

Living Words

ISSUE
NO. 14

All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching,
for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness.



As I write this letter, the wind is raging outside. There are squalls of over 100km/hour, and I have just read that it has been necessary to close all the lanes on the harbour bridge due to the dangerous impact of these squalls.

A powerful reminder of the strength of the wind.

The theme of our last issue of *Living Words* was based on a metaphor of the sailboat versus the powerboat, and how we need to be trimming the sails in order to maximise the power of the wind to reach our destination. That issue received more comment and positive feedback than I have ever heard before, for which I want to thank you!

For this issue we want to extend the sailboat analogy to the concept of *Harnessing the Wind through Prayer*. As I delved into this theme, I began reflecting on why the Holy Spirit is often compared to the wind.

Let me begin with these words of Jesus who was clueing us in to God's perspective: *"The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit"*.
– John 3:8

Put very simply: God's wind blows!

However, there are more characteristics of wind that have a clear correlation to the Holy Spirit. Allow me to share some thoughts gleaned from others who have written on this subject.

- 1. The wind is invisible.** While we can see evidence and impact of the wind, we cannot see the wind. So too, the Holy Spirit is invisible, yet the results can be seen and felt. God, by His very nature is Spirit.
- 2. The wind can be powerful.** Just as it was today, here in Auckland, and in other parts of New Zealand. In the same way, the work of the Holy Spirit is powerful and we can see the impact of God's Holy Spirit in the lives of people.
- 3. The wind is not easily explained.** It is difficult to comprehend where it comes from and where it is going. So too, the work of the Holy Spirit is in accordance with His divine will.
- 4. The wind goes in the direction it chooses.** It does not go where we or anyone else decides. The same is true of the Holy Spirit. God is sovereign and divine.

So we see there are once again important lessons here for us to learn and apply in our lives. We can't create the wind, fully predict the wind, nor tell it where to go; but we can harness some of its power through equipment given to us. **In the same way, we have been equipped with the gift of prayer to appeal to the power of the Holy Spirit, as children of God.**

"So you have not received a spirit that makes you fearful slaves. Instead, you received God's Spirit when he adopted you as his own children. Now we call him, "Abba, Father." For his Spirit joins with our spirit to affirm that we are God's children." – Romans 8:15-16

We have again been blessed with a series of articles written by our members around this theme. There are inspirational stories, practical articles on how to pray and mobilise prayer, and some ways for you to get involved in prayer for the work of Wycliffe NZ. We have also invited, not just our own members, but some of our partners who are committed to collaborating in prayer with us for the ministry of Bible translation. We hope you will be blessed as you read these articles, and inspired by God's Holy Spirit in your own prayer life.

Finally, let me leave you with a prayer:

*"Dear Holy Spirit,
Your work is the wind of God,
breathing new life,
whispering precious promises,
and exhaling powerful truths.
Stir my soul today with the purity of Your fresh air,
and fill our world with Your mighty and mysterious work.
Amen"*.

– Anonymous

Robert Lovatt
Executive Director

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Photographer: Rodney Ballard

Prayer is a *Conversation* With God

BY LESLIE RUTHERFURD

All my life, I have prayed. I can't remember a time when I haven't prayed, both publicly and privately. Praising and offering thanks, praying desperately when situations were out of control, praying Scripture and so on.

However, it took me a few years in my walk with the Lord to realise that praying was really a conversation with God and that I needed to spend more time listening to Him.

One of the best ways I found to listen to the Lord was to memorise scripture. During this time, I memorised the eighth chapter of Romans. Over the years, God brings me back to various verses of that chapter during times with Him. One example is Romans 8:26-27 (NIV):

In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans. And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for God's people in accordance with the will of God.

Since March of 2020 when the response to the Covid pandemic was to lockdown, there has been more time and energy to spend with God. Henri Nouwen's quote encapsulates what God has been revealing to me in my time with Him in these last several years.

*Praying is not simply some necessary compartment in the daily schedule of a Christian or a source of support in a time of need, nor is it restricted to Sunday mornings or mealtimes. Praying is living. It is eating and drinking, acting and resting, teaching and learning, playing and working. Praying pervades every aspect of our lives. **It is the unceasing recognition that God is wherever we are, always inviting us to come closer and to celebrate the divine gift of being alive.***

With so many overwhelming things in the world, and even amongst those in my circles of relationships, sometimes I don't even know what to say or how to pray. I am learning to go to the Lord with a humble attitude, admitting my weakness and asking for help to pray. Jesus prayed in the garden, 'not my will but Yours...' That's one of the hardest lessons of all in prayer and I'm still in the process of learning to do it in every aspect. I've been learning that when I'm feeling that God is silent, I've not been focusing on Him. However, when I do focus on the Lord, I find the answer is often there in a way I didn't expect it.

Over the years, God has also blessed me through people who pray for me. It's humbling when people tell me how they have prayed for something I never asked them to (or that I had stopped praying about) when it has

Whatever is on your heart, just talk to God about it.

been very evident that God has answered it. **Even when I wasn't aware of it, their prayers were impacting my life.**

Prayer is a ministry. Through prayer you can be a part of what God is doing all over the world. If the thought of that is overwhelming, ask the Lord to show you who and what to pray for. Whatever is on your heart, just talk to God about it. That's a great place to start. The more you abide with Jesus, the more you start to understand what's on His heart and the Holy Spirit will direct you in how to pray for it.

One of the ways I have found that the Spirit intercedes and directs me in prayer when I don't know exactly what to pray is by leading me to pray from Scripture. God's Word contains numerous examples of people's prayers and conversations with God, teachings on how to pray, promises we can claim and truth we can declare. Here are some passages that I have prayed over the years for myself and others:

— **Trusting God**

Psalm 9:10; 37:3-5; Proverbs 3:25-26; Lamentations 3:25;
2 Corinthians 1:9-10; Ephesians 1:18-19

— **Wisdom & Discernment**

Proverbs 3:5-8, 21-22; Philippians 1:9-11

— **Rest**

Psalm 131:1; Matthew 11:28-30

— **Provision & Strength**

Psalm 105:4-5; Ephesians 3:14-21; Philippians 4:19; Hebrews 13:20-21

— **Plans**

Psalm 37:5; Proverbs 16:1-3; Jeremiah 29:11

— **Daily Life**

Psalm 37:7; 86:11; 105:4-5; Jonah 2:8-9; Ephesians 4:1-8;
Philippians 1:19-27; 2:1-11; 3:7-12; 4:4-13; Hebrews 12:1,2.

1. <https://henrinouwen.org/meditations/open-yourself-to-god/>

Letting God Put It Together

BY IAN VAIL

Ian and Tania Vail are Wycliffe NZ members who spent 6 years working with the Tae' Rongkong language in Sulawesi, Indonesia.

On Monday June 8th, 1981 I was praying at the end of day with Tania. I had been reading a mission book called *Bruchko* and it had stirred my heart. During the day I had been wondering if reading this book was of God, and if “mission” was for us. Tania and I started praying that night before going to bed. I hadn't known that day Tania had revisited a feeling that she had had in the mid '70's that we were being called to mission in the Solomon Islands. She had asked the LORD that afternoon if we had missed His call and asked if He would ever bring it up again.

As I started praying, it was like the Holy Spirit took over my prayer. Within seconds I was sitting on the bed, aware of what was happening but, seemingly, it was not me who was praying. It was the Holy Spirit. I suddenly started groaning, crying, sighing, and uttering sounds from deep within, which kept going for maybe 10 minutes. Tania was sitting on the bed and wondering what had happened to her husband. This was very unusual.

At the end of my time praying I turned to Tania and said “God is leading us to the mission field, I know it.” Then my rational side kicked in. Do you have a spiritual side

and a rational side like me? I know you do because you are body, soul and spirit just like me. It was like I had an inner conviction that God was calling us into mission work. We talked about it and Tania told me her thoughts of the afternoon. **I found myself praying – “Lord confirm that this book is part of Your will for us.”** I was sure something had just happened of a spiritual nature but I wanted confirmation that the book *Bruchko* was both God's timing and leading. But rather than go racing off to the mission field because I had read a book, I wanted to know it was of God. After praying I thought to myself, “Well that was a dumb thing to pray Ian. How is He going to *confirm the book?*” That was Monday night.

Wednesday night I went off to cell group while Tania stayed home with the girls. At the end of the evening the woman of the house (Yvonne) told me she wanted to speak to me about something. I asked her what she wanted to talk about and she answered strangely, seeming hesitant to tell me. Finally she said she had something to share with me that God had told her. She went to her bedroom and came back with a magazine turned to a book review of the book *Bruchko*. She said **“Here Ian, God said to give this to you!”**

That day Yvonne had been praying in her Quiet Time as was her habit. She was going through the church directory and praying for people in order. She came to Ian and Tania Vail on the list and started praying for us. As she prayed the usual kind of things, Yvonne noticed the magazine on the bedside table turned to an advertisement for the book *Bruchko*. She thought nothing about it until the thought came into her mind, “Show that page to Ian and Tania Vail” – the people she had just been praying for. She thought, “That's silly, what would I want to do that for? What's the point?” But the thought persisted. It was like she couldn't shake it off or get it out of her mind. So at the end of the day when cell group was finished, she summoned up the courage and risked being thought a fool to tell me that God said to “give this to Ian Vail”.

Meanwhile, on the other side of the world, God had been speaking to another woman called Sherry who lives in Texas. She is an intercessor and regularly sat on her lounge floor with a map of the world at her feet, laying her hands on the nations of the world to pray for them. She told the Lord one day after praying for the world for over three years and gathering prayer fuel to pray back to Him, that it was too hard praying for the world; she knew too much about it and there was too much to pray for. She asked the Lord to give her one nation. “Indonesia” came at her from every quarter over a two week period: programmes on TV and radio, magazines and newspapers, even a leaflet put in her letterbox advertising a trip to Bali, Indonesia. She said “OK Lord, I will pray for Indonesia.”

Sherry prayed for Indonesia for three and a half years and then said the same thing. “Lord, I know too much about Indonesia now. There's too much to pray. Give me one island.” She looked at her wall map of the nation of Indonesia at her feet and she thought Sulawesi looks a strange island right in the middle of the archipelago. “I will pray for that island.”

A number of years later she joined *Wycliffe's Bibleless Peoples Prayer Project* (BPPP) and asked them for a people group. She received the Rongkong of Sulawesi. She was over the moon because that was the island she was already praying for! I asked her when I first met her in person, why she hadn't asked the BPPP people for a language group located on the island she had been praying for. She told me, **“Ian, I didn't want to organise things myself, I wanted God to be the One who put it all together”**. Imagine her joy and delight when she received the prayer card for the Rongkong people of Sulawesi in her letterbox.

She poured her heart into praying for the Rongkong, and for the translators who would go to the Rongkong. One thing among many others that she prayed was the following: “Lord You have given me a such a vision for the mission field through the book *Bruchko*. **Father I want to ask that You will use the book *Bruchko* in the lives of the translators You will send to the Rongkong of Sulawesi as a part of their call.** Will You do that Lord? Use that book so they know that they know that they know they are called to the Rongkong.”



Prayer-Song: The Power of Singing Our Prayers

BY JENNY EIRENA

God, being the inventor of music, takes great joy in our musical offerings to Him and we, as co-creators, participants and performers of music, drink deeply from these wells of beauty.

“It’s a prayer declaration. There’s a place for that.” These are the recent words of Delwyn McKenzie, spoken about the song (“Come Upon These People”) which she wrote and sang over a people group in Indonesia more than three decades ago.

At the time the McKenzies were with the Tabulahan language group, working towards a translation of the New Testament in their language. Nearby was another group in a Muslim area which shared the same language. **At the time of singing her prayers, she had no idea if there were any Christians there at all or if anyone had even heard the gospel.** It would be years before she knew the power of her prayer declarations.

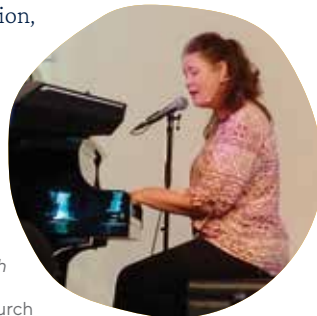
Delwyn and her husband Robin have used song as a powerful form of prayer on many occasions and within their extensive collection of compositions, prayers are well represented. They in fact follow a long and strong tradition connecting song with prayer in the Holy scriptures. What might immediately come to mind are the numerous examples of worship and praising prayer-songs shown in exhortations such as, “Sing to the Lord a new song...” (Isaiah 42:10) and the numerous praising prayer-songs throughout the Psalms. But while songs in Scripture are often prayers of praise and worship, they also take other forms and perform other functions. To name a few, we see prayer-songs at celebrations (e.g. 1 Chronicles 15:16), in war (e.g. 2 Chronicles 20:22), for comfort (e.g. 1 Samuel 16:23), for confession (e.g. Psalm 6), as witness (e.g. Acts 16:25) and for teaching and admonition (e.g. Colossians 3:16). There is no doubt that Scripture gives us reason to connect prayer with song. But we don’t have to look far

to find the same in Western extra-Biblical traditions.

The very foundations of Western music are prayed songs in the form of Gregorian chant. This monophonic form of sung prayer was the main type of music during the Middle Ages. Moreover, much of the music produced in the Renaissance period was heavily influenced by this vocal form of prayer, but as the complexity of music increased the theme of sung prayer remained strong. Even as secular music took a greater role in the musical landscape, there remains to this day a loud echo of our long sacred singing traditions in the form of singing in mass and protestant forms of sung liturgy, hymns and of course, contemporary worship songs. Prayer songs are obviously important in Scripture and are a deeply significant art form represented in our worship traditions. **It is apparent that God, being the inventor of music, takes great joy in our musical offerings to Him and we, as co-creators, participants and performers of music, drink deeply from these wells of beauty.** What an amazing gift God has given us!

Given the significance and power of sacred song, Wycliffe NZ is excited to bring to life a new creative initiative which is designed to use song as a mechanism for giving inspiration, information and involvement to the NZ-wide church.

Jenny Eirena performing one of her *Scripture Through the Arts* modules at Mt Albert Baptist Church



Scripture Through the Arts (STA) is our newest branch of our church engagement department. The initiative has a three-fold purpose:

1. To educate the church on the worldwide Bible translation movement; its function, its importance, its needs and how people can be involved.
2. To serve the church of NZ by inspiring them to more deeply access the treasure of God’s Word which they already have in their own language.
3. To further serve the church by providing meaningful Christian ministry opportunities for those gifted in the performing arts and create for them an environment of spiritual growth and discipleship.

Our first project is called, “Stories of Hope” in keeping with Wycliffe NZ’s current theme. We are gathering stories of Wycliffe missionaries (mostly with some NZ connection) and creating small vignettes which depict a fragment of their experience and tell of the hope that Scripture in one’s own language brings. These mini performances can be combined to create a larger work or can be used in smaller chunks, as the needs of churches dictate.

A fabulous team is growing, and we are excited to see God’s provision as the project moves forward. The arts are a very powerful mechanism of communication and, just as Delwyn and Robin McKenzie have powerfully utilised song in their ministry over the years, we trust that STA will continue this Wycliffe NZ heritage.

So, what did happen with the people who

were the inspiration for Delwyn’s song? How did God answer the prayers expressed in “Come Upon these People”? Just months prior to their New Testament dedication in 2004, they met a young woman called Nur¹ who was from that neighbouring Muslim community and had become a Christian after the revelation of John 14:12, that Jesus is the Way, the Truth and the Life. Up to that point she had been sharing her faith with others but struggling to translate Scriptures from her national language Bible into Tabulahan. When she first read Scripture in her own language she exclaimed, “This is so clear!”² Later, reflecting on this time, Robin and Delwyn wrote **“...God in His wonderful timing had Nur, and now her father, ready to receive the Word even before anyone else reached them. It was a reminder to us that we should never stop praying in faith for the unreached peoples of the world. God is working in ways beyond us.”**²

Delwyn’s prayer-song was answered in a way she had not even been aware of. Your prayers are important too! Please pray for the work of Wycliffe – in any form, but why not try singing your prayers? Follow the path of countless others before you, combining the power of prayer with the beauty of song. “Harness the wind” with your voice; sing out your declarations. There’s a place for that!

● If you are interested in being on the STA prayer team or think you may like to be involved practically in some way, please email sta_ministries@wycliffenz.org

References:

1. Name changed due to sensitivity
2. From *A New Day Dawns* article by Robin and Delwyn McKenzie (Wycliffe NZ Publication *Living Words*, October 2005)



PARTNERS PRACTICAL PRAYER TIPS

In the following segment, we invited two of our partners to share their thoughts and experiences on how they have been more effective in prayer over the years.

This article is written by Ian Vail, founder of Berean Insights.

Ian is a Wycliffe NZ member who, together with his wife Tania, founded Berean Insights to provide training and resources to help people go deeper in their study and understanding of the Bible.

Berean Insights offers a seven-level, multi-layered course called *Deeper Bible* designed to take you deeper in your Bible study than you have ventured before.

In addition to *Deeper Bible*, Ian writes "Bible Gems" and "Nuggets," posted on the Berean Insights website bereaninsights.org

Berean Insights offers valuable tools for deep Scripture Engagement, which is a vital part of seeing lives transformed through the translated Word of God.

LET'S PREPARE OUR HEARTS

I looked forward to meeting Sherry Chapman, the intercessor I told you about in the article *Letting God Put It Together* who prayed for the Rongkong. When we first met in 1990 I was in for a surprise. She told me she had been longing to pray with me. I agreed, I too wanted to pray with this intercessor who had had such an influence in our lives. I bowed my head to pray and Sherry's hand reached out to touch my arm. **"No Ian, let's prepare our hearts first."**

I learned much from this woman who pours out her heart for the nations, which then became the inspiration for a seminar I would teach on praying powerful prayers called the Effective Pray-ers Seminar.

In the Seminar, I worked through five areas to make prayer more effective, each inspired by Sherry's prayer habits.

1. Praying Through the Veil

Sherry liked to pray through a pattern similar to the way people used to enter into God's presence in the Old Testament. Praying with Sherry gave me insight into the significance of each stage in the Tabernacle for the Israelites at that time, and how we might apply this understanding to the way we pray today.

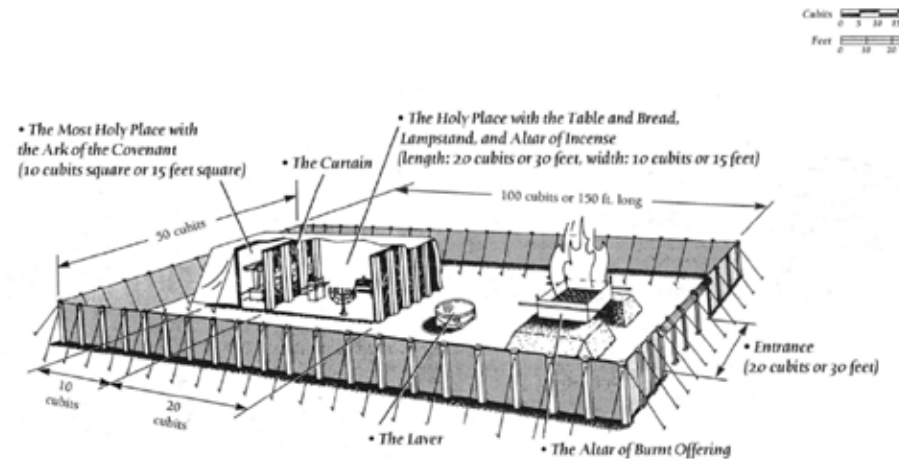
The Outer Court

The Bronze Altar and Bronze Laver shows how we can't cover our sin by ourselves, and we need cleansing. Recognising this can help us acknowledge what Jesus did for us.

The Holy Place

The Lampstand shows our need for the light of the Spirit to guide us. The Shewbread shows the role of Logos in our lives. The Altar of Incense shows the place of praise and worship in powerful prayer.

Image from Bible Gateway



The Most Holy Place

The Ark of the Covenant represents God's provision and authority.

Keeping these things in mind can be helpful as we come to God with our requests and concerns.

2. Praying Through to Reality

Sherry constantly asked questions, wanting to gain insights into the lives of the people we were to reach. She wanted to understand the nature of the spiritual warfare going on around us.

3. Praying Through in Focus

Sherry is incredibly focused in what she prays. She keeps notes on everything the Lord shows her. She gathers information to pray back to Him. She is not satisfied with general prayers like "Lord bless Ian and Tania" or "Lord, be with them." She is lasered focus in what she prays.

4. Praying Through the Word

Sherry is the most Word focused person I think I have ever met. She uses the Word of

God to keep her focused and prays back to Him, the principles, promises and prayers He teaches her. Especially the prayer example of Paul in Colossians 1:9-12.

5. Praying Through the Spirit

Sherry was always keen to know what the Spirit wanted her to pray and kept her ear tuned to His voice. What does it mean to pray in the Spirit and what is not praying in the Spirit?

This seminar series struck a chord with many people over the years I presented it in New Zealand and Australia. It became part of Wycliffe's *Resourcing the Church* series of seminars. People could see the power that resulted from praying in such focused ways, and it was always very well received.

— The Effective Pray-ers Seminar is no longer being taught, but we are looking into making materials available. Contact admin@wycliffenz.org if you would like to know more.

This article is written by Eversmith.

Eversmith is a Praise and Worship band hailing from New Zealand but now based in Nashville, TN. It's a family affair, with siblings Esther and Caleb as key members and their dad, Phil, as manager. They are all about uniting the people of every language as the Church in the song of Jesus Christ, the God of the nations, and have been collaborating as musical ambassadors with Wycliffe NZ for 13 years.

One of the joint initiatives they are part of is the **Story of Hope** podcast, of which front woman Esther is a co-host along with Wycliffe's own, Alex Winslade. Check them out at eversmith.band

PRAYERFARE: BEING A JOYFUL HOUSE OF PRAYER FOR THE NATIONS

For many, prayer is a regular part of their lifestyle, their being. But when it comes to connecting prayer with the notion of aggression including warfare, some find it weird, improper, and even abhorrent.

Interestingly, Jesus acted at times with aggression, one of His most aggressive moments related to prayer. Jesus made a whip, turned tables, drove out money changers and merchants.

Many view getting the money changers out as the purpose; however, it was actually the process. The purpose was for God's house to be a place of prayer. In Mark's gospel, we see the added purpose that God's house of prayer is to be for the nations, and in the portion of Isaiah Jesus was quoting, we see that God's house of prayer for the nations was intended to be joyful.

Musical Prayerfare

God—Father, Son and Holy Spirit—is:

- A man of war
- Captain of the host
- Commander in Chief
- Our song

As such, He:

- Responds to song with conquering angels
- Exhorts us to clap and shout with triumph

As we do, He empowers us to:

- stomp on serpents heads
- open prison doors with loud sung praise
- tear down city walls with trumpet blasts
- advance on enemies with musical prophetic chants

What's more, He provides mighty weapons and full armour, and links prayer with spiritual warfare, which we call 'prayerfare'.

Musical Command Mode

Psalm 133 tells us that when God's people dwell in unity, it not only sets the platform for God to bless, but for God to command the blessing of life eternal. The equally well known verse, Matthew 18:19 reads "if two of you on earth agree as touching anything it will be done by my Father in Heaven".

In the Greek, the word translated in English as "agree", is the root of the English word "symphony" and includes the notion of bringing people into one accord accompanied by musical instruments.

One of the challenges in prayer is the "what do we say/pray next?" question. We believe music and Biblically based lyrics provide a powerful answer to both the what to say/pray dilemma and the one accord dynamic, along with enhancing joy levels.

Part of our Eversmith and home church culture is a weekly day of fasting climaxed with what we call a "God-Band prayer Jam". This is a prayerful 'pray' on words.

Firstly, in the natural with broadband, we can simply boot up our computer, click on our mouse, put fingers to the keyboard and communicate with almost anywhere on the planet, and even into space. God-Band is the spiritual equivalent where we boot up our hearts, engage our minds, emotions, and body. Not only can we pray into all parts of the earth, but also the heavens.

Similarly, take two or more God fearing singers/musicians, put the lyrics of Biblically based songs on the screen, and as described above, you have a God-Band Prayer Jam with everyone in one accord singing the same thing in command mode unity.

Life-saving Prayerfare

A few years ago, a young woman came to us obviously very upset and advised she had just heard from her Dad that her mother had locked herself in the bathroom and was threatening to take her own life.

We gathered together and began to 'prayer jam'. Our Mum, Shona, got a vision of a woman with a very threatening looking set of dark clouds over her head. We followed Shona's lead and aggressively began to sing in the spirit over those dark clouds. After a short period of time, Shona saw a flash of light bursting through the clouds she was seeing in the spirit.

We found out later at the very moment we prayed like this, the suicidal wife and Mum found a fresh sense of hope and decided not to take her life.

Praying for the Nations with Understanding

Another part of our prayerfare culture is praying for specific nations and people groups. With search technology, it is easy to find information about all the nations. We choose 5 each week in alphabetical order which means we pray for all nations at least once a year. As we pray, we have the information on the screen, including name of leaders, state of Bible translation, population and other data that fuels our prayer.

— We've created a resource with all the information on each of the nations we've compiled over the years, which we regularly update, and we make it available for any who want to use it to fuel their lifestyle of being a house of prayer for the nations. If that's you, email esther@eversmith.band and we'll get you free access too!

Ask a WycliffeNZ member:

How has prayer played a part in your ministry?

JONAH ADAMS

Prayer has been our lifeline on the field. During our time here we have been so excited to see the glory of the God who answers prayers. Prayer is our first call of help, our mission strategy, and our last hope. Prayer is our plan A, B, and C.

We believe that our effectiveness in ministry is linked to our prayer and the prayers of those who stand with us.

Without the prayers of our supporters and friends, our work on the field would come to nothing. As it stands, we are excitedly looking forward to seeing the fruits of our labours in the Lord, as He is the God who is pleased to work in and through the prayers of His people.

Prayer has sustained us in hard times of loss when we are reminded of the bounty of Him who provides as He calls us into deep fellowship with Himself. Prayer has been the means by which we have survived in a hostile political environment with very few 'run-ins' with the law, and prayer has been answered in amazing ways, causing officials to look away, those standing against His work to be taken out of the way, and favour and friendship with local officials in an otherwise impossible situation. **Prayer has been the method God has used to teach us to rely on Him daily as we**

joyfully join Him in His work that He is accomplishing among the people.

It was so exciting to see this work out in the lives of our mother tongue translators who have joined us in the project. As we modelled for them an entire dependence on God through prayer and His mercy alone we have seen an amazing flow-on effect on their families and their own walk with God. We continue to pray with them that God's Word would speed ahead into our people group and be honoured among them. We pray that God would extend His kingdom in the hearts and lives of the people. We pray that our heavenly Father, who knows how to give good gifts to His children, would bless them with the Holy Spirit to understand and believe His word, and to be wonderfully saved for the glory of Jesus!

*...av puv naiv trihggew geh shohmai geh
naivxing bbuv zaw ddaiv pivqih fav av geh
lavshivov cuv laiv waih
bihshiv trihggew nwuh ddaiv bbiev ji
ddeivbuvaiv
trih av zaivmov ggov geh
...for I knew that you are
a gracious God and merciful,
slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love,
and relenting from disaster*

– Jonah 4:2

JANET BUHLER

My husband Phil and I have been living and working in Juba, South Sudan for the last 10 years now. Life here is interesting and, like any mission field, certainly has its ups and downs and stressful moments. One area though that I have long struggled with was communicating prayer needs to supporters back home in NZ. I was always afraid of asking for too many things, in case people got sick of hearing from us and as a result, often didn't put forward any prayer needs unless things were desperate. **I found out, though, that people did want to hear our prayer needs and requests more often than that.** It was also a bit difficult to get the word out effectively and in a timely way to enough people when we did have prayer needs, and being a person who doesn't really like writing – I found it hard to do if it involved writing long emails.

On one trip home, I met another missionary couple working in Africa who were using WhatsApp and later Signal as a means to keep up prayer support. I thought this was a great idea because it allowed us to reach everyone at once instead of having to rely on one or two people to funnel our prayer needs out to everyone else. It also meant that I could just write quick notes or instant time sensitive requests, and people would often respond right away with some words of encouragement or just to let us know that they were praying. Another advantage that I have found is that several of the people on our prayer group list, have their own groups of intercessors or prayer warriors that they also disseminate our requests to. **So sometimes, when things seem really bad or urgent, you find you have a massive number of people all focusing and praying for the situation in real time.**



We found this especially helpful just a couple of months ago. Having just travelled to Uganda for two weeks leave, Phil suddenly got quite sick with pneumonia, seemingly out of the blue. We were in a strange place that we didn't know (we don't usually ever go to Kampala, Uganda when on leave), we hardly knew anyone and we didn't have any knowledge where to get the best help. Fortunately MAF staff in Uganda (Phil volunteers for MAF, South Sudan) really rallied round and gave us practical help and advice. They were absolute life savers. But we were also able to put out real time prayer requests and let supporters at home know what was happening as we went. We really felt the effects of their prayers. Timely decisions were made that just averted potential huge problems, and we were able to get all the help we needed and the right help at the right time. I got the same infection myself but was treated quickly enough to get it early. And the rate at which Phil improved was amazing. **I knew that God had a big hand in that. He had really shown us mercy and responded to people's prayers. It was also great that people were able to respond to my updates, asking how we were and just being generally encouraging.** I was so thankful for this easy way of communicating our immediate prayer needs to people and to see the results of it so clearly in our situation. Having a WhatsApp prayer group has made that easy and accessible for us.

Your prayers can make a difference

In Exodus 17 there is a great picture of intercession and partnership at work:

“So Joshua fought the Amalekites as Moses had ordered, and Moses, Aaron and Hur went to the top of the hill. As long as Moses held up his hands, the Israelites were winning, but whenever he lowered his hands, the Amalekites were winning. When Moses’ hands grew tired, they took a stone and put it under him and he sat on it. Aaron and Hur held his hands up—one on one side, one on the other—so that his hands remained steady till sunset. So Joshua overcame the Amalekite army with the sword.”

In the battle there were two distinct roles, represented by Moses and Joshua. Joshua was down on the battlefield with his men doing the physical, front-line fighting. Moses was on top of the hill fighting on the spiritual level, interceding before God.

Joshua’s efforts on the front-line would have failed without Moses’ intercession. In the same way God’s kingdom work depends on the faithful intercession of his people. We are doing significant work in the heavenlies when we intercede. Your prayers can change the world.

There are a number of ways you can get more involved in praying for the work of Bible translation through Wycliffe.



Sign up to receive our *Prayer Matters* newsletter

Once a month we send out a prayer newsletter with praise and prayer points from many of our members. Prayer Matters is a great way to stay up to date with what our members are up to, and be a part of their ministry as we lift them up in prayer.



If you would like to receive our *Prayer Matters* newsletter, either by email or by post, you can scan the QR code and sign up using the form, or email us at info@wycliffenz.org



Join or start a Prayer Group

We have active prayer groups across New Zealand where people meet together regularly to pray for Wycliffe NZ members and the mission of Bible translation. A prayer group can be structured and tailored to your own circle and preferences. Some may choose to meet and pray for whatever member, project, or people group God has put on their hearts. Some like to work through the Prayer Matters together, while others divide up the Prayer Matters prayer points among the group. Still others write to us to receive prayer requests beyond what is in Prayer Matters.

Email membercare@wycliffenz.org if you would like to know more about finding an existing prayer group near you, or getting set up to start your own!



Bibleless Peoples Prayer Project

As mentioned earlier in this edition of *Living Words*, our friends over at Wycliffe USA have set up a fantastic prayer initiative called the Bibleless Peoples Prayer Project (BPPP). By scanning this QR code you can sign up to pray for a Bibleless people group and receive updates about their translation progress.



For more information visit wycliffe.org/prayer/how-do-i-pray-for-bibleless-people

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wycliffenz.org

facebook.com/wycliffenz

instagram.com/wycliffenz

Phone: +64 9 262 8440

Toll Free: 0508 992 543

Email: admin@wycliffenz.org

Level 6, Laidlaw House
20 Amersham Way
Manukau City, Auckland

PO Box 276005
Manukau City, Auckland 2241