



## CREE INITIATIVE CANADA

FALL 2021 UPDATE

A member of the Oji-Cree Kingfisher Lake community reads the newly printed Gospel of Mark.



### STORIES OF IMPACT

#### Worship and unity in the Oji-Cree church

In Kingfisher Lake, many people are coming to God with their grief, and choosing to worship together. In the summers, many people gather mid-week in an old unheated building in the corner of the community. This atmosphere is very different from what is found in services held at the Anglican Church on Sundays, yet many of the same faces are seen. The unity among believers is beautiful, and the church fosters this deliberately.

We are looking forward to seeing what God will do through His Word, as the Gospel of Mark is newly available in the Oji-Cree dialect.

#### Western Swampy Cree church values Bible translation

In the Western Swampy Cree community, there is a strong desire within the indigenous church to continue valuing and using the language. Their new vision document, *Pitching our Tents*, includes the statements:

“The Word of God can become more visible, when it takes forms that grow out of the local languages and culture,” and “We look to win our young people to a church that values the identity they still learn from their elders, and that the schools are promoting—a church that speaks in their own language.”



## Recent Highlights (In The Past Six Months)

- The Oji-Cree team is on track in its goals to publish John's Epistles as well as a community language website with cultural videos.
- The Oji-Cree team finished the Gospel of Mark.
- Completed Oji-Cree language projects were made publicly available, and a Facebook group in the Oji-Cree language was launched. These projects include a story collection about the history of Kingfisher Lake.
- Western Swampy Cree in-person language lessons and language camps put on hold.
- Being unable to meet in person, many initiatives have been postponed, and periodic interruptions in work occur.
- A wave of Covid-19 hit First Nations communities severely in Northern Manitoba. This led to lockdowns and postponements. Restrictions are easing now, even in Northern Manitoba.
- Scripture-based trauma healing workshops were developed for the Western Swampy Cree Split Lake community, and took place in late August 2021. This church-led training program was set up to equip clergy members and lay leaders with tools to address trauma within their communities, especially the wounds fostered by the residential school system.
- Children's books about Joseph and his brothers have been designed and developed as part of a series of stories from Genesis. These Joseph books have been distributed to leaders in the Northern Manitoba Swampy Cree communities.



## Upcoming Goals

- Publish John's Epistles, the gospel of John and some of Paul's Epistles in Oji-Cree.
- Produce an audio version of the gospel of Mark and other liturgical selections in Oji-Cree.
- Publish Oji-Cree community language website with cultural videos.
- Prepare to hold the annual First Nations translation workshop in 2022.
- Resume Western Swampy Cree language learning camps.
- Produce series of 30 booklets in Western Swampy Cree on biblical themes, in partnership with the Canadian Bible Society.
- Continue Scripture-based trauma healing workshops with the Western Swampy Cree.
- Host Scripture engagement and mother-tongue translation workshops, bringing together translation teams from different communities for mutual learning and support.



## Pray with us

- For the end of the Covid-19 pandemic in the Cree communities, particularly among the Western Swampy Cree people who have been hard-hit by sickness and death. Pray for comfort and restoration in affected hearts and lives, and that the work can progress.
- That the Oji-Cree work can continue and that the hearts and lives of the translation team and committee would continue to be transformed.
- That the recently distributed Gospel of Mark in Oji-Cree will lead many to follow Jesus.