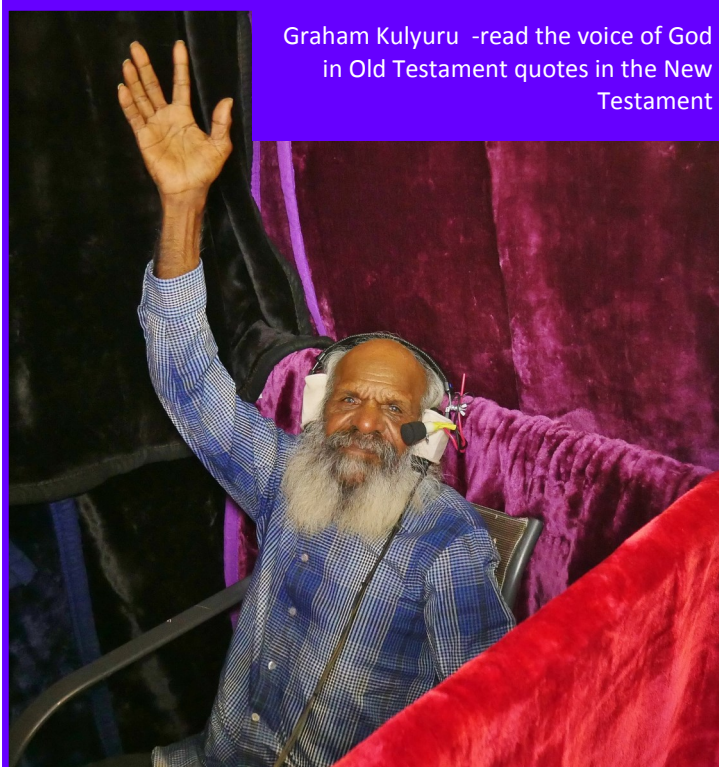


## Completion of the epic Pitjatjantjarra New testament recording.

Ann Eckert



Graham Kulyuru -read the voice of God  
in Old Testament quotes in the New  
Testament

**Week 1** We've been in Alice just 10 days now. We have had four people recording. The brother of one died this week from illness. A young 23 year old cousin of another was killed in a car accident last night. Some are working Saturday so we can go out to the funeral of a lady on Monday (a 2 hr drive from here). This lady was planning on recording but her life was cut short having had a heart attack when she was a passenger in a gruesome accident several weeks before the recording event... I can only say that the hope and stability of Christians really stands out and I admire them.

Paul is busy but it is not as pressured as our last recording time in Adelaide. In the evenings he takes people to see relatives in hospital, or to join grieving relatives for good cries and support,

at any rate, this has been the case this week. We are happy to announce that despite any of the above our recording is on schedule and the ones involved are committed to stay longer to finish 'their parts'. (The USA team has a way of measuring our progress day by day).

**Week 2:** We went west for the funeral past Hermannsburg to Areyonga catching the stunning ranges in the early morning sun. The trip home late afternoon was even more spectacular --- what unique ranges they are. The funeral itself was a beautiful celebration of a wonderful life as well as a mourning and expression of the pain of loss.

Katrina Tjitayi read 1 Corinthians, Umatji  
Tjitayi proofer, Paul, Stanley Windy read  
the voice of Jesus in Matthew



A PROJECT OF THE NORTHERN REGIONAL  
COUNCIL OF THE UNITING ABORIGINAL  
AND ISLANDER CHRISTIAN CONGRESS AND  
THE UNITING CHURCH IN AUSTRALIA  
NORTHERN SYNOD

# Completion of the epic Pitjatjantjarra New testament recording.

Ann Eckert

**Week 2 continues:** This week I have had precious little time, what with trips to hospital and doctors, banks and Aboriginal Council for the re-issuing of ID cards, post office, shopping etc... the days seem to fill up. I feel like I am in my own little world, with the recording happening in the little room just outside the venue's verandah. I have resisted counting how many flies my new little blue swatter kills in this dining/kitchen area, but can vouch that my aim is improving!!



Stanley Windy, Naphtalie Scobie,  
Kathleen White, Dan & Kay Finley

The team report continuing good progress. The Jesus words of Mark and all of 2 Corinthians should be completed this week. Luke narration and Acts narration are not too far behind and we expect new readers on the weekend to commence other bits. Our prayer is still for the male readers we need --- one fellow said he'd come after he'd attended two funerals but we're not sure when either will be! But we expect others as well as there are far more 'male' reading parts than female left to record.

**Week 3:** This week we have had technical difficulties with the microphones and later with the computer which keeps record of all text modifications made. This apparently was all lost as well as stuff from last year. This isn't so critical our end, but will be for the final editing and putting in of sound effects etc. in America. One thing that saddens us is how many 'excellent' readers now struggle with fluency having been compromised by ill health. Yet they are the senior ones whose voices will be respected. The words of Jesus in Luke are currently being recorded by the fellow, who did Jesus in Mark, and the narrative bits of Acts have been completed – that was a long book. Now we need a Peter and Paul!

**Week 4:** It's time I expressed appreciation for the very skilled and self-giving, persistent and patient work of Dan and Kay Finley, the team from 'Faith Comes by Hearing'. They come with considerable life and cross cultural experience and great skill in this multi-voice recording effort. They have worked steadily to achieve relationship, even though the speakers come and go for usually no longer than two weeks at a time. And so our hearts are full of thanks for them and their flexible work style. They are awaiting a replacement piece of equipment from the USA but have been able to proceed. Mid-week a lady finished up all the Narrative parts of Luke, and the



Dan and Kay Finley

final chapters are heavy in narrative so it was a challenge to finish up so she could leave for a funeral. K. A. is persevering with Romans and is well into Chapter 3 out of the 8 we hope she can do, but her health concerns grow and she may not be able to continue which will be a great sorrow to her and us. Yesterday and now today two men have joined us...they are recording by mimicking Paul – a little more of a tedious process for all, but gets the job done. And the reader of Jesus' words in Luke should be back from a funeral soon to finish his chapters. We are still hopeful of completing the task.



## Report 9 – Easter Monday: Around 50

Pitjantjatjara voices have participated in this project here in Alice and earlier in Adelaide. Paul and his listening team have 90 chapters to listen to and about half an hour's recording left. Most of that Paul will do and his voice will be adjusted for the Satan lines. We are so grateful for the perseverance of the two men who completed what looked like an impossible task on Thursday last, with the final verse recorded at 9:45 pm. The final reader, Philip



Dan Finley, Nurina Burton, Makinti Minutjukur read 2 Corinthians and Kay Finley

from Maryvale, asked if he could pray as he concluded – thanking God for the team who had come all the way from America to help them and asking God to bless His Word as it went out.

**From Louise:** Yurranydjil Dhurrkay and I visited the recording project in early March when the Bible Society print and video journalists were also visiting. This project has been an epic marathon, with 4 months of intense work in Adelaide and Alice Springs. We were both struck by the passion that each of the workers brought to the project with stories of readers who were overcome as they read the words of scripture in their heart language. When listening to one chapter from Revelation, even without understanding Pitjantjatjara we were moved by the emotion in the readers voices combined with the music and sound effects of the crashing waves. After the Easter Weekend celebrations at Pukatja Paul spoke by phone of the final week of recording. The whole New testament has been completed except for two missed verses. This was from earlier recordings and Debra had long ago returned to Amata. There was no way of her getting back into Alice as both she and her Mum were sick. On the final day Paul received a call from Debra, she was in Alice having flown in as the escort with her Mum who had to be evacuated to the hospital. She could record the missing verses and she and Paul could return to her mother's bedside to pray with her. With so many stories of illness, death, hard work and passion this project could never have happened without so many people having faith in the work of the Holy Spirit to guide their days.



Yurranydjil Dhurrkay



Debra Burton (narrated Acts) & Nurina Burton (narrated Luke)



Naphtalie Scobie Reading Jesus Crucifixion (he read the voice of Jesus in Mark & Luke)



# In Memory of K. Armstrong

By Paul Eckert

K. Armstrong was an incredibly strong Christian, who found her 'calling' from God in the work of Bible Translation from 1990. Her passion was that the written Word be in very natural Pitjantjatjara and to this end she worked tirelessly.

She was one of the first to get her Certificate IV in Translating and grew proficient on-the-job. She was among many who rejoiced in 2002 when the Pitjantjatjara Shorter Bible was published (The New Testament and 15% of the Old Testament).

When the team decided to push on with Old Testament translation in 2010 she got busy again. Even when a stroke robbed her ability of writing easily, she enlisted 'scribes' to continue on, even a faithful friend who was with her in ICU once was asked to get to work alongside her!!

She first drafted more of the Old Testament than anyone else to date: Deuteronomy, half of I Samuel, Daniel, Proverbs, many Psalms and was more than half way through the Song of Songs when she passed away the Tuesday before Easter 2018.

She was also an artist and painted a number of Biblical inspired paintings one of which appeared in the recently published book *Our Mob - God's Story* of Aboriginal Christian artworks.

During the last few months she was able to participate in the New Testament multi-voice recording project in Alice Springs.

But above all she was committed to her Lord and Saviour, wanting to live a life worthy of Him, to not alter His Word even when it was not popular, and to persist in hope despite life's losses and challenges – which included her husband, three of her children, and renal failure and eventually becoming a double amputee herself, and being dependent on others for care.

Doctors, nurses, care givers all observed something 'special' about her and grew to love and respect her. She was not shy to give testimony to the reason for her joy.

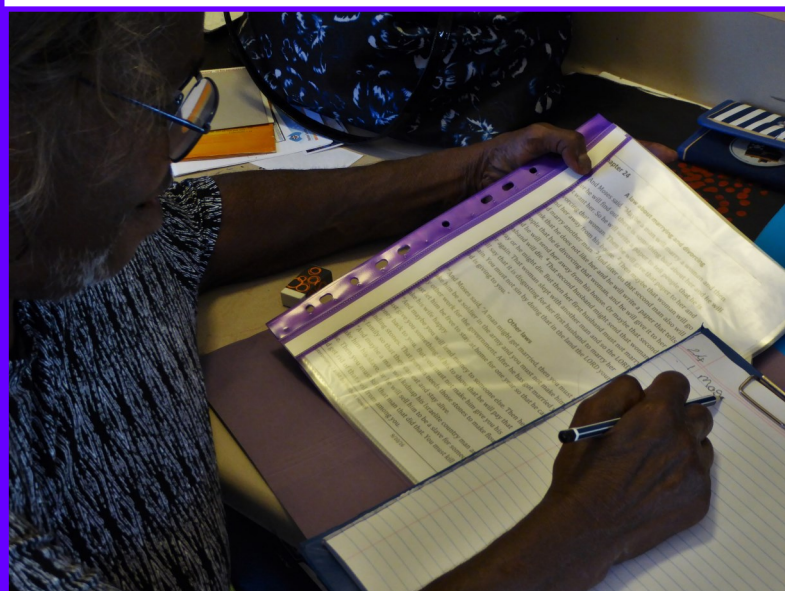
In the last week of her life she sang a chorus in Pitjantjatjara over and over again "He'll never let go of me".

She would like the Bible translation completed in her mother tongue. Contributions to a memorial fund will assist in this happening.

The funds raised through this fund will support the professional development of the next generation of Pitjantjatjara translators  
BSB: 065900      Acc #: 921537



K. Armstrong -Mustard Tree





# Easter Journey to Pukatja

My heart was drawn back to the important work of translation when I took this trip to Pukatja/Ernabella. Discipleship training schools, discipling the nations, even for Yolŋu, will only be effective when it has the translated Word of God. It is foundational to all other work of the church.

If we are to develop effective training for youth, we need people to grow in their understanding of God, who they are in Christ, their calling by God and obeying Him.

We must have His word in our hearts, so we can face whatever we have to go through, knowing that God who was made flesh will communicate with us. That means understanding God in our heart language. Then we can truly follow his ways, being transformed by His word.

When we were travelling through the desert we saw signs and wonders across the land as the sunset across the sky. The desert was truly blooming. That's what I saw.

The Bible translation work needs a team, a number of people. I saw the Pitjantjatjara translation team's excitement as they shared about their work and paid their respects to Paul Eckert for his life work with them.

Rev. Maratja Dhamarraṇḁji



Maratja and Paul

This Easter, we joined the community at Pukatja to farewell Bible Translator, Paul Eckert, who has worked and lived more than 4 decades in the Pitjantjatjara lands. We honoured him as a man who has translated God's word with a growing team of Pitjantjatjara translators. To many he has been God's 'Living Letter'.

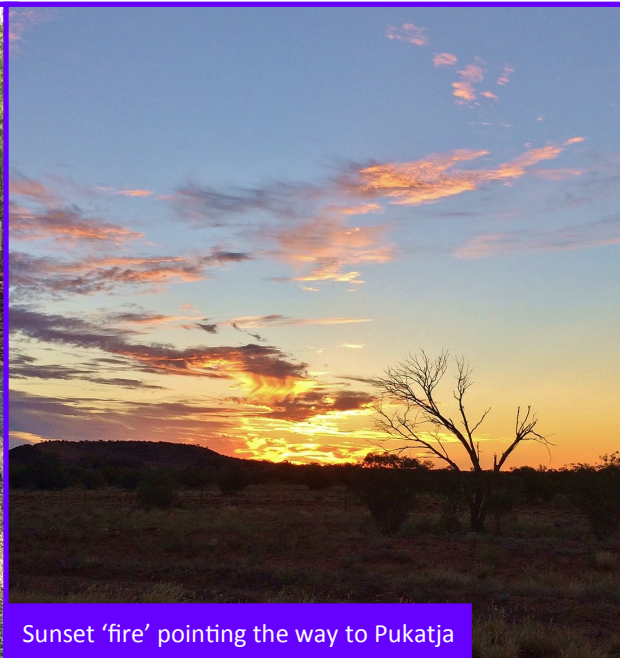
Bible translation work is not just working with words, words and more words. These words come from God's heart, they are powerful, alive and active. As God's word goes into the minds and hearts of the translators, the reality of God's word is 'translated' into lives today. This is the most rewarding part of all, for anyone involved in Bible translation work.

Margaret Miller with Yurranydjil Dhurrkay

It was amazing how the travel plans for the Arnhem Landers came together. Travel costs were funded from different areas for different people. At first we were going to hire a 4WD for the trip from Alice Springs to Ernabella, but a wonderful couple from Alice Springs with the gift of hospitality that the Apostle Paul speaks of, lent us their Prado for the trip. How's that for faith? They didn't know us, but did that as a service to the Lord. Thank you Mark and Amanda Dunn. And it served us beautifully on our 10 hours of driving, 4 of which was on dirt, desert road. We praise the Lord for safety in travelling.

Mally McLellan

Amanda Dunn with the 5 Ms:  
Margaret Mary Maratja Mally and Mätjarra



Sunset 'fire' pointing the way to Pukatja



# Easter Journey to Pukatja



Paul, Ann + 3 daughters  
with Imini, KA's sister

40 years is a long time. And that's how long Paul Eckert has worked amongst the Pitjantjatjara people in the APY Lands. The esteem with which the people hold Paul and Ann was evident over Easter weekend, when a special event was held to celebrate Paul's retirement, and to remember his life among them all these years.

Significantly, a skilled translator, with a burning call of God on her life, passed away just two days before these planned celebrations. This woman had worked with Ann Eckert, and more latterly with Paul for most of those 40 years. So the celebrations

also became a commemoration, as all three were farewelled from the work.

The people of the community of Pukatja, Ernabella, planned and conducted the event from start to finish.

Visitors came from other places. There were great reunions as the 3 Eckert daughters, Christie, Katie and Jodie, came back after many years, travelling from Adelaide and Fiji for the occasion. There was also a group of 5 from the Arnhem Land translation team. Paul had a significant input into the translation of the Djambarrpuyngu New Testament, so they wanted to join the Pitjantjatjara in honouring him.



New Pitjantjatjara team  
arrive with David

At the beginning of the ceremony, David Barnett of Bible Society led the team of present day translators into the meeting circle. Paul met him with his walking staff, handing it over to David who then continued the



Paul hands over his walking staff for their journey

journey to the front of the assembly. The symbolism was strong.

This led then to a recognition of the one who had just passed away. Ann Eckert walked forward with a vase of flowers, placing it on the table with the translated Scriptures, and all who wished went forward to grieve with the translators, including Ann and Paul.



Ann walks forward with her vase of flowers

Following this, people brought forward symbolic gifts to the table. A warrior brandishing a spear in its woomera and with a traditional shield came forward to the translations. Hebrews 4:12: God's Word is a spear penetrating the very being of a person. It is through the Holy Spirit (represented by the woomera) that the word does its work. And all the time, we need the shield of faith to stop the fiery arrows of the devil. (Ephesians 6:14) Paul was also likened to a spear, straight and upright of character, a humble and trustworthy man.



Keith Stevens The Word of God  
is sharper than a spear



The table of Bibles and symbols

Next someone brought a coolamon, a traditional water dish. It is from the Scriptures that we learn to come to the "water of life".





God Calls' ...just as God called Abraham and takes him on a journey, so also God called Paul Eckert in Australia. Nyunmiti Burton

There were other wonderful gifts too, including two large dot paintings, both of which told stories of Paul and Ann's life and work in Pitjantjatjara country.

Everyone enjoyed a bbq at dinner time, after which the memories resumed. The Yolngu team from North East Arnhem Land were asked to reflect, and Maratja gave the message. Paul and Ann responded, and as a final touch, Paul put on a section of the dramatic recording of the New Testament in Pitjantjatjara, which has since been completed. What a delightful way to end!

Early the next morning, the church held a dawn service on a hill above the community, on which has been placed a cross. From there, we watched the sun rise over the surrounding hills and rejoiced. Jesus is alive. He rose from death and has given us the hope of eternal life. This gives an assurance that the beloved translator who passed away is also alive with Christ. There is renewed life too, for the translation of God's word in their language.



Yanyi, Mätjarra, Nāndama and Gary Lewis

This is my story about our trip to Pukatja (Ernabella). We went during this Easter for the retirement of Pitjantjatjara translator's, Paul and Ann Eckert.

This was God's plan. He made the way for us to go there, Maratja, Mätjarra, Mally, Margaret and me, Bible translation workers from Arnhemland. We went over there to join in with the translators in Pukatja. We wanted to give thanks to Paul and Ann before Paul's retirement, for the times they have come to us to help in our Bible translation work, with God's help for God's work. God's Word never fails, it lives forever.

We shared our love with Paul's family. We were given accommodation, near their Translation Centre. We joined with the community, in a service of honor to

Paul and Ann on Saturday. The whole program was in Pitjantjatjara, with no English. At sunset we all ate a BBQ dinner together. Then we shared our messages as well to Paul and the community.

We witnessed Paul and his team of translators handing over the work to David and the new generation of translators. It was sad to remember that one of the older translators passed away just before Easter.

For me, I understand the call of God in my heart to the Djambarrpuyngu Scripture in Use work is just like God called Ann to the Pitjantjatjara Scripture in Use work. Ann and Paul have sat and lived amongst the Pitjantjatjara people, but they have even reached out to help us. God's Word will stand forever. I am glad to have told them that I have appreciated all that they have done.

Nāndama

Coordinate Issue #22 April 2018

Paul and Ann Eckert



1978-2018

marks a significant part of my life – the years I was involved in the Pitjantjatjara Bible Translation Project. People often speak of the ‘products’ of such an involvement

with such a great team of Pitjantjatjara speakers and translators – for example, the publication of the New Testament plus 15% of the Old Testament in 2002 and more recently the multi-voice recording project with teams from an organization called ‘Faith Comes By Hearing’. In each production 50 Pitjantjatjara colleagues were involved in their coming to birth not to mention my wife, Ann, who worked alongside me all the way. David & Jan Crawford also spent 10 years as part of the team.

But I prefer to speak of our joint ministry as a ‘process’ – the process of understanding the meaning of God’s Word and then translating that meaning and letting its message live out in us as the translation unfolded. Our joy was always teamwork, relying on the various gifts and abilities, being patient for the Holy Spirit’s direction, being steadfast through testing times. In 2010 the new generation of Pitjantjatjara translators commenced more Old Testament translation with the view to completing the whole Bible.

Easter Saturday this year I passed the baton, a walking stick, onto Dave Barnett and his team. It was a sweet-sad time as one of my ‘mothers’ who singularly penned more first draft translation than anyone else had passed away the previous Tuesday. The gathered ones honoured us both --- me with paintings of my life (compared to Abraham), affirming speeches, gifts of all descriptions including a boomerang bidding me back. All three of our daughters, who grew up at Pukatja/Ernabella were present, and our sister team from Elcho Island were represented as well. It was a high note on which to commence retirement.

As we watched the sun beginning to peak over the community the next morning from a hillside opposite, the truth is that we are but responders to the King of Kings who conquered death and lives forevermore.

Hallelujah!

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