



2019 NEWS

NUNGALINYA



Authentic Indigenous Christians ▶

The early months of 2019 saw the passing of several significant leaders in the Northern Territory Christian context. Indigenous Elders, Deacon Boniface (Catholic) and Reverend Garrawurra (Uniting), and long-time Church Missionary Society missionaries, Reverend Canon Barry and Mrs Margaret Butler (Anglican), went to be with the Lord.

They had all worked tirelessly to build an authentic Indigenous church and in community development programs, both within local NT communities and at a national level. Although they came from very different backgrounds, they shared a commitment to the Scriptures and ministry in First Languages, appropriate integration of Indigenous culture and faith, and the need for on-going training. Here are some of their thoughts:

I must use the things of God that are in my culture. I must use them in his service. If I do not do this, my faith and my service are shallow. They are a pretending. They belong to some one else, not to me. God has asked us to love him with whole mind, heart and soul. So, I must give myself to God as an Aboriginal. This is what God wants or he would not have made me what I am.

- Boniface, late 1970s.

Aboriginal people need to renew their Aboriginal way of 'discipline' so family relationships can be made

strong and so they can learn about God through Aboriginal 'discipline'... this will also mean giving back the responsibility to the right people so that they can solve and control their own social problems.

- Garrawurra, 1984, from his Nungalinya Diploma of Theology thesis.

Christianity (is) not something just for white people, which was to be laid upon the Aborigines. God spoke their languages. They did not have to become imitation white people, but could really be Aboriginal Christians worshipping and ministering in culturally appropriate ways.

- Butler, 2004, reflecting on 50 years ministry in the NT.

We thank God for the service and wisdom of these Elders over many, many years. We are also humbled to recall that Nungalinya College has a long and proud heritage of partnering with individuals and communities as they strive to be authentic Indigenous Christians. This is the complex process of contextualisation, and 2019 has seen a number of opportunities arise where Nungalinya could continue to embed this process. We hope you are inspired to pray for us as we share some stories of this year of Indigenous Languages, teacher training and the integration of faith and culture.

- Ben van Gelderen
Principal



DEACON BONIFACE



REVEREND GARRAWURRA



REVEREND CANON BUTLER AND MRS BUTLER

2019 YEAR OF INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES

'Multiplying the Multitude' Conference

"After this I looked, and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands." Rev 7:9

In August, Nungalinya hosted the 'Multiplying the Multitude' conference. Taking our inspiration from the UN Year of Indigenous Languages and the heavenly promise of Revelation 7:9, we encouraged people from various backgrounds and denominations to share their experiences in First Language ministries. It was an incredible two days of workshops, presentations and fellowship. Over 130 people attended, coming from work in mission agencies, schools, universities, digital technology fields and theological colleges. We covered complex issues of language revitalisation, Bible translation, Christian bilingual education, Bible orality, liturgy development and many more! The conference was a wonderful opportunity to both be encouraged and to learn of the challenges and initiatives in the vital ministry area of First Languages.



Diploma of Translating

In a lovely piece of God's timing, it was exciting to begin the new Nungalinya 'Diploma of Translating' qualification this year. The course is a partnership between the College and an array of like-minded ministry partners who desperately desire to see a new generation of Indigenous Bible translators be trained to work in their own clan languages. Only Kriol has the complete Scriptures translated, so there is still much work to be done! A strong cohort of 16 Indigenous Elders joined the course, all of whom have completed previous theological training at Nungalinya and/or have extensive translation experience. Many of these Elders presented at our conference on local issues and programs. Study at the Diploma level is challenging but worth it:

"Doing Bible translation - I think it's the number one job! The translation of our Almighty... English is for the mind but Yolŋu matha is for the heart. When we hear God's word speak to us in the language he has given us, it is more precious, more valuable. It is beautiful."

- Yurranydjil Dhurrkay, Bible translator and
Diploma of Translating student



2019 Diploma of Translating class

Multilingual Education

It is with great excitement that we can announce that Nungalinya has received some funding through the federal government Indigenous Languages and Arts (ILA) program, to help maintain and revitalise First Languages. In a clear 'win-win' scenario, we plan to record Indigenous Elders discussing Scriptural passages and themes, and incorporate these sessions into our existing Certificate III in Theology and Ministry course.

Thus, there will be a digital resource for generations to come of First Language teaching, and current students will be able to study at least some of their course in their own language. However, there are many, many languages in the NT alone, so please pray for our planned workshops and recordings in 2020 as we take on the complicated process of turning an exciting vision into reality!

Indigenous Faith and Culture ▶

Nungalingya students come from a diverse array of language and cultural backgrounds. As all Christians should be doing, they are continually processing how the gospel message transforms and interacts with their own cultures. Our practice at Nungalingya is to faithfully expound the Scriptures to enable Indigenous Christians to discern and express their faith in their own context.

Troy Mardigan from Nauiyu (Daly River) community painted 'Creation Story' during his time at Nungalingya in 2019. He was studying the unit 'God's Story' in the Certificate III Ministry and Theology course. Here is an excerpt of his explanation:

The feather on Jesus' head shows him as the Ceremonial man, the Son of God who has the complete authority. As he was creating, he knew the future- that he would die for us. I have shown this by the cross on his face. On his body we see the heart of Jesus Christ and the blood flowing down to cover us. We are the dots on his body... the net flowing down from his head to the left side is a fish

net. It represents how Jesus met with Peter and said, "I will make you fishers of men if you follow me". I am thankful to God for this gift he has given me, and I want to continue to use it to share the good news of the gospel.



Indigenous Teacher Training ▶

Nungalingya has always believed in a co-teaching arrangement whereby Indigenous and non-Indigenous trainers together plan and deliver our courses. Besides facilitating better understanding of the English terms used to understand the Scriptures, this arrangement is the most powerful way to ensure Indigenous perspectives on faith and culture are consistently embedded in our College.

However, as a Registered Training Organisation (RTO), all trainers must hold appropriate qualifications to teach in this environment, to move beyond an 'assistant teacher' role. In 2019, all six of our Indigenous teachers: Mandy Manggurra, Marlene Andrews, Wängarr Dhamarrandji, Yurranydjil Dhurrkay, Justine Gawinygawiny and James Woods began a new 'skill set' qualification to enable them to officially train in an RTO.

By February 2020, everyone will have completed this important training, and we are very excited by this development, in keeping with Nungalingya's vision of 'Empowering Indigenous Christians'.

WE NEED YOUR SUPPORT NOW!

Nungalingya College needs your support! Partner with us to continue equipping Indigenous Christians for ministry.

Donate online at www.nungalingya.edu.au/donate



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Empowering Indigenous Christians

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