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Celebration time!

**AUTUMN
2017**

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Cover Photo taken at actual Lewo dedication. All unattributed stock images courtesy of pixabay.com. Articles may be freely reproduced, but please acknowledge *Wycliffe Today* or its sources as indicated in this publication.



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Editorial from the CEO

It is an absolute joy to lead a faith-based volunteer organisation like Wycliffe because one gets to appreciate the extravagant generosity of Australian Christians and the Australian Church, whether it be giving through prayer, acts of service or financial donations. In the last year Wycliffe has received over \$6 million for member support and close to \$400,000 for projects. Without this generosity, Wycliffe simply cannot function and make a uniquely Australian contribution to the worldwide Bible translation movement. With it, it is more than just supporting Bible translation, it is an expression of the body of Christ in action.



Barry Borneman

Introducing the Wycliffe Relief and Development Foundation

The Wycliffe Relief and Development Foundation was recently formed to receive tax-deductible gifts for various types of relief including medical assistance and disaster aid. This relief aid will be directed to needy overseas communities where Wycliffe Bible Translators Australia or its partners work.

MORE

Go online to: www.wycliffe.org.au/projects/wycliffe-foundation

Check out our new site: wycliffe.org.au

Wycliffe Australia's website has had a facelift and an upgrade. With new features (and more to come), visit our website to discover the changes.

MORE

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Time to Celebrate! Lewo Translation Project Reaches Dedication

PHOTO BY ELYSE PATTEN

by Sharna Steinert

Join us in thanking and praising God for the completion of a New Testament translation for our neighbours in Vanuatu. This 35-year project has faced many setbacks, but now is the time to celebrate!



On 2 March 2017 the Lewo language community of Epi Island in Vanuatu celebrated the completion of the New Testament in their own language. The ceremony was held in Nikaura, the most central Lewo village, where Ross and Lyndal Webb worked recently to bring this project to completion.

Thirty five years ago, in 1982, a New Zealand family arrived on Epi Island and began the Lewo translation with Elder Kapiapo and Elder Andrew. The project quickly expanded to incorporate two other languages on Epi. In the early years the translation program was well known and many people participated as translators, cooks and typists, among other roles.

In the late 1990s circumstances changed and progress slowed considerably. Work moved to Port Vila, and community involvement narrowed to one man who travelled back and forth. He is remembered for his vigorous promotion of the language.

Before Elder Kapiapo died in 2013 he appointed a successor, a godly man with a gift for reading his language. This man has done much of the audio recording of the Lewo New Testament for release alongside the printed version.

The Lewo translation had been in progress for 20 years before Ross and Lyndal arrived in Vanuatu. After finishing up in a leadership role they offered to take the Lewo New Testament through the final stages of preparation for publication and audio recording.

The Lewo community, along with the other two language communities, have welcomed Ross and Lyndal. Coming in at this stage, and working with three different language communities, means that Ross and Lyndal mainly use Bislama (the national language of Vanuatu) to communicate while learning some of the three languages as they go.

Ross and Lyndal write, 'It is hard to overestimate the value of a translation team living and working in the village situation in the Pacific.' Staying in the village for up to 10 weeks at a time, and building relationships and working closely with the Lewo translators on a daily basis has enabled the project to cross the finish line.



LISTENING TO THE SCRIPTURE ON MEGAVOICE

The work, however, is ongoing. After the celebration Ross and Lyndal will stay on a little longer in the village. They hope to promote Bible study and encourage locals to listen to the recorded scriptures on megavoice. The goal of course is not just a completed Bible translation but a heart and life transformation from encountering God through his Word.



It all begins with a language survey! Watch Ross Webb assisting Houghton Richards and team on a language survey of Ambrym island in Vanuatu: www.vimeo.com/167362075



This is an abridged version. To read it in full, visit www.wycliffe.org.au/lewo



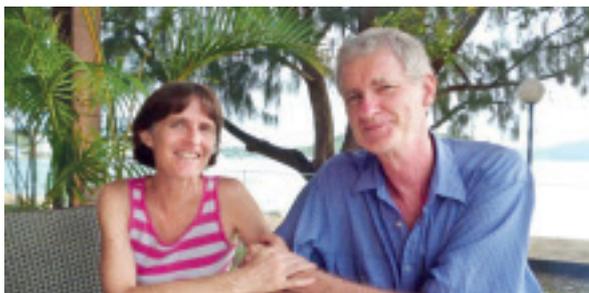
We love our supporters!

Interview by Sharna Steinert

While about to take a New Testament translation across the finish line, Ross and Lyndal Webb reflect on the significant role that supporters have played in their journey.

You have been on the translation journey for many years now, and many supporters have walked alongside you. How do you feel about your supporters?

We can be nothing but be super grateful to God for the friends he has given us as partners in the gospel over the past 30+ years. Many of the 'originals' are still hanging in there with us. How good is that? It is such an encouragement to know that this is not some personal crazy idea but a task that has the backing of godly men and women who see Bible translation as something they would support to the hilt!



ROSS AND LYNDAL WEBB

How have your prayer and financial supporters been part of the team over the years? Have there been specific events or incidents in which you have felt their partnership?

We love our supporters' responses to our newsletters: getting replies makes all the difference! We loved it that a number of supporters came to the dedications of the Irumu (PNG) Bible dedications way back at the end of last century, and now again have signed up to come to the dedication of the Lewo New Testament here in Vanuatu. It is so wonderful that friends would want to come all this distance to be where the action is, so to speak. We love that we can count on the prayers of friends for everyday stuff and for when life turns out to be harder than we'd want, like when Lyndal was found to be with cancer some years back. We love that many of our supporting friends have kept up a strong interest in our boys and their own lives and ministries.

Have you had new supporters join you at different stages? How does it feel to have new people join you?

The Lord has never left us to fend for ourselves! Whenever a supporter has had to withdraw for some reason or another, he always provides another individual or church to take up the slack. We are totally grateful for his mercy in never requiring us to pull back, or take stock, or worry about how we are going to continue.

Meet the supporters

Translation work really is a team effort, and supporters play a significant role. How fitting then that Ross and Lyndal will be joined by their supporters for the dedication ceremony.

Pamela King, Sydney, NSW, Australia

My involvement with Ross and Lyndal began in the late 1960s. Ross's parents, Tom and Gwen Webb were working in translation in Papua New Guinea and Ross, having finished school, lived with my late husband, Brian King, and our young children in Dural and then Wahroonga for around four years. Our sons assumed for many years that Ross was an older brother!

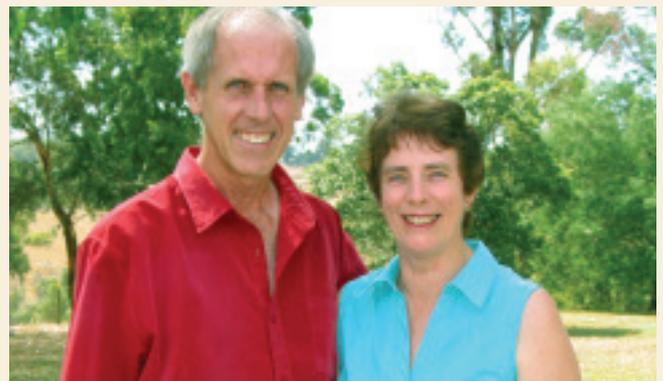
In 1997, my youngest son Matthew and I flew to the village of Zuepak in Papua New Guinea to join in the celebrations of the dedication of the Psalms and New Testament in the Tuma-Irumu language. It was an amazing experience and one which Matthew has talked about so much that when the opportunity came for us to join in another celebration, his 14 year old daughter Charlotte was keen to come as well.

It is a privilege to share in this significant occasion and we give thanks to God that another people group will be able to read the Bible in their own language.



Peter & Yvonne, NSW, Australia

We have been personally supporting Wycliffe for about 45 years, and in the past 9 years have worked with Wycliffe Assist.



Through leading Wycliffe Assist work teams we aim to relieve field workers from other duties that might distract them from translation work: our teams have built, painted, repaired plumbing, made curtains, catalogued libraries, photocopied and enjoyed Christian fellowship, Bible studies and prayer. Joining Wycliffe Assist was very much God's leading and personally a career change for us after retiring.

It is exciting and a joy to see God's Word going out, and a joy to see the completion of what has been a very long project. It is also very special for our friend, staff worker Luwi, as this is his own mother tongue and his island of birth. We have worked with Luwi over 9 years and it has always been a joy to work beside him, and it is very special to see Scriptures in his own language.

GO

Keen to use your practical skills to support translation projects? Contact the Gillespies about upcoming work teams at www.wycliffe.org.au/join/wycliffe-assist/

Every little bit counts

by Craig Schneider

Have you ever been overwhelmed by the enormity of the task of sharing God's Word and wondered what difference you could possibly make?

Scripture tells us that we are each one part of Christ's body, and even the members who appear less significant are indispensable in carrying out God's work (1 Corinthians 12:12-31). Every contribution—every little bit—counts.



In 1962 Graham and Dianne Cooling started committing two pounds a month to support Bible translators in Papua New Guinea.

Fifty-five years later, they are still contributing.

'We give,' Dianne says, 'for the purpose of being able to see God's Word as available to other believers as it is to us. We are all part of the body to take part in his work.'

This faithful participation in Bible translation is necessary. It is inspiring. Yet there are times when one-off gifts have a special place in furthering God's work.



We see this through Sheryl Parker and the Caring Hands Craft Group, who made fitted cloth bags for a New Testament dedication in Vanuatu.

'It was wonderful to see the passion in which some of the ladies in the group made the Bible bags,' Sheryl said. 'They felt worthwhile and empowered and pleased.'

So thank you, supporter in the body of Christ: whether a long-term or short-term contributor, every little bit counts in sharing God's Word with the peoples of the world.

Partnership is like a lovely cuppa

by Sharna Steinert

Partnership in ministry work is like the perfect cuppa.

Start with the tea leaves: God provides the desire and skills to be involved in the work.

Add water: financial support makes the work possible. Every bit helps - once-off gifts as well as regular ongoing partnership. Every dollar is like a drop of water, and together all those drops fill the teapot.

Add sweetener: the encouragement of supporters, family and friends. A little bit makes a huge difference. Whatever form it comes in, each encouragement is cherished.

Add milk: the other kinds of support that make the journey that bit smoother - receiving a reply when newsletters go out, an email or letter, or having someone visit or send something from home.

Prayer is vital, and without prayer, partnering with God in his work, we can achieve nothing. Prayer is the teapot, holding everything together, so that God will be honoured.

Every time I sit down with a cup of tea, it reminds me I am not alone, that my supporters are all with me and part of the work I am doing. And I am thankful.

Housing, goats and hiring: *the story of Bethel Funerals*



by Louise Bettison

How to raise enough money to retain Wycliffe's valued Australia-based members has long been on David Cummings' mind. Unlike other agencies, crucial home-based staff such as administrators, mobilisers and trainers are not paid a salary, instead relying on faith support.

'Our home staff need support just like anyone out on the field, but find it difficult,' the former Wycliffe chief executive said.

It was a problem he and Wycliffe's Word Investment committee were determined to solve, leading them on a journey from bricks and mortar to goats, and eventually, funerals.

The first step was the creation of Word Investment Limited (WIL), enabling people to invest in ethical ventures with the interest going to Wycliffe and other causes. But an early investment in house building in Geelong, Victoria hit turbulence when a downturn in the local automotive industry made for unreliable returns.

WIL moved on to goat farming, then a hiring business, while David pondered how to best use limited resources to create income for mission.

'I realised that through Word Investment, we could start our own business, moving on from stocks and shares to something that would help others while helping the mission,' he said.

He remembered a friend's family had successfully run a business for decades in a stable industry with consistent demand: funerals.

After much prayer, research and the generous guidance from that friend, Trevor Adams, (now Chairman of Word Investments) David took his idea of starting a Christian funeral company to WIL and Wycliffe leadership.

'They had some reservations at first, but a key investor said "go for it" and they did,' he said.

'We wanted to run the business the right way, with integrity, and set clear goals: to make money for mission and minister to grieving people.'

Twenty years on, the not-for-profit company they created, Bethel Funerals, has contributed more than \$2 million to missions, and to Wycliffe in particular. The service enables families to contribute to missions in a unique way, and is a wonderful opportunity for people to leave a legacy as they depart from this life.

'It makes my heart rejoice how this has worked out, and how Bethel has a wonderful ministry,' David said.

'I love too that we have this testimony of how God was in it from the start, from gathering the key people we needed through to providing the material things.'

MORE

For more information visit:
www.bethelfunerals.com.au

Conveying the emotional meaning of a text

by Adam Pike

Adam is a translation advisor in Vanuatu.

How would you translate this text? *And a sword will pierce your own soul too.* Luke 2:35b.

These are the words of Simeon to Mary when she brought her baby Jesus to the temple. They speak of the pain and sorrow she will experience when Jesus is rejected.

In the Merei language it is possible to translate it literally as: *A knife for fighting will cut into your spirit/life.* However, if we use these words they won't convey any of the emotional content of the original text and then much of its meaning is lost.

After much discussion we came up with an expression that says, *Your heart will despair for your child.* This is the kind of expression that a Merei speaker would use to convey the deep sorrow felt by a person at the loss of a loved one.

By doing it this way, have we changed the Scriptures? These are the kinds of challenges we and the translation team face every day as we seek to accurately translate the meaning of God's Word into the Merei language.



ADAM AND HESTER PIKE, WITH HAYDEN, MATTHEW, ALEXA AND JOSEPH



Pray that the Spirit will lead the translation team to make good choices in translation work.



Adam speaks about mentoring and growing people in their faith here: <https://vimeo.com/81997724>

New members



Susanna Baldwin

Susanna first heard about Wycliffe around 10 years ago and fleetingly thought she could see herself in translation work, but shelved the idea soon after. Years later she met and talked with a number of Wycliffe members involved in Bible translation, and her conviction to follow this ministry path grew. In 2016 she completed a Bachelor of Divinity at Moore College and will undertake SIL training in the UK in July before taking up a translation role.



Jeremy

Jeremy recently completed graduate studies in language development through SIL Australia and was accepted into membership with Wycliffe in December 2016. He feels led to serve the people of South Asia after hearing many testimonies that God is moving in that area like never before. Jeremy is excited by the opportunity to serve people through being involved in Bible translation and being a part of the expansion of God's kingdom in that region.