

# South Pacific



## New Caledonia Bibles

### Overview

Bible Society in the South Pacific is co-ordinating this project to see the translation of the Old Testament in Ajie, the New Testament in Nelemwa, and the digitisation of existing Bible translations among three other languages spoken in New Caledonia, to reach more speakers of each language with God's word.

### The Need

In meeting with church leaders and community elders, a great need for Bible translation among the people and languages of New Caledonia has been made known. The people are mainly Christians and are very supportive of the Christian message. There is a great demand for printed Scriptures to benefit those living in the rural areas and outskirts of the main towns.

In addition to this, the population of New Caledonia is young, with 48% of the population 24 years old and younger. These young people speak both their common national languages and their indigenous languages and, since a good number of young people are tech savvy, there is a great need for the production of the Bible as an electronic text. The ongoing work of digitising and reviewing the Bibles that were first translated by the early missionaries and translating/adapting the Scriptures into contemporary languages is crucial in meeting the needs of the young population.

More specifically, there are needs in five language groups for Bible translation. In the Ajie language (spoken by 4,000 – 5,000 people) the draft translation of the Old Testament has been completed and needs finalising, which will complete a full Bible. In the Nelemwa language (1,000 speakers), a draft translation of the New Testament has been completed in the major dialect of the community in 2021 and needs to be finalised. In the Drehu language (12,000 speakers), the laai language (the 6th-most-spoken language of New Caledonia, with 4,078 speakers), and the Nengone language (8,000 speakers) there is a need for proofreading and checking of the scanned digital Bible texts, after which the Bibles can be published electronically.



# 285k

people live in New Caledonia (2020, UN data).

# 48%

of the population are 24 years old and younger.

# 97%

of adult population (aged 15 years and above) in New Caledonia are literate.

# 99.7%

the overall youth literacy rate.

## Goals

The goals of this project cover five languages spoken in New Caledonia. There are many Bible translation goals for this country, which this project seeks to address, including proofreading the scanned text of previous Bible translations, correcting old typo and spelling errors caused by old translation inconsistencies, and scan errors due to old ink stains and faulty fonts.

This project aims to complete translation work and publish a complete Ajie Bible by 2025

and publish the Nelemwa New Testament in 2026.

The project will also work to publish electronically the revised Drehu Bible by 2024; the revised Iaai Bible by 2026; and the revised Nengone Bible by 2025.

The plans for 2023 include: for the Ajie Old Testament, an internal review of the draft translation of Genesis – Malachi; for the Nelemwa New Testament, an internal review to be launched; for the proofreading

of the Drehu Bible, a visit from a Translation Consultant to continue reviewing the Wordlist of which 35% has been checked and corrected; for the proofreading of the Nengone Bible, a visit from a Translation Consultant to continue to pursue checking and correction of the Wordlist, which is 10% complete; and the launching of the proofread project for the Iaai Bible.

## Impact

The total number of people this project aims to impact with Bible translation is 285,000. This is based on the population of New Caledonia.

The audience will be engaged by the Bible translation during the lifetime of the project, with language speakers involved at the translation stage as well as the review and checking of the translation process.

The people of New Caledonia who speak these five languages will understand the Scriptures better and be more able to apply them to their lives.

## Prayer Needs

- Pray for New Caledonia and its people, pray for church leaders and the Bible Translation work and its successful completion.
- Pray for a replacement for the current Translation Coordinator to better coordinate the work.
- Pray for meaningful engagement with the Scriptures in New Caledonia.

