



Wycliffe Today

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God of the unexpected

**AUTUMN
2022**

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- » Partnership development in a world of uncertainty

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Editorial from the CEO



I love the story in the Bible of Paul's shipwreck (Acts 27:1-28:10). It is hard to summarise the full account but it has everything: high hopes and gentle winds, then hurricane winds and a violent battering. Cargo is thrown overboard and most of those aboard experience complete despair. The ship runs aground and is smashed to pieces. Paul and his fellow prisoners manage to escape being killed by the sword, and then death by drowning, eventually being washed up on an unknown beach. To put it simply, just about everything that could go wrong did go wrong.

But the amazing thing in this story is Paul's response to these completely disrupted plans. He was supposed to be going to Rome to make his defence of the gospel message. Instead, he finds himself on an unknown island a long way from home and with a deadly snake latched onto his hand. It would be very easy to have a bad attitude about these dramatically changed circumstances but Paul serves a God whose thoughts are not our thoughts and whose ways are not our ways (Isaiah 55:8). While on Malta, God uses Paul in amazing ways to influence the chief official of the island with the gospel and to heal many sick people. You get the feeling that this was not an accident. God had a reason for sending Paul there.

In this edition of *Wycliffe Today*, we celebrate the God who is still God despite disrupted plans. What do you do when COVID-19 shuts down all international travel? What do you do when you think you were headed for Mexico and you end up in Darwin? How do you remain patient on an isolated island when Rome is calling you? I hope from our stories that you will be encouraged to embrace 'disruption' and serve your God to the fullest in every situation in which he might place you.

Max Sahl



Like you, we believe in Wycliffe's mission. For over 22 years, our pre-paid funerals have continued to create hope from sadness, because our profits are proudly re-invested back into Wycliffe's work. Find out more at bethelfunerals.com.au/wycliffe



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Transformed by the Word

Expecting the God of the unexpected

by Lyn Wake

But, O my soul, don't be discouraged. Don't be upset. Expect God to act! For I know that I shall again have plenty of reason to praise him for all that he will do.

Psalm 42:11a (TLB)



Can you recall a time when unexpected circumstances suddenly turned your world upside down? Perhaps at the time it was considered a blessing: a financial windfall, a new relationship, or the fruition of a long-held dream. Or maybe it felt like a curse: a serious health diagnosis or the death of something long hoped for.

We have all been dealing with unexpected twists and turns over the past couple of years. I wonder if we are becoming more attuned to 'expecting the unexpected' as the pandemic unfolds? While it may be scary, this unexpected season offers us the opportunity to learn more about God's character and our own place in his overarching story.

We are not alone in holding incomplete expectations about how God acts in his world. God's people were expecting the Messiah but I'm sure nobody in their wildest dreams expected a poor, unknown teenage girl to birth the King of kings - with no alternative but an animal trough for his bed!

Did anyone in Jesus' time expect his ministry to oppose the religious order of the day? Were they anticipating a suffering Saviour? No way! Yet Jesus willingly submitted himself to brutal crucifixion to take away the sins of the world. He became the living, resurrected Lord who intercedes for us at the right hand of God through all our unexpected detours. Gloriously and gratefully unexpected.

Friends, if I have learned anything through this season of the unexpected, it is this: like a 'can't put down' novel full of the unexpected, we can expect God's redeeming love story to beautifully resolve and usher in our ultimate happily-ever-after. Even while various triumphs and troubles continue to roll in, Jesus invites us to co-labour with his Spirit, using unexpected ways and means as he makes all things new.

So, whether we initially view something unexpected as a blessing or a curse, we can entrust the final outcome to the good God of the unexpected. With confidence, let us expect him to act in unexpected ways for our mutual joy and Christ-filled glory.

Be transformed by the Word as you engage with: **Psalm 42**

Prayer: My God, help me remain soft-hearted and open to your unexpected plans. May I find myself secure in your love as I place my hope in you alone.

Discover...

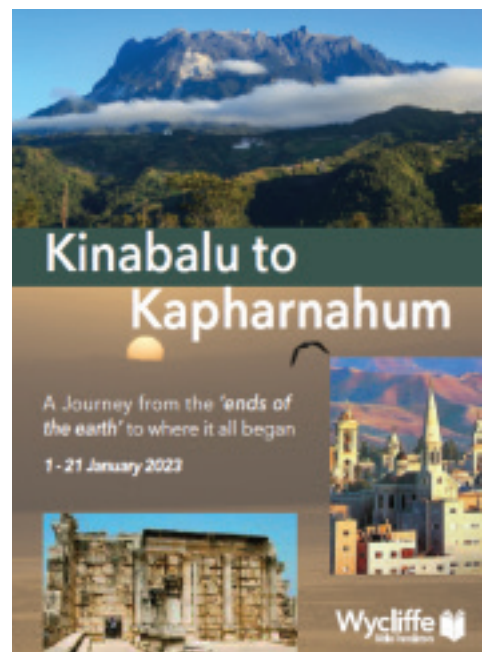


13 June - 8 July 2022

Discover the sounds and structures of other languages, practise proven techniques for learning them and prepare yourself to cross cultures. Benefit from our expert linguists in a hands-on, four-week residential course on the outskirts of Melbourne. Full-time, part-time, distance, accredited and non-accredited options available.

For more information go to:
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Kinabalu to Kapharnahum (K2K) Study Tour



Join the 2023 Study Tour of the Holy Land: a journey 'from the ends of the earth' to where it all began!

Contact Tour Leader, Keith Benn, for more information: keith_benn@wycliffe.org.au

The Bible brought to life in the Holy Land ... and hotel quarantine

PHOTO: ROBERT BYE

by Nicole Jansezian, Israel

A new phenomenon has developed here in the Holy Land: tourists are finding it hard to leave. Literally.

Registering its highest numbers of infections in January since the pandemic began, Israel became the world leader in per capita infections – registering more new cases in January alone than all of 2021. At the same time, the Israeli government decided to reopen the borders to tourism early in January, under strict conditions. The tourists are now coming back, but the limited influx means that they have many sites and even entire hotels to themselves. Groups travel as a contained ‘capsule’ to reduce exposure to coronavirus.

The Wycliffe Australia Israel Study Tour 2022, however, may have set a new record when 10 of the original 20 on the trip found themselves positive for COVID-19 after a mandatory PCR test prior to flying out. That meant a five-day quarantine and then several more days waiting for the few-and-far-between flights out of the Holy Land.

Keith Benn, a Wycliffe Australia member and SIL International translation consultant led the tour. He spoke to *All Israel News* from his ‘corona hotel’ room and offered a bright side to the situation:

The challenges have actually made the trip better, not worse. An easy trip is not necessarily the best trip. In fact, it’s been good being in hotel quarantine – we’ve been able to recover, think back over what’s happened in the last three weeks, share and pray together and we’re leaving here with a medical certificate saying we’ve recovered from coronavirus.

After their release from the quarantine facility, the 10 who had to quarantine were moved to the Austrian Hospice in Jerusalem’s Old City to await their flights out. Despite their unexpected challenges at the end of the trip and many of them needing to get back home to family and jobs, everyone in the group said they would do it all again. Margaret Peters said the challenges of travel were not daunting to her. In fact, it was worth the life-changing revelations they picked up as their tour guide and other experts described the various biblical sites.

She recounted the wonder of a group member from Africa who had been translating the Bible into his own language for years but on this trip saw an Israeli fig tree and pomegranates for the first time.

The team consisted of four Tanzanian trainee translation consultants, one Kenyan trainee translation consultant, one Filipino translation consultant and 14 Australians. The trip is designed to help Australian Christians understand the great need for Bible translation around the world and to give national translation consultants and trainees an opportunity to see the Holy Land, to help them in their work of Bible translation.



PHOTO CARE OF MALCOLM BARKER

While most tourists say that the Bible comes to life when coming to the Holy Land, that same impact can serve to transform biblical language for a translator – literally bringing the Word of God to life. Keith Benn said this happened to him with the Parable of the Sower. The story makes little sense in Australia, where farming looks different. But when the tour guide showed them the tiered, rocky soil of the land in Israel and how those levels were transected by paths on which these seeds would have been thrown, Jesus’ words were illuminated in real life: ‘He showed us the path, the rocky soil,’ Benn said. ‘It was so obvious these seeds would dry up.’

With this sort of revelation, and undeterred by challenges, Wycliffe is boldly booking another trip in January 2023.

MORE

This article is an abridged and adapted version of the original story by *All Israel News* reporter, Nicole Jansezian. For the full story, visit the website rb.gy/orujjc.

MORE

For information about the 2023 tour, go to wycliffe.org.au/events/k2k-kinabalu-to-kapharnahum/

God's plan is better

PHOTOS: GARY MCMASTER

by Deb Fox

Greg and Rachel Shipp were set to arrive in Mexico in August 2020 with their two young daughters.

The family was preparing to work with indigenous language communities in the Southern Mexican town of Oaxaca (Wa-ha-ca) but those plans had to change when COVID-19 hit the world stage. The Shipp's are now working in Maningrida, Northern Territory, with the Australian Society for Indigenous Languages (AuSIL). They share with *Wycliffe Today* about what they are discovering as they trust in God throughout uncertain times.

You were so close to heading to Mexico before the pandemic hit. How did you feel when your plans had to be put on hold?

Both: Like many others around the world, we were disappointed in the disruption. We were just getting into the swing of raising support and spruiking Mexico. Suddenly, we were faced with the question of 'what now?' Then we spoke with Wycliffe about other possibilities and discovered that AuSIL needed help with language survey work in the Northern Territory.



What are you doing in the Northern Territory?

Greg: My assignment in Mexico was going to be working in the National Finance Office – a chance to use the maths skills and knowledge from what I've studied in a location where Rachel could use her linguistic skills as well. Mexico seemed like a situation that was specially made for us and our family. But I came to Maningrida without a specific role. That was both a humbling and an unsettling experience. Then one day, I was talking with the finance people at AuSIL. I discovered that they needed help in their finance department so it was a simple decision to join the team.

Rachel: I am currently a Language Survey Worker, assessing different Bible translation needs for communities in the Northern Territory. I will be doing the same role if we end up getting to Mexico, so this is a great training opportunity. I studied Social Research at uni and we were taught specific research steps to go through when interviewing people about their language needs. But I have mainly been getting the research done 'on the side', asking people questions in the context of our conversations. The church has been asking for help so I am being led by what they want. It slows the work down but it makes sense – the people are so relational. I had no idea how much translation work there was still to do in Australia! There are 10 languages here in Maningrida alone. So far, I have looked at all 10, narrowed the focus down to two, and then focused on one.



What is your advice for others struggling with a change of plans or circumstances?

Both: God doesn't care about the specifics. You might feel like 'the plan' for your life has been sidetracked but God has everything under control. We had the plan to get to Mexico in 2020 for a number of years and it was looking good until COVID-19 happened. We had to come up with a 'Plan B' but having been in Maningrida for a while now, we have come to see how God is using this time to prepare us. His plan is always better!

Please pray:

- for more workers to join the team
- that God would provide what is needed for the work to continue
- that Indigenous communities would get the support they need
- that the Shipp's will keep trusting God for the future.



Check out the video of Greg and Rachel 'God knew better' at bit.ly/Godknewbetter

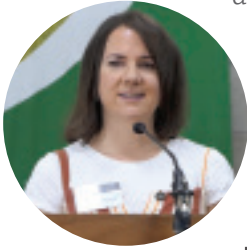
TRUSTING GOD

in times of suffering and uncertainty



by Susanna Baldwin

I've always had a love for words, communication and language.



For a long time, I didn't really have a vision for using those gifts in a ministry context. But around 10 years ago, I started feeling the pull to leave my secular career and invest in some kind of vocational Christian work. As I sorted through what that might look like, I quickly came to see Bible translation as a good fit for the interests and skills God had given me.

I'm currently in Darwin and working on the Plain English Version (PEV) translation project, in partnership with the Australian Society for Indigenous Languages. My original plan was to serve with SIL in Ethiopia, but I only made it to Ethiopia for ten days last year before COVID-19 hit and Wycliffe began recalling its overseas staff. Being so new on the field, and with the SIL offices and language school closing down, it was an easy (if disappointing) decision to leave Ethiopia and wait out the pandemic in a more familiar environment.

I headed to the UK, where I kept my mum company through several lockdowns and continued working on a book-writing project (which is still ongoing). The book is based on some research I did at Bible college on Job's three friends – the famous 'miserable comforters'. In it, I ask the question: what does it mean to be a 'good' comforter? My aim is to draw on the lessons of Job and his friends to help equip the everyday Christian to speak into other people's suffering with both compassion and biblical clarity.

Towards the end of 2020, with Ethiopia still looking uncertain, I started to talk with Wycliffe about the possibility of an interim assignment back in Australia. They suggested the PEV as a project that I could slot into without the need for prior language study or lengthy cultural orientation. I was very thankful for the opportunity, and have thoroughly enjoyed being part of the team here.

When we watch the devastation wreaked by COVID-19 across the world, we can wonder what God is thinking and doing in the midst of so much suffering. The pandemic certainly pushed me to think more concretely about what it means for God to be 'in control' of a world in pain.

I love how the Bible so often reminds us of the simple truth that God is God and we are not. Job is a great book for this! In chapter 26 verse 14, Job recounts God's absolute command over the most vast, ethereal aspects of creation. At the end of it all, he says: 'And these are but the outer fringe of his works; how faint the whisper we hear of him!' How can we not trust and rest in a God like that?

Please pray:

- for God's guidance to produce a translation that is faithful to his truth, while being clear and understandable to readers
- I would be motivated and energised by the gospel, over and above my love of analysing Bible texts and playing with words
- for discernment about my future – whether to eventually serve in Ethiopia or continue longer-term work among Australia's Indigenous language speakers.

10

International Decade of Indigenous Languages

The next ten years (2022-2032) have been declared the International Decade of Indigenous Languages by the United Nations. Wycliffe Bible Translators Australia is privileged to be helping language communities throughout the world discover their value and worth in God's eyes through access to Scripture in languages they understand best.

MORE

For more information, go to
wycliffe.org.au/international-decade-of-indigenous-languages/

Bibles and backpackers in the Outback: opportunities to spread seeds for the gospel

PHOTOS: GARY MCMASTER

by Deb Fox

David and Ming Fang Strickland live in Central Australia and work alongside Anmatyerr speakers to help them translate Scripture and engage with God's Word.

Last year, the Anmatyerr Mini Bible which they have been working on for 18 years was published with the help of The Bible Society and dedicated in four communities. Ming Fang says that the Mini Bible is incredibly important to the people:

The dedication made people feel like this is a new milestone for them. We have published Mark and John, the seven letters and Luke and Acts. When you put them all together in one book, people feel it is significant. We are very pleased seeing this publication come to life.

The Mini Bible dedication opened opportunities for Anmatyerr people to engage with Scripture. Ming Fang notes:

I have received requests from many ladies to start a Bible study. We already had Mark's Gospel, John's Gospel and seven letters in audio format and now we would like to add Luke's Gospel and Acts so we will have the whole recording of the Mini Bible. We will have audio and digital versions to add to a website so that people can download. We want every Anmatyerr person to know the Bible is there for them to use.

Ming Fang also runs painting workshops for Anmatyerr women to read God's Word and connect with it in a way and in a format that relates closely with their culture. However, it is not just the Anmatyerr people the Stricklands have been able to reach. A 'backpackers ministry' has been making an impact on visitors to Alice Springs, especially those from overseas when they were unable to travel home during worldwide lockdowns. Ming Fang says she started a Chinese Bible study in 2015, which then expanded to a much larger international group:

I just felt that I would like to talk to them and make them feel welcomed. We share testimonies, personal stories and a meal together then finish by worshipping in a number of different languages.

Now a team of young volunteers is working with Ming Fang. In 2020, the group set up emergency aid for backpackers who lost their jobs due to COVID-19 lockdowns. With the help of local churches and businesses, over \$18,000 was raised to provide vouchers and essentials for anyone in need. Ming Fang says the backpacker ministry numbers can go up and down but the people always leave changed:

Language and culture are living things. Just like people, language and culture are always changing. Every language and culture is unique but deep in the heart of each person, they need God. The unique challenges in the past two years have helped us spread seeds for the gospel here in Australia and (eventually) throughout the world.



Please pray:

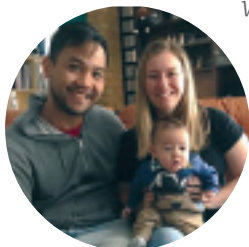
- for safety as the Stricklands visit communities in Ti Tree, Mount Allen, Six Mile and other smaller communities
- for financial support to develop more resources that help Anmatyerr speakers connect with God and his Word.

MORE

For more information on supporting David and Ming Fang, go to [wycliffe.org.au/david-mingfang/](https://www.wycliffe.org.au/david-mingfang/).

Partnership development in a world of uncertainty

Paul and Nicola Mangohig are Wycliffe Australia members preparing to head to Vanuatu to work with SIL in a translation, Scripture engagement and community development project.



The Mangohigs moved to Darwin in 2020 to be closer to Paul's family. While they continue working, they have also started raising financial and prayer support, and raising an energetic toddler.

Nicola says that networking with churches and organising partnership development during a worldwide pandemic has had its share of challenges:

Our biggest struggle right now is trying to stay focused on the Wycliffe stuff and keeping that as our main priority. There's so much change happening just here. Mission doesn't happen in a vacuum – it needs many people working together and supporting one another. We came to get a supporter base here and we felt such a peace about moving here at the beginning of the lockdowns and everything.

The time of waiting has been difficult for the family. Nicola adds:

There were so many unknowns – we didn't know when the borders would reopen, we didn't have a date for when we would be leaving. **How do you share your plans with people so they can support you when you don't even know what those plans will be yourself yet?** Nothing is certain. People want information about when you'll be leaving, where you'll be staying, what you'll be doing. We have this goal, this desire God has put in our hearts and he is very clearly orchestrating everything. Yet we had no idea when all these things would happen because there were so many moving pieces. I kept asking: 'What can I do right now?'

One of the things the Mangohigs have chosen to focus on during their time of waiting is creating greater connections with the community around them. Nicola has joined a basketball team and is using it to grow relationships with the other members. Paul is the official supporter and unofficial 'mascot' for the club.

This has created opportunities to encourage new friends and share the gospel. Nicola has also started a catering business called Mango Spice focused on vegan, gluten free and nut free biscuits and platters. As well as generating a small amount of income, the business is helping to support local businesses and share about the needs of translation in the Territory and eventually in Vanuatu. Nicola shares:

I've met so many wonderful people through the business. It's taken off much quicker than I thought it would! It's another avenue we're using to connect with people and, when opportunities arise, share about our heart for mission and translation.

Paul adds that the time of uncertainty has actually helped them to pray and wait on God for guidance. He says:

We sensed that our time in Darwin was coming to an end. Now, we're aiming to raise the required financial support by the end of this year then head off to Vanuatu by early January next year (God willing, of course). After a time of waiting, we now have a direction and a goal that allows us to focus on God's plans for our future.

When they get to Vanuatu, Paul is planning to be a translation advisor and Nicola will be working in the area of Scripture Engagement. The Director of SIL Vanuatu recently contacted the couple and asked if they could be there in June for training. The Mangohigs were planning to go but the discovery of another baby on the way has meant that they will be in Australia for the birth of their second child.

Seven of us were preparing to go over to Vanuatu (including Wycliffe members Jared and Bethany Killey). We were asked to attend orientation and then come back [to Australia] for support raising but God has us here for a bit longer before that goal can come to fruition. We're just enjoying making connections and trying to reflect Jesus with others while we wait.

MORE

For more information about Paul and Nicola, or to support them, go to wycliffe.org.au/paul-nicola/



Ministry Resourcing

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Wycliffe Bible Translators 

What is Wycliffe Ministry Resourcing?

Wycliffe Australia's Ministry Resourcing department seeks to support the work of our members and organisational partners on the field. We are committed to building strong relationships, with an emphasis on mutual respect, trust, collaboration and prayer. Our three main objectives are to:

- work closely with national Bible translation organisations under the Next Step Development initiative
- support strategic partnerships with SIL International
- support Australian members on the field with their project needs.

Training the trainers

The past couple of years have shown us how important it is to train and equip local leaders so that programs vital to their communities can continue without the need for outside assistance. While the pandemic has created additional challenges for many of our partner organisations, be encouraged by the unexpected opportunities that are opening up! The projects featured in this edition of Ministry Resourcing focus on literacy and Scripture training throughout the world, as well as supplying facilities and resources to support these projects as they grow.

Cameroon North Literacy Project 8878 (WRDF)

WYCLIFFE
RELIEF AND
DEVELOPMENT
FOUNDATION
PROJECT

TAX-DEDUCTIBLE



This project aims to strengthen literacy programs in eight communities in the north of Cameroon. These communities are among the poorest and most illiterate in the country. They have a strong attachment to their language, which is still the main language of communication in their territory.

Each community will select and send two people to 'train-the-trainer' and 'functional literacy' sessions that will be held each year for three years. The trainers will be coached and mentored by SIL specialists. They will also help to translate, into their own languages, key books that deal with the critical problems their communities are facing.

The key objective of this project is to empower local literacy leaders to run literacy programs without continued input from SIL. The training will enable programs to become more self-sufficient and sustainable in the long-term. It is also vitally important that local speakers are trained, given the fluid security situation in the region.

Target: A\$25,000 for 2022

Next Step Development Projects

The mission of Next Step Development is to hear and understand what God has put on the hearts of our national colleagues, and through prayer to come alongside and support their vision and strategies for Bible translation. Next Step is currently working in close relationship with Wycliffe Global Alliance partners from PNG, Vanuatu, Solomon Islands, Indonesia, Philippines and two countries in South Asia.

To see more Next Step projects, go to wycliffe.org.au/projects/

Wycliffe Relief and Development Foundation Projects

Wycliffe Relief and Development Foundation is a separate company owned by Wycliffe Australia, which works through local partners to improve the practical aspects of life in marginalised communities. We aim to demonstrate Christian compassion and provide practical assistance in literacy and education, disaster relief, medical and basic health support. Donations to the Foundation are tax-deductible.

For WRDF projects, visit the WRDF website wycliffefoundation.org.au

Wycliffe Field Support Projects

Wycliffe Australia is committed to helping our field teams and the organisations they work with to thrive and serve effectively in their communities. Ministry Resourcing can help with providing funding for computers, village housing, travel costs, delivery of training, consultants and other services.

See more projects at wycliffe.org.au/projects/

Ubuo Training Centre and Dorm Papua New Guinea

Project 8520 (WFSP)

WYCLIFFE
FIELD SUPPORT
PROJECT



Wycliffe member, Hanna Schulz, is the Bible translation advisor to the Kope people in Papua New Guinea. In 2020, Hanna was able, through the generous support of donors, to build and open the Orioi'io Madei (Living Word) Training Centre in her village of Ubuo.

The Centre has already proven to be a blessing to the Kope translation team as they near the completion of Luke's Gospel. At the end of 2021, workshops were held to train vernacular literacy teachers, as well as a Scripture Use workshop. Hanna recently held a two-week Vernacular Creative Phonics course. The team was pleasantly surprised when 50 people showed up to attend the course. The desire to improve literacy and Bible literacy was so great that they had to turn some people away and plan for more workshops to meet demands.

In 2022, the plan is to hold more literacy and Scripture Use workshops, as well as to reach out to neighbouring languages through a multi-language project teaching Oral Bible Storytelling (OBS).



OBS trains people to internalise Bible stories so that they can clearly, accurately and naturally retell them in their own language. These workshops will enable several languages to start getting God's Word in their own language groups very soon.

In addition to the training, there is an urgent need to provide accommodation for those who travel to attend the courses. While the community has been able to host participants for the occasional workshop, the increasing number of workshops makes for an immediate need for a dormitory to be built. Ideally, the dormitory would be ready for the first OBS workshop, planned for May 2022. Please prayerfully consider supporting this vital second phase of the project so that the Training Centre can be a blessing to many people from neighbouring areas.

Target: A\$66,700

To support this project, go to:

wycliffe.org.au/projects/ubuo-training-centre-png/



South East Asia Church-based Literacy NSD Project 8818 (NSDP)



Ambon Scripture Engagement Project 8817 (WFSP)



The literacy needs are great among Bunong-speaking communities in Cambodia - most people are unable to read or write, even in their own language. Literacy rates in Bunong and in the country's official language of Khmer need to improve so that conversations with authorities and commercial organisations protect the communities' interests.

The Northeast Community Education and Development Organisation (NCED) is a local partner organisation committed to supporting communities with these needs. The Church-based Literacy Program is assisting the Bunong people by providing culturally-appropriate literacy programs through local churches to people of all ages. Running the program through local churches also helps Bunong people to read Scripture in their own language. The program has been so successful that it has recently expanded from running in seven churches to twelve, meaning more teachers and resources are required to meet the needs.

Bunong communities have also been affected by COVID-19, creating an urgent need to communicate health advice to better protect them from outbreaks and to manage any cases that develop. NCED has been involved in this important work with translated written materials and visits to villages (when permitted).

Target: A\$27,849

To support this project or for more information, go to:

wycliffe.org.au/projects/south-east-asia-church-based-literacy-nsd-project/



The Ambonese Malay New Testament is scheduled to be published in 2022. God has brought together a great team of people to promote the new translation and help people to use it and apply it in their lives.

The Ambonese Malay Scripture Engagement team is passionate about seeing God's Word at work among the people of Maluku. The team is highly sought after for their training workshops that are designed to meet the needs of the local churches. Topics include trauma healing, overcoming addiction, conflict resolution, parenting, and using local language in ministry. At each workshop the team teaches, prays and leads worship in Ambonese Malay, enabling participants to experience the transforming power of God's Word in their own language.

An important part of their work during 2022 will be running a series of workshops to introduce the newly published Ambonese Malay New Testament to churches and showing how it can be used in teaching and discipleship.

Target: A\$8,722

For more information, go to:

wycliffe.org.au/projects/ambon-scripture-engagement-project/



If you would like to discuss any of the Ministry Resourcing projects, please contact:

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Or call (03) 9712 2777