



# CREE INITIATIVE CANADA

SPRING 2021 UPDATE



## STORIES OF IMPACT

### Oji-Cree Scripture “is more real”

A group of Oji-Cree youth from Kingfisher Lake, Ont. began joining an online gathering of Anglican youth from across the country to read Scripture together and encourage each other in their faith. At the last gathering, the youngest translator, Dominick, read a passage in Oji-Cree from the new translation.

A woman gave a testimony of how much it meant to her to hear Scripture in her own language.

“It’s more meaningful,” she said. **“It brings it alive to some extent; it’s more real in your native tongue. I’ve heard the Bible read in Cree, and it’s different!** I can understand it, but the language is just different.”

Traditionally, the Bible is read in Plains Cree in Kingfisher Lake, a dialect poorly understood by most local Christians today. The new Oji-Cree translation allows people to experience God’s Word in their own language.

### Naskapi Scripture published

In eastern Quebec, the Naskapi Development Corporation produced and printed a book that contains all the Scripture translated into Naskapi so far. This includes 17,393 verses, or 56% of the Bible.

The Naskapi Scriptures have been translated in sections for seven different publications, since 1993. This volume groups all the translated Naskapi Scriptures in one place, and includes all the translation work in progress as well—that is, all of the books and chapters that exist in ‘first draft’ at least, and still may have several checking stages to go before they are approved for publication. The text still in draft form is included in grey. The Bible is arranged like a standard one, with all the books and chapters included. Verses not yet translated into Naskapi are left blank.

The hope is to make Naskapi Scriptures more accessible and to encourage the community to press on to fill in the blanks and complete the Bible! All translation plans within the Naskapi language project are on hold until new mother-tongue translators are prepared to help with the initiative. At the moment none are available.



## Recent Highlights (In The Past Six Months)

- Covid-19 shut down many northern communities. Oji-Cree communities have begun to open up. The pandemic is now affecting Swampy Cree and other Cree communities.
- Translation work has resumed in Oji-Cree! The book of Mark is nearing completion.
- Dominick, an Oji-Cree speaker, put together a gospel songbook written in syllabics.
- A partial Naskapi Bible was printed and celebrated with a Scripture dedication, including blank sections and pages where translation portions are missing. The goal is to celebrate the progress, while encouraging more people to step in to finish the translation.
- The Swampy Cree team published a book, The Teaching of our Elders. This contains traditional oral stories, history and culture.
- Two new mother-tongue translators were trained to translate and record Scripture stories. A paraphrased version of Joseph and some other Scripture stories were recorded.



## Upcoming Goals

- The Oji-Cree plan to publish Mark and John's epistles.
- The Swampy Cree hope to produce 30 booklets containing chronological teachings on the Bible used in Bible-based literacy programs. The Naskapi team has already translated these and is working to publish them.



## Pray with us

Father God, we pray for health and safety, specifically in the First Nations communities of northern Manitoba, who are dealing with reported cases of Covid-19. Provide them with the medical support they need. And may you give these communities wisdom and peace as they adhere to extra precautions. We pray especially for the children and youth who are impacted by isolation. May you be their comfort and hope.

We pray for the Windors, who are expecting their third child. Please provide for them and guide them as they continue their language work remotely until June. Please provide committed translators for the Naskapi project, and help the Reed family in their language learning. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

