



# Wycliffe Today

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## Celebrating God's Faithfulness

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Missions Interlink  
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## Editorial from the CEO



*The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do it.*  
1 Thessalonians 5:24 (NIV)

At certain times in our lives, God calls us to do (or surrender) something for him that requires a large measure of faith. In 1997, my wife Helen and I felt God calling us to join Wycliffe Bible Translators Australia and serve in Papua New Guinea. This meant leaving the secure job that I had with the Queensland Education Department and gathering a team of supporters who would faithfully stick with us as we headed off into the great unknown.

At our commissioning service, our church asked, 'What Bible verse would you like to have prayed over you?' After some thought, we decided that 1 Thessalonians 5:24 best captured our feelings of fear, uncertainty and inadequacy at the time – *The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do it.*

It is just a short verse included in a collection of final instructions from Paul to the Thessalonian Church, yet it has been significant to us in all the years since we took that first step of faith. We are all called by a faithful God but the work is his and not ours. He is the one who will do it. In all our circumstances God is with us and loves us. He has a hope and a future for us and that makes me want to celebrate his faithfulness!

Max Sahl

## Do you have 20 days to prepare for intercultural life and work?

Are you interested in cross-cultural work in Australia or overseas? Invest 20 days with SIL Australia at Launch and boost your language learning and intercultural capacity. Discover the sounds and structures of other languages, practise proven techniques for learning them and prepare yourself to cross cultures.



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Check us out at [sila.org.au/launch](http://sila.org.au/launch)

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# Transformed by the Word Remembering God



by Lyn Wake

In 2021, we pause to remember God and all he has done over the many years of Bible translation ministry in our country and throughout the world. Remembering God's faithfulness is a major theme that keeps appearing throughout Scripture. Why?

Because we have a great tendency to forget!

In Deuteronomy 8, the people of God were told to REMEMBER the Lord and not forget his character and promises. They were commanded to keep remembering him by constantly declaring to all generations the stories of his great deliverance and his wonderful attributes. They were also asked to keep certain memorial ceremonies built into the rhythms of community life to protect them from forgetting God and his eternal covenant with them.

The ancient Passover was the greatest of these remembrance feasts. Passover pointed forward to Jesus, the Lamb of God, who would deliver God's children from slavery and death. During the Last Supper, Jesus turned this most significant remembrance symbol into a much deeper one as he established a beautiful and sacramental way to practically remember God and his merciful salvation plan.

Passover was not only fulfilled in Jesus but transformed by him into a magnificent memorial. On the night of his betrayal, Jesus took the Passover bread, gave thanks, broke it, and offered it to his disciples, saying, 'This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me'. Luke 22:19 (NIV)

The remembrance Jesus commands is not simply reflecting on his death and resurrection through a religious ceremony. Nor is it merely longing for the fulfillment of his glorious promises in the future.

It is also an active, continual remembrance of God's love for us here and now. Intentionally remembering God in the memorial of communion activates the liberating presence of Christ himself. This active and living remembrance of God provides a transformative means of abundant life with him right now as we keep remembering behind with thankfulness, and remembering ahead with hope.

Be transformed by the Word as you engage with:

**Psalm 106 and 1 Corinthians 11:23-26.**



## Your story matters!

The Bible translation movement includes a diverse group of people supporting a wide range of language groups throughout the world. At Wycliffe Bible Translators Australia, we therefore want to feature as many different people, languages, topics and locations as possible in our publications and videos. Whether you are currently serving as a Wycliffe member, have participated in a MAD trip, or had exposure to mission work and the Bible translation movement, we would love you to share your story with us!

Contact [journalism@wycliffe.org.au](mailto:journalism@wycliffe.org.au)



## AuSIL (ATG) turns 60!



This year, AuSIL (the Australia Timor Group) will be celebrating 60 years. If you have been involved with the group in any way over the years, please contact Melody at [publicity\\_ausil@sil.org](mailto:publicity_ausil@sil.org) to share your story and stay up to date with the latest news and ATG events.

# For God, nothing is impossible

by Belinda Fox, Papuan Malay Team Leader

*'For God, nothing is impossible.'* That is the Papuan Malay translation of Luke 1:37 inscribed on the back wall of our translation office in blue decal stickers.

They are words often quoted by our team because God is often doing impossible things in our midst! But how about keeping a Bible translation project going during a global pandemic? What about translators not being able to travel freely to the office due to COVID restrictions? Or expat facilitators getting stuck in their home countries indefinitely? Or project funding being unexpectedly cut? Or the churches and groups we normally approach being shut for months?

'For God, nothing is impossible.' In fact, he didn't just overcome these particular challenges to enable the translation to run smoothly in a year that many would rather forget. He went one step further and did 'immeasurably more than all we [could] ask or imagine'. Ephesians 3:20 (NIV).



For years, we have been praying that our translation team, along with the local church and community, would take ownership of the Papuan Malay Bible translation. It's one of our main priorities as we look towards publishing the New Testament in the next few years.

But you can't force ownership. No amount of team discussions, devotionals or meetings with church leaders will have any real effect unless God aligns hearts with a vision for Scripture in a language that speaks to their hearts and a longing to invest in seeing that vision accomplished.

And it seems that in 2020 he has been doing just that. Our team members demonstrated greater passion, initiative, ownership and reliance on God than ever before. Doors opened to partnerships that had always been shut tight. Key leaders approached us asking how they can support our translation and distribution efforts.



Trying to reach an area larger than New Zealand with God's Word to prepare people for the New Testament in their language has always felt like an important but impossible dream. But, 'for God, nothing is impossible!' Of all years, he chose 2020 to accelerate the work and soften hard soil.

So we rejoice in his goodness and faithfulness! And we wait. With expectant hearts. Ready to see what impossible things God does next and join him as he prepares the ground for harvest. Knowing that, no matter what circumstances we may face, 'for God, nothing is impossible.'

# Prayer coordination: the bridge that connects

by Lindsay Fairhead

*Lindsay and Lola Fairhead have recently taken on the role of Prayer Coordinators for Wycliffe Australia. Lindsay shares about the importance of organising informed prayer to support the work of Bible translation throughout the world.*

## **How do you feel about serving as Prayer Coordinators with WBTA?**

We are thrilled to serve as Prayer Coordinators with Wycliffe Bible Translators Australia. Before we took on the role of coordinating prayer, we sensed that God was looking for targeted prayer for every language community that lacks access to the Bible. Without that prayer, we cannot hope to see a Bible translation project underway in every language that needs it (Wycliffe Global Alliance's 'Vision 2025'). The role of prayer coordination gives us the opportunity to encourage the informed prayer that we believe God is looking for.

## **How would you describe your role?**

Coordinating prayer is a bit like a bridge—a bridge that connects prayer needs with 'pray-ers'. At one end of the bridge, we are interviewing field workers and listening to others on the ground to understand the national and local needs and obstacles keeping people from knowing God (2 Corinthians 10:4-5).

At the other end of the bridge, we have the joy of praying with ordinary believers who serve an extraordinary God. At this end of the bridge, we encourage prayer for the work of Bible translation. We do this through *Prayer Words*, a regular Wycliffe Australia prayer update. We also collaborate with others to motivate prayer. We are supporting the Seed Company's 'Pray For Zero' initiative—working towards the goal of zero language groups without access to Scripture in a language which they value. We are also partnering with other prayer groups such as Missions Interlink which is facilitating Prayer for the Nations.

So often in mission work and in life, we can feel overwhelmed by the task ahead. But our God is the God of the impossible. We are grateful to God for every praying believer who partners with us to support the Bible translation movement. Let's continue to step into God's abundance through prayer!

## **For someone who may be struggling to pray, what would you encourage them to try?**

- Ask God for the help of his Holy Spirit. God never meant for us to struggle on our own. He understands our weakness and is there to help (Romans 8:26-28).
- Prayer is a conversation. Start by reading or listening to a small section of Jesus' teaching in the Gospels and think about what God is saying to you. Effective prayer is when we seek God and remain in him (John 15:7).
- There is no one way to pray. God says to 'pray in the Spirit ... with all kinds of prayers' (Ephesians 6:18). Be yourself and let God lead you.
- Enjoy your God! He loves you so much that he calls you his child (1 John 3:1).



**MORE**

To receive prayer updates from Wycliffe Australia, go to [wycliffe.org.au/pray/prayer-words/](http://wycliffe.org.au/pray/prayer-words/) or fill in the Response Form.

# A call for peace: *'retribution is in God's hands'*

by Deb Fox

*Matt and Andrea Torrens met as singles in Papua New Guinea, fell in love and developed a passion for Bible translation.*

He was from Australia, she was from Germany, but now PNG feels like home for their family. They have been involved in a variety of jobs over the years but their heart has always been to help language groups with Scripture Engagement projects, which is now their full-time work. When international lockdowns were announced in March 2020, they decided to stay in PNG rather than fly back to Germany or Australia. Matt shares:

The hardest part was seeing so many other families and friends leaving [PNG] en masse. But despite our concerns, God protected us and opened up some incredible opportunities.

One of these opportunities came about when Matt organised a Healing the Wounds of Trauma workshop for a local village in the Sepik region. The course had originally been designed to help people who have experienced horrific events like war, conflict, abuse and natural disasters to engage with the Bible 'to find God's healing for wounds of the heart'.

Participants in the course were from two warring villages. A ceasefire had been in place but it had been broken. Many lives had been lost on both sides. Yet, when the leaders heard what God's Word says about his mercy and forgiveness, their hearts were transformed. Their eyes were opened to the call to 'never pay back evil with more evil' but to 'do things in such a way that everyone can see you are honorable. Do all that you can to live in peace with everyone'. Romans 12:17-18 (NLT). Matt shares:

As they were taking their burdens to the cross, leaders from both sides stood up and said, 'Now we know that retribution is in God's hands'.

Leaders from a local church involved in new ceasefire agreements have been trained in the Healing the Wounds of Trauma material, should any tensions arise in the future. The community also recognised that the healing between the tribes took place during the time that the new Prime Minister for PNG, James Marape, called for three weeks of prayer and fasting for the nation.



Matt notes:

We all agreed that it was God's timing that they were completing the workshop and were now able to reconcile as a community. After the reconciliation had taken place, there was also a brilliant rainbow stretched out across the two villages. It was like God was smiling on us, reminding us all of his mercy and faithfulness. It gives me so much joy being able to share about the freedom we have in Christ and see people grasp hold of his grace.

When we first started this journey, I didn't think we would be where we are today. We are so thankful for everyone who prays and supports the work of Bible translation and enables us to be here. We are privileged to see firsthand how much God's Word impacts people's lives. So many people here have suffered incredible hardships and yet, because of our amazing God, we can bring them a message of hope, love and forgiveness.

# Parting the seas: the journey from despair to hope

by Deb Fox

*Exodus 14:1–31 is an example of God's redeeming love in action.*

He made a way for his people through the Red Sea, from captivity to deliverance, from despair to hope. Mark and Lorene van Rossen hope to offer a similar place of refuge and care to cross-cultural mission workers. The unique counselling centre they are developing is being designed to deliver people from a place of brokenness to one of healing: the Red Sea Counselling and Member Care Centre.

The van Rossens have spent over 20 years in various roles with Wycliffe in Australia and SIL in Papua New Guinea. Lorene says this new counselling project has developed from 'a career-long exposure to the need for good member care', particularly culminating from their last year on the field in PNG. She says:

We are privileged to see great member care systems in place for our members but we often forget about the struggles that accompany long-term cross-cultural work. It can take a huge mental and emotional toll on the entire family. Our most recent term in Ukarumpa [Papua New Guinea] at the beginning of 2019 was as the Staff Care Managers for SIL-PNG. It was horrible seeing people suffering from many different crises, completely burnt out.

Mark adds:

We've seen so many mission workers from a range of different organisations and denominations pack up and leave and never come back. All of the training they've gone through, the supporters they've built up and time they've spent on the field just falls in a heap. The issues we've been seeing are when people are at breaking point. The thing is, so many of these issues are preventable.

Around eleven years ago, another Christian mission tried to get a similar counselling centre established but unfortunately there was not enough traction to keep moving forward with it. Mark says there was great need for it back then and there is an even more critical need for it now:

The high attrition rate amongst missionaries in this part of the world cannot continue. We need to do something about it and we need to do it now. We have prayed continuously that God would provide a way for it to come to fruition.

Mark explains that the Centre needs to be a place without connections to any particular organisation, sending agency or denomination:



This is a totally independent venture so that people from all different backgrounds and mission organisations feel safe sharing their experiences. This is a felt need from a vast number of mission agencies. It will be a shot in the arm for all mission organisations to offer a service for people who have left the field to get help and get back into the ministry God has called them to do.

Mark and Lorene recently moved to Cairns to begin working through legal and financial requirements with the Board and Co-founder, Dr Roger van der Veen, for the first stage of setting up the Centre.

Mark says:

When we first started out with the Red Sea Centre, we thought, 'How on earth are we going to do any of this?' But God has provided everything we have needed. He is nothing but faithful. We hope to provide a facility that will provide much needed clinical, professional, psychological and spiritual help to support our fellow mission workers. We want to help them become more resilient and find the tools they need to live strong and healthy lives. We want them to not just survive but thrive; to continue their ministry to the people they were called to serve.

**MORE**

To find out more or to support the van Rossens, go to [wycliffe.org.au/member/mark-lorene/](http://wycliffe.org.au/member/mark-lorene/) and discover how God used Mark's dog training skills to open doors for Bible translation!

# Jessie's journey: recognising God's fingerprints

*Jessie first heard about the work of Wycliffe through a friend in Australia and says it was 'daunting to know that so many languages are still without a single verse of Scripture'.*

She was unsure of how to help the work of Bible translation until a pastor suggested that 'helping someone else through prayer and financial support is just as important as serving on the mission field'.

Reading news from the family she supported in Kenya made Jessie feel connected to the work they were doing. She looked forward to receiving their newsletters and decided she wanted to visit them to see the work for herself. Jessie did not have the money to fly overseas but an achievement award from her workplace provided the airfare and expenses necessary to cover the cost of the trip.

It was an eye-opening experience. Jessie found herself in a remote desert land with no roads or medical facilities. She witnessed the poverty and tribal wars that occurred on a regular basis. The safety and comforts she was accustomed to in her new home in Australia now seemed like a distant memory. Jessie shares:

Before I left, I read books about mission workers and imagined them with golden halos around their heads. Perfect people who had all the answers. I thought to myself, 'I'm not a saint! I don't have a halo. I'm not someone important. But this is important to God'. Seeing real cross-cultural workers on the field helped Jessie realise that they are just ordinary people like her.

Jessie's experience led her to apply to serve as a Wycliffe member in the 'area of most need'. Later, she found herself in the French-speaking area of Africa. Her time there cemented Jessie's desire to support the Bible translation movement so she came back to Australia to get formal theological training.

Then Jessie received a call from her sister in Hong Kong with tragic news that their mum had suddenly gone into a coma.

She rushed over to be by her mother's side and recalls: 'I felt so completely overwhelmed. I could not see what God was doing but now I can see his fingerprints on it all.'

Jessie stayed in Hong Kong to help care for her mother and her time there also enabled her to volunteer with The Journey program. She enjoyed helping people discover how they could use their unique gifts to serve God.

Jessie shared with her mother her desire to continue ministry in Australia. Sadly, only a week after Jessie left, her mum's condition deteriorated and she passed away. Jessie was devastated but having her mother's blessing spurred her on to continue the path set before her.

Jessie's time in Hong Kong helped prepare her for her current role as a representative for Wycliffe Australia's NSW office among the Chinese diaspora in Australia. She is now a member of Wycliffe Australia and is passionate about connecting Chinese churches and leaders with mission opportunities, and encouraging others to use the unique skills God has given them to serve him.

Jessie shares:

**Mission is at the centre of the Father's heart. It is my goal to help others realise that they are a part of this mission. We often feel like we have to be perfect, have everything in our life going perfectly or have the 'right' skills or qualifications to serve God. The truth is, we don't have to worry too much about the details—we just need to be obedient to what the Lord calls us to do. Like a piece of blank paper, he writes his story on our lives. We need to trust that he will equip us and provide for our needs along the way.**



To support Jessie go to [wycliffe.org.au/member/jessie/](https://wycliffe.org.au/member/jessie/).



For more information about the next Journey Program, go to [wycliffe.org.au/eventtype/the-journey/](https://wycliffe.org.au/eventtype/the-journey/).

# Ministry Resourcing

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**Wycliffe**  
Bible Translators 



## *What is Wycliffe Ministry Resourcing?*

Wycliffe Australia's Ministry Resourcing department seeks to support the work of our members and organisational partners on the field. We are committed to building strong relationships, with an emphasis on mutual respect, trust, collaboration and prayer.

Our three main objectives are to:

- work closely with national Bible translation organisations under the Next Step Development initiative
- support strategic partnerships with SIL International
- support Australian members on the field with their project needs.

# Thank you for your support!

Wycliffe Australia is grateful for the kindness and generosity of many people who donated towards projects that support communities where Bible translation is taking place, despite the pressures of 2020. There were 18 different Field Support projects funded by Wycliffe Australia for Africa, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, Papua New Guinea, South Asia, East Asia, and Central and Northern Australia. Many other projects are on hold until groups can meet safely.

A total of \$44,700 was raised by the aid charity, Wycliffe Relief and Development Foundation, to help support communities in need through a special COVID-19 Relief Fund. The project was able to provide short-term assistance to many communities. They sometimes travel in difficult circumstances, facing extreme weather and dangerous road conditions. Health is still a concern as COVID continues to be a threat. We appreciate our project partners who were able to shift quickly into emergency mode. Through their flexibility, the COVID-19 Project was able to fulfil critical needs for the people in their communities. Thanks to WRDF donors who contributed to this appeal.

This year, many of our projects have begun to return to their regular initiatives, with a COVID-sensitive 'overlay'. There are also a few new projects we are excited to sponsor. We encourage your financial support and prayers for these marginalised people and ask you to uphold our partners that serve these communities.

## Books for Remote Schools – PNG Project 8873 (WRDF)



TAX-DEDUCTIBLE



### Thank You to WRDF donors

*We are elementary and primary school teachers of Papua New Guinea from different provinces who attended the Vernacular Path to English course at Ukarumpa in the Eastern Highlands Province.*

*We realise that our local languages are very special and important for keeping our culture alive. It is the sound that enables the children to learn, understand and be fully literate. During our training, we received a variety of fiction and non-fiction books to use with the children.*

*A special and great thank you to our friends in Australia who donated the books to us. We will go with the books to educate the children. Thank you and God bless you all.*

**Target: A\$4,000 to ship books again in 2021**

Find the full report at: [wycliffefoundation.org.au/pacific/books-for-remote-schools-png/](http://wycliffefoundation.org.au/pacific/books-for-remote-schools-png/)

### Next Step Development Projects

The mission of Next Step Development is to hear and understand what God has put on the hearts of our national colleagues, and through prayer to come alongside and support their vision and strategies for Bible translation. Next Step is currently working in close relationship with Wycliffe Global Alliance partners from PNG, Vanuatu, Solomon Islands, Indonesia, Philippines and two countries in South Asia.

To see more Next Step projects, go to [wycliffe.org.au/projects/](http://wycliffe.org.au/projects/)

### Wycliffe Relief and Development Foundation Projects

Wycliffe Relief and Development Foundation is a separate company owned by Wycliffe Australia, which works through local partners to improve the practical aspects of life in marginalised communities. We aim to demonstrate Christian compassion and provide practical assistance in literacy and education, disaster relief, medical and basic health support. Donations to the Foundation are tax-deductible.

For WRDF projects, visit the WRDF website [wycliffefoundation.org.au](http://wycliffefoundation.org.au)

### Wycliffe Field Support Projects

Wycliffe Australia is committed to helping our field teams and the organisations they work with to thrive and serve effectively in their communities. Ministry Resourcing can help with providing funding for computers, village housing, travel costs, delivery of training, consultants and other services.

See more projects at [wycliffe.org.au/projects/](http://wycliffe.org.au/projects/)

## Blood Analyser – PNG Project 8876 (WRDF)



A blood analyser is a vital tool for the SIL clinic in the central highlands of PNG. The clinic has long provided life-saving and life-prolonging medical care for local Papua New Guineans. At the clinic, they often discover previously undiagnosed diseases (commonly diabetes and heart disease) that slowly result in a diminished quality of life for the patients. The current machine performs over 10,000 tests per year, but is now unreliable and beyond repair.

A new blood analyser will allow the medical staff to quickly diagnose problems—the first step in providing appropriate treatment and long-term health management. On many occasions, it is literally life-saving. The replacement will not only be more reliable, but also more effective given its ability to perform a wider range of tests.

The clinic sees helping people in local communities as a central part of their practical and spiritual mandate so they appreciate all the prayer and financial support they receive. We encourage you to support this worthwhile project.

**Target: A\$20,000**

**For more info go to:**  
[wycliffefoundation.org.au/pacific/png/blood-analyser/](http://wycliffefoundation.org.au/pacific/png/blood-analyser/)

## Child Trauma Healing Workshops – Cameroon Project 8898 (WRDF)



Since October 2016, communities in parts of Cameroon have been subject to violence resulting in families seeking refuge in safer regions. According to UNICEF, over 300,000 school-age children are affected. These children suffer the trauma caused by this upheaval in their lives. The aim of this project is to equip teachers, parents and guardians to address their trauma and support their children through these extreme life events. The second year of classes continues with the addition of advocacy efforts to convince the government to adopt child trauma healing more broadly in the community.

**Target: A\$21,000 Yearly**

**For more info go to:**  
[wycliffefoundation.org.au/africa/Cameroon-child-trauma-healing/](http://wycliffefoundation.org.au/africa/Cameroon-child-trauma-healing/)



# Hdi Language Dictionary – Cameroon

Project 8899 (WRDF)

WYCLIFFE  
RELIEF AND  
DEVELOPMENT  
FOUNDATION  
PROJECT

TAX-DEDUCTIBLE

# Nungalinya Diploma of Translating – Australia

Project 8331 (WFSP)

WYCLIFFE  
FIELD SUPPORT  
PROJECT



SIL in Cameroon has been working with the Hdi community to develop a dictionary of their language, using a process called Rapid Word Collection. So far, the Hdi team has collected over 12,000 words and expressions. The dictionary will help in the standardisation of the alphabet and spelling rules for the language, improving the quality of written materials and making communication more effective. The local community understands that dictionaries like this are significant for strengthening their identity and heritage while aiding future learning and growth.

This project will fund the final stages of the dictionary due to be completed in three years.

**Target: A\$2,200 Yearly**

**Donate here:**

[wycliffefoundation.org.au/africa/hdi-dictionary/](http://wycliffefoundation.org.au/africa/hdi-dictionary/)

The goal of the project is to support and renew translation work in Indigenous languages, particularly of the Northern Territory. Nungalinya College is the premier training body for Indigenous Christians offering courses in literacy and numeracy, ministry, theology and applied fields of art, family wellbeing, media and music. The formal and accredited 'Diploma of Translating' course was added in 2019 to grow the skills of those involved in translation work in partnership with Wycliffe, CMS, AuSIL and Coordinate Uniting Church NT. The project also incorporates a series of community workshops to cover basic principles of translation for those who are keen to be involved in translation work, but cannot (yet) access the formal course.

**Target: A\$15,000**

**More info:**

[wycliffe.org.au/projects/training-indigenous-translators-nt-australia/](http://wycliffe.org.au/projects/training-indigenous-translators-nt-australia/)



**Wycliffe**  
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If you would like to discuss any of the  
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