If we are to understand the Word of God, God needs to translate himself into our language, so that his words can speak deeply to each person,” Elvis Guenekean reflects. “It’s the translation of the Word of God into my language that is at the base of my own faith.”

Elvis was once an atheist, an eager student of humanistic philosophy, and firmly set against Christian faith.

“When my wife would return home from prayer meetings, I would mock her, asking her a series of philosophical questions,” he remembers. “I aimed to persuade her that God didn’t exist and that her faith was useless.”

His remarks would often make her cry, but she was never dissuaded from praying for him.

After completing his studies and training as a teacher, Elvis’ further academic plans were blocked by a lack of finances. In answer to his wife’s prayers, this roadblock became a turning point in his life. He decided to look for opportunities to use his skills to benefit the local community. He even approached the pastor of a local church.

The pastor encouraged Elvis to enroll in a translation training course under the direction of Christians with experience in translation. It was being offered to members of the community so that they could begin to translate the Bible into Gbeya, Elvis’ own language.

At first Elvis saw translation as just a challenging intellectual exercise. But as he sought the meaning of each passage of Scripture, and grappled with the best way to express it in Gbeya, he began to discover the God of the Bible.

“As I became immersed in the Word of God, I began to understand the incredible love and grace which he freely gives each one of us,” Elvis recalls. “I couldn’t even imagine why God would want a relationship with me. My deep intimacy with God is one of the most amazing things I take from this ministry.”

Soon Elvis went from being one of the translators on the Gbeya translation team to being the coordinator for translation and literacy projects in his region.

“Ever since I accepted Jesus as my Savior,” he says, “my entire life has been such an adventure in faith.”

God continues to use the Bible to change hearts and lives around the world today. You can read more incredible stories like Elvis’ by visiting wycliffe.org/whybible.
The Church has existed in Europe since about A.D. 50, when the Apostle Paul brought the Good News on one of his missionary journeys. While many people groups already have Scripture, there are still those who are waiting — particularly among the many European sign languages and language groups that have immigrated to Europe over the years.

You can make a difference in countries across Europe through joining our prayer team. Sign up at wycliffe.org/prayer to receive weekly prayer emails on different countries, people groups and more that help you pray for what God is doing around the world.

Ways to Pray for the World

» Pray that people across Europe will use Scriptures in their own languages.
» Ask God to kindle a passion for his name among European people groups.
» Pray for the remaining languages that are still waiting for Scripture.