

New edition in works for Inuktitut-based Bible

Last Updated: Tuesday, October 17, 2006 | 4:12 PM NT

[CBC News](#)

A new edition of the Moravian Bible — a landmark work in Inuktitut — will soon be available, more than 200 years after it was first produced.

German missionaries began spreading the Moravian faith in Labrador in the 1750s. The first translations of parts of the Bible followed years later, although the process was done gradually.

In fact, there are no less than 10 separate volumes, which has caused confusion for congregations since.

"They kept losing the books that they were trying to use, every time they did a service or a Bible study," said Sabina Hunter, a lay minister in Happy Valley-Goose Bay.

"So, they wanted to have the Bible in one book, so the Old and New Testament can be in one book."

There were also errors in translations.

For almost two years, members of the Moravian congregation have been collaborating with the Canadian Bible Society to complete an all-new translation for Inuit readers.

Hart Wiens, director of scripture translation with the Canadian Bible Society, said there has been a desire for years to produce at least a new electronic version of the Moravian Bible.

"[The objective] would be to reprint this text under one cover as the heritage Bible, in honour of the elders, the people that have been used to this text for all these years," Wiens said.

The Moravian Bible was the first book produced in Inuktitut in Labrador. Moravian missionaries maintained a presence in Labrador until 2005, and the congregation has been managing its own affairs since.

For Sofie Tuglavina, Andrea Webb and the three other translators working on the project, reading specific verses and passages has stirred many memories of home and church life.

"Some of these stories are pretty personal," said Tuglavina. "It's very moving to get back to that, back so long ago."

"It's very emotional, especially when you're an Inuk and Moravian, and it's been taught to you all your lifetime, ever since you were a little baby,"



Sofie Tuglavina says translators have often had emotional experiences as they handled specific verses of the Moravian Bible. (CBC)



Lay minister Sabina Hunter said having a one-volume Moravian Bible will help ensure the survival of Inuktitut. (CBC)



said Webb.

The Canadian Bible Society hopes to have the new edition of the Moravian Bible available for use by next spring.

Hunter said the importance of the project cannot be understated.

"I believe the Bible will be able to allow people to say that we can preserve this language in this capacity," she said.

Hunter added that once the heritage edition is published, work will begin on translating it into modern Inuktitut, to account for changes in the language.



Hart Wiens said the Canadian Bible Society was keen to support a corrected translation of the Moravian Bible.
(CBC)