

PROJECT NO: 8850

TAX | NON-TAX

Australia



Pitjantjatjara Translation

Overview

Bible Society Australia is committed to helping Indigenous Australian's Open The Bible in their heart languages. Bible Society is supporting the Pitjantjatjara (Anangu) people of Central Australia to translate the Old Testament into Pitjantjatjara. Amongst other things, BSA funds translation workshops and provides expertise through translation consultants.

The Need

Since 1788, over 155 of the estimated 300 or more languages first spoken in Australia have disappeared, and the remaining 110 are critically endangered. In 2005 the National Indigenous Language Survey said, "all of Australia's Indigenous languages face an uncertain future if immediate action and care are not taken." It is widely acknowledged that the Bible is the most important source of usable connected discourses in endangered Australian languages. Translating the Bible into Indigenous languages has always been, and remains, critically important. They are the heart languages of many people. A heart language is the language a person thinks and dreams in.

Many Indigenous people speak some English, however much of what they read in English versions of the Bible can be confusing and complicated. Pitjantjatjara is one of the few original Australian languages that are still used daily. It's learned by children as a normal part of growing up and is spoken by several thousand people who live in their traditional homelands in the northwest of South Australia, as well as parts of Western Australia and the Northern Territory. Diaspora in Alice Springs, Port Augusta and Adelaide also speak Pitjantjatjara. With a full Bible in their language, Pitjantjatjara speakers will be better able to come face to face with God's Living Word.



155

of the estimated 300 or more languages first spoken in Australia have disappeared.

110

languages are critically endangered of the 145 languages left.

3-5K

Aboriginal Australians use Pitjantjatjara as their first language, with up to another 5,000 people speaking it as their second or third language.

Goals

In 2022, work continues on finishing the translation of Habakkuk and Judges. A final front translator workshop is scheduled for May, and the final 2% of the front translation should be completed this year, in preparation for drafting.

In 2023, work will continue on drafting the remaining Old Testament books into Pitjantjatjara language along with editing, community consultation and consultancy checking, before these translations are ready for

publication. It is hoped that most of the Old Testament will be at the 'first draft' stage or beyond by the end of 2023.

Impact

Pitjantjatjara is the first language of about 3,000–5,000 Aboriginal Australians, with up to another 5000 people speaking it as their second or third language. These people are the ones who will be impacted by the finished Old Testament translation. Work continues steadily on the Pitjantjatjara Old Testament translation even amid the restrictions of the last few years of the pandemic. Translation of 1 Samuel and Joel were finalised in 2021.

In May 2022, the book of Hosea was the last book front-translated for the Pitjantjatjara Bible. A front-translation is a preliminary step in the translation process to help out the mother-tongue translators. It's re-writing the English Bible in a way that is closer to how it'll be written out in the target language. The next step is first drafting in language, and currently about 80% of the whole Bible has at least a first draft.

Testimonies

"One of the by-products of translating the Bible has been the steady collection and preservation of old words, that, with the passing of another generation, would otherwise soon be extinct... At last count we have recorded twenty-seven old Pitjantjatjara words over the last 5 or 6 years that are in the Pitjantjatjara Bible, but not in the Pitjantjatjara dictionary. We still have perhaps 40% of the Old Testament to translate, so who knows how many more words we'll come across?"

David Barnett, Translator and Bible Engagement Coordinator at Bible Society Australia

Prayer Needs

- Thank God that we can continue to support the translation of Scripture into the Indigenous languages of Australia, that we can journey together with our Indigenous brothers and sisters, acknowledging them as the custodians of their languages.
- Pray for all those those working on the Pitjantjatjara Old Testament translation project, that God would keep them safe, give them wisdom, and sustain and encourage them in their work.