



INDIGENOUS INITIATIVES | Canada

SUMMER 2024 UPDATE

(L) Team member Marianne sets up a beautiful display at a community gathering with Naskapi language materials and translated Scriptures. (R) In September 2022, the first Blackfoot Translation Workshop took place in Strathmore, AB. Now, almost two years later, a full-fledged Blackfoot translation initiative has begun!



STORIES OF IMPACT

The Blackfoot translation initiative begins

Last update, we shared that leaders of the Blackfoot Confederacy gathered in Alberta and asserted their interest to begin a Bible translation and language development project. A second gathering later took place to establish project goals.

Today, we are thrilled to share that the Blackfoot translation initiative is launching! Through this initiative, we will see Bible translation, literacy and language development efforts move forward in the Siksika, Piikani and Kainai nations of the Blackfoot Confederacy.

In November, six Blackfoot translation team members joined the First Nations Bible Translation workshop in Guelph, Ontario. This training gathered Indigenous Bible translators from Quebec, Ontario and Alberta.

The Ven. Jacqui Durand, Archdeacon of Indigenous Ministries in Southern Alberta, has played a crucial role in coordinating this initiative and accompanied Blackfoot delegates to Guelph for training. She shared:

"We explored topics and hands-on practices and were rewarded at the end of the workshop with a textual draft of Luke 2:1-7 in Blackfoot! It was a proud moment! . . . The translation process is hard work, as translation needs to be clear, natural, and accurate. There are lots of checks and

revisions. Even so, it was a joyful work with a lot of laughter and fellowship. . . Our team is excited to continue!"

In December, the first Blackfoot translation session took place in Lethbridge, Alberta. Please pray for the Blackfoot translators, and for this work to have a great impact on them and their language group.

An opportunity to share about Bible translation

This past quarter, Oji-Cree translator and team member Yvonne was invited to speak about her work in the Cree Initiative at the Bible Translation Conference, a global forum about Scripture translation. Yvonne shared about her desire for her community to be able to understand the Word of God in their own language. She explained:

"We are just trying to get the word out there for young people [about] having a better understanding of the Bible in Oji-Cree. Bible translation helps us to understand the meaning—the true meaning—of what the Word is trying to say to us."

We thank God for Yvonne's presentation and her faithful involvement in Indigenous-led Bible translation in Canada. Join us in praying that her words from this presentation would lead many individuals to support and pray for translation work among Cree people.



RECENT HIGHLIGHTS

- **Published the Epistles of John in Oji-Cree.** Join us in celebrating this great milestone!
- **Improved and shared Oji-Cree audio Scriptures.** John's Epistles and the Gospel of Mark were edited last quarter. It is encouraging to hear that Oji-Cree people are listening to these Scriptures!
- **Published the Oji-Cree prayer book.** We hope this resource blesses the prayer life of many Oji-Cree speakers.
- **Contributed additional works to the Oji-Cree story collection.** Last quarter alone, 750 photos, 43 journals and 30 cassettes were digitized, and the team translated 10 Oji-Cree cultural texts. These selections are a wonderful way to celebrate the Oji-Cree community's culture and language.
- **Provided training opportunities for translators.** This included training on material digitization for two interns, and a publishing course for another team member.
- **Published and dedicated the book of Exodus in Naskapi.** Praise the Lord! The book was finally placed in the hands of Naskapi people who have waited for so long. The team is now focused on translating and reviewing 1-2 Samuel, and Judges.
- **Expanded Naskapi language development goals.** The involvement of Marianne, the new Naskapi Cultural Development Officer, has been a great help to the team. She is working on developing goals to promote and celebrate the Naskapi language.
- **Launched the Blackfoot translation initiative.** The focus so far has been the training of translation team members.
- **Held a successful Bible translation workshop in Guelph.** This gathering brought together Indigenous Bible translators from across Canada, for mutual learning, encouragement and support.



UPCOMING GOALS

- Formally begin translation and language development efforts in Blackfoot nations once project finances and administration are set up.
- Recruit new Cree team members to advance Bible translation, literacy and language development efforts in focus communities.
- Finish consultant checks and publish the Gospel of John in Oji-Cree.
- Complete the formatting and typesetting of the Naskapi-English dictionary.
- Finish editing selections for the Oji-Cree story collection before compiling them for publication. These selections include texts about local history, legends, and traditional knowledge.
- Finish the audio version of the book of Psalms in Naskapi. The next priority is to record and edit Psalms 123-125.
- Make progress on reviews of translated Naskapi Scriptures. This includes team checks for Deuteronomy, Job, 1 Samuel, Daniel and Joshua, and consultant checks for Judges. These steps have unfortunately been paused due to lack of qualified staff.



PRAY WITH US

- For Indigenous youth. May they come to encounter the hope available in Christ.
- For strength and perseverance for Blackfoot leaders, as they launch a translation initiative.
- For the success of language development efforts. May these initiatives preserve and celebrate Indigenous languages.
- That God would raise up translation team members who are passionate about God's Word. These teams require support, and the lack of trained personnel has caused delays.
- That Indigenous people in Canada would have great hunger for the Word, and that its truths would bring great peace, comfort and healing in these communities.