

Associate Action

US VOLUNTEERS AT KANGAROO GROUND

by Jim & Joyce Pederson

It all started with an email addressed personally to us from someone we didn't know. That someone was Rick Gray, a Wycliffe Associates recruiter based in the US. The date was 27 April 2009. Two weeks later we had tickets in hand for a flight that would head to Kangaroo Ground, Australia in mid-October.

How does this happen? We don't know for certain, but it's one of those mysteries of the Christian walk—the Holy Spirit prepares and prompts, the Scriptures challenge and convict, and God opens very specific doors for opportunities of service.

Normally, we would have sought to be involved in a teaching assignment of some kind (we are retired teachers and have no expertise in construction work!). Ironically, just the weekend before the email arrived, we had gone through a potential list of places in the world that we would love to see, and where we KNEW God would never send us. Mistake! One of the places on our list was Australia—it was too beautiful and 'un-mission-like' compared to the village in Tanzania and the mission school in Brazil where we had served previously. We prayed, and one week after the initial email, Rick Gray called us and suggested we apply for the Melbourne team.

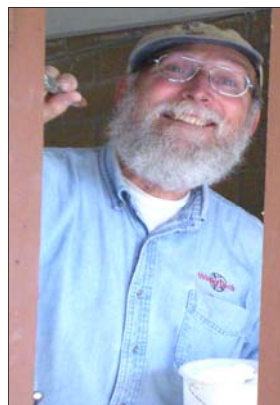


Isaiah 55:8-9 states: 'For My thoughts are not your thoughts, and your ways are not My ways. For as heaven is higher than earth, so My ways are higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts.' Praise God that he knows what's best for us, and that he truly desires to gift us with the desires of our hearts!

On 16 October we boarded a plane for the 13,000 km flight that would take us to the continent 'down under'. There we spent the next five weeks as part of the team of Americans and Aussies remodeling the EQUIP Training student accommodation.

People came and went. No day was the same as far as who was working or sharing meals. The one constant was Peter Dunstan, the on-site manager and visionary for the project.

We, being the least experienced, learned how to stud walls and frame over old door openings. That entailed converting our minds from 2x4's (US inches and feet) to the metric system: which 'timber' in that pile is a 35 x 70? The 'noggin' is supposed to be 450 – uh, what's a 'noggin' and where's that on the tape measure! We laughed at our ignorance and tried to overcome the Aussie accent. Peter then moved us on to installing hardboard on interior bathroom walls and hanging ceiling stringers for the sheetrock. From there, we moved outside, put up exterior siding, and painted. Thankfully, God put together a group with many skilled volunteers who graciously taught us and helped us contribute to the team's work.



On the weekends, we worshipped together and visited many sights within driving distance of Kangaroo Ground. We saw duck-billed platypus, echidna, fairy penguin, koalas and kookaburras. On these excursions, we discovered some unusual Aussie sayings that have been fun to take home and share with our friends: *Give Way, Keep Left Unless Overtaking, Trouble Concentrating? Powernap Now!, and 'Good-day, Mate!'*

Whether working or sightseeing, we ate and ate and ate—at least five times a day, counting the morning and afternoon 'Smoke-O's'. We still don't know the difference between 'tea' and 'dinner'—but the food was great, both American and Aussie. As important as food, though, were the times of spiritual renewal and challenge. Team members shared devotions after breakfast, and one night a week was set aside for Bible study. Daily onsite Bible reading and prayer were an integral part of the morning 'Smoke-O', along with sharing of testimonies by many of the guests joining us. Several evenings a week, guests joined us for the meal and then shared—giving us a peek into many of the diverse ministries and

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*Praise God that
He knows
what's best for
us....*





Editorial

by Peter Gillespie

Over the next couple of editions we will be featuring the contribution of retirees supporting the work of Bible translation. These people have found great fulfilment in using their time and skills for God's wider work in Australia and overseas.

The question I asked myself when approaching retirement was, 'How can I best use my time and energy for God?'

To some it may mean volunteering as a school teacher overseas, teaching missionary children (there is a constant need for teachers at international schools).

Others will have different skills to offer, but whatever it is, using skills for the kingdom will bring many rewards and you will also have a rich cultural experience.

A great way to 'dip your toe in the water' and see if God is calling you into mission work is to join a short-term mission trip or a work party. There you will see first hand the work of the mission, Bible translation, and life in another culture.

However, it is not about the work you do, important as that is, it is about how God touches peoples lives.

No matter what your skills, if you are willing to say 'yes' to God, God can use you.

Retirees gain their second wind

Australia has begun what is expected to be the largest group of people reaching retirement that this country has seen. The original baby boomers have hit 60 and are leaving the work force in the thousands. What are they all doing with their time—travelling overseas or around Australia, buying a new home, or relocating near the sea or a golf course? For some however, it will be a time to seek God's leading into the field of volunteering.

For retirees with financial independence the opportunities are limitless. How does one find out about such opportunities? One option is the **Second Wind Network**, an organisation which encourages mid-lifers with a fresh vision of cross-cultural ministry. As the name suggests they match places of need with the right people to fill that need.

Directors Lindsay and Barbara Fell, say many in their 40s to 60s face changed circumstances, such as early retirement. *Second Wind Network* helps them explore how they can spend the rest of their lives in new avenues of service.

'People in this age bracket have a tremendous amount to give,' Lindsay said. 'They are well

educated and have life and ministry experience and are often at a crossroads in their lives, wanting to do something significant.'

The network has two key tools to help mid-lifers explore the possibilities: an online mission matching service and regional forums. Wycliffe is one of 25 mission and development agencies currently partnering with the *Second Wind Network*.

The online mission matching service allows them to record opportunities and needs; individuals can then find the right 'fit' for their experience, qualifications and availability.

The *Second Wind Network* is not a recruiting agency, but introduces missions and mission-minded people to each other. It also provides other resources and information.

Face to face interactions happen at the forums hosted by groups of local churches. There, questions can be asked and options explored first-hand with mission organisations and others who have already taken the step into mission in 'the second half'.

For more information see the *Second Wind Network* website: www.secondwind.net.au

Volunteering in the Solomon Is by Dianne Whitby

The Solomon Islands is a very beautiful place. People love going to Church and they love singing. Church services are long but the people really like to praise their Lord. Fish, chicken and vegetables are the main foods. The weather is extreme—extremely hot and extremely humid. It is a good place to go if you want to lose some weight. We lost 5kg each. Who needs expensive diets!

Peter was involved with the final construction stages of building the Wycliffe Associates volunteer accommodation at the Solomon Islands Translation Advisor Group (SITAG) by helping put in skirting and architraves, hanging doors, fitting ceiling fans, fitting out bathrooms and other finishing touches. He enjoyed working alongside the nationals, advising and giving on-the-job training.

I spent my days typing. People from various language groups are involved in training



Celebrating the official opening of the new building in February 2010. (R to L) The Archbishop of Solomon Islands, Brent Ropp - WA-USA, Jan Gossner - SITAG's new director

throughout the year in the literacy and translation process. Various workshops are held, one of them a 'comic' workshop. I typed the Abraham story in comic form in 6 different languages. I also re-typed small story books and medical charts written by nationals. The highlight was on the second last day when I was handed a translation of the Gospel of Mark to start the typing process.

I am looking forward to our extended period in Solomon Islands this year where I will be able to use my library and classroom experience. There is always a great need in the schools as they are not as resourced as our Aussie schools.

There is a continuing need for people to be part of the translation work in the Solomons.



Ground floor framework in 2009

Our story

► Peter and Dianne Whitby

Peter and Dianne are a couple who took a serious look at what opportunities retirement offered. Not that Peter has fully retired—he still works part time—but being his own boss he is able to schedule work around his other activities. Peter and Dianne first heard about Wycliffe through their church, Taringa Baptist where the organisation rents an office.

Being aware of the work of Wycliffe was just

the first step, next they were invited on a work party to the Solomon Islands. Dianne was still working at a local school so Peter went and was privileged to attend a Scripture dedication on the island of Malaita. This was a highlight for him, seeing the big picture of

Bible translation and the impact on the local people. The experiences he had were something that would not happen on a normal holiday—the die was cast!

Later that year Dianne took leave and they were both able to be part of a joint Aussie/US work party in Vanuatu. Peter used his skills as a builder and Dianne, a librarian and typist, also helped with sewing and cooking.



'With the children grown up volunteering is now a viable option,' said Peter. 'We didn't want a big holiday and would rather use our time, skills and money to do something really worthwhile.'

A strong relationship with the Solomon Islands led them in 2009 to offer their home in Brisbane to translators, Julie and Andy Pearce whose first baby was due. During that time Peter and Dianne decided to serve the Lord through Wycliffe Associates Australia. After a month in Port Vila, Vanuatu, they headed over to Honiara in the Solomon Islands. It was Dianne's first time in the Solomon's. Peter felt a true sense of God's leading him back there.

This year Peter and Dianne will spend nine months in the Solomon Islands supervising the construction of a two-storey training centre, and typing in language data for Debbie Conwell. All this because they were open to God's leading in their retirement and because someone asked them to be involved. Great work guys!

► John and Ros Waterman

John and Ros retired five years ago and not only had a change of occupation, but a change in location. After taking early retirement from teaching and early childhood work, they moved from Shepparton to Diamond Creek to be available to help Wycliffe. They planned the building of their new home to include a self-contained flat for use by Wycliffe members when accommodation at Kangaroo Ground was not available.

David and Ruth Cummings had a great influence on the Watermans, being members of the same congregation. Feeling unsettled where they were, God lead them to make contact with Wycliffe, and with the blessing of their family they made the move. They were greatly encouraged by Keith and Carol Barber as they investigated the volunteer options available at Kangaroo Ground.



Ros and John have had a big impact on the six-week Summer School Course, providing quality child care and pastoral ministry to the students. John is happy to be involved in various administrative jobs that come his way.

'It has been wonderful to build relationships with the people at Kangaroo Ground; to feel so accepted and useful,' said John. 'The openness of the people to share and talk about their faith is an encouragement to us both'.

Ros finds great joy in encouraging others in their work and feels that the experiences of their early life has been preparation for work at Wycliffe—an extension and growth on what was previously done.

Thank you John and Ros for being part of the team.

A GIFT OF SIGHT

Julie Purdie is an Optometrist in a country town in NSW, but she is also helping translate the Bible in Vanuatu. Julie heard about the work of Wycliffe at her local church in Maitland and offered Wycliffe Associates some 'magnifiers' to help the national translators.

In Australia all those over 40 know the routine of getting reading glasses without considering that the change in eye sight could mean the end of reading or close work. Many in the isolated islands of the Pacific do not have the option of glasses, so reading becomes problematic. For national translators it can mean the end of their work and therefore further delay in bringing God's Word in the heart language of the people.

Thanks to Julie's gift, 40 pairs of glasses were taken to Vanuatu and now those translating the Scriptures can see the words more clearly and continue working.

Thanks Julie.



A national translator using his new glasses at the Wycliffe Centre in Port Vila



*Catch your second wind
and have a significant impact
for the extension of God's kingdom.*

www.secondwind.net.au

Thank You to Work Teams

from Debbie & Greg Conwell, Solomon Islands



We praise the Lord for the benefits that you've blessed us with, that remain after you've gone. We can only smile and be grateful when we look at the lovely Loft; when the downstairs flat in our house is full of translators, working, laughing and singing below us; as curtains and furnishings in many houses reflect your loving service; and as I look back on the years of typing and scanning and other office-work that would not have been done without your assistance.

This year, thanks to the many people who have come and done whatever was necessary, we have an amazing new building—volunteer accommodation. This building is to house teams that come to help with ongoing projects... particularly the Training Centre, our 2010 project. The Training Centre will have two self-contained apartments upstairs; a four-bedroom area downstairs; and a huge main room for a lounge/dining area, for meetings and/or classroom.

We cannot help but give thanks to our heavenly Father for his faithfulness, love, and provision of more than we could even hope for. We thank him for the people he has given us. People who share our work and vision, helping in practical and encouraging ways and leaving behind results that make possible the on-going work of translation and literacy in the Solomons.

US VOLUNTEERS AT KANGAROO GROUND ...continued from front page

outreaches emanating from this part of the world.

As we prayed and shared communion at Kangaroo Ground on the Wycliffe World Day of Prayer (11 November), we were reminded once again that God has called each and every one of us to be his disciples, going wherever he leads (whether across the street or to the ends of the earth), sharing our 'story' and what he has done in our lives. We pray that our time in Australia will open opportunities for us not only to share pictures and the work of Wycliffe in the Pacific, but also to challenge believers in the US that God's Word is a living Word that continues to speak and guide and transform lives! As Romans 12:2 states - *Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may discern what is the good, pleasing, and perfect will of God.*

Top Vacancies

Please pray for Volunteers who are needed for the following positions:

- A business manager and a maintenance supervisor, Vanuatu
- Volunteer coordinator, SIL Uganda Tanzania Branch
- Multi-skilled computer specialist, AuSIL Darwin
- Plumber and electrician for four weeks, Solomon Islands
- School teachers at international schools various locations
- Office support, Wycliffe Australia, Melbourne.

Projects for 2010 – Vacancies

These are the dates for work teams this year. Please advertise them in your church and encourage others to become involved.

- **4 – 23 July**
Port Vila, Vanuatu
Maintenance of buildings at SIL centre
- **1 – 20 August**
PNG Bible Translation Association - Madang
Maintenance and renovation of buildings
- **23 August – 17 September**
Kokopo, PNG
Building new accommodation for national translators
- **27 September – 15 October**
Wycliffe Centre at Kangaroo Ground, Victoria
Maintenance of centre accommodation
- **1 – 19 November**
Honiara, Solomon Islands
Building a new training centre at SITAG
- **8 – 26 November**
PNG Bible Translation Association - Port Moresby
Maintenance and renovation of existing buildings

The skills needed for work parties include: handyman, carpentry, electrical, plumbing, painting, cooking and sewing, but above all a servant heart.

To join a work team or for more information contact Peter Gillespie (*details below*)

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