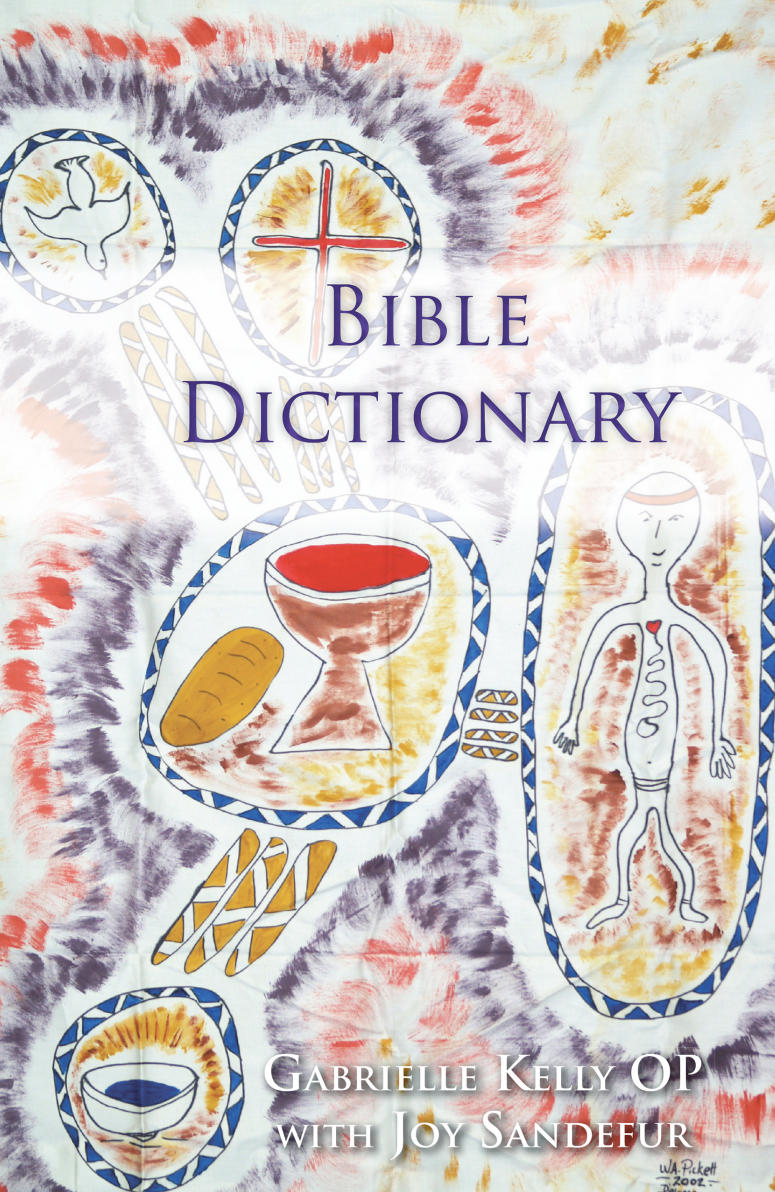
Bible Dictionary



Gabrielle Kelly OP
with Joy Sandefur

Bible Dictionary

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with Joy Sandefur

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BIBLE DICTIONARY

SELECTED BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL WORDS

A LANGUAGE RESOURCE FOR ABORIGINAL AUSTRALIAN STUDENTS

Gabrielle Kelly OP
in collaboration with Joy Sandefur



ATF Press
Adelaide

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Original artwork by WA Pickett, 2002, Darwin. A banner from the *Nungalinya* College collection depicting symbols of the Christian and Sacramental life. Clockwise from bottom left: the waters of the Sacrament of Baptism, the dove representing the Holy Spirit, the cross of Jesus and the human person enlivened by these gifts of grace. In central position are the symbols of bread and wine representing the Eucharist.
Used with permission of *Nungalinya* College.

FOREWORD



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This volume, entitled *Bible Dictionary—Selected Scriptural and Theological Terms* by Gabrielle Kelly in collaboration with Joy Sandefur, has been compiled primarily as a language development resource for a particular learning community. This is the community of *Nungalinya* College in Darwin, an ecumenical college for Indigenous Australians whose students are drawn from traditional and urban communities around Australia. For many of these students, English may be a second, or perhaps even a third or fourth language.

Across the world, and within Australia, there are many people who need to learn in English for a variety of reasons, even though it is not the language of their hearth and heart. Students at *Nungalinya* College are motivated to this hard road of second language study of the Bible and other Christian books because they have committed themselves to serving Christ and teaching others about him. It is a hard road, made more difficult by the technical words they encounter throughout Scripture and in their studies. Many of these words are crucially important key terms that allow the special level of discourse needed when we speak about issues of faith and theology. There are words, for example, like Incarnation, or Resurrection, or Trinity; or seemingly straightforward words like Easter, Sacrament or Creed. All of these words are loaded with meaning, often pulling together stories and ideas from the whole Bible, or bringing into one word discussions that have preoccupied the Church since the first century. Even people who grow up speaking English have trouble with some of these potent and frequently occurring words. How much more demanding it is for native speakers of an Australian Aboriginal language, when their vernaculars do not have even a distant relationship to English or its linguistic and cultural ancestors.

As a consequence, students and teachers at *Nungalinya* wrestle constantly with the need for resources that allow the best chance for our students to understand the English they encounter. This *Bible Dictionary* will be of great assistance to both the learning and teaching efforts of our students and teachers. Constructed as it is—in word choice and sentence structure—to meet as far as possible the requirements of this learning community, the text together with the illustrations, in many cases done by the students themselves, will allow students at a beginning level with English to explore and master the building block ideas for talking about theology.

Because much of this text was trialled with *Nungalinya* students, we are confident that it will soon become a welcome resource in theology classes as well as for students studying at home. This volume also has the potential to become a useful language and learning resource in circles far beyond the limits of *Nungalinya* College and its sister institutions. It may even prompt further ideas for the development of useful resources in this particular learning environment. As one who has spent many years in the field of theological education among Indigenous communities, I wholeheartedly welcome the advent of this volume.

Rev Dr Steve Etherington
School of Theology, *Nungalinya* College, Darwin

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ABOUT THIS BOOK

This volume is first of all an English language learning and teaching resource. As a Bible dictionary incorporating selected biblical and theological words, it is intended to assist students and teachers of theology and scripture at *Nungalinya* College, an ecumenical training institute for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians in Darwin.

Students at *Nungalinya* College come from many traditional and urban communities around Australia. They may face particular linguistic challenges studying in English, since English is often a second, if not a third or fourth language. While many Aboriginal people are gifted linguists,[1] this natural giftedness and capacity can more easily be activated with the help of suitable English language learning resources.

The idea for this book arose from discussions held at *Nungalinya* College in Darwin in December 2004, when a meeting was arranged to consider what type of English language resource might be useful to staff and students in the College's theology school. The idea for a dictionary of terms, in suitable language and format, and incorporating a significant artistic and pictorial dimension, was the outcome.

Compilation of the dictionary has been a lengthy process. Words for inclusion were selected by *Nungalinya* College staff on the basis of their occurrence within students' courses. A first draft was subjected to further revisions before being submitted for comment and suggestion to other key persons, including theological and biblical experts from the three participating denominations at *Nungalinya* College. The assistance of all these persons who gave of their time, thought and expertise is acknowledged with gratitude.

This book is intended to help bridge a gap for speakers of English as a second or third language. At the same time, it is recognised that there would be wider potential for its usefulness if it were to be translated into Aboriginal languages. As an eminent Christian church leader declared in recent times, 'the church … in Australia will not be fully the church that Jesus wants … until you [the Indigenous peoples of this land] have made your contribution to [the church's] life and until that contribution has been joyfully received by others'.[2] Hence, any moves to have this material presented through the cultural and linguistic lenses of those First Australians whose languages are in use would be welcome.

The definitions

This dictionary is an introductory resource for a specific learning context. We have therefore sought to provide only the most basic definition for each entry. While theologians and bible scholars from the participating denominations have read the draft and offered suggestions, there may be additional explanations and nuances which members of the different denominations may wish to add in their treatment of words. It is expected that, as a matter of course, teachers will provide whatever extension is deemed desirable.

It is important to bear in mind also the limits and the changing nature of language. Finding the most suitable words to speak the truth about God and the things of God is an ongoing task for theologians of the Christian community, because the mystery of God is ultimately not

1 See RMW Dixon *et al*, *Australian Aboriginal Words in English*, second edition (South Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 2006), 7. Multilingualism was often a consequence of the need to develop proficiency in the languages of neighbouring groups.

2 Pope John Paul II, Address to Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders, Alice Springs, 29 November, 1986.

containable in any language. Moreover, words and their meanings change over the centuries, and as the Christian community constantly strives to move forward in its understanding, it finds new and better ways, more adapted to new times and different cultural circumstances, to express fundamental truths and beliefs. The definitions given in this volume are for the present time in the context of a particular learning community. Nevertheless, the explanations of words listed here are commonly those used in mainstream Christian churches at the present time.

Notwithstanding these necessary qualifications, this resource is offered in the hope that it will provide a useful tool as learners engage with the theology and bible content of their courses. If it were to serve as a bridge to further studies in these fields, we would be glad indeed! In any case, beyond the limitations of this volume, we trust in the power of God's word, read and studied in the light of faith, to achieve its intended effect in the hearts of learners:

> *… the word that goes from my mouth does not return to me empty,*
> *without carrying out my will and succeeding in what it was sent to do.*
> [Isaiah chapter 55 verse 11.]

Gabrielle Kelly
Darwin, Northern Territory
October 2008

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The illustrations — art work, photographs and sketches — are integral to this dictionary. We thank all those who have contributed and who have given permission for the various works to be used. In particular, we thank many *Nungalinya* students whose works are included, M & L Joshua, Peterson Nganjmirra and those whose work appears as part of the Anglican Diocese of Northern Territory collection. *Nungalinya* banners remain the property of *Nungalinya* College.

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We acknowledge with special gratitude the Australian Research Theology Foundation Incorporated (ARTF Inc.) for its generous grant towards costs involved in the production of both the pilot edition and the final version of this Dictionary. That assistance has greatly facilitated the realisation of this language project, in both its verbal and artistic dimensions.

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Adoration

A

ABBA

Meaning: **An Aramaic word that means 'father'. Young children and grown children, as well as adults, used this word to talk lovingly to their father.**
Mark's gospel tells us that Jesus sometimes used this word to talk to God, who is as close as a father. Like Jesus, the first Christians also sometimes used this word to talk to God.

SEE ARAMAIC p 15

Examples: The night before he died, Jesus prayed in the garden of Gethsemane. *He said,* ***Abba,*** *Father, for you all things are possible; remove this cup from me; yet, not what I want, but what you want.*
[Mark chapter 14 verse 36.]

St. Paul wrote: *For all who are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God … When we cry, '***Abba***! Father!' it is that very Spirit bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God …*
[Romans chapter 8 verses 14–16.]

What is the word in your language for God who made everything?.....

Talk about what you call God when you pray.

ADORATION

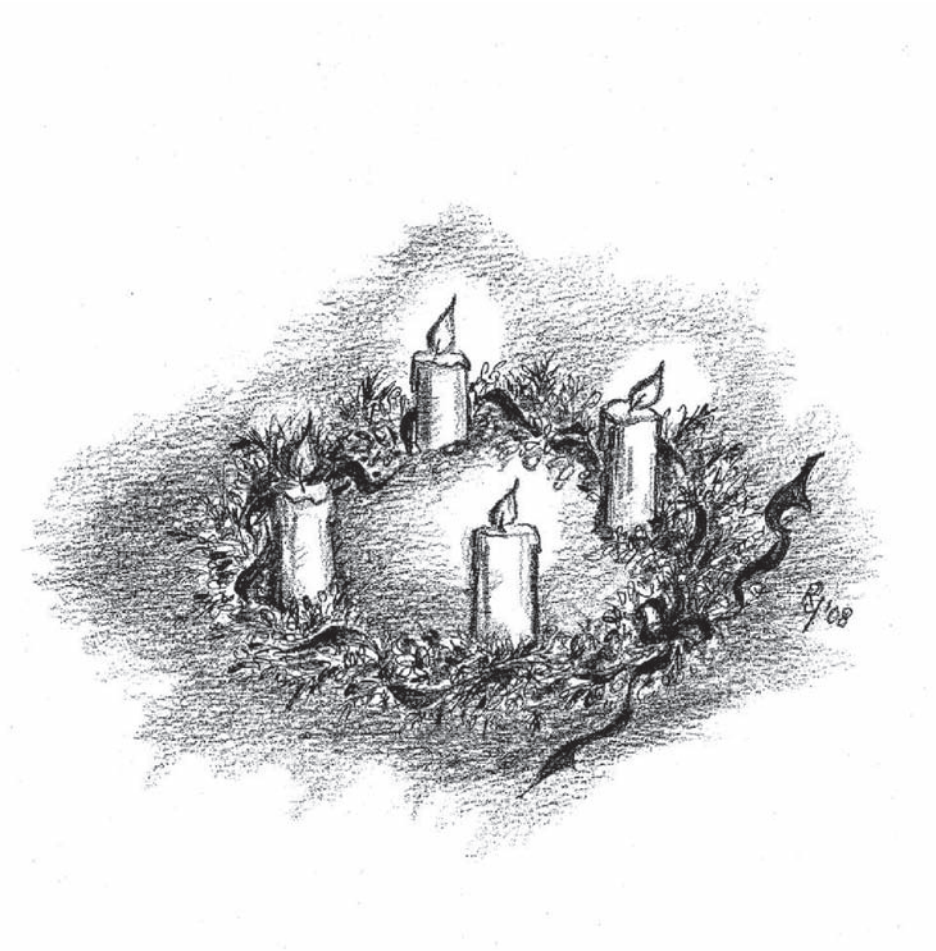
Meaning: **The loving praise and worship we offer to God.**

SEE WORSHIP p 279

Examples: We **adore** God by being grateful for God's love for us, by living good lives, by loving other people, and by worshipping with other people.

John the apostle had a vision of all creatures giving **adoration** to the Lamb: *Then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea … singing, "To the one seated on the throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honour and glory and might forever and ever!" And the four living creatures said, 'Amen!' And the elders fell down and worshipped.*
[Revelation chapter 5 verses 13–14.]

Is there a word like **adoration** in your language?.....



<u>Advent</u> includes the four weeks before Christmas

ADULTERY

Meaning: **Sexual relations between a married person and someone who is not that person's husband or wife is called adultery.**

Example: *You shall not commit **adultery**.* [Exodus chapter 20 verse 14.]

What is the word for **adultery** in your language?.....

Talk about the way **adultery** hurts families and communities.

ADVENT

Meaning: **An advent is when somebody or something arrives.**

Advent is the name of the season in the Church's year when we get ready to remember the 'coming' of Jesus at Christmas, and look forward to his coming again.
Advent is the first season of the Church's year. It includes the four weeks before Christmas.

SEE LITURGICAL YEAR p 157

Examples: The **advent** of alcohol brought great damage to traditional communities.

The first Sunday of **Advent** is usually late in November.

Advent is a time of prayer to prepare for the anniversary of the coming of God's gift to the world, Jesus Christ.

Do you have special times of celebrating the coming of something in your community?

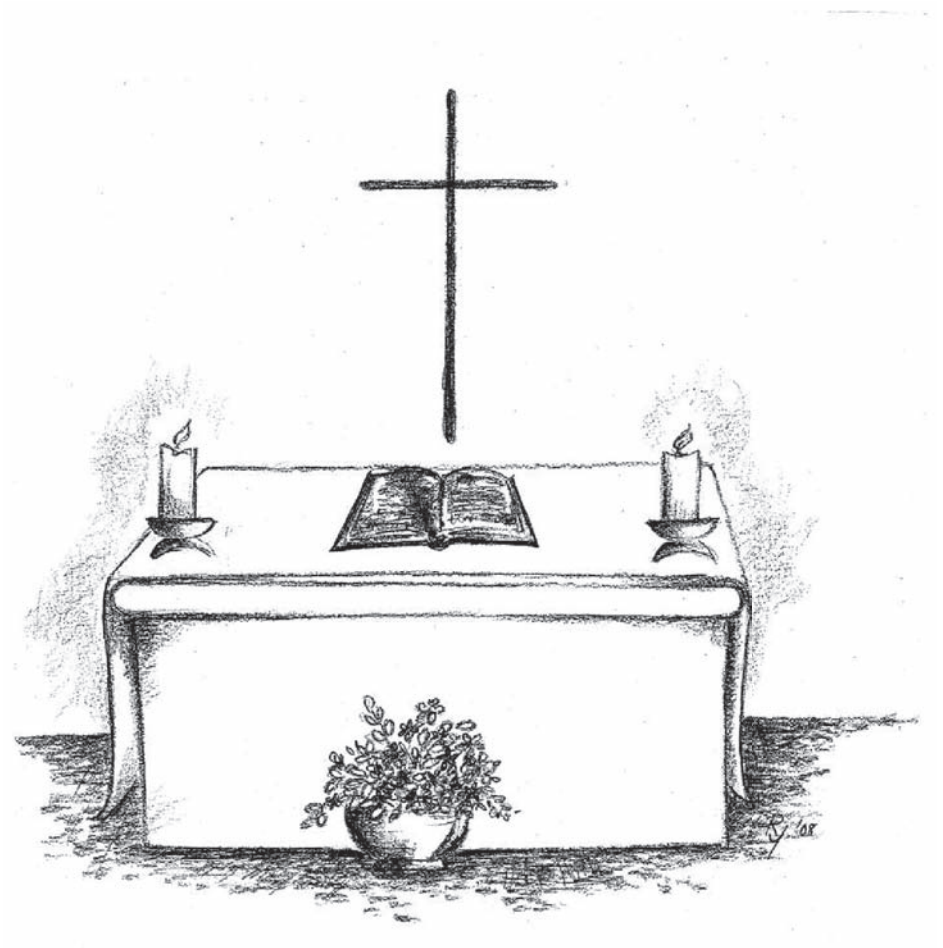
ALLELUIA (also spelt 'Hallelujah')

Meaning: **A word we use when we want to praise God. It is a Hebrew word which means 'Praise be to God!'**

Example: At Easter time, Christians sing many **alleluia** songs, because they are happy that Jesus is risen from the dead.

Is there a word like **alleluia** in your language?.....

Talk about the times you were so happy you wanted to say **'Alleluia!'.**



Altar

New Testament

ALTAR - OLD TESTAMENT

Meaning: **For the Israelites, the altar was the place where they killed animals and offered them to God. They also offered to God wine, corn and other gifts.**

The altar was outside in the open air. It was made of large stones, but sometimes heaps of earth.
Sometimes the altar was a place high up on a rock or hill.

Examples: The Israelites used to offer their sacrifices of animals to God by putting them on an **altar.** [Exodus chapter 20 verse 24.]

For the Israelites, their most important **altar** was in the temple in Jerusalem.

ALTAR - NEW TESTAMENT

Meaning: **In Christian churches, the table, often made of wood or stone, at the front of the church. In some churches, this is also called the Communion Table.**

This is where the priest or minister stands to make the people's offering to God.

Example: In many Christian churches, the people celebrate Communion or Eucharist by putting bread and wine on the **altar.**

Talk about what the **altar** looks like in your church.



Angel

AMEN

Meaning: **Amen means, 'Yes, it is true', or 'I agree'. It is a Hebrew word, and we usually say it at the end of a prayer to show that we agree with the prayer.**

Examples: *Our father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come.*
Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our debts,
As we also have forgiven our debtors.
And do not bring us to the time of trial,
but rescue us from the evil one. [Matthew chapter 6 verses 9–13.]
Amen.

I knew he had finished praying when he said **'Amen.'**

In your language, how do you say: Yes, I agree! Is there one word for it, or more than one word? ……

ANGEL

Meaning: **A spirit messenger from God to people.**

Examples: The **angel** Gabriel brought a message to Mary that she would have a child named Jesus. [Luke chapter 1 verse 26.]

After Jesus was tempted in the wilderness, the devil left him, and **angels** appeared and looked after him. [Matthew chapter 4 verse 11.]

Is there a word like **angel** in your language?.....

Talk about what people in your community think about **angels**.