



Reformation Translation Fellowship Australia

澳洲改革宗翻譯團契

...but the word of God is not bound (2 Tim 2:9)

The Unbound Word: The Salt and Light of Translation

In the winter of 1526, the courtyard of St Paul's Cross in London was lit by a fire intended to erase words. Bishop Cuthbert Tunstall had ordered the public destruction of William Tyndale's English New Testament. Smuggled into England among ordinary trade goods—including sacks of grain and cloth—these volumes posed a direct threat to the established order. As we mark the 500th anniversary of that first printing, we recognise that while Tyndale's particular edition was eventually absorbed into the fabric of the English Bible, the logic of his mission remains as disruptive as ever. Translation places the ultimate authority of truth directly into the hands of ordinary people, bypassing the gatekeepers of power.

"Translation is not merely a support task; it is the most effective form of mission because it secures the church's foundation for centuries."

Tyndale's work changed the world because he chose vernacular words that fundamentally reshaped the social and religious landscape: "priest" became "elder", and "church" became "congregation". This was a deliberate move towards spiritual transparency, implying that the ploughboy could engage with the divine as clearly as the prelate. It paved the way for a reformation that was as much about social dignity as it was about doctrinal purity. His translation provided the linguistic DNA for an entire culture, demonstrating that when the Word is read in the language of the marketplace, the structures of the world lose their absolute hold on the soul.

From its inception, the Reformation Translation Fellowship (RTF) has followed this same path, moving beyond mechanical literalism towards careful contextualisation. In practice, this means RTF translators do not simply substitute words; they bridge two worlds. They preserve the original reasoning of the author while drawing on the full range of classical and contemporary Chinese vocabulary. For example, when translating works such as *Christianity and Liberalism* by J. Gresham Machen, the aim is to equip Chinese readers with the precise categories needed to discern the Gospel from its modern distortions. This approach ensures that Reformed theology is not perceived as a "Western import", but as a universal truth speaking in a native heart language.

Supporting a ministry like RTF is an act of biblical stewardship that reflects the parables of Salt and Light. Translation acts as Salt, preserving the purity of the Doctrines of Grace against the theological decay of modern liberalism, which often seeks to reduce the Gospel to little more than social usefulness. It acts as Light, cutting through confusion and providing believers with an intellectual backbone. Just as salt must penetrate meat to preserve it, these translated works must permeate the language of the church to sustain it. Many of you have already partnered in this work, often unseen, trusting that faithfulness in language would bear fruit long after the translator's name is forgotten.

Too often, translation is treated as a technical task that merely facilitates "real" mission. This is a missiological error. Translation is the mission. A preacher can be silenced or expelled, but a faithful, well-contextualised translation endures. It multiplies quietly and outlives the messenger. This is the incarnational principle: just as Christ became flesh, the Word must become linguistic in order to take root. Without this, Christianity remains a foreign set of borrowed rituals rather than a lived reality. The impact of this work is the infrastructure of endurance—the unseen architecture that enables faith to withstand institutional and cultural pressure. By providing the tools of the Reformed tradition, including standards such as the Westminster Confession, the ministry ensures that reform is not a passing revival but a sustainable foundation. It transforms fragmented groups into a confessional body capable of standing firm for generations.

The mission moving forward is to ensure that the next generation is better equipped than those who would seek to domesticate or restrict the Word. In his final days, the Apostle Paul wrote: "I suffer trouble... even to the point of chains; but the word of God is not bound" (2 Timothy 2:9). Tyndale's work was absorbed into the soul of the English-speaking world; today, the RTF carries forward that same legacy. Supporting this ministry is an investment in the church's future voice. It ensures that the Salt remains salty and the Light remains bright, in a language the church can truly call its own.

2026 RTF Australia Translation Project

Updates

We're grateful to share the latest progress on our 2026 translation projects. By God's kindness and the generosity of supporters, we have seen significant momentum—especially with two titles reaching their full funding goals in a very short period. In fact, both **The Masculine Mandate** and **Crisis of Confidence** were fully funded through donations given within a brief window between Dec. 2025 and Jan. 2026.

The Masculine Mandate: God's Calling to Men (Richard D. Phillips) is now fully funded (**AUD 5,400**). This practical guide offers a clear, Bible-centered vision of Christian manhood rooted in Genesis, calling men to humble responsibility in their work, marriages, families, and church life. We're delighted to move forward with this translation and make it accessible to readers who are navigating a culture of confusion regarding gender and calling.

Crisis of Confidence: Reclaiming the Historic Faith (Carl Trueman) is also fully funded (**AUD 4,760**). In a culture increasingly shaped by individualism and identity politics, Trueman provides a timely and accessible defence of the historic creeds. He shows how confessions serve as faithful summaries of Scripture, giving the church shared stability and courage. We believe this will be a vital resource for communities seeking to ground their identity in historic truth rather than modern trends.

Union with Christ: The Blessing of Being in Him (Sinclair Ferguson) is currently 50% funded, with a total goal of **AUD 4,150**. This warm, pastoral book introduces readers to the heart of the Christian life—our union with Christ. It is an essential work for strengthening assurance and deepening personal holiness, helping believers remain rooted in their relationship with Jesus rather than their own performance. We invite you to help us cross the finish line for this project. Your partnership is what makes these treasured Reformed resources accessible to a wider audience. Whether through prayer, financial support, or simply sharing this update with others, you play a vital role in this ministry. To contribute to the Union with Christ project or to learn more about our work, please visit our website or contact us directly. Full donation details are provided below.

Pray for China Day 2026 (Sunday 1 March)

It has long been our practice to encourage churches across Australia to unite in prayer for Christians in China and for the work of Reformation Translation Fellowship (RTF). Promotional resources (flyer, slides, and church notices) are available to download from rtfa.org.au.

Please pray:

- Under tightening religious restrictions, that God would open safe pathways for books to enter China and protect the churches and believers who receive them.
- For a renewed hunger to read—that Chinese Christians would grow in the knowledge of God through faithful books, and that the Lord would give us wisdom to commend Reformed literature.
- For wisdom and discernment for publishers to choose and produce the most valuable titles for the building up of the church.
- For pastors, elders, and congregations to be rooted in Scripture, standing firm amid rising persecution and witnessing boldly to Christ.

Please also pray for our 2026 translation projects:

- David R. Jackson — *Crying Out for Vindication: The Gospel According to Job*
- Zack Eswine — *Recovering Eden: The Gospel According to Ecclesiastes*
- Richard D. Phillips — *The Masculine Mandate: God's Calling to Men*
- Carl Trueman - *Crisis of Confidence: Reclaiming the Historic Faith*
- Sinclair Ferguson - *Union with Christ: The Blessing of Being in Him*

Reformation Translation Fellowship Australia

Mr Steven Yu (Chairman, NSW)
Rev Andrew Stewart (Secretary, VIC)
Rev David Chang (NSW)
Mr Brett Lee-Price (NSW)

The doctrinal basis of the Reformation Translation Fellowship is the Reformed understanding of Christianity as set forth in:

- The Westminster Standards
 - Confession of Faith
 - Larger Catechism
 - Shorter Catechism
- The Three Forms of Unity
 - Belgic Confession
 - Heidelberg Catechism
 - Canons of Dort

Ways to Give

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