

Names of God, Experienced Translator Workshop

By Louise Macdonald



The last time our experienced translators gathered was in 2019, so the excitement for this workshop in February was considerable. After careful planning with meetings and spread sheets and phone calls and budgets it all came together. Twenty four translators and sixteen helpers all got to Nungalinya for daily devotions in the Old Art room.

Eleven language groups were represented and each had a turn at offering devotions to start each day. After devotions a training session on the 'Names of God' was given by Thomas, a Bible Translation Consultant from Bible Society who fitted into our group easily for his first Australian experience. The theme for this workshop came from translators who had attended the short passage workshop last year. Many groups had to confront the need to expand the words they used to name God beyond just 'Father'. Thomas took us through nine sessions, starting with 'What does the word name mean?' Elohim, Yahweh and Adonai as well as Elyon, Shaddai and Sabaoth from the Hebrew in the Old Testament were covered in the first week. In the second week we explored Messiah, Christ, Son of Man, the Trinity and finally Jesus and the many other names that appear in the New Testament. As the workshop progressed it was interesting to see translators initially choose borrowed words for their translations but as they gained confidence they started to explore using words from their own languages. It was helpful when we were asked to consider what the word "God" had meant for English speakers when it was first chosen in the original English translation of the Bible.

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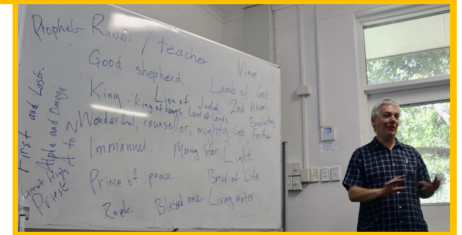


Names of God Workshop



Each day after morning tea West Arnhem and Mrrinh Patha returned to the Old Art room and East Arnhem gathered in the Old Library with their respective helpers. Each group worked on their own projects for the remainder of the day.

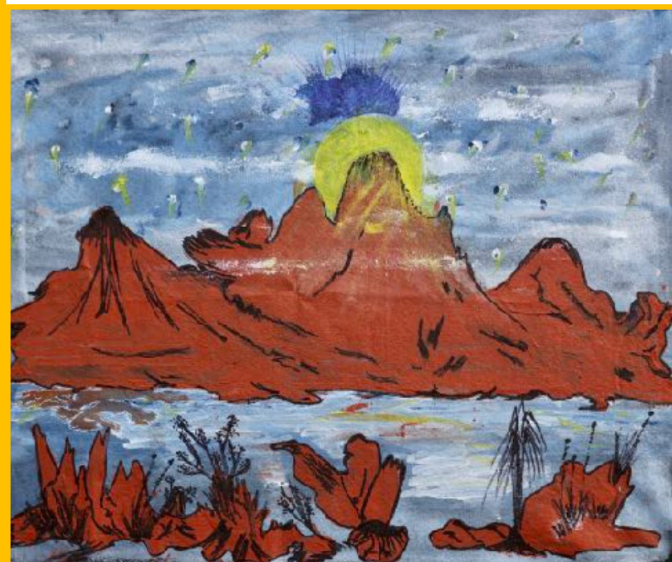
There is often an assumption with Bible Translation work that individuals grapple alone with their chosen passage and the work is between the translator and their laptop. But this workshop brought home to me the collaborative nature of translation which happens in discussion. Each group works across multiple languages: their own language, other languages that team members know, English and of course the original Greek.



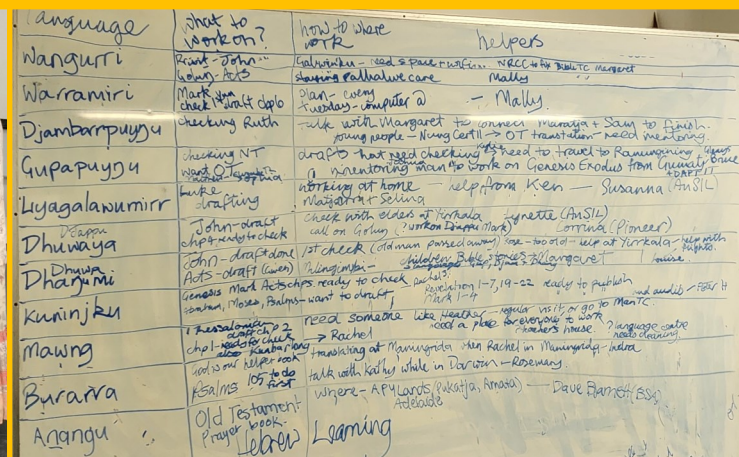
His name is YHWH from Ephesians 4:6

By George Pascoe

There is one God who is the Father of all people. Not only is God above all others, but he works by using all of us, and he lives in all of us. This picture is very important for how this Scripture applies to me. God existed before creation. He created and was involved with His creation— both the physical universe and the spiritual. The Hebrew name YHWH, which means “I AM,” helps us understand this. It is where He dwells. He dwells in the heavens and on the earth. And He dwells in us. God wants us to be filled with His Spirit. It means that He is involved with me, in me, and with us. God wants us to understand that we can be filled with His Spirit, grace, love, and peace. This is a great gift. You and I are part of His plan today. His name is YHWH.



During the workshop, participants were invited to spend time painting in the Art Studio at Nungalinga. George a Burarra speaker from Maningida took up this invitation.



Ten of the language groups currently work within the Coordinate family: Wangurri, Djambarrpuynu, Liyagalawumirr, Gumatj/Dhuwaya, Kuninju, Mawng and Bruarra. We give thanks for the richness and diversity of language within the Uniting Church and we give thanks for all who supported this workshop, each helper, Bible Society, AuSIL and Nungalinga.



Farewell to Dr Mally McLellan

By Louise Macdonald

At the splendid gathering hosted by Casuarina UCA to say farewell to Mally and celebrate her 33 years in the Northern Territory the depth of her contribution to so many people and communities was acknowledged. She has been a mentor to me and so many others. As Bronnie Carson outlined 'the five loves of Mally McLellan' all present could connect with all of these passions in her life.

Her love of language has led to so many of us hearing her admonition to commit to 'tongue gym' as we grapple with getting our mouths into shape to correctly pronounce all the unfamiliar sounds in Indigenous languages. Mally's doctoral thesis documenting the

Wangurri language is work that led to her extraordinary depth of connection with Wangurri family, and has also been read and referenced by many linguistic students and academics since.

Her passion for education has enabled the ongoing development of the translation training at Nungalinga and has had widespread impact on so many people. Sitting through classes on plain English, asking questions, naturalness and accuracy in translation or just learning about the plants in my garden while we wait for the kettle to boil has had an indelible impact on my own learning.

Mally's love of Christ and her constant theological curiosity have been a blessing to so many people. The combination of enthusiasm for language, education and Christ have made for an extraordinary legacy in the world of Bible translation particularly in North

Eastern Arnhemland and more widely throughout the northern Territory.

At Coordinate we pray that Mally's relocation to Queensland is swift and smooth because we know that her work with us is not finished!



Welcome to Yane Daminyak Nungalinga Principal

It is with gratitude that we welcome Yane and her family back to the Northern Territory as the Principal of Nungalinga College in Darwin. Yane is familiar to many in the Northern Synod of the UCA because of her previous role in pastoral ministry with the Living Waters congregation at Humpty Doo. Yane is a Moluccan woman from the Maluku islands located in East Indonesia in the Western Pacific Ocean. She has had a long association with Australian



Inland Mission, holding leadership and educational roles. Now that her children are young adults she feels called back to the Northern Territory. She is passionate about theological training in Indigenous contexts, a focus that was also the subject of her doctoral study, she says "I am humbled to think that God has woven together my previous ministries, background and studies to prepare me for this new role. I look forward to working alongside the college community to advance the vision of empowering Indigenous Christians for leadership across churches and communities in Australia". We pray that Yane will bring all her skills and knowledge to make a significant contribution to the life of the College.

“The right tools...in training translators”

By Margaret Miller and Louise Macdonald

In the 1970s and early 1980s, Bible Translation in Australia was mostly being managed by trained linguists and translators who came from distant places to live in remote communities of north Australia. Each translation project had their own indigenous Language Assistants. For example from North East Arnhem the Djambarrpuyngu Translation Project was Di Buchanan as linguist, with Language Assistant, Dorothy Wanymulu, and working on the Gumatj Translation Project were Joyce Ross as linguist with her language assistants Mutilga and Gulumbu. Together they dedicated their lives to this unique work, supporting one another, often joining together at the Australian Aboriginal and Islander Branch (AAIB) for Translation workshops in Darwin.



In the 1980s a younger generation of mission-schooled first-nation people were joining the translation teams. In this period, the church

in North East Arnhem experienced revival. The outback was no longer seen as a mission field but as a mission force, with Indigenous Christians taking up leadership in their churches.

An emerging generation of 8 Aboriginal Bible Translators met at Lake Bennett in June 1989 with 17 co-workers representing 13 Bible Translation Projects. At this conference, organised jointly by Bible Society and AAIB, the Aboriginal participants expressed in a letter to their church leaders: ‘please ask God to give us the right people and the right tools for us to complete the job’. They needed training in translation principles.

AAIB responded and assigned Dr Chris Kilham (Wik-Mungkan translator and AAIB Consultant) with input from Ann Eckert (Pitjiti-jantjara Translation and Literacy worker) along with others in the AAIB who assisted in developing a course over the next few years called ‘Translation Time’. This unique course, unlike other available translation courses internationally, was specifically designed for Australian students addressing the unique features of Australian languages. It was tested by Maratja Dhamarrandji and Mätjarra Garrawurra, and other emerging Indigenous translators from other Translation projects and they were rapt! Supporting this training, was a Translation workshop held at Hamilton Downs in October 1991 organised jointly by Dr Carl Gross of Bible Society and Ann Eckert of AAIB. The 14 trainees from 6 lan-



guage groups, independently put their hands to the task of translating portions of Nehemiah and 1 Samuel. A new era had begun within Australian Bible Projects by Indigenous Bible translators!

You intend this for evil, but God intends it for good, for the saving of many lives (Genesis 50:20).

This verse of hope, strengthened the vision of the training plans for Indigenous translators. The community was inspired to push forward. It desperately needed more skilled Indigenous translators, in order to continue the work.



“The right tools...in training translators”

By Margaret Miller and Louise Macdonald

Suzanne Hagan turned to 'Translation Time' to develop a Certificate III in Translating, as an accredited VET course. In 1995 David Crawford moved from the APY lands to Darwin to become the co-ordinator and secured funding for the Certificate. He continued to build on the content developed in 'Translation Time' and also formalised SIL-AAIB Berrimah base as a Registered Training Organisation. Mally McLellan and Margaret Mickan joined David in Darwin to deliver the course.



For the first cohort, David recruited students, both old and new Indigenous translators, representing three translation projects; Kriol, Djambarrpuyŋu and Kunwinjku.. Two non-Indigenous colleagues also signed up for this new Certificate III. The Djambarrpuyŋu team included Wanyuli Dhamarrandji, Maratja Dhamarrandji, Dorothy Gapany, Mätjarra Garrawura, Wängarr Dhamarrandji, Yurranydjil Dhurrkay, Mary Dändama and Margaret Miller. The Djambarrpuyŋu and the Kriol teams graduated with a Certificate III in Translating in 1998.

Ann Eckert worked separately in the Centre with two Pitjantjatjara women translators, Margaret Dagg and Kanytjupai Armstrong who also graduated in 1998. Younger emerging Pitjantjatjara translators, Katrina Tjitayi and Makinti Minutjukurr later began their training and have since spear-headed the continuation of the Old Testament translation.

The success of the Certificate III encouraged other language groups to consider the course and soon the Anindilyakwa and Wubuy teams embarked on their studies.

The Mawng team with Sandra Makurlngu, Rosemary Urabadi with their translation advisor Heather Hewitt were keen to train but miscommunication with the church meant that it was assumed they were not interested. Instead, Mally conducted informal training sessions as required. Memorably, a session on how to translate the various meaning of 'make'. By the end of 2004. It was assumed that there no other language groups were interested in training and the burden of being a Registered Training Organisation (RTO) had become too onerous for AuSIL so, the course concluded.

During the following decade, Indigenous translators were introduced to newly available computer technology. However, not all the translators had received training in the Certificate III, and this new generation of translators needed to learn the principles of Bible translation.

Psalms 102:12 'You, O LORD, are enthroned forever,
you are remembered throughout all generations.

"The right tools...in training translators"

At Yirrkala in 2016 there was a significant meeting of Uniting Church translators, Scripture-in-use workers and AuSIL. It was put to the translators that they could receive apprenticeship style 'on the job' training, but overwhelmingly they requested accredited training at Nungalinga College. Louise Macdonald approached Jude Long, the principal of Nungalinga, to see how Nungalinga could support this ambitious plan. Jude had already been searching for a Diploma level course that could be a pathway for students into university education and found the Diploma of Translation. This was a government accredited general translation course, more focused on project management rather than translation principles, so not specifically designed for Bible Translation. This course was adopted in 2017 and the project was set up. While the government accreditation meant the student costs were covered the costs for the Course Coordinator, teachers and co-teachers needed funding and a budget of \$100,000 had to be found. Within two weeks all the funds were provided by Coordinate/Uniting Church, Bible Society Australia, Wycliffe Bible Translators and Church Missionary Society (CMS). The steering committee was formed with these organisations, as well as AuSIL. Lizz Martin was employed as the Coordinator and Mally was the co-teacher. The Diploma ran over two years. It was a course that could be run with multiple languages and many experienced translators graduated in 2020.



It became clear that there would not be enough students with the capacity to study at a Diploma level again but there was still a strong desire to have a course that dealt with the 'nuts and bolts' of translation. In 2021 Mally started to create the content for a Certificate 2 in translation based on many of the units from the original 'Translation Time'. Ben van Gelderen the new Principal at Nungalinga boldly took on the task of moulding Mally's work into a VET layout and gaining industry approval from the Churches, Education Department, CDU and the NT Interpreters Service. In 2022, while this painstaking work was happening Nungalinga ran a Certificate in 'Reading and Writing in your own Language', borrowed from Tauondi Aboriginal College in Port Adelaide. By mid-2022 the Certificate 2 in Indigenous Translation was fully accredited by Australian Skills and Qualification Authority (ASQA). Lizz Martin was unable to



continue as Course Coordinator due to family needs. Hannah Harper was appointed as a co-teacher and the Yolŋu Matha with Yurranydjil Dhurrkay as the indigenous co-teacher was up and running. The Murrinh Patha cohort was started in 2023 and both cohorts expected to graduate this year. The Biniŋ Kunwok cohort commenced in 2024 with Father Mark Woloszyn now in the role as the course Coordinator and Sandra Makurlngu as the co-teacher. The next group to start this year will be Tiwi with 16 students enrolled and Lachlan Webb, a new AuSIL member, ready

to come on board as the co-teacher with Fr Mark. One of the success stories of this training has been the development of Aboriginal co-teachers.

The next step in this exciting journey will be creating a Certificate 3 in Indigenous Translation. Once Mally has relocated to Brisbane she has committed to developing the content for this next course.

The steering committee and Nungalinga are busy making plans for the next language groups that are keen for training and mapping out course development, with a vision for a possible Certificate 4 in Indigenous Translation. The journey continues!

Prayer and Praise for West Arnhemland Scripture projects

Pray for the upcoming experienced translator workshop being held in Maningrida in early June. We will be working with Kuninjku, Burarra and Mawng translators.

Both prayer and praise for the arrival of a new AuSIL member Anne Spragg who will be working as a translation advisor in West Arnhem. Anne is still to discern which West Arnhem language she will concentrate on.

Pray for the preparation of the Biniñ Kunwok cohort of the Certificate 2 in Translation at Nungalinya in August as their second block of study is developed. Pray for Father Mark, Sandra Makurlgnu and Louise Macdonald as they develop materials for this block. Pray particularly for Father Mark's trip to Maningrida at the end of March, that it will be a productive time of meeting with students and preparing them for their time of study at Nungalinya.

Pray for the ongoing work of the Kuninjku translation team as they wait expectantly for their translation of eleven chapters of Revelation to be published.



Prayer and Praise for Pitjantjatjara

For the Translation Team

Pray for strength, health, and perseverance for the Pitjantjatjara translators, many of whom face significant personal and community challenges as they dedicate themselves to this work.

Ask God to grant the translators wisdom and clarity as they seek to accurately and faithfully translate the Old Testament, balancing faithfulness to the original text with accessibility for all generations of Pitjantjatjara speakers.

Pray for continued unity and strong relationships within the translation team, and that they would be encouraged by their community and supported in their daily tasks.

Pray for the physical, emotional, and spiritual protection of the translators and their families, especially in times of adversity or illness.

Ask God to provide all the resources needed for the project—funding, expertise, technology, and opportunities for training and workshops.

Pray for protection from spiritual opposition, discouragement, or external pressures that could hinder the progress of the translation work.



For the Pitjantjatjara Community

Pray that the translated Scriptures will be embraced and used widely in churches, homes, and schools, deepening faith and understanding of God's Word among Pitjantjatjara speakers.

Pray for spiritual awakening and transformation among the Pitjantjatjara people, that many would come to know Jesus personally and experience healing and hope through Scripture.

Pray that the full Old Testament will be completed in God's perfect timing, bringing joy and spiritual renewal to the Pitjantjatjara people and beyond.

Pitjantjatjara translators praying at the Western Wall in Jerusalem

Prayer and praise for North East Arnhemland Scripture projects

Praise for the wonderful Names of God workshop in February. A workshop of experienced translators who had been waiting since 2019 to get together.

Pray for the smaller regional experienced translator workshops that will be coming up in the dry season in East Arnhem.

Pray for the Gupapuyngu workshop happening in Ramingining, special prayer that appropriate accommodation can be secured for this workshop.

Pray for the planning of the Liyagalawumirr workshop to be held in Galiwin'ku.

Pray for the workshop to be held in the Marthakal area for four of the central Translation Projects.

For all these projects pray for workshop preparations, and communication regarding transport and accommodation, pray for the health of all participants.

Pray that it will be an effective time of working together while translating God's Word into these smaller language groups and pray that hearts will be inspired.

Prayer and praise for Transition Training in Remote Indigenous Ministries (TTRIM)

Praise for the enthusiastic class in January 2025 . With participants from Marara Christian School, CMS, Nungalinya, and Salvation Army.

Pray for the continuing improvement of this vital cross cultural course and the enthusiasm of the facilitation team . Praise for the new unit on security that was run in January and pray that more Australian content for this unit will be developed for 2026.

Pray for unity in the facilitation team as they commit to working together under this statement "The facilitators in this workshop represent decades of experience in community and also represent a very diverse range of denominations and theological perspectives. We have been working together in these workshops for many years now and even with these differences enjoy and respect each other's company. We will be covering a wide range of perspectives: not because we all agree on these but because we are presenting the terrain that you are going to discover . We hope that this will help you navigate your own path in such ways that both you and the people you will be living and working with can thrive".

Pray for the facilitators and students in the second block of TTRIM in October 2025.



Vale Graham Kulyuru

By David Crawford



Graham Kulyuru was born in 1939, and grew up and lived in Ernabella from his childhood onwards. He was 86 when he died, and was the last of his generation of Pitjantjara Presbyterian elders living in Ernabella. He was commissioned as an elder in the 1960s – where each community had a team of elders who conducted all church activities, under the oversight and training of a white minister from mission days. So in practice his more recent role of Community Minister in The Uniting Church was a continuation of what he was already doing.

My first encounter with Graham was on a trip around Ernabella homelands in 1984 with Paul Eckert the translator linguist. Graham was in the back of the vehicle. A goanna shot across the road in front of us. Paul screeched to a halt. Graham darted out, picked up a stick and flicked it at the reptile running twenty metres away. He got it – stone dead. And took it home to cook for lunch,

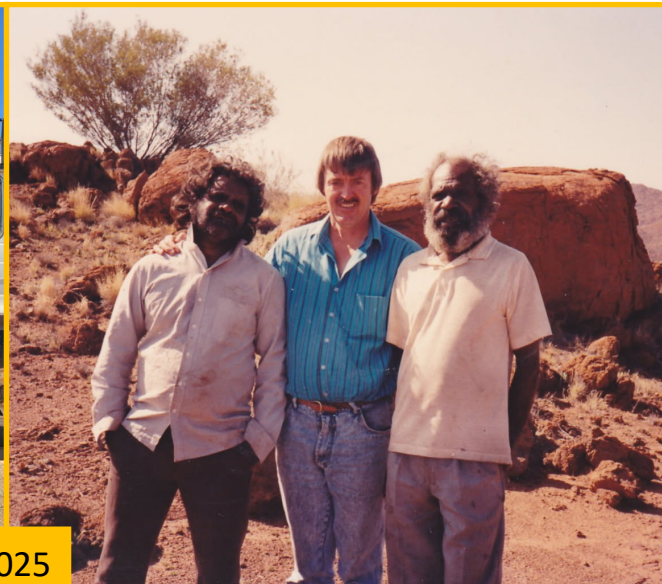
Graham was married to Angkuna who was a skilled craft worker at Ernabella Arts. They had nine children, six girls and three boys. Some of his daughters continue their mother's craft artistic skills in Ernabella. Other children and grandchildren now live in Adelaide mostly as part of a strong urban drift from the APY Lands in the last 20 years.

Graham was a skilled wood worker and spear maker. His whole life was focused on Christian activities. He worked in Bible translation sometimes, and recorded scriptures. In later years he was always at home, surrounded by family, and studying the Pitjantjara Bible creating messages in his head. He loved praying.

He conducted many funerals. Whenever he preached it was evident he had a sound understanding of the Bible, and he spoke creatively, humbly, yet powerfully. In many ways his life was a great witness to the gospel.

At his funeral this year many family members wore T shirts with the familiar picture of his bearded face under the wide stockman's hat. Words from Psalm 91 were printed on it.

"God is my refuge. Under His wings I will find shelter." (*Uwa, palurunta wirura kanyilku, panya tjulpungku kulunypa tjut nyalpingka unngu angatjura kanyilpai, palu purunytjunta angatjunkula kanyilku, kan ngu lu wiya rapa alatjitu nyinaku paluru atunymankunyangka.*)



Opening the Bible from the East to Uluru *Godaku Tjukurpa* distributed in APY Lands

By Dave Barnett



Thanks to the generous support of Bible Society Australia (BSA) donors, the *Godaku Tjukurpa* children's Bible has been distributed in the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (APY) Lands in April, touching the communities it was created for.

The response to this beautiful book, which was pioneered by the late Nami Kulyuru has been moving.

After four years of collaborative work with 28

Anangu artists, translators and community members, this richly illustrated children's Bible in Pitjantjatjara and English was launched in Ernabella (Pukatja).

The event was marked by celebration, with hundreds in attendance and a large community-requested cake featuring an image from the book — Jesus calming the storm. While the 1500km journey from Adelaide left the cake a little worse for wear, it was received with joy.

One of the most powerful moments came when the team was able to present a copy of *Godaku Tjukurpa* to Nami's son. Nami's love for children, her passion for Pitjantjatjara translation work and her commitment for sharing God's story with her community all form part of her legacy, which now lives on through the pages of this culturally significant Bible.

A group of enthusiastic young volunteers from Emmaus Christian College, all former students with a heart for the people of the APY Lands, supported the launch. Volunteers then split into smaller teams to distribute the *Godaku Tjukurpa* across APY Lands communities, from the east to the west, as far as the small town Yulara, near Uluru.

In one surprising moment, a Japanese family with young children who were visiting the area bought a copy and expressed their deep interest. This moment highlighted to the team that this deeply local book might have impact and reach far beyond these communities. (continue over)



Godaku Tjukurpa distributed in APY Lands

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The contributing artists were among the most excited to see the final book in print. Many had painted their illustrations years ago and were very happy to finally hold the finished product in their hands.

As David Barnett, BSA Bible engagement coordinator for the Pitjantjatjara Translation Project, shared, "there was just a lot of excitement, especially from the artists. They'd almost forgotten that it was actually going to be produced in a book, and now they're holding it. It was a very special time."

This launch and distribution trip was so meaningful and effective that the Emmaus Christian College is now exploring the idea of partnering in an annual Bible distribution trip into the APY Lands to support and encourage these communities with Scripture resources.

Your support of both the Pitjantjatjara Old Testament Translation Project and *Godaku Tjukurpa* has enabled God's word to take root in hearts and homes across the APY Lands, in a way that is beautiful, culturally meaningful, and transformative.

Please continue to pray for the children receiving and learning from this Bible and for the ongoing work of the Pitjantjatjara translation team.

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