



## The Gumatj New Testament Reprint

by Margaret Miller

Corrina and Mayalil



The Gumatj Translation Team of 1980s Felicity, Gulumbu, Mutulŋa and Joyce

In the 1970's and 80's the Gumatj Bible project was bathed in prayer by it's church members at Yirrkala Uniting.

In over a decade and a half, a New Testament and portions of the Old were produced; nothing short of miraculous in quantity and quality. It was a special time in the life of the church when the Revival moved throughout NE Arnhem Land and beyond.

Since then, this work has had its challenges; challenges of a 'baby Gumatj' language being favoured in the local school bilingual program, along with the normal environmental challenges of tropical weather causing major deterioration of the excess stock. To find any 1985 copies of the New Testament or the Old Testament today, is like finding 'hen's teeth'! For these reasons, the request to have more copies has long been a cry of the past two decades by those who have valued its words.

Now the two main Gumatj senior women, **Gulumbu** and **Mutulŋa**, who were involved in the earlier work of the Gumatj Bible Translation have gone to be with their Lord. The Bible translator, **Joyce** and assistant, **Felicity** have retired down South. The Gumatj Scriptures are still sought out by it's Gumatj clan today.

So, faced with all these concerns Rosemary **Bändil**, a Gumatj lady, whose husband is a Senior Pastor in Yirrkala homelands, volunteered to proof-read of all the digitised text of the New Testament manuscript during 2016-17. It was wonderful to have Bändil's completed work, with Njändama's and my assistance, to then be entered into the main computer files by **Barry** Martin (Wycliffe). **Stuart** Cameron (Wycliffe/Bible Society) has made this 'clean copy' of the digitised Gumatj New Testament available on Bible Society's website: Aboriginal Bibles..

It was during this time, that Barry had major health issues. We were all in desperate prayer for his recovery!

The following year, Bändil had a massive stroke and has ever since been confined to a wheelchair.

**A PROJECT OF THE NORTHERN REGIONAL COUNCIL OF THE UNITING ABORIGINAL AND ISLANDER CHRISTIAN CONGRESS AND THE UNITING CHURCH IN AUSTRALIA NORTHERN SYNOD**

# The Gumatj New Testament Reprint cont.



**Djawut**, formerly of the Djambarrpuyŋu Translation Team, through familial lines (ie. his mother's clan), has taken up a Yolŋu managerial role with this Gumatj Scriptures and is particularly keen to have an appropriate cover design for its New Testament. At this time, **Louise** Macdonald and Stuart Cameron gave good support to Djawut with illustrations and having them digitised. One Gumatj lady **Mayalil**, with family living in Gove, has been available to answer the detailed queries of Gumatj layout

and final checks on the prepared print-ready copy.

Mayalil is a very competent Gumatj speaker, and is assisting in recording Gumatj Scriptures as well. Her skills as an interpreter in the Yirrkala/Gove community are in high demand. Another Gumatj lady, Dayluŋu has also been giving valuable input into the final checks as she has been eagerly awaiting a print copy of the Gumatj scriptures for several years.

**Louise** Sherman (Bible Society) has been working closely with **Gordon** Thompson (Wycliffe) in typesetting and preparing this edition for printing with Amity Press.

Just this past Wednesday, I had an opportunity to put in requests for prayer for the Northern Synod members / intercessors and mentioned the Gumatj NT needs. This occasion presented to me a taste of the power of corporate prayer that was experienced by those involved in the Gumatj earlier work of the 1980s.

Answers came with so much immediacy; a 'hen's tooth' 1985 copy was located that afternoon in Yirrkala by **Corrina** Loenen (Pioneers) supporting the Gumatj work on the ground at Yirrkala. She needed a 1985 copy in order for the Gumatj ladies to check the new work that has just arrived in the post.

I was able to send through some recommended procedures on what the ladies were to check. The evidence of prayer that day was palpable!

So yes, thankyou for joining us together in prayer to see this new edition through to the finishing line!

Please pray for this very spread-out team of workers, located in Yirrkala, Gove, Elcho Island, Darwin, Adelaide, Brisbane and Alice Springs.

Pray for good communications between all the workers and all that needs to be accomplished.

Pray for the finalising of all that is required regarding printing needs with Amity Press.



# Plain English and World View

Excerpt from a paper by Dr Mally McLellan

The purpose in speaking or writing anything in Plain English is so that the target audience can understand the content of the text. Notice that I am not calling it simple English. That is for semantic reasons. Many people think that Simple English = Simple concepts. But even the most profound concepts can be expressed in clear English – which is why I choose to use the term Plain English.

There are two main areas which inhibit comprehension for people. Difference in worldview and the language used.

No matter how plain the English is, if a concept is not part of the worldview of the person hearing it, they will not understand it. No words exist in any languages for items or concepts which the speakers have not known or experienced. That is why we must get to know the worldviews of the people we are working with if we are going to hope to communicate, even in English.

To develop education around any topic, including the Gospel, we need to come to an understanding of the world view of the people we are educating. It is basic that all education goes from the known to the unknown. Those of us who are educating need to find out what IS known. We need to become literate in the worldview of our students/readers/listeners so we can find bridges from one to the other. We can speak of "knowledge gaps" in our cross cultural understanding of any topic, and try not to make assumptions as to what people know or do not know, but work to find it out.

If a concept is not in our world view, we need specific educating around that topic. I'll give you an example from Yurranydjil:

*"When I first read the dictionary entries for "pupil" and "iris", it was totally new information for me. Because our eyes are so dark, we Yolŋu people see it all as one. So I had to learn the difference between iris and pupil. And together Mally and I had to figure out how to say that in both entries – pupil entry and iris entry. I was peering into Mally's eyes and seeing what happened when she turned to the light and then away from it. I saw that her pupils grew smaller and bigger. All was good until we went to translate the example in the dictionary. Mally had worded it like this:*

*If our pupil grows smaller slowly when a doctor shines a light into our eyes, it may mean that we have a brain injury.*

*If you look at the words in that example, there is nothing difficult, but when I read it I turned to Mally and said, "Wha-a-a-t?" I did not understand what it was trying to say, so how could I translate it? You see, there was implicit information there that I did not know. There was a knowledge gap, and the plainest of language could not help. Can you see what the implicit information might be?"*

Implicit information: Although Yurranydjil now knew about pupils and irises, and that the pupil grows smaller or larger according to the light, she did not know that it was important for the pupil to change quickly. That small knowledge gap created great difficulty for her understanding.

So we then reworded the whole entry to look like this:

*When someone shines a light into our eye, our pupil should grow small quickly. If it grows small slowly, it may mean that something has injured our brain. That is why a doctor shines a light into our eyes when something has hit our head hard.*

The only way we can come to an understanding of each other's worldview, or to find knowledge gaps in our topic of learning, is to sit as adults together and talk things through – dialoguing to find out what is known and what isn't. Standing in front of a group and speaking, or developing visual aids apart from the target audience will not help us to find what is known and to develop bridges from that understanding.

Strangely, some people who need to communicate, think that repeating a message enough times – and maybe a little bit louder – will make it somehow understandable. Lesson: We need to spend time sitting with people to find what knowledge they have, so we know where to begin developing the learning strategies. Never presume an understanding.



Yurranydjil and Mally

# Designing Cross Cultural Competency Training

By Louise Macdonald

In the year of Covid things have had to be done differently, so many of our workshops have sadly had to be cancelled and we pray that our program next year will return to a regular schedule of translation workshops and Scripture in Use programs. In the meantime this year has enabled space for projects that have been on the back burner and one such project has been the planning and design of a two week Cross Cultural Competency training program for workers preparing to live and work with Aboriginal Australians from remote communities. This work is essential as many of us working in the field are familiar with projects that fall over when staff and volunteers move into field work with much energy and enthusiasm but very limited cross cultural competency or orientation.



Note: Balanda are non indigenous people and Yolngu are the Indigenous people of Eastern Arnhemland

This year Coordinate has become an associate member of Missions Interlink (MI) whose mission is to link, equip, serve, inspire and represent mission organisations and churches across Australia. As a privilege of this membership we have been able to significantly contribute to the redesign of their very reputable Transition Training course which is directed at church workers heading into International mission fields. Although this has been a very high quality and successful course it was apparent that it is not fulfilling the needs of workers heading into Aboriginal Australian remote placements.

A chance encounter over dinner in Jabiru with Rachel Borneman who is the MI representative in the Northern Territory has led to a year long redesign process encompassing many partnering organisations such as MAF, Nungalinya and Pioneers and many of the churches in the NT such as the UCA, Anglicans, Baptists, Salvation Army and Pentecostals. With many highly experienced workers involved with Coordinate and all the other participants there has been hundreds of years of collected experience putting effort into this task.

To give you a taste of why cross cultural competency might be a priority, I recently heard this aphorism from Tyson Yunkaporta an indigenous man and author of "Sand Talk: How Indigenous Thinking Can Save The World" and it rang very true. I recognise the Balanda way: we go into an encounter with our agenda and believing that we know what the problem is and how to solve it, we stuff up so we think about it, we reflect, realise we need to connect with people to find out

from them what the problem might be and finally we develop respect. Indigenous people do the opposite. Every encounter they have starts with the need for respect. Then they connect; the opening line of any indigenous conversation will almost always be about relationships. Then they think about the relationships and finally they take action and direct. Learning how to manage these sorts of differences is the business of Cross Cultural Competency training.

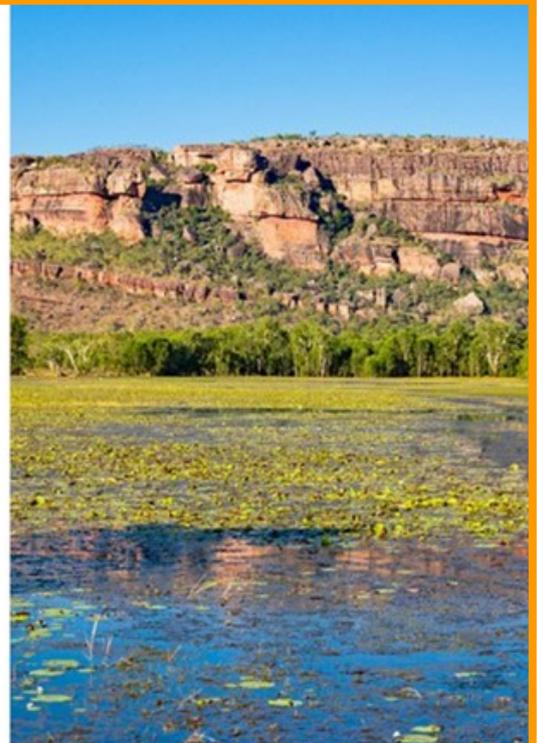
**The Balanda way is to:  
Direct, Reflect, Connect  
and then Respect.**

**The Indigenous way is to:  
Respect, Connect,  
Reflect and then Direct**



# Transition Training

## Remote Indigenous Ministries (T-TRIM)



Are you a Christian, and wanting to live and work with Aboriginal Australians?

Darwin, 2021



### Training Schedule & Content

*\*DISCOUNTED FEE is for MI Members & Associates. These are individuals who are part of an organisation, church and/or ministry that is a Member or Associate of MI.*

#### 19-22 JANUARY 2021

**Living and Working with Aboriginal Australians**

19-21 Jan (2.5 days)

Costs: Registration fee - \$315  
Discounted fee - \$210

**Aboriginal Languages**

21-22 Jan (1.5 days)

Costs: Registration fee - \$175  
Discounted fee - \$115

#### ALL JANUARY COURSES

Registration fee - \$425  
Discounted fee - \$250

#### TERM 2 - Living in Two Worlds (online)

Dates TBA (4 session x 3hr blocks)

Costs: Registration fee - \$220  
Discounted fee - 145

Only for those who have completed Living and Working with Aboriginal Australians

Refund/cancellation policy: \$50 cancellation fee applies.

#### 13 - 16 JULY 2021

**Christian Spirituality in Aboriginal Australian context**  
13-14 Jul (2 days)

Costs: Registration fee - \$300  
Discounted fee - \$200

**Health, Cultural Safety and Chaplains**  
15 Jul (1 day)

Costs: Registration fee - \$150  
Discounted fee - \$100

**Aboriginal Languages**

**Faith & Art**

16 Jul (1 day)

Costs: Registration fee - \$175  
Discounted fee - \$115

#### ALL JULY COURSES

Registration fee - \$550  
Discounted fee - \$340

#### FULL COURSE

**Combination of January 2021, Term 2 & July 2021**

Costs: Registration fee - \$1,050  
Discounted fee - \$700

DEPOSIT is required for Full Course  
\$150 deposit per person to secure your place.  
Note that this is not an extra cost.

All costs are GST free and includes lunch & course materials.  
Accommodation at Nungalinya College at \$60 per night per room & \$20 towards breakfast & dinner.

#### LOCATION:

Nungalinya College, Darwin

**REGISTRATION DETAILS:**  
Registration opening soon

Visit [missionsinterlink.org.au/events](http://missionsinterlink.org.au/events)  
or contact Rachel Borneman

#### CONTACT: RACHEL BORNEMAN

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0412 998 594  
(send a text message first)

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# The Shipp's arrive in Maningrida

By Rachel Shipp

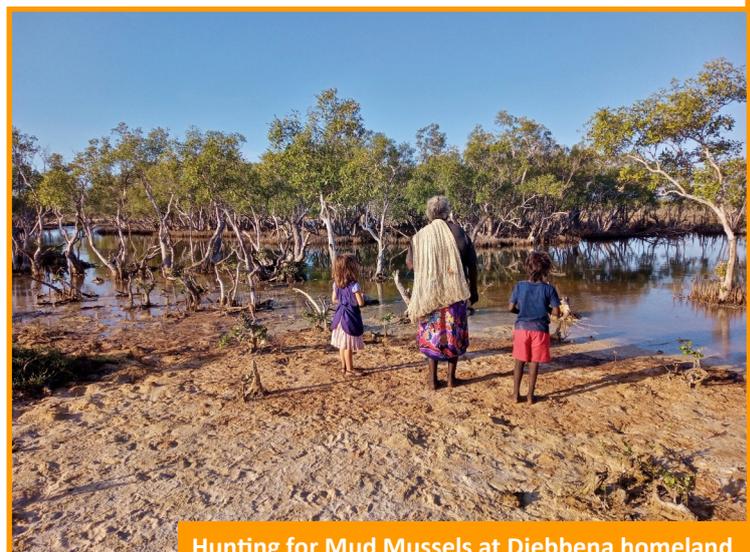


Family Shipp

My husband, and I (and our two little girls) have just started our first assignment with Wycliffe Bible Translators, working in Maningrida in West Arnhem land. Pre-COVID the plan was for us to go to Mexico, but be-

cause of the international travel restrictions we began to ask if there was any work happening in Australia that we could help out with for a year or two. We were surprised to learn that there is a HUGE need for Bible translation work in Australian Indigenous Languages – heaps already happening but a long way yet to go. We are really excited to be here – it's not where we thought we would be or quite the work we thought we'd signed up for, but God knew COVID was coming, and his plans are better than our plans.

What is Maningrida like? Part of me wants to say it's lovely... the physical setting and red dirt/tropical/coastal combination is really special, and traditional culture is so alive and a genuine part of daily life. We love the sea breeze and the mango trees, learning how to fish and about a very different concept of family. But I don't want to paint an overly rosy picture. Being woken every night to the sound of street dogs fighting, or the sounds of domestic abuse, is not so fun. Being woken to clapping sticks and chanting is interesting – until you know it means another person has died. Local Christians speak about their confidence in Christ's transformative power to overcome the negative aspects of society, and I'm inspired by their testimony to the power of prayer. I've also been confronted by the past and current failings of non-Indigenous Australians here (government policy and individual responses) and the relative graciousness of the Aboriginal community to us in light of all of that!



Hunting for Mud Mussels at Djebbena homeland

# Shipp's in Maningrida continued



Fellowship at Maningrida

Maningrida only has a population of 3,000 but for Arnhem land that's huge. It's a regional hub that services a large area where at least 13 separate languages are spoken. The biggest of those languages (Burarra) has a New Testament translated. Now we want to know, what's the best way to reach all the other language speakers with God's word? We don't just want people to have to struggle to understand the words they hear in English or in Burarra – we want them to be able to hear from God in a language they understand *well* AND that they *enjoy* and *want* to use. Our job in Maningrida is to run a 'language survey' to help fill in some information gaps about language use in Maningrida: How many people speak each language as their first language? What about a second language? How well would they understand the Bible in that language? How would they feel about using that language to listen to the Bible? This sort of information will help those of us involved in Bible translation to best target our resources in the future.

This 'planning phase' of translation doesn't directly benefit any one group in the immediate future. Fact-finding and planning in general is also fairly counter-cultural and we're finding people don't quite understand why we don't just pick a language and get on with it (and maybe there's merit to that!). Please pray with us that especially those Christians who already have the Bible in their language would have a heart to see their brothers and sisters from smaller language groups have that same opportunity.

We have already learnt so much from this experience and we pray that God will use the rest of our time here for his glory and the benefit of his Church in Maningrida.



Church House at Maningrida



Maningrida Church



## Solar-powered Megavoice for Yolngu By Anton Zhang

"So faith comes from hearing, and hearing from the word of Christ" – Romans 10:17.

Faith comes from hearing. This truth seems to resonate so much more obviously in Yolngu culture, who are an aural culture and prefer to hear and pass down stories verbally rather than through text. For this reason, MAF, in partnership with Megavoice, Coordinate, the Bible Society and GRN, has acquired 400 Megavoice solar-powered audio players which have been loaded with nearly all the Yolngu Matha audio gospel resources that are currently available. This includes Bible recordings, stories, and worship music, most of which were recorded by GRN.

The devices have made their way to all the major communities in North-East Arnhem Land, including Elcho Island, Lake Evella, Ramingining, and Milingimbi, and are being distributed by MAF, Pioneers, and Coordinate. So far, over 30 of the devices have been distributed to Yolngu.

Eroni Cakacaka, a missionary with Pioneers in Lake Evella says: "Everyone who I've given a player to, have shown great appreciation. I was just on a phone with a couple from Elcho Island. I gave them an audio-Bible as a gift last week. They called me now and said, "Wäwa, the audio-Bible is manymak! We listen to the verses and also the songs from it." These audio-Bibles are a big blessing to our ministry here. I think it's going to be the future when it comes to ministry amongst the Yolngu, because they'd rather listen to the message of the Bible is being presented to them in a way they are familiar with."

Let's pray that more of the devices will make their way into the hands of the Yolngu, and that faith will come from hearing.

Coordinate Issue #29 November 2020

YES...

**I want to Support Indigenous Scriptures through Coordinate**

**NAME:** \_\_\_\_\_

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**PHONE:** \_\_\_\_\_

**E-MAIL:** \_\_\_\_\_

- For \$20, I would like to become a Coordinate Partner, (1 year)
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  - \$50 Small Group
  - \$150 Church
- I would like to make a gift of \$\_\_\_\_\_

**I would like my offering to support:**

- Coordinate General
- Central Australia (Pitjantjatjara)
- East Arnhem translation
- East Arnhem Scripture in Use
- West Arnhem General
- West Arnhem (Maung)
- West Kimberley

**METHOD OF PAYMENT**

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  - BSB 634 634
  - ACC 100039620

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Winnellie, NT, 0821  
Scan and email to  
coordinate@ns.uca.org.au