

Tongan Translation



Tonga

Project: 102799
Non-Tax-Deductible

Overview

Bible Society Australia is supporting Bible Society in the South Pacific to deliver a contemporary Tongan Bible and revise two legacy translations so God's Word is clear, accurate and widely accessible in print and digital formats. The Contemporary Bible prioritises natural, everyday Tongan so younger people and new Bible readers can engage deeply, while revisions of the West and Moulton editions serve churches that prefer those texts. Together, these streams aim for broad, cross-denominational use and long-term Scripture engagement across Tonga and its diaspora.



The Need

Church leaders and communities in Tonga have asked for Scripture that reflects today's Tongan, alongside digitised editions, so more people can read and understand the Bible easily. The 2022 Hunga Tonga–Hunga Ha'apai eruption and tsunami intensified needs for hope, trauma recovery and strong church discipleship. Social challenges, including family breakdown, youth disengagement and unemployment, further underline the importance of clear, trusted Scripture that churches can use together. Providing contemporary and revised Tongan Bibles (and publishing them digitally) addresses both access and understanding for a highly literate nation with strong church participation.

- ~103,300 is the population of Tonga
- 99.4% adult literacy rate
- ≈98% of the population identifies as Christian, with church attendance is culturally very high

Goals

The goal of this project is to make a contemporary Tongan Bible available in print and electronic formats, giving people access to Scripture in clear, everyday language. The project also aims to publish a revised edition of the Tongan Bible (West translation), including updated book introductions and section headings to support the churches that use it.

In 2026, the project will progress all four Tongan Scriptures through their final publication stages. The **Contemporary Bible** will have its checks completed and move through typesetting, printing and shipping, with a full launch planned by the end of the year.

The **Tongan Revised West Bible** will be typeset, printed and prepared for launch. The **Kosipeli Katolika (Catholic edition)** will be typeset early in the year, then printed, shipped and prepared for launch. The **Tongan Moulton Bible** will be printed, cleared and launched during 2026.

Impact

This project aims to impact a total of 80,000 people, and is strengthening Bible accessibility across Tonga by providing clear, contemporary Scripture and refreshed editions of well-loved translations. Over time, it is expected to support deeper engagement with God's word across denominations, generations and communities, especially as digital formats widen access for Tongans both at home and in the diaspora.

In 2025, significant progress was made through a three-day community review involving 16 participants who helped refine the **Contemporary Bible**, an experience the Translation Consultant described as "a joyful occasion" as errors were identified and corrected. The revision of the **West Bible** continued with careful re-positioning of subheadings across chapters, and the **Moulton edition** was fully typeset and prepared for printing. Churches across different traditions continued to support the work, affirming the need for translations that serve all congregations.

Impact in Numbers

16

community reviewers participated in a three-day Tongan Contemporary Bible review workshop in November 2025.

3

major translation streams (Contemporary, West, Moulton) advanced to typesetting, printing or launch-stage readiness in 2025.

96%

overall project progress was recorded by the end of the 2025 reporting period.

Testimony

"The Tongan Contemporary translation project is the one project that has the support and has unified the church leaders in Tonga to work together on the translations of the Bible."

— Mr. Viliami Falekaono, Coordinator of the project

How Your Support Helps

\$45

will help to cover proofreading and typesetting preparation tasks for the Tongan Scriptures.

\$300

will help to cover project travel and reporting needs as the texts move through 2026 publication stages.

\$1,000

will help to support a Bible launch celebration in Tonga, marking the release of new Scripture editions into churches and communities.

"...I came that they may have life and have it abundantly."
— **John 10:10, ESV**