service," March 1956, p. 1, TA 12104.