

Hannah

## EUGENE NIDA DIES

**Dr Eugene Nida, a giant and pioneer of Bible translation in the last century, died yesterday, aged 96. Of Dr Nida, our Executive Director Eddie Arthur, shared these thoughts:**

**“Though the average Christian may not have heard the name Eugene Nida, he is undoubtedly one of the most influential Christians of the last century. His legacy is found in hundreds, if not thousands, of Bible translations in minority languages around the world.”**



This biography of his life and work below comes from the [\*United Bible Societies\*](#), of whom Dr Nida was a respected leader.

Eugene Nida, the giant of Bible translation in the twentieth century, died in hospital in Brussels on August 25. He was 96. Conveying the news, his widow Elena said, “My adored husband has passed away 10 minutes ago. Thank you for your prayers. He was a saint. The Lord is with him.”

For more than 50 years Eugene Nida was the leader of the translation program of the American Bible Society, and subsequently the intellectual leader of the global program of the United Bible Societies, as well as consultant to that organisation.

Dr Nida will be best remembered for the revolution he brought about in the field of Bible translation in the mid-twentieth century. The resulting impact on the growth and development of the Church continues to be felt as millions of people in hundreds of languages around the world have access to the Bible because of the approach he developed and promoted.

Using concepts from linguistics, cultural studies, communication sciences and psychology, Nida developed a practical approach to translation he called dynamic equivalence or functional equivalence, the goal of which was to make the translation clear and understandable as well as accurate. He also influenced the emerging field of modern translation studies and is generally acknowledged as having set in motion the developments that led to that discipline. Through his numerous books and publications and extraordinary lecture schedule, he was able to help scholars, translators and specialists in Christian missions find new ways to think about effective communication.

Nida graduated from the University of California, Los Angeles, in 1936, summa cum laude, with a major in Greek and minor in Latin. He received his Masters degree in New Testament Greek in 1939 from the University of Southern California and doctorate in linguistics from the University of Michigan in 1943.

In 1943 he joined the American Bible Society and immediately embarked on extensive travel to work with Bible translators, gradually developing the dynamic equivalence approach. He was an extraordinarily effective communicator, and was able to train translators with a wide range of educational backgrounds how to use his approach. The resulting translations were both accurate exegetically and understandable. The Bible has thereby become available and accessible in an unprecedented way.

When a number of national Bible Societies, including the American Bible Society, joined together for mutual support and formed the United Bible Societies in 1946, Nida was present at the founding meeting, and subsequently was responsible for shaping the translation programs of the new organisation.

Nida recognised the need for translators to have the very best base texts to work from, and led major projects on both the Greek New Testament and the Hebrew Old Testament. He was also responsible for a new approach to lexicography. The Greek-English lexicon project that he headed up resulted in an invaluable tool for translators.

His legacy continues in the Eugene A Nida Institute for Biblical Scholarship at the American Bible Society.

Nida's wife of 50 years, Althea Lucille Sprague Nida, passed away in 1993. Some time later, he met a distinguished translator and interpreter, Dr Elena Fernandez-Miranda, whom he married in 1997 and who survives him.

The original article comes from the *United Bible Societies*, which you can [read here](#). The whole of Wycliffe Bible Translators in the UK pass on their condolences to Mrs Nida, and thank the Father for his life of service.

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Reference: [http://wycliffe.org.uk/blog/2011/08/eugene-nida-dies/?utm\\_source=twitterfeed&utm\\_medium=twitter](http://wycliffe.org.uk/blog/2011/08/eugene-nida-dies/?utm_source=twitterfeed&utm_medium=twitter)  
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