

Literacy in the South Pacific

Most literacy programs run by governments and educational institutions in South Pacific countries are in English. But English is not the heart language of many people and is one reason why children often grow to adulthood with poor literacy. What is needed is literacy training in the people's first language, but the amount of available material is limited.

Christian ministries of various kinds are working towards making the Scriptures available in people's heart language, linking this to literacy training in such a way that children might grow up to have a better knowledge of God through reading his Word. Countries with a predominantly Christian background such as Tonga, Samoa, Vanuatu, New Caledonia and Papua New Guinea all currently have programs to increase literacy in a way that will facilitate people's access to the Word of God.

Bible Society

Myanmar's Bible schools vulnerable

The growth of Myanmar's resistance movement is bringing increasing hostility from the military dictatorship that runs the country. It is increasingly hostile to ethnic minority groups, most of which have a strong Christian component. Now the army is threatening to take young people from ethnic minority groups, especially from Bible colleges, to be porters for goods and ammunition to the front lines of the war. This is so concerning to leaders of Bible colleges in Yangon that some have taken steps to close their colleges and disperse the students around houses in Yangon until they can determine what to do next.

Hope Myanmar

Churches in Bulgaria

Bulgaria, more than most countries, is still suffering from the collapse of the USSR hegemony in the 1990s. Corruption and powerful organized crime syndicates persist, poverty is widespread, and many bright and capable citizens have emigrated in search of jobs and money.

Churches are capable of making a positive impact on the country, but hopes for a better future have been slow to materialise and racial tensions abound. Arab Muslim missionaries from the Gulf States have taken advantage of the post-Soviet vacuum to radicalise young Bulgarians who are disillusioned with the promised prosperity of democracy. The church in Bulgaria values our prayers.

OW/BF

Spiritually impoverished Japan

Japan, one of the world's most technically advanced countries, is also one of the least evangelised. An estimated 98% of the people have no understanding of the Christian gospel. Pray for the many media broadcasts and online services that are still making the gospel known. Churches survive in their own communities but struggle to make an impact on the masses.

FEBC

Africans reaching out

From a purely human point of view, the Ingessana people of Sudan would have little hope of hearing the gospel. They have no Scriptures, no gospel radio broadcast in their language and no *Jesus* film. For most of their recent history, the 100,000 people who identify as Ingessana have been on the run. Many are refugees.

Then, in 2015, missionaries discovered one Christian among the Ingessana people. Now, there are about 30 baptised believers. The group is being disciplined and meeting in a refugee camp in South Sudan.

Throughout Sub-Saharan Africa, 440 unique people groups like the Ingessana have no access to the gospel. These are becoming the focus for new outreach, much of it from Africa itself. More Christians live in Sub-Saharan Africa than in any other part of the world.

New Life

From Uganda

"I am a Bible College lecturer and one part of our Bible training is to have special classes for non-residents. These are people who want to come to college but cannot afford the costs.

"Your books in the library are in great demand, because they are a great resource for people to study and copy. Even though we are in the generation of computer and Internet, the majority of people here don't have a computer and can't go on Internet or websites to read. So I am one of those who believe from experience that physical books are a resource that countries like mine still need badly."

Bridgeway

Christian printing press in Middle East country

In a region of the world where many countries have declared the Bible illegal, the underground church in one Middle Eastern country is printing Bibles in multiple languages and putting them in the hands of persecuted Christians and seekers of the truth among Muslims.

While trekking across rugged frontiers to spread God's Word and grow the underground church, Christian evangelists face serious danger. One of them said, "We get death threats and we face persecution constantly, but we have peace in Jesus. Each day we don't know if we will live or die. Our life is in God's hands."

Through delivering God's Word into the hands of persecuted believers, they are helping new believers grow in their faith, pursue the Great Commission and resist those who violently pressure them to return to Islam.

Global Christian Relief

Disciples of Jesus in Costa Rica

In the Central American country of Costa Rica, the strong evangelical surge that began fifty years ago is not as evident as it once was. Many churches seem to lose almost as many as they gain, partly because of their emphasis on 'soul-winning' without an accompanying commitment to making disciples of Jesus Christ. In places there is a serious deficiency in godly lifestyles and biblical knowledge, despite the good work done nationally through Bible colleges, correspondence courses and radio programs. The Bible Society reports an encouraging demand for the Scriptures.

Operation World

Malawi: 'Satan' man converted

"I had a very good time when we opened a new branch at a remote area. I had to travel by hired pedal bicycle which I cycled for three hours and then walked for 7 km to reach the village. God manifested himself as the Word of God was preached. A man who called himself Satan was converted by one of our elders who lives there. Many people came to see this miracle, since the elder who preached the gospel to this man is blind. So it was a blind man preaching to a man who called himself Satan. At the end of the service nine people came to put their trust in Christ and were baptised. I am now back home, a very happy man."

Bridgeway

Nepal – still moving forward

In Nepal, a country where believers often face hostility, a training program strengthens new Christians in their faith and prepares them to serve their local churches. Courses provide discipleship and leadership development through home study and group discussion led by trained tutors. In the year to July 2023, more than 1,100 students enrolled in courses and 219 Christians were trained as tutors.

Barnabas Fund

Tanzanian challenge

Although Tanzania (pop. 66 million) is a majority Christian country, its chief island Zanzibar (pop. 1.4 million) is 99% Muslim. Zanzibar's government, using its semi-autonomous authority, would like to eradicate Christianity from the island, and to this end appoints Muslim religious officials to important administrative posts. The three-pronged anti-Christian strategy seems to be to promote Islamic education, prevent the establishment of new churches and force pastors to leave the island. Christians have a constant battle to maintain a viable presence.

Meanwhile on the mainland, the church is growing strongly, even amid the economic hardships that most people face. This is despite some overall improvements in the national economy.

Voice of the Martyrs

From an Indian evangelist

"Please keep praying for us and our gospel teams working among these idolatry people. We are winning new souls and then teaching them to be disciples, using Bridgeway books to explain the Bible in these dark regions of India.

"We all love you much for your sacrifice in helping and guiding us. We also give aid to many poor children, orphans and starving widows. And we saw good fruit in the conferences we conducted to teach and encourage church leaders."

Bridgeway

Kurdistan Christians shot

Three Christians, all known for sharing the gospel and discipling new believers, were gunned down in Kurdistan, northern Iraq. These three men came from very different backgrounds – a former Kurdish military member, a government worker and a car mechanic. But they were united in living faithfully for Christ and now in dying for him.

Mission Network News