



Language: Mbelime

Speakers: 107,000



Dates: 2019-2022

Project Goal: New Testament portions

MBELIME (mm-BEH-lee-may)

AFRICA — BENIN

THE PEOPLE

The Bebelibe people live in a hilly region in northwestern Benin, mainly building their homes in the plains.

Although there are a few towns in their area, there are no paved roads connecting their communities. Livelihoods are typically based on farming and raising livestock.

For many people, each day ushers in familiar challenges. They must search for water, collect firewood, and work in their fields. Some engage in small businesses, but — on a day-to-day basis — they can never be sure of earning enough to cover their needs.

Most people put their faith in *Uwienu*, the creator God. They believe he can't be approached directly, and seek intermediaries in order to call on him.

Over the last few decades, however, interest in Christianity has increased, and about 10% of the people now attend churches. But to gain a deeper understanding of the gospel message, the Bebelibe need God's Word in Mbelime, their language.

THE PLAN

We're partnering with a local association to produce more of the New Testament in Mbelime!

At this time, the community has access to the Gospel of Luke and some Scripture-based films, including the "JESUS" film.

The association has recruited three people for the translation project. In this three-year project, they will revise previously translated books — Mark, Luke and Acts — updating them according to the recently revised writing system.

They'll also translate the Gospel of John, 1-2 Timothy, Titus and James, and draft 1-2 Thessalonians and Philemon.

Because many Mbelime speakers prefer oral communication, the completed books will be made available in both print and audio formats. In addition, Scripture will be published on a smartphone app.

This project will also feature a variety of training opportunities for translators and project administrators. And members of the community will be equipped to review translated Scripture, giving feedback on its clarity and naturalness.

THE IMPACT

"Bible translation will allow Mbelime-speaking churches to use the Scriptures during services and Bible studies," a project adviser said. "Church members will have a greater understanding of God's Word and apply it to their daily lives."

The New Testament books included in this project were selected by local church leaders and other Christians to meet specific challenges facing Bebelibe communities.

For example, people will learn the differences between worshipping God and practicing traditional religion. "Translated Scripture will assist in resolving the problem of syncretism," the adviser said.

As Bebelibe Christians live out their faith, team members believe churches will experience a new level of growth. "Our hope is that lives will be transformed as the gospel message is presented in Mbelime," the adviser said.

Your prayers and gifts will help Mbelime-speaking people gain access to more of God's Word in a language that speaks to their hearts!