



Inawinytji Stanley with

Pitjantjatjara Bible Translation update

By Dave Barnett

There has been a lot of excitement recently with the arrival of the new Pitjantjatjara Shorter Bibles. The previous edition was a best-seller, and since running out of stock in 2016 there has been growing anticipation for the new Bibles.

In 2018-2019 the Pitjantjatjara New Testament was recorded for an audio app, and during the recording process several changes were made to the text. There is something about reading the text aloud in a group that allows people to hear whether the Scriptures sounds natural in their language. As well as updates of the NT, the new Shorter Bible includes the book of Daniel, and many other smaller portions of the OT including 1 Samuel and Psalms.

Inawinytji Stanley was working on a first draft of Zechariah chapter 10 in Adelaide when the new Bibles arrived. Her eyes lit up and she was overjoyed to receive her new Bible! She then searched throughout the NT to see how the previous translators had translated terms she was struggling with in Zechariah such as 'sheep' and shepherd'. Upon receiving her new Bible Inawinytji said, "My heart skipped when I saw it! I was thinking, 'I've been waiting a

long time to see this, and now it's finally here! Now I'm going to go home and read it all night."

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



Inawinytji Stanley and Michelle Lewis

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Amata & Mutitjulu APY lands

When I rang and told another translator, Tjulyata, that the Bibles had arrived at the Koorong warehouse, she immediately hung up the phone while I was mid-sentence, jumped on a bus and headed to the store to get her copy (before I had the chance to tell her they were packaged in boxes out the back and inaccessible!)

There is a tremendous sense of pride in holding the physical Bible in their hands – the fruit of many years of persistent labour, amidst many trials and challenges, but all with the knowledge that the Lord has called them to do this work, and not only for them, but for their children and grandchildren after them.

A team of Pitjantjatjara translators are planning on launching their new Bible at Salisbury Congress Church on Sunday April 5. Then a team will travel throughout the APY Lands to sell the new Bible over the Easter weekend and again in June. Please pray with us that God's Word will be read, heard and received by many Pitjantjatjara people.



Louise Sherman and the arrival of the New Shorter pitj Bible



Amata & Mutitjulu APY lands

An English Bible for Indigenous Australians

By Kathy Dadd

I love my work! Basically, I get to do my favourite things all day - read the Bible and play with words. My name's Kathy Dadd and I am doing Bible Translation with the Australian Society for Indigenous Languages (AuSIL). When I learnt that there were still many Indigenous Australians speaking their own languages, and that only one of those languages had the whole Bible, I was keen to help give Aboriginal people better access to God's word. Somewhat ironically, I am working on another English translation of the Bible! Read on to see how it is helping Indigenous Australians understand God's word.



What is the Plain English Version?

[The Plain English Version](#) (PEV) is a translation of the Bible for people who speak an Aboriginal language as their mother-tongue, and have a limited knowledge of Standard English. It is designed for those who do not yet have the Scriptures in their own language, or who meet with Christians from other language groups. It is also being used in theological training and by Aboriginal people doing Bible translation into their own languages.

Why is it needed?

The coordinator of the project, Dave Glasgow, and his wife, also Kathy, spent much of their lives in Maningrida, working on the translation of the New Testament into Burarra, one of the languages spoken in the area. Upon its completion Dave saw that there were still many Aboriginal language groups with little or no Scripture, and that people continued to use Standard English Bibles which they could not easily understand.

For most Aboriginal people in remote areas, English is still a *foreign* language, used only on occasion for certain purposes. Thus, they don't use Standard English, but their own dialect of English, which is influenced by the grammar of Aboriginal languages. Unfortunately, most Aboriginal languages only have portions of the Bible translated, and some don't have anything. So the PEV is designed to give speakers of Aboriginal languages access to God's word in a language they can understand.

An English Bible for Indigenous Australians

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How is it different to every other English Bible?

Given that our audience does not speak Standard English, there are many differences to a Standard English Bible, such as:

Grammatical constructions - As English is not our audience's mother-tongue, they typically don't use grammatical constructions that are not in their own languages. As a result, our translation tries to avoid constructions that are not common in Aboriginal languages, such as passive voice, abstract nouns, negative questions and unanswered rhetorical questions.

E.g. 'You will be saved' is a passive construction, so it needs to be turned around and have the subject stated, becoming, 'God will save you.'

Background knowledge - Our audience also do not have the background knowledge that the original audience of the Bible had, so some things need to be explained.

E.g. 'It is written,' becomes something like, 'A long time ago God got one of his men to write about this in his book. He wrote...'

Figurative language - Figurative speech varies greatly across languages and requires an understanding of the context to be understood, so figures often need explaining to ensure they are clear.

E.g. 'I am the good shepherd,' becomes, 'I am like that good shepherd that looks after his sheep properly.'

Vocabulary – As our target audience speak a different dialect of English, many words are not known and some even have different meanings, so the vocabulary of the translation is adapted accordingly.

E.g. 'The chief priests and the Pharisees,' becomes, 'the Jewish ceremony leaders and the Pharisee mob.'

Worldview – Our target audience also has a different worldview to most English speakers, so they often understand things differently.

E.g. Giving your child a snake to eat, instead of a fish, would be just as good! So the PEV has, 'If your son asks you for a fish, will you give him a cheeky snake? No way.' (Note that "cheeky" means "dangerous".)

How much has been translated?

Over the past 12 years, a number of people from a variety of organisations have contributed to the translation of the Plain English Version. Some books from the Bible have already been published by the [Bible League](#) as individual booklets (under the original name Simplified English Version), and several others have since been translated by the team. We are now working to compile these books into one volume, called a Mini-Bible. It will have about 75% of the New Testament and some excerpts from the Old Testament. One day, we'd love to see the whole Bible translated. Pray with us!

Nungalingya College students using the PEV





with Dave Glasgow
working on the PEV



Checking the PEV translation in
Maningrida with Katie Cooper



Nancy and Rosemary translating Scripture from the PEV into Maung

How does translation happen?

The general principle of translation is to convey the same meaning to the target audience as the original audience would have understood. In order to do this draft translations are checked with people from the target audience to see how easily and how accurately the translation is understood. If something is not understood, or is understood inaccurately, then it is adjusted until the meaning is clear. Once the team is happy with the translation, it is checked by a trained consultant who has not been involved, to ensure that the original meaning has been maintained. The consultant will typically interview more people from the target audience to confirm how the translation is understood. Once the translation has been approved, it can then be published. The Plain English Version is available digitally on the [Aboriginal Bibles website](#) and as an app on [Google Play](#). The individual booklets are provided free by the [Bible League](#) and they will also be publishing the Mini-Bible. Audio recordings are also being done and will be available in [the PEV Bible app](#).

What have I learnt from the Plain English Version?

Not being able to use Biblical jargon, such as *righteousness*, *glory* and even *kingdom*, means that we need to work out what a passage really means before translating it. While the final translation can sound clunky to my Standard English ears, I love that it has to get down to the real meaning. When reading the Plain English Version, I sometimes find myself questioning a verse, only to realise that I hadn't really understood the verse before. Even though the PEV is designed for speakers of Indigenous languages, I know of highly educated native English speakers who use the translation to help them understand the Bible!

For example, the Greek term 'proskuneó', typically translated as 'worship' in English, usually means to bow down before someone as a sign of respect or worship. I don't necessarily picture this when the Bible says that the blind man 'worshipped' Jesus (John 9:38), but the PEV leaves no room for misunderstanding, 'And he got down on his knees in front of Jesus, to show him respect.'

Pray for the future of Bible translation in Australia

I only started working in Bible translation less than a year ago, and I don't have a lot of colleagues, and unfortunately, many of those I do have are nearing retirement! Please pray for more workers to help with the Plain English Version, and to support Bible translation into Indigenous languages. As well as translators, we need people with a variety of skills including administration, promotion, IT, audio/video, discipleship and linguistics. If you, or anyone you know, would like to know more about the Plain English Version, about Bible translation in general, or about Indigenous ministry, please don't hesitate to contact [AuSIL](#), [Coordinate](#) or [Wycliffe Bible Translators Australia](#).

Bible work In the Time of Covid

By Louise Macdonald

About two months ago our world became a strange place! Maybe you noticed? Amongst our Coordinate family we had so many plans for this year. Yurranydjil Dhurrkay was organising a big translation workshop at Gove, she was hoping for everyone to work on drafting the book of James and to improve our computer skills by having training in how to use Team view. But now that all of Arnhemland is a designated area no one from outside Arnhemland can travel to Gove.

At the Katherine Christian Convention we were planning to gather together everyone interested in Scripture Engagement so we could build a network over all the regions, to share ideas and work on projects together.

We were looking forward to another audio workshop in Gove where GRN (Global Recording Network) were planning to train local people to be able to produce quality audio recordings that can be published in GRN's Five fish app.

I had decided to focus on travelling around Australia to tell the Coordinate story, instead I

find that I can't even travel from my home in Jabiru to Darwin.

We are learning so many new skills, Zoom, Facebook livestreaming and finding links to Youtube are now commonplace. We can now drop in on church anywhere in Australia and see how other people are getting on. Nungalinga College has not been able to have classes but their daily Chapel has gone on line and it is wonderful - follow them on Facebook.



All over Arnhemland, Kimberly and the APY lands in the desert fellowship is happening in family groups every night. It is beautiful listening to the music and worship coming across the lake each night here in Jabiru and we hear similar stories from all the other communities.

We keep in touch with our friends and colleagues by phone and facetime. Margaret Miller who has been unable to get home to Galiwijn'ku is working just as hard from her mother's flat in Sydney.

Although our local community churches are thriving it is very difficult to support each other in our Bible translation and Scripture in Use work so a lot of our work is in hibernation as people concentrate on those projects that in other times we didn't have the space to finish.

We pray that everyone stays healthy and strong, ready to gather again when the crisis has passed.

It is time for this heart language to be heard by the heart and not just the ears!

By Glenys Waters



Nalambirra and Bruce

Sometimes translation work leads you to places where you feel alone and a bit stumped. If you experience too many of those places all at once, you can lose momentum and just feel like giving up. So when we heard help was needed at Milingimbi in February we jumped on the plane a few days later and went for a visit. Friends Ed and Sally were so flexible, and with very short notice opened their home to us. They plied us

and our co-workers with meals, and helps of all kind for the duration.

The visit gave us the opportunity to help the translators over some humps. It was wonderful to catch up with each one and renew friendships. Nalambirra was working on Gupapuyngu Luke, Nalambirra was working on Liyagawumirr Luke and Murarrgirarrgi was working on Gupapuyngu John. But each of them had struck problems. Some of the Adapt It program features were not working as well as they could for them. Some translation choices they had to make were not clear cut. And Nalambirra was frustrated with a couple of passages in Luke – they were not coming out well and she didn't know what to do about it. So we had two weeks to work on all these things together and encourage one another.

With God's help, we were able to check through all they had done since we had last seen them. We asked questions arising from our checks; helped them to learn and confidently use some of the additional Adapt It features, and showed them how to fix up the parts they wanted to retranslate. Nalambirra and Bruce worked on a different form for the genealogy in Luke – one that she was far happier with and that flowed better. Once they had worked that out for Gupapuyngu, Nalambirra chose to follow the same pattern for Liyagawumirr. There's a great advantage in working on closely related languages at the same time!

At the end of our visit, we backed up all their work to a USB stick for safe keeping. Ed printed out whatever had been done in the book they were working on. They can now read through these and make further changes or talk their work over with family and friends.



Nalambirra and Bruce

It is time for this heart language to be heard by the heart and not just the ears!

By Glenys Waters

One morning, another friend came to visit, declaring, "Every language group should have John 3.16 in their own language!" So Bruce challenged her to translate John 3.16 into her grandmother's language. She was thrilled and then shared it with another speaker of that language over the phone. They were both overjoyed. At one point, she commented, "He's now feeling emotional! ... This is the heart language. This is such a blessing that when God spoke to us, He spoke in our heart language. It is time for this heart language to be heard by the heart and not just the ears. Thank you Wonderful One, [this is giving me] great happiness."

All these ladies have families and relatives who are struggling with complex life issues. In addition in recent months the community has been in lock down due to Covid 19. But it was precious to see them immersed in God's Word, working to see that that Word is heard in the heart language, by the heart and the ears. There's still a long way to go to see these portions completed and accessible by families, relatives and communities. So we pray they can continue to overcome the humps and potholes and we look forward to seeing them at the next translation workshop, when travel restrictions are lifted for us all.



Murarrgirargi and Bruce

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