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Refined by Fire

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Stories:

» Take heart
» Transformed by the Word: Even if …
» A long road
» Refined by fire
» A not-forgotten people
» Finishing well: The life and legacy of Didi Kanjahn
» A reminder, when you still smell smoke

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Take Heart

The Wycliffe Australia national centre is based in Kangaroo Ground, Melbourne – the gateway to the Yarra Valley. Vineyards decorate the hills almost everywhere you look. I have been told that despite drought, the dry weather often creates sweeter grapes. Not only this, but there will be a greater harvest if the vine is exposed to the elements. To nurture the vines to this state requires meticulous and seemingly harsh pruning, but without it, the vine will grow only leaves and no grapes. Correct pruning becomes essential for the plant to have fruit instead of just leaves. It is a fascinating insight to John 15:2, '*He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful.*' It is well observed in the Bible and throughout history that in the face of adversity God's purposes still prevail.

There is no easy road in the world of Bible translation, and the stories in this edition of *Wycliffe Today* depict ways in which the Lord has been glorified through arduous circumstances. Across the globe our partners have been bearing great fruit via pruning, whether it be challenging circumstances, spiritual opposition, hostility or even death, the goodness of the Lord prevails. God calls us to faithful service in this rugged world, but we can cling to his gentle reminder, '*I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.*' John 16:33 (NIV).

Max Sahl
CEO Wycliffe Australia

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:

Even if…

by Lynda Wake

'If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God whom we serve is able to save us. He will rescue us from your power, Your Majesty. But even if he doesn't, we want to make it clear to you, Your Majesty, that we will never serve your gods or worship the gold statue you have set up.' Daniel 3:17–18 (NLT)

Imagine the scene recorded in Daniel 3. Everyone was commanded to bow down to an impressive, man-made image. When the music started, everyone went with the flow – all except three brave Israelite exiles who dared to stand with holy conviction, even under the threat of cruel death for defiance. I would like to be as courageous under such intimidation, but I simply don't have it in me. I wonder what helped form their remarkable resolve to never bow in worship to another – even if God didn't protect or deliver from suffering and death?

This passage reveals how these three had already been tested, together with their friend Daniel. When they feared the Lord more than people or consequences, God gave them gifts of capability and wise judgement ten times greater than everyone else. Then, when tested so publicly, they wisely knew they could trust God's goodness – even if. Their story, like ours, ends with redemption. In a legendary plot twist, God saved them through the blazing trial, with the blessing of his glorious presence.

There are times we are saved from the fiery furnace, and other seasons we are called to enter in. But, even if we have to endure trials, God will be with us. He uses fiery furnaces to expose, refine and transform our character.

For Reflection: Where is God with you in the crucible of the refiner's fire?

Be transformed by the Word as you engage with: Daniel 3 and Psalm 66.

Prayer: *Lord, please help me to trust your goodness when going through trials that overwhelm me with searing pain. Help me to live well in the tension of the now and the not yet where my faith is refined like silver, and forged like gold. Amen.*

Join the adventure

Are you finishing school and wondering what's next?

Check out our gap year program, L2L (Launch into Life).

Gain:

- a deeper understanding of God's Word
- more knowledge of his world
- hands-on experience.

Interested?

The gap year program is based in Kangaroo Ground in the leafy north-east of Melbourne. Hands-on experience includes studying the Word, travel and living in community.

MORE *Enquire today: Visit wycliffe.org.au/events/gapyear*

Podcast

Translating the Word is a podcast hosted by experienced practitioners Ross and Lyndal Webb, offering an 8-minute peek into the world of Bible translation and its place in the world today. With over 7,000 languages spoken globally and millions still lacking Scripture in the language they think and dream in, the series explores the urgent mission of making God's Word understandable to all. Ultimately, this podcast is an invitation to witness a joyful life-and-death mission to ensure that every person can be fully "nourished" by the Word of God in the language they hold dearest.

MORE *Visit wycliffe.org.au/events/translating-the-word-podcast/*

ROSS AND LYNDAL WEBB

A long road

by Kathy (surname withheld)

If you had told me in 2008 that I would end up in Nigeria, I would never have believed you. At the time, my husband Bruce and I had just moved into a remote area working with the Iceve language community, in Cameroon.

A language survey suggested they had been waiting a long time for someone crazy or bold enough to go and help them begin developing their language – and there we were!

Our home in Cameroon was three days' long trek from the end of the road, and three hours' walk to the nearest hospital. The plan was to get started, persevere, and eventually begin Bible translation in this language, and – with God's help – three of the surrounding languages, too.

ICEVE TRANSLATION TEAM (PHOTO BY SUZIE BURGESS)

We were well into persevering ten years later, when we said goodbye for a two-month trip to Australia. 'Two months' away, however, became eight years. While in Australia, friends in the language area sent messages, 'Don't come back. People have guns and are shooting.' The little-publicised civil war in Cameroon had finally reached our area.

At the time, we thought all hope for 'getting to Bible translation' was lost. It was one of those moments where the back of the tapestry looks a mess, but God's side of the tapestry is neatly in order. We eventually heard that a Nigerian Bible translation organisation was about to start a Luke project in Nigeria. It 'just so happened' to be with a group of languages close to Iceve.

The four years that followed, helping three speakers translate Luke were not smooth sailing, either.

One of the speakers lived in a refugee camp, another made the perilous journey across the border from Cameroon every few months. But again, God gave us the strength and protection to persevere.

On 25 January 2025, we returned to the town of three refugee settlements, celebrating the dedication of the Gospel of Luke in Iceve! What joy to see people cross the border, coming to buy their copy! What joy to see amidst all the hunger, sickness and scattering of families, more Iceve turning to hope in Jesus than we had seen before.

Still, it was the book of Luke in only one of the four languages we went to help. What of the other three? Two of them have not progressed much further in language development since 2018. They still don't have any Scripture in their language. But – another golden thread – an English missionary who worked with the third language in remote Cameroon moved to Nigeria with her husband, and continues with those speakers in another refugee settlement.

GETTING A MOTORBIKE ACROSS THE CAMEROON/NIGERIA BORDER

And us? We have moved to northern Nigeria, where Bruce is in his element: mentoring Nigerian linguists as they help many languages. The last six weeks have brought another joy. One of our Iceve 'sons' came to stay with us. He's named 'Bruce', because he was born a month after we arrived in his village. Who'd have thought, holding that baby in my arms, that eighteen years later God would bring us together in Nigeria?

Bruce and Kathy are serving with SIL Nigeria.

PRAY *Pray for strength and diligence to continue to follow God, and pray that Iceve speakers would be listening to, and reading, Luke.*

Refined by Fire

by Amber and Corey

Fire is rarely comfortable. It tests, purifies, and reveals what is genuine. Our seven years serving in West Africa were marked by many such fires: false accusation, political upheaval, rising terrorism, illness, uncertainty, kidnapping of a colleague and the heartbreak of leaving a place we had come to call home.

Yet through every challenge, God was at work. What often felt like loss and hardship became a season of refining that produced lasting fruit.

When we arrived in West Africa in 2019, we knew ministry would be challenging. What we could not have anticipated was how dramatically the country would change during our time there. Security deteriorated following the 2023 military coup. Roads we once travelled freely eventually required military escorts and later became inaccessible. A colleague was detained and then Amber was detained with her, and another colleague was kidnapped a few months after we left (he has now been released after being held for 10 months), and by early 2026 all Western missionaries had been evacuated. Throughout these difficulties, we learned that ministry is not about comfort or control. It is about faithfulness in the midst of uncertainty.

The refining process was not limited to the nation around us. As a family, we experienced cancelled flights, changing plans, health challenges, and the reality that we had no control of what the future might hold. There were moments when we questioned what God was doing. Yet time and again, he reminded us that his purposes are not limited by our circumstances.

Even in those difficult years, God accomplished remarkable things through the ministry at the Health Centre. The Health Centre continues to serve as a place of healing, hope, and gospel witness. Major infrastructure projects were completed, including a new clinic, operating theatre, conference hall, extensive renovations to existing facilities, and a 3.4 km security wall that helped protect both the health centre and missionary community. What had once been deteriorating infrastructure was transformed into facilities that could continue serving the community for years to come.

Beyond the buildings, lives were being transformed. Local workers were trained and mentored, gaining skills, confidence, and purpose. Ibro*, once known for sitting under a tree drinking tea, grew into a respected leader who now plays a vital role in maintaining the health centre following the departure of expatriate staff. Patients found more than medical care. Women such as Tabita* encountered both physical healing and the hope of Christ, while Estha* became an enthusiastic evangelist, sharing audio Bibles throughout her village. We also had the privilege of attending the dedication of the Makori New Testament, celebrating a milestone that placed God's Word into the hands of people in their own language for the very first time.

The challenges also refined the local church. As security restrictions increased, ministry methods changed. Local believers increasingly stepped into leadership roles, sharing the gospel, discipling new believers, and reaching villages that missionaries could no longer visit. We witnessed believers from opposing ethnic groups studying God's Word together while conflict unfolded only kilometres away. The gospel was proving stronger than division, hardship, and fear.

Perhaps the greatest lesson from this season is that God's work is bigger than any one person or organisation. When Western missionaries were forced to leave, local believers stepped forward. Evangelists continued sharing the gospel, discipleship continued, and ministry carried on. The challenges did not destroy the work. Instead, they revealed the strength and maturity that God had been building all along.

A WELL IN WEST AFRICA

Looking back, we would never have chosen many of the trials we faced. Yet, the story of West Africa and the Health Centre is ultimately not one of hardship, but of God's faithfulness through the fire.

** name changed for security reasons*

A not-forgotten people

by Jade Cummings

Growing up, Jack attended a Japanese church in Brisbane. It was here that he met a Hazara Afghan who he asked, 'How many Christian Hazaras are there?' The man answered, 'None. I am the only one.' As far as this man knew, he had no brothers or sisters in Christ who spoke his language. The impact of this moment has remained with Jack.

The Hazara community is resilient in the face of persecution resulting from differences in religion, ethnicity and culture. Their culture and their language, Hazaragi, are considered inferior within Afghanistan. Due to the current Taliban government in Afghanistan, many Hazaras are making the treacherous trip to places like Australia.

JACK AND RACHEL ON A FAMILY OUTING

In Australia, they must begin adapting to survive. Not only do they have an enormous amount of emotional unpacking to do, they also have to learn new skills. The struggle becomes navigating the bureaucratic societal structures, paperwork and administration in a new language. Many women from Afghanistan have never stepped inside a school. Rachel, Jack's wife, works with an English learning class for Afghan, Chinese and Vietnamese women. The lessons teach them English and useful phrases, focusing on topics that can be applied such as going to the chemist. It's an amazing opportunity bringing confidence to the women and fostering community and joy in coming together. Rachel was chatting with one lady who came to Australia when she was 16 and pregnant, who noted that, 'No one sees you'.

Jack's work with the Flourishing Communities Project (FCP) focuses on creating tools that honour the Hazaragi language. FCP staff come alongside several migrant communities in different capacities. When a migrant community approaches them with language issues or challenges, they have discussions, and come up with plans. Sometimes it's just a matter of being present and acknowledging the community. Back in Afghanistan, the Hazara community is not recognised. The Hazara people even dismiss themselves. Jack reminds us that Jesus does not dismiss them. Walking with people and talking about their language and culture is very meaningful.

Rachel and Jack share one beautiful example of the Lord at work. They were at dinner with some Hazara friends, and the man and Jack began a conversation with a Hazara Imam, who was visiting Australia from Pakistan. The Imam mentioned that he spoke in the Hazaragi language in the mosque. Jack's friend was astounded – he had not experienced their language, viewed as inadequate for God by their culture, being honoured in this way. Jack, then, had the opportunity to show them Psalm 23 in Hazaragi, and explained that it was written by David, the shepherd-turned-king, in the language of lowly shepherds, just like the Hazaras. The dignity given to the Hazaragi language is evidence of God's honour for them. Jack was then able to give the Imam a copy of the Psalms. As the Imam read through it, he was impressed with the accuracy, beauty and clarity of the translation.

Jack and Rachel explain that whilst the Hazara are a seemingly forgotten and diminished people, God has not forgotten them. Lapas lazuli, the stunning blue stone from Afghanistan, is often translated in the Bible as one of the precious stones on the High Priest's breastplate and the flooring beneath God's throne (Exodus 28:18; 24:10; Ezekiel 28:13). It is a reminder that Afghani people are precious to God and a part of his redemption story.

PRAY *Jack and Rachel live in the outer suburbs of Melbourne, Victoria. Pray for spiritual protection, good community and deep friendships.*

MORE *Support Jack and Rachel here: wycliffe.org.au/member/jack-rachel, and the Flourishing Communities Project here: sila.org.au/projects/flourishing-communities-project/*

Finishing well:
The life and legacy of Didi Kanjahn

by Deb Fox

Diethelm Wilfried Kanjahn was a living example of 'finishing the race well' (2 Tim 4:7). Despite living with cancer for the final four years of his life, Diethelm, or 'Didi' as he was affectionately known, was committed right until the very end to helping the Bunong language community of Cambodia complete their own translation of the Bible.

But it wasn't just the task of completing a translation – Didi wanted everyone he met to understand the good news of Jesus.

Didi and his wife, Mimi, headed to Cambodia because they felt called to make God's Word available to those who had never heard it before. Didi created a writing system and he and Mimi gave literacy lessons to many Bunong people. This not only helped to improve educational and job opportunities for them but also enabled a team of mother-tongue translators to join the important task of Bible translation.

During Didi's funeral, Didi and Mimi's nephew Andy said of his uncle:

> We never imagined that our hippy, Hong Kong-based, TV-producing aunty would marry a German nerd! But Didi loved all of us so deeply. He wanted for himself to be forgotten but for Jesus to be remembered. When I visited him, I asked him how he felt about his cancer. He said he felt peace to go and be with Jesus: 'To live is Christ, to die is gain. Jesus knew the pain of death. He weeps with us. Death and grief are not the final word.'

Didi passed away on 4 July 2026. His funeral was well attended and included a total of 26 different speakers. Included in that list were Lhon and Borat – men whom Didi and Mimi helped to disciple and encouraged to become pastors.

The pastor at Didi and Mimi's church, Ps Matthew, shared a message from John 11, which he said held a particularly special place in Didi's heart. This chapter, about Jesus comforting Martha after the death of her brother Lazurus, is a reminder that death is not the end. The pastor noted, 'Didi didn't just translate John 11 – he staked his life on it.' He went on to share:

> Didi believed that Jesus IS the resurrection and the life. He cared more about people coming to Jesus than anything else. Even when the diagnosis came, there were amazing conversations talking about the work of Bible translation and the Lord's will. With every word, he was content. His eyes were always heavenward.

Our thoughts and prayers are with Mimi as she continues to grieve not only the passing of a loving husband but also a partner in gospel work. At the time of his passing, Didi and his team were only a few chapters away from finishing the translation of the Old Testament in Bunong.

DIDI AT WORK

MORE *You can help to complete Didi's work by supporting the project. Go to wycliffe.org.au/projects/bunong-old-testament-translation/*

WATCH *Discover more of the Bunong story by watching the video 'A New Day' which celebrates the dedication of the Bunong New Testament that took place in May 2016. Visit wycliffe.au/bunong-video*

In loving memory of Diethelm Wilfried Kanjahn | 19 March 1960 – 4 July 2026

A Reminder, when you still smell smoke

by Jade Cummings

Have you ever wondered if your most difficult ministry challenges could be waiting for you not in a foreign country, or trekking through a desert, but in your hometown where you grew up?

With a desire to be near their ageing mothers, Wycliffe Australia members Woody and Bev Baker were seconded to ministries in their hometown in North Carolina. There they work with the Friendship Fund and The Gathering Place Ahoskie, ministering to people stuck in the cycle of poverty. Often these men and women come from broken homes, addiction, and either unemployment or minimum wage. When people come to their organisations for help, they offer them the chance to be listened to, to be prayed for, and to be helped in a practical way. Bev noted that, 'The most precious thing you can give someone is your time and attention.'

Three years in the Solomon Islands taught Woody and Bev an important truth. In many ways, the work they did there was successful. The literacy projects went well, they were embedded in the community and had established good relationships with locals, but there was friction within their team. It was here that the Lord taught them the important lesson: God cares more about how you're doing things than what you're doing. Woody notes that God 'could snap his fingers and do all the translation. He snapped his fingers and confused all the languages, and he could do that again but he's inviting us to do it with him.' Though Woody admits with a laugh that he questions all the time, 'Lord, it isn't very efficient to include us in what you're doing, what are you thinking?' This season refined their methods and attitudes, and now in small town North Carolina, they're having to abide by that lesson.

With this in mind, they entered their ministry in North Carolina, which has ended up being 'the hardest job the Lord's ever given us'. It's hard when you're not seeing success.

When generational poverty has such rigid strongholds, hopelessness sets in. Often people come asking for help, but instead use it to fuel their hidden addictions. It's been a time of remembering that the Lord is still okay with them even if they can't see measurable results.

Woody and Bev reflect that there have been few success stories, which has been discouraging in many ways. After enjoying working in teams with Wycliffe and SILA, in this ministry they have had to work at building their team through local volunteers. They vividly recall friends with Wycliffe Australia whose first assignment didn't go well. They were quite disheartened. The man said, 'I've never heard anybody give testimony of failing. And here I've failed, and I feel like I'm the only failure I've ever known.' Yet reflecting on the significant work this couple went on to do brings only encouragement to Woody and Bev.

BEV WELCOMING CLIENTS AT THE FRIENDSHIP FUND

Despite the ministry's challenges, there is still hope, Bev reveals that:

> It's hard living here – but it's where God has us, and I know the best place to be is where he has you. This comes from experiencing him, over and over and over, coming through and keeping his promises.

Recently a young woman came in to meet with Bev at the Friendship Fund, and she was able to encourage her, 'I'm twice as old as you, and God's never failed me. He won't fail you either!'

Ministry Resourcing

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Wycliffe Bible Translators

PHOTO BY GARY MCMASTER

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
- support strategic partnerships with SIL Global
- support Australian members on the field with their project needs.

Take heart, projects of perseverance

At this time of year, the season turns and the days begin to grow longer. Early morning walks in the winter are long, cold and dark. Yet, I persevere, knowing it is good for both my body and mind. I leave in darkness, and return in darkness. Ah, but how nice it is in the Springtime to set out in darkness and watch as the sun rises to illuminate the world, bringing light to the shadows. The imposing shapes lining the roads become trees, and the black expanse turns to green pasture.

The projects listed here all reveal that despite physical challenges – whether it be sickness, terrain, even death – there is light in the darkness. We invite you to participate, through prayer and financial support, in the work God is doing in these communities who have experienced much pain and darkness. Despite the continuing challenges, there is hope.

By Jade Cummings,

Wycliffe Today editor

Medical Equipment for PNG

Project 8884

WYCLIFFE RELIEF AND DEVELOPMENT FOUNDATION PROJECT

Empowering Tagbanua communities.

One hygienist. A whole region in need. Help us change that.

The SIL Medical Clinic in Ukarumpa provides services to local communities in Papua New Guinea. Their latest priority is to assist the clinic in updating their dental facility. In the past they have had a fully staffed team in the dental clinic, but currently there is only one dental hygienist! Consequently, many people in the area suffer significant dental issues. Currently the closest dentist is two hours' travel on public transport, along rural roads.

The hope is to accommodate dentists who wish to work in PNG. The project will also aid in recruiting dentists, dental assistants, and dental lab technicians, as they will have a better facility to work in. This project will co-fund the purchase of the needed equipment, alongside medical specialists and the clinic's own resources. Dental hygiene can often feel like an optional add-on to health care, but dental issues quickly impact on overall health and wellbeing. If dental problems persist, they can lead to more significant health issues.

Target: A$22,000

MORE *For more information go to wrdf.org.au/pacific/png/png-medical-equipment/*

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 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/

Scripture Distribution Bible Society Vietnam

Project 8825

WYCLIFFE FIELD SUPPORT PROJECT

This story is adapted from an article by The Bible Society of Vietnam

How far would you walk if it meant fellowship with other believers and hearing the Word of God? The highland women of Vietnam live arduous lives. Their days consist of strenuous agricultural work, chores and caring for family. Despite their circumstances, these women walked the winding rugged road from Dak Rip Church, wading through streams, climbing mountains and arrived at a gathering organised by the Christian mission church. They arrived not with fatigue but instead joyous smiles.

There, the Sedang ethnic women shared their testimonies of God's work in their lives, rescuing them from long, dark nights of illness, alcoholism and the darkness of superstition. One spoke of how the moment Jesus entered her stilt home, everything changed, and peace reigned in their home and their hearts. Another woman shared how desperately she cried out to the Lord to heal her chronically ill child. On their knees, the whole family prayed together for healing, and the Lord heard their cries. The child's strength and health returned. The mother, with tears streaming down her face, said 'I have nothing to repay the Lord, I only know how to love Him and follow Him to the end of my life.'

While they were there, the women were gifted Bibles from Wycliffe Bible Translators Australia, through Bible Society, and they joyfully held them tightly, exclaiming that the Bibles were, 'a love letter' written by God.

The Vietnam Bible Society wrote:

> We learned a profound lesson from their testimonies: their joy does not come from easy circumstances. The farm work remains arduous, the journey home is still far, and life is still full of hardships. That joy is undoubtedly deeper and more enduring because it comes from the presence of the One who loved them first, died for them, and promised never to forsake them. It is a joy that the world cannot give, nor can it take away.

Target: A$16,666

MORE *For more information go to wycliffe.org.au/projects/scripture-distribution-bsv/*

Moba Literacy Project

Project 8310

Moba is an African language spoken by the Moba people of Northern Togo. The Moba literacy project provides opportunities for the poor and illiterate. The funds raised in this project cover the cost of the classes, in which 75% of the participants are women.

Yendoube wanted to run literacy classes in his church so that the people would be able to read the Bible in the Moba language. It was a historically hostile area where many church plants had failed in the past. Yendoube explains the struggles and joys:

> The beginning of the course was not easy. We met multiple diabolical attacks, sickness, and even death. In spite of all that, the Lord, who is the inspiration for and master of this project allowed success, for the glory of his name. I rejoice to be used as a servant in this praiseworthy project, to glorify the name of the eternal God and our Lord Jesus Christ. … Truly, words fail me for telling of all the wonders that the Lord has accomplished in my life and in that of the members of my church, through these literacy classes.

Target: A$31,111

MORE *For more information on the Moba Literacy project, visit wycliffe.org.au/projects/moba-literacy-africa/*

Lama Old Testament Translation

Project 8315

WYCLIFFE FIELD SUPPORT PROJECT

Have you ever felt like God was speaking directly to you through the words of a sermon, song or Bible passage? That is exactly what happened to one of the mother-tongue translators working in the Lama language.

Lama is an African language spoken by the Lamba people of Togo, Benin and Ghana. The Lama New Testament was dedicated in 1995, and work on the Old Testament has been underway since the year 2000. Praise God that, after years of hard work and cooperation between SIL and the Bible Society of Togo, the first draft of the entire Bible has now been completed!

Translation consultants involved in the project recently met to read through the draft with the mother-tongue translators to check for errors and to test whether the translation into Lama was clear, accurate and natural. During the process of reading, one of the translators, David, gained a new appreciation for God's holiness and power. He shares his experience:

When the translators brought us together to present the plan on the read-through of the entire Bible in Lama, great joy could be seen on all our faces. Finally, the Bible in the Lama language will soon be here!

Target: A$9,444

MORE *For more information on the Lama Old Testament Translation project, visit wycliffe.org.au/projects/lama-old-testament/*

Wycliffe Bible Translators

If you would like to discuss any of the Ministry Resourcing projects, please contact:

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