Our Dear Partners

We just got home from another working trip the Oji-Cree community of Kingfisher Lake in Northern Ontario. They started their own Bible translation project in Oji-Cree last year, and have asked for more training from us.

The Dr. William Winter School of Ministry

The Kingfisher Lake community was the home of the late Dr. William Winter, a respected Oji-Cree elder and church leader who had a dream many years ago of establishing a program for training indigenous people for ministry. The Dr. William Winter School of Ministry was established in 2003 and since then, many men and women have taken courses for ministry in northern Ontario and Manitoba.

We were invited to take part in the second week of this year’s School of Ministry. It is held at the Big Beaver Bible Camp, in the bush near one of the traditional settlements of the Oji-Cree people who now live on the Kingfisher Lake reserve. The day after arriving at Kingfisher Lake, we were brought by pick-up truck to the boat landing on Misamikwash Lake opposite Big Beaver Bible Camp.
A small fleet of outboard motorboats serve as transportation to the camp, and after a 15 minute boat ride we were walking up the dock at the camp.
The School of Ministry features courses in Bible history, theology, and other topics useful for indigenous clergy and lay-persons involved in ministry in their own First Nations communities. It is a great hardship for non-stipendary (unpaid) indigenous clergy to take ministry courses offered at seminaries and universities so far from their homes. The School of Ministry removes most of those hurdles by providing quality education right in their territory at an affordable cost, and presented in their own mother tongue. Most of the sessions are translated directly into Oji-Cree on the spot by interpreters as they are delivered by instructors in English. Some sessions are taught by
This summer’s two-week session included teaching sessions that were led by the Rt. Rev. Mark MacDonald, the National Indigenous Bishop of the Anglican Church of Canada, and also by a team of Maori clergy from New Zealand: Bishop Rahu and Rev. Robert Kereopa.
They also feature such practical classes as music and hymnody, planning worship services, and Oji-Cree language. Zipporah Mamakwa, one of the Oji-Cree translators, invited Bill to assist her in two of the language sessions. During those sessions they made a presentation to the students about the beginnings of the new local Bible translation project, and also shared hands-on teaching methods for Oji-Cree syllabics and an introduction to Algonquian grammar for literacy.
The two-week session culminated in a beautiful outdoor Eucharist service conducted by Bishop Lydia Mamakwa and all the visiting indigenous clergy and lay persons, and the recognition of all the participants.
Oji-Cree Translator Workshop

Over the weekend, the visiting participants for the Dr. William Winter School made their way back to their home communities and places of service, while the Oji-Cree translators prepared for have a Bible Translation training workshop with Bill and Norma Jean back at Mission House in Kingfisher Lake.
There, they discussed and evaluated their progress toward the translation team’s goals on the various translation stages: First Draft, Team Checking and Review, Community Checking, and Back Translation.

Bill conducted classes in the use of a computer-based tool that is used to assist the translators to choose consistent spelling of key Biblical terms. The computer program that we use to help us translate the Bible can also access a database of key Biblical terms that includes all the names of persons and places in the Bible, along with encyclopedic information and the proper pronunciation and usage of those terms. The translators can then discuss and approve their own spelling of those terms in their own language. The database guides them to help them to ensure that every occurrence of each approved term is spelled consistently in their language.
The translation team practiced using the tool, working through their translation and making decisions on terms such as “Moses”, “Jerusalem” and “disciple”, and Bill provided them with a written guide to the Tool so that they could continue to do this on their own in the weeks to come.
Too soon, our time was up and we were brought to the airport for the (several) long flights home, and by late Thursday night August 4 we were back in our own bed at Windham Centre.

Please remember to pray for the new Oji-Cree translation team by name:

- Theresa Sainnawap
- Ruth Morris
- Zipporah Mamakwa
- Jessie Atlookan
- Dominick Beardy (not pictured—could not attend)
- Rev. Ruth Kitchekesik—Ruth also serves as a deacon in St. Matthew’s Church, Kingfisher Lake, and also as the coordinator of the Bible translation team, along with all of her other duties.
- Rt. Rev. Lydia Mamakwa—Lydia provides much of the vision and leadership for the project, as well as serving as the diocesan Bishop over several First Nations parishes in northern Ontario and Manitoba in the Indigenous Spiritual Ministry of Mishamikoweesh (ISMM).

Pray for their families, for their work and their lives, and for God’s continued guidance, provision and blessing on their work.
Norma Jean and I are preparing to go to work with the Naskapi translation team in just a couple weeks. Another Translation Brief will come out with prayer requests for that trip soon.

Serving with you,

*Bill and Norma Jean*
Have you thought about becoming more involved and supporting this work by visiting these websites?

In the USA: https://www.wycliffe.org/partner/Jancewicz

In Canada: http://www.wycliffe.ca/m?Jancewicz

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**Rev. Stan Cuthand—Plains Cree Bible Translator**

Posted on June 9, 2016 by Bill Jancewicz

On May 23, 2016, Cree Bible translator The Rev. Stan Cuthand age 97, passed away in Saskatchewan after a hospital stay. His life work was the translation of the Bible into Plains Cree, his own mother-tongue. Read his obituary [here](#).

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After earning his Bachelors of Theology in 1944, Rev. Cuthand served as a priest in the Anglican Church. He also worked as assistant professor of Native Studies at the University of Manitoba, and “retired” to Saskatchewan to work at First Nations University of Canada and Saskatchewan Indian Cultural Centre.
Around 1990, at 71 years of age, Rev. Cuthand was hired by the Canadian Bible Society (CBS) to draft a new translation of the New Testament in Plains Cree, plus 40% of the Old Testament, which included all the major stories and themes.

**Plains Cree Bible Translation Project**

Throughout the 1990s, the Plains Cree translation project was coordinated by Rev. Bob Bryce, working with CBS. He facilitated a routine of two to three translation and review workshops per year, usually held in North Battleford, Saskatchewan, to revise and approve with Stan’s first draft. Most of the Old Testament sections were reviewed during this period, but little was brought to publication or distribution.

In the late 1990s, Wycliffe / SIL-North America Branch assigned linguist Kimb Givens (Spender) to facilitate the project. She was based in Saskatoon until about 2003 when she married and moved to Maine. She continued to assist from time to time from her home in Maine.

In 2001 Bob Bryce retired from the Canadian Bible Society, and Ruth (Spielmann) Heeg was assigned as project coordinator, working from the Society’s translation office Kitchener, along with many other duties, fulfilling a joint assignment with SIL and CBS.

Around 2002, Wycliffe / SIL-North America Branch assigned Meg Billingsley to facilitate the project jointly with Ruth. She was based in Prince Alberta, and her term of service overlapped with Kimb’s. Meg was reassigned to Mi’kmaq in 2008.

In 2004 Stan Cuthand completed his translation of the first draft of the 40% Old Testament and complete New Testament, and continued to assist at many of the workshops with Ruth, Kimb, and Meg.

From 2001 to 2013 Ruth continued to coordinate the program and to facilitate the translation checking workshops twice a year in North Battleford and Saskatoon. Often if there were too many participants at the workshops they could be very slow and cumbersome. There was often great participation but little progress. Eventually, it was decided to work with a smaller team of Cree translator-reviewers.

From 2014 – present Ruth mostly worked with just two Cree-speaking reviewers, Dolores Sand and Gayle Weenie. This team made much better progress.

The following sections of the Plains Cree translation have been published and distributed:

- Mark (2010)
- Selections of the Psalms (2013)
- James (2014)

In July 2015 the entire book of Luke was finalized and Bill and Norma Jean assisted Ruth in recording the entire book read by Dolores. It will be ready to publish once the final editing is accomplished on the audio files. Matthew is ready to be recorded next. The Gospel of John will be ready after a final check of chapters 20 and 21, and the book of Acts is currently being reviewed and revised by Ruth, Dolores and Gayle.

Please continue to pray for the translation team as they complete the work begun by Stan Cuthand, so that Plains Cree speakers across Canada will have God’s Word in their own language.
Our Dear Partners,

When the First Nations representatives and church leaders met with us in Prince Albert in June of 2014, they identified several priorities for the First Nations Bible Translation Capacity-Building Initiative. One of these priorities was to conduct a series of Mother Tongue Translator (MTT) Workshops to help the speakers of First Nations languages learn the skills that they need to be involved in Bible Translation and community language development.

With assistance from our friends at the Canadian Bible Society, we planned and facilitated the 2016 Mother Tongue Translator (MTT) Workshop held at the Guelph Bible Conference Centre from April 24th to the 29th. Speakers of First Nations languages from four different language communities were able to come to this workshop.

What Happens at a Mother Tongue Translator (MTT) Workshop?

Every morning we began with a hymn: we sang in Naskapi, or Oji-Cree, or Cree, either from an old “legacy” hymnbook, or an up-to-date adaptation into today’s language, or even a completely new song. The participants all enjoyed learning worship songs in their different languages from one another, praising God in their beautiful languages.
Then each day one of the staff shared a devotional from the Word of God. Whenever it was available, the scripture passage was read in the mother tongue of one or more of the First Nations languages of the participants. We reflected about how God uses language in His Mission (Genesis 2, John 1 and Psalm 8); how God’s Word is meant to be understood (Romans 15:1-6), which became a theme passage for the entire workshop. We considered the spiritual warfare we are engaged in when we are working on making God’s message clear for the first time in the languages spoken in these communities, and how the stories of God’s love and grace can be communicated and passed on in engaging and life-changing ways.

Next, the staff took turns teaching chapters from the Bible Translation Basics textbook, which focuses on communication theory, along with modules from the Bible Translation Principles course, which focuses on distinguishing the “form” from the “meaning” of the message, and participants learned how to express the meaning of the message in the form that corresponds to their own language and culture. Each of these resources were useful to help learners understand the translation task and to help them gain the skills they need to do it well.

We also introduced several tools for Scripture Engagement, exploring different ways that the message of the Bible can be made
available in print and non-print media, including the use of audio playback devices (Megavoice) and graphic-novel style presentations of God’s Story such as “Good and Evil”.

**Resources** for sustainable local *Language Development* programs were presented, which offered ways of involving their own community leadership, community organizations and education with their translation teams to help them:

- To raise awareness of the current situation of their traditional language.
- To raise awareness of how they use all of the other languages at their disposal.
- To help the community come to a decision and a response about what they want to do with their entire language ‘repertoire’ in the future.
Some of the more practical and technical aspects of the Bible Translation process were covered each day, including the use of the collaborative translation software program ParaText, which assists translators by providing source translations and resource documents as well as tools to assist them in translating into their own language and checking their work. Several of the participants had never used this software, so we were careful to start very gradually. Those participants who were more familiar with the program helped the beginners during hands-on practice sessions in small groups.

On Tuesday and Wednesday morning, SIL International translation consultant Steve Kempf came as a guest instructor to teach us all about translating names and especially the special care and consideration that need to be taken into account when translating the Names of God, such as Elohim, Adonai, and YHWH (Yahweh).
Bill also taught modules on the Algonquian language family and grammatical structures, the history of Bible Translations in First Nations languages, and practical considerations for setting up a local language development program that includes Bible translation and individual professional development. Discussion between the translation teams from different language communities helped them to see how the different challenges that each one faces may be addressed.

Cree Scriptures in Syllabics

- In the mid 1800s, the Rev. William Mason (who succeeded Evans at Norway House) and the Rev. John Horden (who succeeded Barnley at Moose Factory) both dedicated themselves to Bible translation work in Cree.

J. A. Mackay

In 1898 the British and Foreign Bible Society began setting up a committee to “...improve and harmonize the various translations.” The committee met in Winnipeg in 1902.

So each day contained a stimulating blend of discussion and instruction, worship and encouragement from the scriptures, training and capacity-building. We closed the week with a celebration and presentation of certificates to all the participants.
For the first four days of the workshop, *Word Alive* editor **Dwayne Janke** and photographer **Natasha Ramírez** were “embedded journalists” with the workshop staff and team. *Word Alive* magazine is Wycliffe Canada’s journal whose mission is to inform, inspire and involve the Christian public as partners in the worldwide Bible translation movement. They have already featured a wonderful description of the Naskapi Bible Translation project in their **Spring 2013 edition**. They were with us gathering material to for a future publication to highlight First Nations Bible translation in Canada.

Throughout the week we were also visited by several guests who were interested in making connections with and serving First Nations Bible translation projects, including **Paul Arsenault** and **Jeff Green** from Tyndale University and the Canadian Institute of Linguistics (CanIL), **Benjamin Wukasch**, a student interested in service in First Nations language communities. Our guests also included staff from the Canadian Bible Society Scripture Translation offices in Kitchener, Ontario, **Barb Penner** and **Tomas Ortiz**.
On Thursday, Wycliffe Canada Korean Diaspora Church Connections brought a group representing the Korean church, who are very interested in praying for and working together to assist their First Nations brothers and sisters to have better access to the scriptures in their own languages. Many of the First Nations participants shared how blessed they were to meet their new Korean friends.
At the end of the week, Elaine Bombay, a photojournalist with Wycliffe Global Alliance visited the workshop to meet the participants and also helped by taking photographs of the staff and participants and the workshop closing ceremonies. Several of the photographs posted here are her work. Thank you Elaine!

The workshop was staffed by facilitators and instructors Bill and Norma Jean, Ruth Heeg and Myles Leitch from the Canadian Bible Society, Meg Billingsley, an SIL translation consultant in training, and Matthew and Caitlin Windsor, who are preparing to serve as translation project facilitators in a First Nations community soon.
On Friday, the last day of the workshop, we took some time to reflect and evaluate the workshop program, and all the participants provided feedback for the organizers to consider for the next workshop. Here is a sampling of some of the participants’ comments:

What was something new that you learned during this workshop?

“...Translating Biblical Names.”
“...God is trying to speak to people in their language.”
“...Saying “less” can mean “more”.”
“...The features in Paratext–I got to learn more about how to use them.”

What did you particularly like about this workshop?

“...Meeting other Algonquian language speakers.”
“...The technical part–how to use the programs.”
“...I enjoyed the whole workshop.”
“...Singing hymns / Everything.”
“...Hymn singing, devotions, sharing, everything.”
“...I liked the experience with the Koreans.”

What were the best aspects of the workshop?

“...Learning from patient facilitators who were patient with me.”
“...Learning new things about translating the Bible.”
“...Giving our opinions and experiences.”
“...Sharing of other teams’ experiences.”
“...I enjoyed the visitors and all they offered for us in their prayers, and the direction of the facilitators.”
“...The singing and devotions and great workshop presenters, and the explanations about the basics of translation.”

God continues to be at work bringing His message to His people in their own languages. We are so grateful that you can be a part of this work with us. Thank you for your prayers and support for this workshop and for the wonderful things God continues to do in the lives of our First Nations friends.

Serving with you,
Consider becoming more involved and supporting this work by visiting these websites:

In the USA: https://www.wycliffe.org/partner/Jancewicz

In Canada: http://www.wycliffe.ca/m?Jancewicz

Northern Translation Brief: Mother Tongue Translator (MTT) Workshop

Posted on May 4, 2015 by Bill Jancewicz

Our Dear Partners,

When the First Nations representatives and church leaders met with us in Prince Albert last June (click here for the story), they identified several priorities for the First Nations Bible Translation Capacity-Building Initiative. One of these priorities was to conduct a series of Mother Tongue Translator (MTT) Workshops to help the speakers of First Nations languages learn the skills that they need to be involved in Bible Translation and community language development.

With coordination and assistance from our friends at the Canadian Bible Society translation office in Kitchener, Ontario, we planned and facilitated the 2015 Mother Tongue Translator (MTT) Workshop held at the Guelph Bible Conference Centre from April 20th to the 24th. Speakers of First Nations languages from three communities were able to come to this first workshop, which was a “re-boot” of a series of annual workshops that were started in the early 1990s for North American translators, initially held at the “Christian Hope Indian Eskimo Fellowship” (CHIEF) in Phoenix, AZ, and later at the SIL Mexico Branch Center in Catalina, AZ.

Over the years, many First Nations, Native American and translators from other minority language groups have improved their translation skills by attending these workshops. The Naskapi language team in particular has benefited by attending these—but unfortunately the workshops were discontinued after the last one was held in 2011, in Sydney Nova Scotia.
Even though some of the Naskapi translators had been to the workshops several times through the years (George, Silas, Seasi) most of participants had never been to one, and needed to start at the beginning. A very good place to start.

First Nations Translators from across Canada

It’s expensive to travel in and out of the North, and plans were already being made last fall to secure funding for the participants to come together this spring in Guelph. The Anglican Healing Fund provided a significant portion of the money needed to pay the airfare and accommodations for most of the Naskapi and Oji-Cree translators to travel from their communities. Although our intention was to include translators from several different language communities, in the end only three translation projects were represented at the workshop: Naskapi, Oji-Cree, and Plains Cree.

![Map of Canada with locations of Naskapi, Oji-Cree, and Plains Cree indicated]

Besides the translation team from the Naskapi translation project (six persons: Silas Nabinicaboo, Tshiueten Vachon, Amanda Swappie, Medora Losier, Kissandra Sandy and Kabimbetas Mokoush), the Naskapi school also sent along a Naskapi language teacher Seasi Swappie and their curriculum development technician Jessica Nattawappio.

![Photo of Naskapi translators]

The Naskapi Nation sent their senior translator George Guanish, and Cheyenne Vachon, the project coordinator for Status of Women in Canada for the Naskapi Nation and church lay-reader.

The newly-formed Oji-Cree translation committee selected five persons from the Kingfisher Lake community to be trained as translators: Ruth Kitchekesik, Zipporah Mamakwa, Jessie Atlookan, Theresa Sainnawap, and Ruth Morris. Bishop Lydia Mamakwa accompanied them on their first day.

The Plains Cree translation project sent one of their translators, Gayle Weenie.

A Full and Varied Schedule

Each day of the workshop began with hymn singing in Cree, which is a language through which much of the sacred music tradition came into First Nations churches across Canada. We took into account language differences, learned to sing one anothers’ favourite songs, and also learned something about the linguistic relationships that connect the language varieties that were represented.

We also had daily devotions, reading the Bible (when the translation was available) in the languages that are represented, and having a short Bible study.
The first session every morning covered Bible Translation skills. The learning alternated between using lessons from “Bible Translation Basics: Communicating Scripture in a Relevant Way” which focuses on communication theory, and modules from “Bible Translation Principles” which focuses on distinguishing the “form” from the “meaning” of the message. Each of these resources were useful to help learners understand the translation task and to help them gain the skills they need to do it.

Each day after the lunch break we had basic training in the use of the collaborative translation software program ParaText, which assists translators by providing source translations and resource documents as well as tools to assist them in translating into their own language and checking their work. Most of the participants had never used this software, so we were careful to start very gradually.

Also, the entire Oji-Cree team received a set of five new laptop computers to bring back to Kingfisher Lake with them, along with a new printer and data projector for their translation committee. This needed equipment was provided thanks to support from the Canadian Bible Society translation office. They received training in keyboarding in their own language, and some basic computer skills for beginners.
Other modules covered throughout the week included such topics as “From God to Us: Bible Translation and History”, “Planning the future of our language”, “The Algonquian Language Family” and the importance of personal Bible knowledge for translators.

Preparing for a “consultant-check”

During the whole workshop, the participants all learned something about the process of Bible translation—but simply getting the message into the words of your own language is just the beginning. Tuesday of the workshop we focused on some of the next steps that are necessary after a “first draft” is produced.

Steve Kempf, a certified translation consultant with SIL International (Wycliffe Bible Translators) who has had many years of experience and specializes in Old Testament source material came to be with us Tuesday, and presented two modules about the necessity and procedure for checking a translation. He covered working together as a translation team and the importance of thoroughly checking the naturalness and clarity of a translation with other speakers of the language throughout the community. He provided methods and examples of how to do this on a regular basis as sections of a translation are written.
He also provided a "live" demonstration of some of the ways that a translation consultant like himself works with the translation team to help them to ensure that the translation is both accurate (faithful to the original) and acceptable (how the readers perceive a translation as trustworthy). To do this, the Naskapi translation team provided him with their draft translation and a back-translation (a literal translation of the Naskapi back into English) of the book of Exodus, one of the current active Naskapi translation projects. After examining the translation during the weeks before the workshop, Steve conducted a consultant-checking session with the translator and other Naskapi participants as a demonstration to the rest of the workshop attendees of what to expect when a consultant comes to check their translations.

**Encouraging Connections**

The workshop participants were not only encouraged by each other, finding that their vocation of Bible Translation into their own language was shared by speakers from other First Nations language communities from across Canada, but also we were visited by church and organizational leaders who are counted as partners and friends of the First Nations Bible Translation movement. Bishop Lydia Mamakwa, the first bishop of a new indigenous diocese in the Anglican Church of Canada, the Indigenous Spiritual Ministry of Mishamikoweesh, accompanied the new Oji-Cree translation team from the community of Kingfisher Lake in northern Ontario. We were pleased to have her encouragement and fellowship for the first full day of the workshop on Monday.

Dr. Myles Leitch, the newly appointed Director of Scripture Translation for the Canadian Bible Society, came to observe the workshop and greet the participants on Wednesday morning, staying for lunch and connecting with some of the workshop organizers and facilitators. The Canadian Bible Society played a significant role in seeing that this workshop was a success, by making arrangements for the venue and providing on site technical and administrative support. Sharon Peddle and Tom Ortiz from the translation office assisted during the week, and Bible Society translation consultant Ruth Heeg participated and provided her help and input for the entire workshop.
The Right Reverend Mark MacDonald, the National Indigenous Anglican Bishop, visited the workshop on Wednesday afternoon and encouraged the participants in their work. He reminded us all that the Bible is a “...sacred book, a miraculous book, (ɁɁłɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɂ
“I feel more encouraged and refreshed in my job as translator.”

“I felt that I have helped other in starting their own translation projects.”

“I have learned some great ideas for how translation goes; for example, what materials and helps are available to use.”

“I felt blessed to involve myself in this workshop: meeting different Nations and learning about similar cultures and languages to my own. I liked the teamwork, involvement and singing together the best.”

“I felt that I learned that there was more that I could do for my community.”

All of the participants indicated that it was a privilege to come and would definitely want to come to future workshops to learn more.

At the end of the last session the participants were awarded certificates of completion, and the workshop was closed with hymn singing in Cree, prayers and good-byes.

Many thanks to all of you who faithfully prayed for us all during this workshop, to all who contributed their time, expertise, and money to make this workshop a success and inspiration for all who attended. We would like to especially thank the congregation at Harvest Church in Byron, Georgia, USA for their generous support to the Wycliffe Bible Translators’ “Western Cree Partnership” project, which supports this initiative to build Bible translation capacity in First Nations communities in Canada.

Serving with you, Bill and Norma Jean

PS: We include a collection of photographs below taken throughout the workshop.
Gathering all the workshop materials at the Bible Society translation office

The Naskapi team arrives in Guelph from the airport
The Oji-Cree translation team: Ruth K, Theresa, Jessie, Zipporah and Ruth M.

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We brought Lydia to the airport on Monday evening.
Seasi and Jessica from the Naskapi School

Bill shows Kabimbetas and Tshiueten how to use ParaTExt
Ruth Heeg helps Gayle with Plains Cree

Seasi and Jessica learning with Kissandra and Medora
Zipporah—Handcrafts after the workshop

Myles Letch observes the workshop on Wednesday morning
Bishop Mark at Wednesday's supper

Tshiueten, Kabimbetas and Cheyenne at mealtime
Learning to work together on the Internet (in the lounge)

All the participants received certificates
In 1891, The Smithsonian Bureau of Ethnology Bulletin, (Vol 13, issue 1, U.S. Govt. Printing Office) listed only two “whole Bibles” in its “Bibliography of Algonquian Languages”. The Bible in Massachusetts by J. Eliot, and the Bible in Cree by W. Mason. The “Eliot Bible” was published in Cambridge, Massachusetts in 1663, and it is the first Bible of any language to be printed in North America, and the first Native American language Bible.
Almost 200 years later, the **Mason Bible in Cree** was published in London by the British and Foreign Bible Society in 1862, and thus was the second Native American (First Nations) language Bible.

The overleaf on the 1908 (J.A. Mackay) revision of the Mason Cree Bible says **“The Old Testament in Plain Cree”**, which is a reference to the variety of the Cree language that is spoken “on the plain”, which in modern times is referred to as “Plains Cree”. Although the names “W. (William) Mason” and “J.A. (John Alexander) Mackay” are the individuals generally associated with this book, how this Bible actually came to be is an engaging and remarkable story:

James Evans, a Wesleyan Methodist missionary, developed a syllabic orthography for translating religious works into Ojibwe in the mid 1830s. In 1840 he was assigned to **Norway House** at the northern end of Lake Winnipeg in present-day Manitoba. He lost no time in adapting his syllabic writing system to Cree, the language of the First Nations peoples there. Read more about this remarkable writing system [here (click)](https://example.com). You will recall that this is also the writing system used for Naskapi, and many other Canadian languages.
Evans was succeeded at the Norway House mission in 1843 by William Mason, who also married Sophia Thomas that same year. Sophia was the daughter of a Cree woman who was married to Hudson’s Bay Company Chief Factor Thomas Thomas. Sylvia Van Kirk (1983) writes:

“Sophia, the youngest daughter of former governor Thomas Thomas, had been placed in the care of the Church of England missionaries at an early age. An apt pupil and "a good pious girl", she grew up a devout Christian. In 1843, she married the Reverend William Mason and, with her knowledge of Cree and her sincere interest in the welfare of the Indians, was a great help to her husband’s ministry at Norway House. Although she had a delicate constitution, Sophia was reputed to have devoted herself unceasingly to the operation of the Indian day school, visiting the sick, and translating hymns and scripture. Her lasting work was the production of a Cree Bible.”

Anne Lindsay and Jennifer Brown (2009) continue Sophia’s story in an article by the Manitoba Historical Society:

“In 1858 the Masons moved to England where they oversaw printing of the New and Old Testament in Cree syllabics. These printed Cree syllabic texts were credited only to William Mason, which set off complaints from Native co-workers John Sinclair and the Reverend Henry Bird Steinhauer that they had contributed substantially to the work. William Mason’s own remarks suggest that his wife’s role in the translations was considerable. Sophia Thomas Mason, whose health had always been delicate, began to suffer pleurisy soon after arriving in England, and her work on translations was often stopped when she was overwhelmed by pain. In July 1861 she gave birth to her ninth child, and in the fall of that year the last of the Old Testament books was printed in Cree syllabics. On 10 October 1861 she died of tuberculosis.”

Sophia’s husband’s journal entry on her death stated, “She has been spared to accomplish a great work, the Cree Bible; and to bear such a testimony for Jesus amongst the heathen, by the patience with which she suffered, and her zeal and persevering labours to make known the glorious Gospel of salvation...”

Joseph Lofthouse (1922) wrote, “The translation of the Bible into Cree was to a very large extent the work of Mrs. Mason, who was a native of Red River, had grown up amongst the Indians, and understood their language perfectly. It is the most idiomatic and by far the best translation that has ever been made in Cree. ... Mrs. Mason on her dying bed finished the last chapter of this marvelous book, which has been such a blessing to the Indians of the whole north country.”
It is this book that even today sits on the pulpits of hundreds of churches in First Nations communities across Canada, from Hudson’s Bay to the Rocky Mountains.

As you can see from the map, Cree territory covers a vast area and indeed includes several distinct language varieties. Linguistic work over the past half century has documented these varieties, and their characteristics are described in the Ethnologue. (click the link for more information). In many cases, the contemporary language variety spoken in these communities is quite different from the dialect of Cree used in Mason’s Bible. In these situations, previous generations of speakers learned to read the “Plains Cree” syllabics, and this practice developed a hierarchy of bi-literate “experts” who served as catechists, deacons, lay-readers and clergy, and these persons were able to teach others in their own language variety by translating from Mason’s Bible.

Over the years, some of the linguists who study these languages have quipped that “God Speaks Cree”, referring to the special position that the Mason Cree Bible holds in the hearts of many speakers of different varieties of Cree, Ojibwe and Oji-Cree. Indeed the situation is similar to the way the King James Bible is held in high esteem in many Protestant churches, or even, in communities where the local language is very different from the Cree in the Mason Bible, the situation may be compared to the way the Latin language was revered in Catholic churches before Vatican II allowed services in the local languages.

The copy that Bill is working from here pictured belonged to a member of the congregation at St. Matthew’s Church in Kingfisher Lake, Ontario. You can see how it is well-worn from use, and many pages have detailed annotations by the user.
But because of a fundamental shift in the way literacy skills are passed on in these First Nations communities, many younger speakers of these Aboriginal languages are growing up not being able to understand the language in the Mason Cree Bible, making it necessary to produce contemporary translations and other language materials in the mother-tongue of the local community.

Nevertheless, the Mason Cree Bible still holds a place of honour and stature across Cree territory, and for that reason one of the priorities of the First Nations Bible Translation Capacity-Building Initiative is to produce a modern, digital publication of the legacy Mason Cree Bible. The Bible Society arranged to have the text keyboarded in the early 1990s, and in recent months is reviewing it for consistency and standardization.

To do this, reviewers compare the keyboarded digital version (either in a printout or on-screen) to a printed copy of the 1908 Mackay revision. Since Bill can read the syllabic script, he is participating in the efforts to complete the review along with other Plains Cree speakers and facilitators. Here pictured is an example of the review process from the book of Leviticus.
Once the review work is done, not only will we be able to once again provide new and improved printed copies of this much-loved volume, but the text will also serve as an interactive, searchable digital resource that may be accessed on computers and handheld devices and also used as a reference work for contemporary Cree and Oji-Cree Bible translation work by translators for years to come.

This post has been an extended feature on the topic of just one of the “priorities” identified by the First Nations Bible Translation Capacity-Building Initiative. Keep watching for other posts right that feature some of the other “priorities”, including the following components of the vision:

- (Cuthand) Plains Cree Translation project
- Oji-Cree Translation project
Serving with you, Bill and Norma Jean

Please also remember our daughter Elizabeth who is in Labrador this week with the “Labrador Creative Arts Festival” (LCAF) https://www.facebook.com/131612796945171/photos/a.594239127349200.1073741827.131612796945171/594248440681602/?type=1&ref=nf&pnref=story

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Northern Translation Brief 22Aug2014

Posted on August 22, 2014 by Bill Jancewicz

Our dear partners,

In just a day or so we are bound for Points North as we begin our fall development trip. We leave Sunday, August 24 driving eastward pulling our little camper trailer. We will be making our first visit to the middle of the Oji-Cree language area in northern Ontario, where we will be welcomed by Bishop Lydia Mamakwa. To get there, we drive to the small town of Sioux Lookout, Ontario, and then fly to Kingfisher Lake (ᑭᓑᑭᒪᓂᓯᐊᐧᐳᐠ Giishkimanisiwaaboong. We will be visiting the Oji-Cree speakers in that isolated Northern community, and discovering how we may be used to help them to have access to the Scriptures in their own language. You may remember that when we met with First Nations speakers and church leaders at Prince Albert, Saskatchewan last June, this is just one of the projects that they asked us to help them with.

Kingfisher Lake is just the first stop of many appointments we have on this 10,000 mile (by road–plus about 2500 miles by air) journey.

The second week of September we will be at the Canadian Bible Society offices in Kitchener, Ontario...
The third week of September we will be in the Naskapi First Nation community at Kawawachikamach, Quebec…

The fourth week of September we will be heading for southern New England…

The end of September and beginning of October we have scheduled several visits with friends, supporters, and sending churches where we will be reporting about our work supporting Bible Translation in Canada and sharing our vision for the where God is sending us now and in the months to come.

At the end of October we will be attending the Algonquian linguistics Conference, and then turning west again to return to British Columbia where Norma Jean will be completing her graduate work at Trinity Western University.

Thank you for your prayers for God’s continued guidance, provision, protection, and direction, and especially this coming week (Sept 1-5) during our time at Kingfisher Lake.

Serving with you, Bill and Norma Jean

Northern Translation Brief: Redrawing the Map

Our dear partners and “followers” (*),

In the last post, I had a map with a plan of our meeting with some Cree language speakers and church leaders at Prince Albert for the “First Nations Bible Translation Capacity-Building Gathering”. God is clearly still at work in these northern communities, and it became clear that the speakers of these languages do indeed want help from Wycliffe and the Bible Society with their Bible translation projects.

Cheyenne and Marianne did come from the Naskapi community, and they shared effectively how God’s Word in their own language has deepened their relationship to Him. But one of the new things that we learned was the translation need in the “Severn Ojibwe” language. Look at the map where it says “Prince Albert”. Right under that sign are several isolated communities of Severn Ojibwe speakers, also known as “Oji-Cree”. Bishop Lydia Mamakwa, a speaker from the Kingfisher Lake Oji-Cree community, shared her heart’s desire to see the Scriptures made available in her mother-tongue. Her plea, along with the other priority projects put forth by the group, are the beginning of an initiative to answer all the remaining First Nations Bible Translation needs in Canada.

See if you can find the new locations on the map that were missing from the first one:
We meet again by Conference Call this week with the working group to plan our next steps towards these goals:

1. Acceleration and continuation of the Plains Cree Bible Translation project.
2. The establishment of a Bible Translation and language development project for Kingfisher Lake Oji-Cree and the surrounding Oji-Cree communities.
3. The establishment of a Bible translation initiative that would result in a cluster of several Cree dialects working on the translation of the same books. This cluster could get its start with a series of workshops to train Cree speakers from each participating community in Bible translation and literacy (reading and writing) which could also include Naskapi from Quebec, Oji-Cree from Ontario and Mushuau Innu from Labrador.

Also, be watching this space during the coming week for a serial version of our Summer Newsletter that was mailed out today.

Serving with you, Bill and Norma Jean

(*) I understand that people who do websites like this one, that some call “blogs”, also have “followers”. You may apply “partner” or “follower” to yourself as appropriate.

Translation Brief 19Nov2013 “FAQ”-3

Our dear partners,

This is the third follow-up to answer Frequently (F) Asked (A) Questions (Q). Thank you for your response to FAQ-1 and FAQ-2, and for the great questions that you have asked to keep this going!

Another question that (understandably) many people are thinking about is:

(3) “So… what about the Naskapi Translation?”

The short answer is that it’s “still going on”… and more of us are sharing the load.
Most of you will remember the remarkable story of “The Fantastic Four”, describing the new “Naskapi Language Specialists-in-training” that were recruited, hired and trained by Bill to work at the Naskapi Development Corporation. They are all young (in their 20s) and enthusiastic about their work, and each one has taken on the translation of an Old Testament book of the Bible in Naskapi. They are following a training plan in which they study translation principles, Naskapi history and culture, history and geography of Bible times, and Naskapi grammar, along with practice in using some of the computer technology that has been set up so that they can type in Naskapi and organize and edit their work.

Amanda is assigned to the book of Joshua, Kissandra is working in 1 Samuel, Kabimbetas is working on 1 Kings, and Medora will be starting on 2 Kings soon. These are all stories of the history of God’s relationship with Israel.

In addition, Tshiueten, who has worked as a Naskapi translation intern now for about 3 years, has made significant progress through the book of Exodus, the “prequel” to all those stories, the beginnings of the nation of Israel.

Silas is still the senior translator, and besides his own work on the Psalms and his service as deacon at the church, he reads through and revises the work of the younger translators.

Bill interacts with the team several times each week, answering questions and teaching sections of their training plan, and also mentors and guides them into the correct spelling and other translation procedures. But they are gaining experience and their enthusiasm at the translation office at Kawawa is an encouragement to all their co-workers.

Also, our friend Rene Labbe, a former pastor from Quebec City now works as a science teacher at the Naskapi school. He comes by each week to present an inductive Bible study on the period of history and the books of the Old Testament that they are working on. We are so grateful for his involvement with the translation team.
The very first books of scripture that were translated in the 1990s, the “Walking With Jesus" series, have met an important need for beginning and intermediate readers of Naskapi. These are transitional readers that have large print and colorful illustrations, comprising six short (32 page) books that contain highlights of the life of Christ. These have recently been completely revised and the last book of the series “The Resurrection of Jesus” is in the final checking stages. These books make reading the Bible familiar and accessible to children and adults who are motivated to learn to read in their own language. The local radio station also plays audio-book versions of these that Bill produced as MP3s.

The books of Naskapi Lectionary readings, the cycle of readings that are read each Sunday in the Naskapi church, have been through one complete three-year cycle as of the end of this month. Bill worked with Silas to revise and correct the “Year A” book over the past several weeks, and it is now ready for it’s re-release for the first Sunday of Advent this December 1.

The first book of the Naskapi Legend series, “Kuíhkwaçhaw: Naskapi Wolverine Stories” was completed this summer, and Bill is working with the translation team and consultant linguists to prepare the second book, “Chahkapas”, which will be completed early in 2014. These books not only provide good quality reading material in Naskapi, but also give a glimpse into the traditional storytelling genres that is such an important part of Naskapi culture. These two latest books, along with several others were illustrated by our daughter Elizabeth, and we have hopes that she will continue to be invited to participate in the development of these literacy materials. While the main location these books are distributed is at the Naskapi Development Corporation office in Kawawachikamach, anyone can find them on-line as well at http://www.lulu.com/spotlight/naskapi.
Even though Bill keeps pretty busy with his other work [link] our time in British Columbia is giving him some of the margin he needed to bring some Naskapi linguistics and documentation projects further along, like the Naskapi dictionary, grammar, toponyms (names of places in Naskapi territory), maps, the Naskapi Hymnbook revisions, the Book of Common Prayer in Naskapi, and archiving. We are encouraged that there is now a growing staff of Naskapi-speaking language specialist who are gaining some of the skills they need to carry on this work themselves.

Thanks for your prayers for them, and for us.
Serving with you, Bill and Norma Jean

Translation Brief 11Nov2013 “FAQ”-2

Posted on November 11, 2013 by Bill Jancewicz

Our dear partners,
This is the second follow-up to answer Frequently (F) Asked (A) Questions (Q). The response to “FAQ”-1 was so positive that we are thinking that this is the highlight of your week!

The question we get a LOT (especially once folks understand the answer to the first question) is:

(2) “So… what does Bill do […]all day long…?”

The short answer is that he serves as Norma Jean’s “support staff”.

But Bill also keeps pretty busy outside of those responsibilities as well. Trinity Western University (TWU), where Norma Jean is enrolled, is also the home of CanIL, a training partner of Wycliffe Bible Translators and the center for SIL training in Canada. Besides the opportunity to connect with and serve along side the staff at CanIL, Bill is also upgrading his skills by taking a class to use current computer software for applied linguistics—language documentation, dictionary-making, grammar writing and preparing literacy materials. So at least two days a week Bill goes to the campus with Norma Jean to attend his classes there.

Bill is also involved in a Consultant Development program as part of Language Program Services for the Americas Area. He is completing assignments related to “Field Linguistics Specialist Certification”. In short, he is continuing to upgrade his linguistics skills to better serve the Bible translation needs of the minority language groups we serve, including Naskapi, Mushua Innu, Cree and other...
There are also the Old Testament Bible Translation projects that the Naskapi team is working on, which he facilitates from a distance by internet communication with the Naskapi language specialists in the Naskapi community in Quebec. Several projects are just beginning and some are about to come to completion: We’ll be sharing about these Naskapi publications in particular in the weeks to come.

Finally, and related to all of these, Bill is working on needed revisions to the Naskapi dictionary, moving the database to the current language documentation software, working on Naskapi literacy books, and training (via Skype) the Naskapi language specialists to use the translation tools.

As usual, if you have any further questions, feel free to send them to us. Maybe yours will be chosen for another “Frequently Asked Question” answered soon!

Thank you for sharing our vision for everyone to have access to God’s Word in the language of their hearts.

Serving with you, Bill and Norma Jean Jancewicz

** “administrative assistant, driver, bodyguard, personal chef, APA guidelines resource, critic, editor, encourager”**
The local Naskapi school in the community has set up a classroom that, for all intents and purposes, is part of the McGill University campus in Kawawa. Since September of 2010, these students have followed university-level courses to prepare them to serve as educators in their own community. The organizers of the program, seeing the importance of the Naskapi language in this community, have also included courses in Naskapi reading, writing and grammar, taught by Bill and with guest appearances by Norma Jean (for Naskapi children’s literature and curriculum).

The most recent Naskapi class was held from March 13th to the 29th, in which the students studied Naskapi language structures (grammar) covering kinds of words, noun inflection, plurals, and applying grammatical features to reading. They also improved in their oral and silent reading skills of Naskapi syllabic texts, and practiced their typing of Naskapi as well.

Each of the classes that Bill has taught them also has a strong component of Naskapi culture and history, because eventually these students will be teaching Naskapi classes of their own. This class we read “A History of the Naskapis of Schefferville” by Alan Cooke, a previously unpublished manuscript that was first written in 1976, but has now been transcribed and made available in book format, now available with the other Naskapi language resources here.

Bill is pleased to report that all the students did very well and improved a great deal in their ability to read and write Naskapi. Two of his students have recently agreed to serve as “Lay Readers” in the Naskapi church, where for the past several weeks they have been reading the Naskapi scriptures during Sunday services. It is very encouraging to see the strong and growing interest in Naskapi reading and writing among adults since the publication of the Naskapi New Testament in 2007. We are anticipating some ongoing involvement in providing this kind of capacity-building training for the Naskapi community as they take more of the responsibility in maintaining and sustaining their own language.

Serving with you, Bill and Norma Jean Jancewicz.

Posted in Uncategorized | Tagged culture, Education, history, Languages, Linguistics, Literacy, McGill University, Naskapi | 5 Replies

French Alphabet

The French alphabet has 26 letters. French uses the same Latin Alphabet but with diacritic marks. An IETF BCP 47 language tag is a code to identify human languages. For example, the tag en stands for English; es-419 for Latin American Spanish; rm-sursilv for Sursilvan; gsw-u-sd-chzh for Zürich German; nan-Hant-TW for Min Nan Chinese as spoken in Taiwan using traditional Han characters. To distinguish language variants for countries, regions, writing systems etc., IETF language tags combine subtags from other standards such as ISO 639, ISO 15924, ISO 3166-1, and UN M.49. The tag structure has been