



# Reflections from Wycliffe Staff

A few Wycliffe staff were asked about their thoughts on Perspectives outcomes. They include **Stacy Lee** (Perspectives Team Manager), **Chris Sheeran** (Perspectives Relationship Coordinator & National Administrator for Perspectives), **Andy Minch** (Recruitment Strategy Specialist), and **Ben Thornley** (VP of Church Engagement). Here are their responses.

## How has partnering with Perspectives impacted Wycliffe?

**Stacy:** Many people who have served with Wycliffe over the years have been greatly impacted by their Perspectives experiences. Some, like me, point to Perspectives as the main catalyst for their journey with Wycliffe, while others took Perspectives after serving with Wycliffe for many years. Several of those people were surprised to learn how much they still had to learn. Now, we have a team dedicated to supporting Perspectives through coordinating classes, instructing classes, administrative help, area teams, and even editing the 5th edition *Reader*.

**Chris:** Partnering with Perspectives has vastly increased our connections and relationships with local area churches. As we got to know the students (and as they got to know us), there were plenty of opportunities to share about Wycliffe's work. Some of them joined Wycliffe; others became ministry partners with us! We have the opportunity through Perspectives to pour into the lives of these special people, many of whom are very sensitive to God, feeling that they were "made for more" than what they were currently involved in. We had many occasions to tell our story and how God uses even people like us in his service.

**Andy:** Mission agencies need workers not only with the right skills but also the right heart. A mission recruit, convinced that any sacrifice for God's mission is worth the cost, is a valuable recruit. As with most mission agencies that ask recruits to name the most influential factor in their becoming a missionary, Wycliffe consistently hears, "Perspectives." Perspectives classes put our instructors in front of audiences that our best recruitment events cannot match.

Perspectives alumni are given the proper foundation and the right questions to ask when considering joining God's global mission. This is so important that Wycliffe has a team dedicated to supporting and partnering with Perspectives. Wycliffe's rich experience with Bible translation has been front and center in modern missions and touches all aspects of missions. Wycliffe instructors often tell impact stories about the most necessary tool for evangelism and church planting—the Bible. They not only focus on unreached people groups; they also can speak to the use of current technology, as well as how Bible translation unites local churches and sometimes becomes a catalyst for people movements.

For those who want to be used by God in great ways, Perspectives classes identify such people and prepare their hearts for a life of faithfulness. Wycliffe and other agencies enhance the Perspectives curriculum with stories and a vision of how to join God's great mission.

## How has Perspectives impacted you?

**Chris:** For me, the course right away filled in a lot of holes in my missions thinking. We took the course after we had been in missions for 20 years. But, oh, how I wished we had taken it at the start of our journey!

The first thing that hit me was how God's promise to Abraham in Genesis 12 shows his heart for the peoples of the earth. I was then struck by how often the Old Testament mentions the nations. Reaching the nations isn't just a New Testament idea! Other sections of the course connected so many dots with amazing instructors and excellent articles.

Soon after taking the course, we became involved in helping with the class. It was only a short step to coordinating a class, which we did for many years. As a class coordinator, it was precious to see people respond to God's call to serve him globally. Many life trajectories were changed through the course. Some students served in overseas missions. Others became involved in international student missions. Most stayed in the home area, with some of them becoming more involved in missions and outreach through their churches.

**Stacy:** Perspectives opened my eyes to how big God is. I had no idea of his mission to *all* peoples from the very beginning of Scripture. I read the Bible with new eyes, unable to unsee the thread of God's heart for the nations and his desire to be glorified in all the earth. I had worked as a nurse for 10 years when I took Perspectives. Unhappy and dissatisfied, feeling I had made a mistake in my career path, I didn't know what else to do.

Perspectives helped me see God had a bigger purpose for my life. I connected with people from Wycliffe during the course and, over a 12-to-18-month period, learned how I could serve in the work of Bible translation from where I live. Only God could have written my story over these past few years. Now, I serve as the liaison between Wycliffe and Perspectives!

**Andy:** The Perspectives course gave me a clarity of purpose. To view Scripture, history, and life from God's perspective provided a paradigm shift that screamed that God is not content with the status quo. Understanding God's consistent mission since the beginning of time left me with an unavoidable choice. My purpose in life could be wrapped up in what *I* thought was good, or I could faithfully join God in *his* global mission.

### Give an example from your experience when you learned something new about God while attending Perspectives.

**Chris:** For me, it would be God's tremendous heart for the nations. I am not sure how I missed that growing up

and in my early Christian years! As a visual, I looked up all the verses in the Bible that referred to the nations and put the references on little strips of paper. I stapled each strip to a long piece of yarn and inserted it in my Bible on the proper page, then on the next strip, and the next strip, and so on. Once during class, I showed them this Bible with a bunch of yarn loops hanging out of it and explained that the yarn connected each verse about the nations. We then carefully pulled out the yarn, reading a couple of the verses along the way. The length of the yarn from beginning to end was over 30 feet!

### Give an example of how you've witnessed the impact of Perspectives on the lives of others (especially those joining Wycliffe).

**Chris:** When we started coordinating classes, Jeanette and I worked as a team. Jeanette's teaching background made her amazingly effective in organizing and facilitating the class. I helped with administration and technology. Our initial classes were very large, so after the first week, Jeanette split the students into table groups to mix things up.

Occasionally, she played matchmaker, too! In one class, Jeanette assigned two young single people to the same table, and during the class, they found they both desired to serve God in missions. They pursued God's will together and attended Canada Institute of Linguistics (CanIL) to study linguistics, got married, joined Wycliffe, and eventually went to Papua New Guinea as translators! After that, we enjoyed telling people we were "full-service" recruiters.

**Ben:** A friend of mine, Mike, attended Perspectives with his wife. Halfway through the course, a light bulb went off in his head: he didn't have to move overseas to join the missions movement; he could use his skills here in the US to support missionaries. This radically changed his life. He has personally raised a lot of money for Bible translation and other missions efforts!

**Stacy:** I've seen how Perspectives brings churches together. No less than 10 churches are represented in local classes here in Huntsville, Alabama, each time. I love seeing the body of Christ come together like this! Fellowship, friendships, partnerships, and collaborations for kingdom advancement all find a place to start and grow in Perspectives classes. 