



Wycliffe Assist

Rewarded Tenfold *by John Quartel*

Volunteering in the Solomon Islands was a most rewarding experience and I feel blessed to have had the opportunity to serve in some small way. This 'Macedonian call' began back in July 2016 when the Solomon Island Translation Advisory Group (SITAG), based in the capital, Honiara sent out an appeal for a volunteer to fill the position of Operations Manager. This position looks after the day-to-day running of the centre, taking care of translators in remote islands, supervising local staff and attending to maintenance and development of the centre. The position is vital and without volunteers to fill the role, SITAG would call in translators to carry out the duties, taking them away from their key task of translation. This was one of my considerations in deciding to offer my services.



I-r Patson Mae, Ilyn Winia, Jillian Quartel, Judy Mae, on a tour to western Quadelcanal

With a background in civil engineering and managing large projects, SITAG decided that I would go a long way toward meeting their requirements. I was confident that with a 'can learn attitude', the Lord would show me the way to pick up new skills. My very capable wife of over 50 years, supported my 'Macedonian call' and stayed home to care for our son, a dog and three teenagers whose mum recently died suddenly. Half way through the assignment, Jillian was able to visit me in Honiara for a one-week whirlwind visit. It included a visit to a remote island where

we saw how a very active and multi-skilled linguistic couple are working under very challenging circumstances, while also looking after three boys, all under six.

The Solomon Islands brought back many fond memories of my childhood when I lived in the West Indies for 12 years. It is about the same latitude, so the climate, fauna, fruits, majority ethnic population, socio economic standards of living etc were very similar.

The SITAG base has very friendly and supportive people from many parts of the world. The local people are very friendly and capable. They have impressive and varied backgrounds and spoke Solomon Island Pijin as well as several local languages. They came from various villages on the many islands.

My first and very interesting assignment was to evaluate the construction cost of a typical Solomon Island community building with a leaf roof. There was a good example of such a building on the grounds of Parliament House. I gave a verbal report to the board and they made an informed scope reduction to make it suit another project.



Leaf hut in grounds of Parliament House

I then designed and supervised the construction



John and Ilyn Winia discuss monthly data entry

of two significant retaining walls. This included awarding contracts and integration of SITAG personnel. This is where I became very aware of the relevant local cultural and people aspects.

I further coordinated the design and installation of a large, high-tech solar electrical supply installation. A key part was to modify the existing stand-by generator building to accommodate the new battery storage and control equipment. Apart from the significant environmental and economic benefits of solar electricity, it added significant reliability to the IT and radio systems at SITAG. Unfortunately, being a volunteer for a fixed term, I did not see the final commissioning of the new power supply.

In the office I supported the administrative assistant (Ilyn) check all the monthly data she entered into Wycliffe's comprehensive accounting database. That was a big learning curve. **Continued on back page**

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My Week at Wycliffe by Melvyn Jackson

I can't remember how I found out about the opportunity to join a Wycliffe work team, it might have been through Facebook. We were to renovate a large meeting room — it would take a good sized team a couple of weeks. Something to get our teeth into. However the building consents didn't materialise, neither did the team. This meant that I had the opportunity to spend the week at Wycliffe, working on smaller projects with the three Peters (Peter Gillespie, Peter Dunstan and Peter Dedrick) and time to observe the normal comings and goings of staff on site.



Peter Dedrick on shovel, Peter Gillespie adjusting the backhoe and Peter Dunstan in the trench

Editorial

by Peter Gillespie

Ephesians 2:10 says that 'we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.' (NIV)

It is wonderful to think that the good works that we report on are prepared in advance by God. When we put God first in our lives we can expect great things from Him.

I am always greatly encouraged when I see how God uses people to achieve His purpose and grow His kingdom.

This edition picks up stories of mature aged men using their time and resources to assist Bible translation, and in the process receive a blessing more than they gave.

We also look at the annual MAD trips for young adults, but the greatest impact is how God changes lives. Whether a young woman from India, or one on a road trip, God is at work in His people.

What a privilege to serve a living Saviour as we seek out the good works He has for us to do.



Mel operating the backhoe

I met international visitors from Vanuatu and Indonesia, had dinner with staff from the linguistic school, reconnected with the Bowsen, joined in with staff at morning tea and spent time with other volunteers in the 'smoko' room. I lived with Peter and Yvonne in one of the cottages and experienced Yvonne's wonderful hospitality. You cannot be anything but challenged and impressed as you spend time with the Wycliffe team of staff and volunteers.

During the days the three Peters and I got stuck into some long standing maintenance jobs. We

fixed roofs, gutters, dug holes, mixed concrete, installed a street light and laid pipes. The highlight for me was to rediscover my love of digging trenches with a back hoe. We did breakout with sweat from time to time. It was really enjoyable working with guys who are so able and skilled and enjoy using their abilities to contribute to the work of Wycliffe. I learnt a lot from them and not just about maintenance.

It was also a time of personal reflection for me. I had been struggling through some things and the Lord used the time to deal with me and show me a way through them. The time away at a place like Wycliffe provided not just the opportunity to contribute but also time to reflect and renew. I will always be grateful for the opportunities I had during that week. My thanks to Peter and Yvonne for making it possible.

USED STAMPS

Continue to send stamps to Ann Wiggins at her home address:
6/26 Jackson Street, Croydon, Vic 3136 or to the
Wycliffe Office at Kangaroo Ground



I could do that! by William Groves

'I could do that; it would use my skills as an accountant.'

That was my response when my sister handed me the advertisement appealing for auditors for Wycliffe field locations.

I am a CPA working in public practice with nearly 50 years' experience. However, some of the procedures of an internal control audit gave me a new learning curve, one that I was happy to undertake in my first trip for Wycliffe.

Along with David Stanford from Victoria, I travelled to Dallas, USA and spent two weeks auditing at the centre there. It was very satisfying work and I was pleased to complete the report.



William Groves

In April this year, I will undertake my second internal review, this time in Ukarumpa in the highlands of Papua New Guinea. I am grateful to God for this opportunity to use my skills while assisting the ministry of Bible translation. I would encourage other accountants with a love of God's word to consider this avenue of service.

Photos on cover page:

John Quartel, Melvyn Jackson, Neville Knell, Dave Wake and friend

Go MAD *by Yvonne Gillespie*

Chester and Lyn Street worked with the Murrinhpatha people at Port Keats in the Northern Territory for seventeen years. After returning to NSW, they continued with translation work remotely, but had a desire to find a way to stay in touch, encourage the local people and make others aware of Aboriginal translation work. With the assistance of John Walder the first Go MAD trip set out in 1997.

MAD stands for **M**inistry, **A**dventure and **D**iscovery and has a threefold purpose;

1. Help everyone go the next step in their journey of faith,
2. Grow in their love and understanding of aboriginal people,
3. Be able to use some of their gifts in practical ways.

Dave Wake, who joined the team in 1998, and has done thirteen trips since then, said; 'For me the greatest reward is seeing how God works in the lives of the participants and watching them draw closer to Him as they get exciting about mission and ministry. Not only that, they



Setting up to sleep under the stars

all get close to one another during this very special eighteen day journey.'

Each year Go MAD visits Port Keats and on the way stay in other communities. These include; Epenarra, Yuendumu, Ernabella, Ali Curung, and Black Rock. Everyone travels in the Wycliffe 21-seat air-conditioned bus and sleep in tents or under the stars. Catering is done 'on the run' from the mobile safari kitchen.

Participants get to see wonderful sites in the Northern Territory and meet the people who call this part of the world 'home'.

Participant, Kathy said; 'Going into an Aboriginal community was just like going to another country. Food, clothes, daily activities, relationships, priorities and attitudes were all very different to my own and more different from any culture I've been in before.'

Louise enjoyed the adventure. She wrote; 'Just follow the 4WD in front,' a man calls out. He hops back into the Ute in front and takes off at speed into the pitch-black bush, his tail lights our only guide through this country. The dirt track seems endless, with scrub and trees often crowding in, scraping along the sides of the bus, and ditches and hollows taking us by surprise. Suddenly, the claustrophobic darkness became vast emptiness...'

To register: Wycliffe.org.au/MAD-Australia



The Wycliffe bus towing the kitchen trailer

The Power of Jesus Christ *by Jenny Austin*

In 2015 Yuganya moved to Melbourne with her husband to find work. Yuganya soon realised that she needed some work experience to qualify for IT jobs so when she attended a 'Will You Be My Aussie Friend' workshop at the Wycliffe National Centre; she asked if she could volunteer as a computer programmer. Wycliffe was very pleased to welcome her and give her programming work to do. She is enjoying getting to know the team and hearing new stories of God's amazing grace across many countries and languages. Yuganya shares her own amazing story of God's grace to her.

'As a young girl growing up in southern India, I suffered severe headaches every

day and sought help from doctors and from my Hindu gods. However, the headaches remained and one night in tears of despair, I cried out to Jesus Christ to heal me. At that stage, I only knew of Jesus as one of the gods in the world. That night I finally fell asleep and the next day was pain free for the first time in six years. I knew that Jesus had healed me.

It was this testimony of God's healing power that brought about a gradual transformation in my whole family. First my sister who, for a long time, had been overcome with a dread of going to school. After prayer, she began to attend school again. Then my father

who had witnessed the healing in his daughters decided to throw away all the household religious objects. Finally, my mother, who had been possessed by an evil spirit was amazingly delivered following her own prayer to Jesus and began to read the Tamil Bible despite previously being illiterate. The whole family now worships the one true God.

The Lord answered my plea for mercy when no other god could hear. As I learned more about Jesus, I realised that He, unlike other gods, knew my pain because He had experienced it Himself. He had taken on the burden of the world so that He might save it. That was the sort of God I could love and honour.'

Volunteers Needed

Mature age volunteers can play an important role with Wycliffe. There are many vacancies for centre managers similar to what John Quartel has describe. The role can be short term (up to 2 years) or longer if your situation permits.

Contact the Wycliffe office at Kangaroo Ground for details of locations and skill requirements. info@wycliffe.org.au
 Jeanette Bennett: (03) 9712 2733 or
 Jenny Austin: (03) 9712 2736

From front page

After three months I had a pretty good grasp of it, but regretfully a month later I returned home.

Being in a different culture is perhaps the most challenging part of working in another country. Understanding what makes people tick and having good relationships makes the job rewarding. I soon discovered that having a quick iced coffee was much appreciated and good bonding when a key local staff member and I had to go to town. We soon called it 'topping up our memory skills'. We even topped up our happy memories skills when a few staff took me to the airport to return to Australia. It was always my greatest pleasure to pay for the iced coffee, as one iced coffee costs the equivalent of one days wage for a labourer in the Solomon Islands.

Part of the rewarding experience of serving with SITAG was the local people. They were keen to learn and to extend their English skills. Ilyn was always alert when I used a new word and would ask its meaning and tried to use it as soon as possible. They in-turn, taught me a variety of typical greetings and replies in their language. People appreciated my effort to speak their language when with words and body language I respectfully used my limited language knowledge.

I was spoilt as a 'single' person in the accommodation provided. SITAG has excellent facilities and I had a fully equipped one bedroom flat. Betsy, Rosina



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Improving gutter and down pipe capacity

and Joanna are the ladies who do the house keeping for all the accommodation. These ladies further supported me by cooking my main meals and doing all the fresh food shopping at the local market. Every day I had the choicest local meals, fruits and juices prepared by these wonderful ladies. For me my dorm became the SITAG Hilton. Even better was that I lost 15 kg in weight whilst in the Solomon Islands.

There are many more things to talk about. To mention a few; ■ There was regular swimming in the pool of an upmarket hotel in the city. ■ Local colleagues taking, me for fascinating Sunday afternoon trips into the country to hear and see what tourists will never experience.

- Reading up and seeing the history of the islands.
- Being caught out in massive tropical rainstorms where the runoff of the storm water changed the

colour of the bay in no time and many large fish spectacularly jump out of the water. ■ Getting out of bed at say 1:00 am to inspect the roof gutters for how they perform during the peak of massive downpours, (luckily warm water), to determine what changes should be made to gutters and down pipes.

- Seeing what foreign aid does to the country and noting the various countries that contribute.
- Enjoying the beauty and colours of the beaches, the water and reefs.
- Becoming aware again of all my privileges in the Solomon Islands and at home in Australia. ■ Experiencing Bible translation and being enriched by a better understanding of its dynamics. ■ Sharing my experiences with many when I came home to enrich them in understanding their faith and encouraging others to go volunteering.

To 'Serve those who serve' is a great privilege, receiving more than tenfold in long-term enrichment compared with what I contributed as a volunteer.



I-r Silas, Patson, Max & Sam ready for work

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