

Wycliffe Today

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God's Word transforming lives

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Stories:

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- » Creating change from the inside out
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- tribute to Des and Jenny Oatridge

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Editorial from the CEO



All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realise what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right. God uses it to prepare and equip his people to do every good work.
2 Timothy 3:16-17 (NLT)

As a young man, I personally experienced the power of God's Word to transform a life - my own life! The Scriptures tell us the history of God's people and point us to Jesus Christ, but they are also living and active and penetrate into the deepest parts of our soul. These words are just as powerful and relevant today as they were thousands of years ago. As Paul shares in his second letter to Timothy, ALL Scripture is inspired by God, guides us in holy living and helps to equip us for 'every good work'.

This edition of *Wycliffe Today* shares powerful testimonies about lives and communities that have been transformed for eternity by the power of God's Word. We also honour the lives of Des and Jenny Oatridge - a humble couple who dedicated their lives to not only translating the Bible but also helping to save an entire people group on the brink of extinction.

May you be encouraged in the truth and power of God's Word!

Max Sahl

Bethel Funerals

Bethel Funerals' story began in 1997 as a business that provides Christ-like care to grieving families-while also financially supporting Wycliffe Australia.

Visit bethelfunerals.com.au for more information.



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Transformed by the Word Little by little

by Lyn Wake



And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.
2 Corinthians 3:18 (NIV)

As we look deeply into the Word of God, the Spirit of God uses it to change us into the image of the Son of God. The concept here is *metamorphosis*: the process by which we are being transformed into a new form.

Metamorphosis is seen in the transformation that a butterfly goes through during its life cycle. From a tiny egg, to a caterpillar, to the formation of a chrysalis and finally the beautiful winged creature that emerges in its final, glorious state.

While some of us experience significant transformational events in our Christian discipleship, not all change is as quick and dramatic as that of the butterfly. It seems that God often chooses to change us into the likeness of Jesus *little by little* throughout our walk with him.

Do you remember when the power of God's Word first began to transform your life?

I don't remember the exact biblical passage that captivated my heart. Yet as I read page upon page of the Gospels for the first time during a summer youth camp, I was overwhelmed by the perfect love I discovered in Jesus and I am yet to get over the passion he sparked within me.

Over the decades since, the formation of my character has developed slowly, but surely. Necessary change has come through the various ups and downs, twists and turns, mountain peaks and dark valley encounters that have carved out my unique pathway towards Christlikeness. And while I can get discouraged by what seems a long way to go, I also look back with gratitude for how far I have come by his saving grace.

As I absorb and enact God's powerful Word, I regain courageous hope in the Spirit-led process of metamorphosis. Cocooned in his love, God has promised to change us *little by little* into the glorious image of Jesus as we trust and obey.

Be transformed by the Word as you engage with:

2 Corinthians 3:7-18

For further reflection:

How can you surrender to the transforming power of God's Word in one area of your life right now?

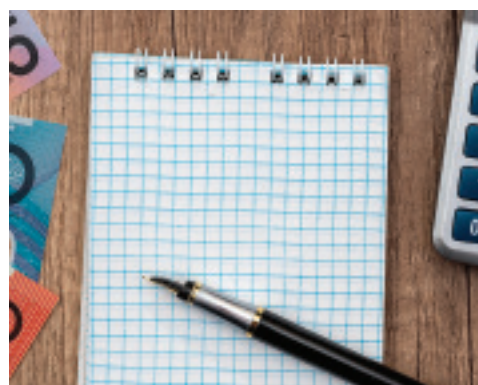
Prayer: Lord, thank you for promising to transform my life through the power of your Word. Please help me to cooperate with you in the good work of blessing your world. Amen.

POSITION VACANT

Finance Accountant

Wycliffe Bible Translators Australia is in need of a full-time Accountant to work with the finance team in Kangaroo Ground, Victoria. There is also the possibility of working remotely. If you have experience with accounting and you would like to support the work of Bible translation, we would love to hear from you!

Go to wycliffe.org.au/positions/finance-accountant/ for more information.



NEW BOOK by Wycliffe Australia!

Transformed by the Word includes incredible real stories of people and communities whose lives have been transformed by having Scripture available in the languages they understand best.

Email info@wycliffe.org.au for more information about the book launch and pre-orders.



The power of God's Word

By Eva McMaster

My daughter Marlena recently asked me, 'What makes the Bible so special?'

It was a great question and reminded me of a sermon from the late pastor and theologian Tim Keller titled 'Labouring for a God who fights for us'. Keller said: **Outside of God's grace that saved us, the Word of God is the most precious (and powerful) gift in our lives.**

I thought to myself: Do I truly believe that? On what basis can we make this claim and, if true, how should this truth impact our lives?

The Bible is unique. Its 66 books span stories that occurred over at least 4,000 years of human history. It was written by potentially 36-40 different authors. It is both a divine and a human book, written in Greek, Hebrew, Aramaic, set in its linguistic, cultural and historical context, on three different continents. It is really a collection of writings with many different styles and genres.

The Bible is also the **most translated book in history.** Of the 7,394 languages in the world, 3,658 languages have at least some Scripture translated. There are currently 736 languages with full Bibles translated, 1,658 New Testaments and 1,264 portions of Scripture. But what makes this book so special? Why has it continued to endure?

Consider this for a moment: a **book so precious** that people are willing to risk their lives to protect it and ensure that its message continues to reach as many people as possible. Bible translators like William Tyndale lost their lives to translate the Scriptures. Prior to the Reformation, Latin was the only acceptable language for printing the Bible and other translations were seen as heresy.

Before Tyndale, there were only handwritten manuscripts of the Bible in Middle English - the work of John Wycliffe from 130 years earlier. William Tyndale's desire was to make biblical truths about sin, Christ's sufficiency and salvation by faith plain to all. These convictions drove him to finish the New Testament

translation into modern English and in 1536 it brought him a death sentence ordered by the king and the bishop of London. Tyndale understood the risk and was still willing to pay the ultimate price because he believed that the Word of God is the most precious gift of all as it **points us to Christ**, 'the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world' (John 1:29).

God's good and sovereign plans are accomplished through his Word that goes out. In Isaiah 55, God's Word is described like rain that waters the earth, producing life. Verse 11 says: 'It shall not return to me empty but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it'. The Lord's sovereign plans among the nations will be accomplished as his Word changes history, transforms whole societies and language groups.

How should we then live according to God's Word? If Jesus, the Son of God, was completely immersed in the Word of God, then we should follow his example. Jesus was always quoting Scripture. He believed that every word was inspired by the Holy Spirit. Jesus himself fulfilled more than 300 prophecies that were written at least 500 years before he arrived on earth as the Messiah.

Following Jesus' example, we also should put our lives completely under the authority of God's Word.

Struggling? Go to God's Word. Tempted? Go to God's Word. Facing a health or financial crisis? Go to God's Word. Needing peace or direction? Go to God's Word. Wanting to share the good news of Jesus with someone? Go to God's Word.

It is certainly time well spent to read, meditate on, and feed our souls on God's eternal, living Word!



PHOTO BY HELEN SAHL

The importance of home staff

There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. 1 Corinthians 12:4–5 (NIV)

Bible translation projects cannot happen without people filling various roles both 'on the ground' and at the home office. Administrative staff here in Australia are just as essential as overseas and cross-cultural workers for keeping Bible translation fires burning. In Wycliffe Today, we will be shining a spotlight on some of Wycliffe Australia's home office staff.

Behind the scenes with the McMasters

Gary and Eva McMaster have been serving with Wycliffe Australia since 2015. Prior to joining Wycliffe, they served for 15 years as church planters in Poland. As a skilled videographer, Gary plays a critical role in bringing attention to the ongoing needs for Bible translation as well as documenting inspiring stories from the field. In her role as a ministry mentor and advocate for Bible translation with the Victorian Office (VICRO), Eva is passionate about God's Word going out to the nations and seeks to inspire a new generation of Christians to respond to God's call as goers or senders.

WT: What was it that first influenced your decision to consider joining Wycliffe?

In our church planting ministry in Poland, using the Bible in the local language was central. Upon returning to Australia, we were shocked to learn that there are still so many people around the world who do not have access to Scripture in their own languages. We wanted to be involved in changing that! Wycliffe was a great fit for us to use our gifts and experience.

WT: What are your greatest needs at the moment?

We love advocating for those we equip to send out, but our main challenge is helping Aussie Christians understand the importance of the behind-the-scenes work we do.

Kathy Dadd is grateful for the support she receives from Gary and Eva. She shares:

I really appreciate Gary and Eva! I work in the Northern Territory. There are so many language communities here asking for Bible translation and help with Scripture engagement. We desperately need more people to join the team. I am so thankful for Gary and Eva making videos, visiting Bible colleges, sharing about Wycliffe's work at events, and walking with people in their journeys of exploration so that we can continue our work on the field. It enables more people to hear about the needs and opportunities around the world. I thank God for the work he is doing through the McMasters, and pray that he will keep using them to encourage his people to partner in the work of Bible translation.

Please pray for the McMasters to:

- continue trusting God for his provision
- see more people to join their partnership team (an additional 35 people who support them \$100 a month) in order to continue serving
- be faithful and effective, helping send more workers into the harvest field.



PHOTO SUPPLIED BY GARY AND EVA MCMASTER

Creating change from the inside out

By Deb Fox

Nelson Tapineng is the new Executive Director of the Bible Translation Association (BTA) of Papua New Guinea – one of Wycliffe Australia's close partners.

A key focus for Nelson as the leader of BTA is ensuring that his team creates change from the inside out. He wants everyone involved in the work of Bible translation to not only be helping others be changed by God's Word but also be in the process of being transformed themselves. Nelson says:

The vision of BTA is transforming Papua New Guineans through the translated Word of God. I'm challenging myself that, before another Papua New Guinean is transformed, I have to be transformed myself first. The Word of God is not really preaching from a nicely prepared sermon to make people understand. No, it is also the way we live our lives. That transformed life has to flow from within us. How can you transform others if you're not transformed yourself? I am being changed in the process of supporting Bible translation and so is my family.



Nelson meets with administration and translation staff on the ground on a regular basis to encourage them and to help identify any areas where they need help. He mentions:

The relationship is so important! People need to know they are appreciated and that we care about their needs. We are committed to capacity building,

not only with infrastructure and systems but also building up our people. We have done recruitment and training to identify where people fit in and how their gifts can best be used.

BTA has 54 language projects on its books but Nelson says that of these, only 38 are active. More help and resources are needed before the other 16 can be reopened. Of the more than 800 languages spoken in PNG, there are also many more languages needing a translation project to begin. Nelson is planning to create greater awareness among churches and individuals about the crucial role Bible translation plays in not only spiritual transformation but also preserving language and transforming culture. Nelson says:

We've got to protect our languages! We thank God for Bible translation and the way it helps with language preservation. The work that BTA and its partners are doing is vitally important for that. I grew up in the church but my knowledge of the importance of Bible translation was very low before I joined BTA. That's why we are focusing on awareness. We recently held an event with politicians and leaders to make them aware of the needs for translation. Papua New Guineans must understand the importance of Bible translation. We believe that as we do our part, God will provide what we need.

Nelson says that BTA is grateful for the support of churches and individuals who want to help transform individuals and whole communities with the good news found in God's Word:

I must thank our international friends and families who have been supporting BTA, including our friends in Australia. It's evidence of the relationship and love you have for us.

PRAY:

- for the 5 million PNG kina (around \$1.9 million AUD) needed to support the needs of BTA
- that the Lord will help BTA to position itself in a way that honours God
- for more young people to join the organisation and for opportunities to help them receive training.

The ripple effect of Scripture

By Helen Sahl

So much of what we think and say and how we interact with one another has been influenced by the Bible.

Phrases such as 'love your neighbour as yourself' and 'salt of the earth' have become part of our everyday vernacular. Many people in Australia no longer realise the impact Bible translation into English has had on our society. Yet what we see in modern Bible translation projects is a powerful ripple effect that creates lasting change among communities.

Kim and Annie Colich are a couple I met while I was a teacher in Papua New Guinea. The Colichs were working on the New Testament for about 20 years in the Tami language. They did not feel like they were close to completing the translation but Annie thought, 'We've done a lot of translation work. It's not ready to be published yet but I'm going to take what we've got and start a women's Bible study'. She sent word around the village and the women began meeting together.

Annie gave them pieces of paper with the translated verses written on them in Tami. The women would listen intently during the teaching times. Hearing the Bible verses read aloud in their own language was so exciting! Many said, 'Oh, this speaks to my heart!' They would gather around the fire in the evenings with family and friends and share what they were learning, applying the truths of God's Word to their lives.

Aikiba is one of the women who attended the studies. Her husband, Angham, was angry and abusive. After years of living in fear of him, when Aikiba heard God's Word being read in her language, her heart

filled with joy. She began taking the verses she received from the Bible study home with her. Aikiba started showing her husband the written verses but he would grab them away from her and throw them on the ground. Yet one day, he took the paper and read Scripture in his mother tongue for the first time. His heart was ready to encounter the Living God, and he asked her, 'Do you think I could attend this Bible study?'

The next week, Angham sat quietly at the back of the group of women and listened to the Scripture verses being read. The words began impacting him and he realised that he needed to turn his life around.

Aikiba saw her husband become a new creature in Christ right before her eyes! The whole community recognised that Angham was a changed man. Angham later shared with Annie:

I felt like I was the man in the Bible with the evil spirit who lived in the graveyard, and when I met Jesus, my chains fell off and I was free!

Angham wanted others to know that Jesus was the reason for this change. Later, he even became the coordinator for the Tami Bible translation project. Many people in the village are coming to a new understanding of the power of God's Word and its ability to change their lives.

Annie's countenance was glowing when she told me how one life transformed by God's Word can create greater change in the world, and for eternity. Annie shares:

If this was the only 'glimpse' of what the Lord did in my 33 years among the Tami, it would be worth it all. But it hasn't been the only one! We have seen so much evidence of

God at work, particularly as a result of the Scripture Engagement courses we have held in the Tami villages. His Word really does change lives!



Dedication to the 'hidden people': Honouring the lives of Des and Jenny Oatridge

Wycliffe Australia celebrates the lives of Des and Jenny Oatridge who both recently passed on to glory.

Their legacy lives on after a lifetime dedicated to the Binumarien people, a remote people group in the Eastern Highlands of Papua New Guinea (PNG).

Des, a plumber from New Zealand, and Jenny, a midwife from Brisbane, met at Bible College (Melbourne Bible Institute, now Melbourne School of Theology) in 1953. They attended the Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL) School where Des's phenomenal talent for phonetics was recognised and his relationship with Jenny grew.

Des travelled to PNG in 1956 where his plumbing skills helped establish the centre at Ukarumpa. Des and Jenny were married in Brisbane in 1957 and moved to PNG in 1958. For the next 26 years, they made their home among the Binumarien people.

Des's skills as a plumber and handyman and Jenny's background as a nurse and midwife had an immediate impact on improving the health and the quality of life in the community. Yet what they were most excited about was helping the Binumarien people understand God's Word in their own language.

The Binumarien New Testament was completed in 1984. This was possible because of the years the Oatridges invested in language learning, developing a writing system for the language, translating the New Testament and promoting literacy across all age groups, starting with the elders.

Before the Oatridges arrived, years of fighting, violence and disease had decimated the Binumarien population from 3,000 to just 111 people. Yet the arrival of the New Testament brought healing and forgiveness, and the Binumarien population has now grown to more than 1,000. The family of one of Des's original language consultants, Tuluo, continues to work on the Old Testament translation.

Barry Borneman, speaking at Des's service, reflected on 'Uncle Des'. Despite struggling with school, Des became a master teacher. His uncanny talent for phonetics and

mimicking sounds was a huge help when constructing the alphabet and dictionary to record the Binumarien language, especially when he realised that Binumarien was a tonal language.

Barry went on to share:

The Oatridges purposely chose the smallest language group because they wanted to show that the 'weak and insignificant' still mattered to God. It was not so much what Des and Jenny did that caught my attention, but how they did it that left an indelible mark. The Oatridges brought the Binumariens from being a pre-literate community to a literate one. Now there are new generations going to university!

During Des's service, a video message was played from the Binumarien village where the Oatridges had lived. An elder, FauFau, said through tears how grateful he was that God sent them to him and his people.

Des went to be with the Lord at the age of 95 on 24 June, followed just 16 days later by his dear wife Jenny, on 10 July (aged 94). The services to honour their lives were held by Bethel Funerals at Reedy Creek Baptist Church and Allembé Gardens (Gold Coast), with friends and colleagues joining their family in person and online. Our thoughts and prayers are with Des and Jenny's children Ruth, Rosemary, Doug, Rob and Jean and their families.

GIVE

Donations can be made to the Binumarien Old Testament Translation listed on the Response Form.

READ

You can read more about Des and Jenny's ministry in Lynette Oates' book 'Hidden People'. Refer to the Response Form for details.



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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.

Leaving a legacy for the future

In the Spring edition of *Wycliffe Today*, you will read about the legacy of Des and Jenny Oatridge who worked among the Binumarien people in Papua New Guinea. The Oatridges developed a writing system for the Binumariens and taught the people to read and write. God's Word took a deep hold of the people and created an incredible change among them after the New Testament was dedicated in 1983. The Binumarien Old Testament Translation and Literacy Project continues the work that the Oatridges started all the way back in 1958. The other projects in this edition also aim to provide a better future for language communities through training, education and healthcare.

Kristen Hoglund
Projects Manager, Wycliffe Australia

Translation Training for PNG Nationals Project 8835



The Pacific Institute of Languages, Arts and Translation (PILAT) is a training organisation dedicated to preparing Papua New Guineans for Bible translation, literacy and other language development work. The National Translators Education Fund (NTEF) project subsidises this training in translation and language development activities undertaken by national translators.

The goal of this training is to equip Papua New Guinean translators to produce a quality vernacular translation of the Bible. NTEF scholarships are granted after applications are reviewed and evaluated. Applicants are working in an SIL or PNG Bible Translation Association (BTA) language program. The scholarship can cover course fees, room and board at the training locations (Ukarumpa and Alotau), travel, course material, books and subsidies for laptops.

Target: A\$86,667 per year



Visit wycliffe.org.au/projects/pilat-png-training/ for more information.

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

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/

Binumarien OT Translation and Literacy Project 8590



Today there are over 1,000 Binumarien speakers. The New Testament and Old Testament books that were translated are actively used by the churches. In 2018, the Binumarien New Testament and five Old Testament books were published with minor revisions in order to get Scriptures available for sale again and in 2021 a Faith Comes By Hearing recording of the New Testament was distributed to the people.

The Binumarien translation team has been working on translating more Old Testament books. Recently, an agreement was signed between the Binumarien, SIL-PNG, and Tyndale Bible Translators. These groups will be working together to complete the full Binumarien Bible within the next seven years.

Another goal of the project is to foster literacy among children and adults in Binumarien. The translation team is currently putting together a Binumarien dictionary. There is also a set of twelve short literacy primers going through a literacy consultant check. Once more teachers can be trained, there are hopes that the Department of Education will re-open the Binumarien Elementary School which was closed a few years ago, because their teachers did not have the required credentials.

The translated Scripture continues to transform lives. As Adi shares:

I don't go to church but I like to read God's Word in Binumarien at my own house because it's written in my mother tongue. I am also very happy to sit and hear God's Word in my own mother tongue. At night time, I turn on the little radio (with the Binumarien Scripture recordings) and listen until late into the night.

Afito adds:

The translation work that has been done in my very own mother tongue, Binumarien, helps me very much. When I hear or read God's Word in Tok Pisin or English, I don't understand it well because those [languages] are not my 'village talk'.

Target: A\$31,239



Visit wycliffe.org.au/projects/binumarien-ot-translation/ for more information.



PHOTOS SUPPLIED BY RUTH OATRIDGE

South Asia 1 Farmer Development Project 8860



South Asia 2 Education and Health Project 8886



The community in South Asia being helped by this project is currently marginalised by the rest of society because of the language they speak, lower levels of education, and inequalities in social structure. The people have a low standard of living and depend heavily on farming and agriculture for their livelihood.

Our project partner has already initiated work in this community and has established a significant number of local farmer-owned and managed cooperatives. The farmers are being trained with programs that promote soil health and natural and sustainable farming practices, and are given access to quality seeds and fertilisers. They are taught financial literacy, diversification into animal husbandry, and how to create microcredit enterprises with monthly savings targets. The farmers are also taught how to access subsidised government schemes.

This project will expand the number of cooperatives and strengthen existing collaborations to help more farmers improve their livelihoods through sustainable and informed farming practices.

Target: A\$17,825 per year

MORE

For more information, visit wycliffefoundation.org.au/asia/south-asia-1-farmer-development/



The country where this project is located is one currently facing many socio-political difficulties. Despite the challenges, there is a leader of a local organisation who is committed to helping the local community flourish. We have been working with this organisation for a number of years, and are continually impressed by the leader's energy and vision.

Funding for this project supports a particularly marginalised community. The project:

- gives children the opportunity to receive early primary education in their own environment, with their own teachers, before transitioning to the national curriculum
- teaches parents the negative effects of early child marriage
- helps people to become aware of the disadvantages of drug use and how it is degrading people's health, mental condition and the development of their community
- helps people obtain their legitimate rights with the local government administration
- develops future leaders through youth seminars, as they learn the role of a leader and apply their new skills in society.

Please help to support our trusted friends.

Target: A\$25,000 per year

MORE

For more information, visit wycliffefoundation.org.au/asia/south-asia/south-asia-2-primary-school-education/