



“It gives me goose bumps!” Notes From Elcho

By Glenys Waters

Yunjirra and Glenys Bruce & Murarrgirargi



“I was reading through chapter 1 of John to my friend, from my translation draft that you printed for checking. And then I got her to read the next chapter to me. As she was reading, she said to me, 'It is giving me goose bumps!' We were both so happy sitting together and reading God's word in our language.”



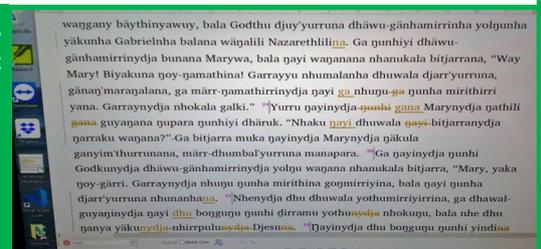
Yunjirra & Njalambirra

Jessie Murarrgirargi's words made me stop and think – how often do I get goose bumps when I read God's Word? But these ladies have been waiting a long time to be able to read and share the scriptures in their own language with others. Both Murarrgirargi and Judy Njalambirra started translation work years ago when Beulah Lowe did translation work at Milingimbi in the late 60's and early 70's but Beulah had to leave and the work halted for many years. But the ladies interest in translation work didn't stop. Over the years they have continued voluntarily with Bible translation work in one way or another.

Now with Covid borders opening and housing becoming available at Galiwin'ku, we could finally meet in mid-April for a work session. The main goal was to print out the books they have worked on to date and to begin the long slow process of checking the drafts. The first check is a self-check. They do this by reading through the translation draft, just focussing on how it comes across in Gupapuyŋu and making any changes and corrections to make the style of the translation flow well and sound like good Gupapuyŋu.

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

corrections on the text



“It gives me Goose Bumps!” continued

Yungirra checking



That's 119 pages or more of concentrated thinking and checking, sitting in uncomfortable chairs with the back aches and pains of old age. But as Nalambirra said, “When I work on translation the Lord helps me and speaks to me and I am at peace.”

It was also a joy to work together with Dorothy Yungirra who lives at Galiwin'ku. She worked on entering her self-check corrections of Warramiri back into the translation program, Adapt It. She is getting her chapters ready for group checking.

Some of the spellings of her words were quite tricky. It took four of us to perfect the spelling of nhänhannharran - which means ‘couldn't see’. It's quite a tongue twister! I challenge you to have a go at it, quickly, 3 times. Nalambirra was able to confirm when we spelt it right – 'Yes, it is four syllables, not three! And she went on to teach us all about the sounds and syllables of the languages in the region. Yungirra and I found her spelling tips quite helpful.

Sometimes we came across a word or phrase that was not quite right. So we would go back to the source text that the ladies translated from, check the English version to see what it was saying and sometimes we even 'phone a friend'! That's something new for those of us who translated in communities before mobile phones were so prevalent.



Nalambirra & Yungirra



Nalambirra phoning a friend

We had some problems throughout our time together – health challenges, family problems, computer problems. But God always found a way through them. Praise God that self-checking of the books of John, Luke, Mark and Acts has begun in Gupapuyngu and that Yungirra is preparing for a group check of Warramiri book of Mark. She is very keen to get these Mark stories checked so she can use them in Sunday school.



Flying with MAF

We also thank the Lord for those who made our work session possible – for the use of Margaret's house and the Galiwin'ku Translation Centre, for financial assistance and encouragement from Coordinate and Bible Society, for the new computer provided for Nalambirra to replace her dead one, and for MAF who are always ready to help with flying needs.

“Adopted in Love” a true story

By Margaret Miller

There is a small homeland, Gäwa, that lies at the other end of Elcho island some 60km beyond Galiwin’ku, where a group of Warramiri people live with their own Christian school. It has a staff of 7. The school community has been enthusiastically preparing a beautifully illustrated children’s



Daymanju & Yäjay



Rachel & Daymanju's granddaughter

storybook in their own language, called: ‘Adopted in Love : Gumurruy-warratthuwan Mä-ñuwatjinyayu’.

During last year, ‘Old man’ Daymanju, elder of his Warramiri clan on Gäwa, directed this very special project for his Warramiri language, but it was also to have an English diglot. His language is a critically endangered language. With the enthusiastic support of the Christian School Principal, Rachel, the children and school staff have shared their gifts together to realise this product.

The story begins with :

Banya djupal Galpawiri ga Warrukay ñurruñu watjuwan djinal Gäwa, ga djäwul djupal banya gurruñunharra wulay watjuwanam djinalam—When Cameron and Rachel moved to Gäwa they had no family on the island.

It tells the true story of how the Warramiri community in Gäwa have embraced their co-workers by adopting them into their kinship system. It describes how that looks in daily living, but the story also takes the reader further to show how this parallels with our adoption into God’s family through Jesus.

One family member, Garal’wuy helped ‘old man’ write up this story in Warramiri. But he also wanted to include some scriptures in the book that had been an inspiration for the story being told. To manage those scriptures well, they sought out Bible Society’s expertise.

Rachel’s text to me on the 12th September:

Great response from ‘old man’. He was excited about Bible Society’s partnership ... before I could mention the bible passages, he already said they (Yurranydjil, Yunggirnga and Garalwuy) can all go through the translation together. Then I mentioned translating the 4 Bible verses from Djambarrpuyngu to Warramiri and he said that’s easy!! He says just come whenever you guys are ready. He’ll be here, thank you Lord!!

So the Gäwa team planned a day for the Coordinate translation workers in Galiwin’ku to travel up to Gäwa to work with them on the processes of translating those verses from Djambarrpuyngu to Warramiri; John 1:12, Galatians 4:6, Ephesians 1:5 and Revelation 21:4.

On the 15th September Rachel sent a text: Hi Margaret, old man is very keen to get Yunggirnga and Yurranydjil here to go over the book so it can be signed off. He anticipates he’ll be busy next week so he wants to



Daymanju has copies for all

do it today or tomorrow 🤔

I replied : ...I talked with Yurranydjil today (she’s just got home yesterday from Darwin) and she is keen too. She understands what is required by Bible Society... so maybe we should get you guys to connect to make a good plan. I know she is also worried about a number of funerals coming up! Her last words were; ‘Gods timing is perfect ’ Margaret

Later that day I messaged Rachel: Guymun and I just found Yunggirnga. We are ready to head for Gäwa in the morning with Yurranydjil - all accounted for. Pray that my car will behave itself!

Rachel: Sounds good! Will pray 🙌 thank you Margaret ❤️

So the next morning the Coordinate workers, took the trip to Gäwa in my car, a one and half hour drive, on an unsealed road, to the other end of Elcho Island, to encourage the teachers, Yäjay, and Gawutjurruwuy... Cont P 8

T-TRIM in January

By Louise Macdonald



The first block for the Cross Cultural training program T-TRIM happened in January. In a five day program which covered Living and Working in Community and Languages we worked with a wonderfully engaged group of participants across many different church backgrounds and work contexts. The participants seemed to appreciate the interactive learning approaches with the emphasis on self reflection and practical information. Starting with a role play where the “Majorians” attending a fabulous “Minorian” celebration. Karen from Nungalingya led us in an exploration of world view, getting us to put on the different lenses required to operate in diverse cultural contexts. Rachel and Carl led us in exploring relationships, kinship and Demand Sharing and how to make friends. Then Rachel and I looked at personal security in community looking at



travelling in the bush, etiquette, dress codes, gender roles, health and self care. Other topics looked at roles and expectations, team building and an intro to Indigenous Spirituality. We finished up with Karen and I unpacking Culture shock and stress and working with mentors. Then Cathy Bow from CDU, our

own Mally McLellan and Kathy Dadd from AuSIL spent a day and half exploring Indigenous language and language learning. We finished up with a fabulous night Kangaroo tail feasting and fellowship lead by a variety of church leaders from Kriol country, Baggot community and East Arnhem Land.



“Living in Two Worlds” in Aboriginal Australia

By Margaret Miller

After having lived in an Aboriginal Community for 7 years, I took a trip to Africa to visit my sister and her family, who had just begun serving in Botswana.

I received a wonderful welcome, and got to meet my sister’s African friends and helpers. It was not long before they commented to me, not about my family resemblances, but rather ‘how relaxed I was’ in their company. They asked me; “Where do you usually live?” and “Why are you so relaxed and at ease with us?” So I shared of my home in an Aboriginal community, and explained how I found their cultural lifestyle similar in many ways to the one I am living in; ie. Australia. They were surprised to know that there were Indigenous people who lived in Australia!

As I showed them photos of my home it was new to them that Australians could be a similar skin shade as they were! But the colour of the people wasn’t all we discovered that was similar...

their focus on relationships was just as strong, and the importance of time was just not there, just as in ‘my’ community back in Australia. I was happy to be at ease with their ‘time’ and to learn how alike many of the Batswana values were to Aboriginal Australian values.

It was only some 10 years later, when my sister and her family had returned to Australia, that she visited me in my Northern Territory home. After a day or two of settling in, she remarked; “This is just like Africa!” I was delighted that she was ‘feeling’ the same way I had in Africa, and confirmed my experiences.

BUT... the greatest reflection for me was considering the differences that had existed in the preparation and training offered to each of us. My sister’s mission agency gave her and her family a good year of preparation, training, conferences and ‘retreats’ to work through, before they embarked on their cross-cultural experience...

Meanwhile, I received good advice in my search for a career path for school teaching in the Northern Territory. I took up a three year Government course that contained 4 unique units on Aboriginal Studies in Canberra. I received an orientation package in Darwin on my arrival, BUT then I had to take the initiative and find any further help, namely experienced colleagues, as there was no comprehensive process by my employer to prepare me to live and work long-term cross-culturally...and I was a lucky one to find that help!!

It has sadly been the experience of many who have embarked on a career in an Australian Aboriginal community, to have little or no preparation by way of cross-cultural training before arriving... after all, aren’t we in Australia ...we are not going ‘overseas’?!

I have been privileged to live and work with Yolŋu people in the Northern Territory for 41 years. English is not their first language, and their cultural values are very different to my Western cultural values ...I have witnessed many people struggle with their entry into an Aboriginal community, some leaving far too prematurely, from the stress of not being well-prepared. ... Surely it is time for change, to encourage, train and support those wanting to engage with one of the most diverse cultural situations possible in our world.

That is why I have been passionate to assist ‘Missions Interlink’ with developing a course in ‘Living in Two Worlds’ that is particularly focused on skilling those entering Northern Territory Aboriginal Communities towards cross-cultural competence. This course was held online on two Saturdays in April 2021, joined with a hub that met face-to-face at Nungalinya College in Darwin. I joined a team of presenters; Rachel Borneman, David Turnbull and Carl Musch.

Already in January, Mission Interlink delivered other units of work to 18 people, interested in working and living in Aboriginal Communities by a different team. Some participants have already established a role in a community, others are closely connected to the Top End life and work, and others are considering the ‘north’ as a possible future.

One participant writes of their recent April unit: “If I was ever tempted to think I could just ‘feel my way’ through cross-cultural interactions with Aboriginal Australian, ‘Living in Two Worlds’ helpfully dispelled that illusion. The course opened my eyes to the profound differences between Western and Aboriginal worldviews and gave me an invaluable toolkit for starting to engage in that space.”



“Eating the Bible!” Elders talk Scripture in Use.

By Paul Kube from Bible Society

Coordinate Issue #30 April 2021

A couple of weeks ago there was an Oral Teaching series in Genesis being recorded on video at Nungalingya. As the Bible Society worker in Darwin, one of my roles is to serve communities in providing scripture and other resources to help understand the Bible. The timing was perfect to sit down with some important indigenous leaders and ask them what should be done.

My wife Melody (AUSIL) and I sat down at dinner with Yurranydjil (Wangurri and Djambarrpuyŋu) and Djawut (Dhuwa Dhanjumi and Djambarrpuyŋu). As we talked about Bible translation in general Yurranydjil commented that Bible translation is good food for her. We started playfully talking about the different foods we can eat. Djawut said that worship music is like dessert. I joked how we always seem to eat dessert first in church!

Later that evening, 9 indigenous leaders came together for a talk on how we can do scripture engagement better. As we talked I was inspired to ask, "How can we eat the Bible?" We need to get God's Word inside of us like good food, so it can make us strong and transform us from the inside. We remembered how the Apostle John ate the scroll in Revelation, and Ezekiel did the same thing. Jeremiah also spoke about eating God's words, and Isaiah said "taste and see that the Lord is good." This picture worked well for everyone at the table.

It didn't take long for Yurranydjil to kick into gear after this. "When we hunt a turtle and bring it back to the community, we all eat it, but there is a law about who eats the meat, which piece they get and in which order. We are the Bible translators, the hunters; we eat the turtle meat first. Then it is other people's turns." We had a lively discussion about who else needed to eat the meat and in which order. The important thing that came out of this story was that if the right people did not eat the meat next, then everyone else could not eat. This became quite a challenge and even a bit of a lament.

As we talked further I talked about Djambarrpuyŋu and said "Djambarrpuyŋu has 27 turtles now. Each time a book of the Bible is translated; this is like another turtle has been hunted. Each time a turtle is hunted the whole community needs to come together to eat it, before it is time to hunt another turtle." We all reflected that the turtle story was very powerful and also very challenging about the right way to eat the Bible. We know that more talking will need to happen about how to do this properly.

I am encouraged because I know this was a very heart felt discussion for all the people present from Goulburn Island (Maung, Iwaidja and Kunbarlang), Eastern Arnhem (Djambarrpuyŋu, Wangurri, Dhuwa Dhanjumi and Liyagawumirr) and Groote Eylandt (Anindilyakwa). All of the people are from turtle hunting cultures and the story made sense to them. It was a challenging discussion. People will take the story they have thought up themselves back to their communities and ask their communities how they can eat the Bible turtles properly. We will have more discussions again, and then when all the people are ready we will have a good Bible eating festival!



Djawut and Yurranydjil speaking at the Multiplying the Multitude Conference at Nungalingya in 2019. Talking about the Turtle Hunt.



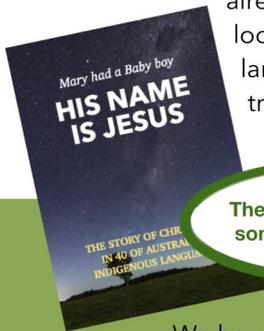
The Christmas Project

By Melody Kube

The Christmas project is a collaborative effort to gather translations of a short Christmas passage, Luke 2:6-12 in as many Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages as possible. Each translation will have its own page in the finished book, the first edition will hopefully be available at Christmas time this year. Some of these translations are over 100 years old, others are currently in progress. We are also actively seeking speakers of languages that still have little or no Scripture available in their language, the story of Jesus' birth may become the first Scripture published in some of these languages. Christmas artwork by Indigenous artists is also requested. A translators' workbook has been produced to aid first time translators. We are also planning a Christmas project translators' workshop, in Darwin, May 17th-21st. Please contact Melody if you would like to be involved.

The Christmas Project

We want to make a book with a short Christmas story from the Bible in lots of Aboriginal languages. Each language will have its own page. Some languages already have this story translated. We are looking for translations into other languages that are still waiting for Bible translations.



The book might look something like this!



We have a **workbook** to help you translate this story so that your language will have a page in the book too. You can get one at AuSIL.



There will be a **workshop** for this translation project:

**Darwin
May 17th - 21st**

If you want to come please call Melody:
0421821794

Jesus is born for all of us!



The Australian Society for Indigenous Languages is dedicated to respectfully partnering with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities who value their languages and want to develop them for ongoing use by future generations.

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'Adopted in Love' continued



'Adopted in Love' storybook arrives in Gäwa homeland community

Together they learned of the processes required for a good scripture translation. Wängarr also came along to demonstrate what is required to do a back translation on the four verses in order for Bible Society to do a consultant check. There were further visits before the process was all signed off.

Two months later on the 16th November I sent a text to Rachel: *Good morning Rachel. Have you seen our emails (from Bible Society)? There is just one question for you to find an answer. Havagoodyday! Blessings, Margaret*

The Consultant check by Bible Society had gone through and the translation into Warramiri for the four verses was approved, ready for print! At the beginning of 2021, there were photos on my phone from Gäwa...

Wow! Gorgeous photos! Such joy! I look forward to my copy. Happy New Year! :) Margaret

ADOPTED IN LOVE:

Contact the Principal at rachel.herweynen@ntschoools.net to order a copy. Proceeds will go to translators and student artists to encourage more work in Warramiri.

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- For \$20, I would like to become a Coordinate Partner, (1 year)
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