

Infocus

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A Translator for the Next Generation

By Jennifer Stasak



Often, we think of Bible translators as people who already have a firm grasp on the stories and meanings of biblical text. But that's not always the case. It's not uncommon for translators grow in their faith in Christ because of what they're learning. And sometimes translators find that God has called them to this work so that they will be transformed by his Word.

Lucas Jebbey came to the Nyagbo Sroe village in the Volta Region of Ghana to visit his ailing mother. Like Lucas, most of his family don't live in the village, choosing to reside in major cities like Accra or abroad. Unbeknownst to him at the time, that trip to Nyagbo Sroe was the beginning of his journey as a Bible translator.

In 2013, full-scale Bible translation work began for the Nyagbo language. It was a historic event, since this marked the first time the Nyagbo language had ever been written down.

An older man named Reverend Kwasi Bansah, who was part of the translation team, heard that Lucas had arrived in the village. Knowing Lucas had a degree in computer technology, the reverend paid him a visit to introduce the Bible translation project and talk about the software they were using. Rev. Bansah began to occasionally call on the young man to check things for him on the computer. Not long after, one of the translators — Reverend Joseph Ziangro — began to experience trouble with his eyesight. Soon, he was unable to read the computer screen and do translation work because the cataracts in his eyes were so bad.

Knowing that Lucas had already helped them with computer work, Rev. Ziangro invited the man to become a part of the translation team and type up things for him on the computer.

Lucas was fascinated with the idea of a translation project in Nyagbo. "It showed that we are developing the language," he said. "I became happy to join this project."

Lucas was a Christian before he joined the translation team. But when he first came to the village to visit his mother, Lucas was all alone and didn't attend church. As his involvement in the Nyagbo translation work increased, he became more and more involved in the local church. Not only that, but Lucas' understanding of Scripture changed dramatically as well.

As a speaker of English, Ewe and Nyagbo, Lucas understands how to communicate in numerous languages. But only one of those languages speaks directly to his heart: Nyagbo.

"[Translating] has made me have more insight into the Bible during translation and review work. I go through a lot of verses and then the teaching of Jesus that I have not been aware of," he said. "Even when I translate the English into Nyagbo, I get the understanding more in the Nyagbo than English, even though I am the translator!"

One of Lucas' favorite parables is the parable of the sower from Matthew 13. Through translating it, he was able to understand the significance of Jesus' teaching about the Christian life — how Christians will always experience trials on earth, but that instead of abandoning our faith, we have to rely on it in order to grow.

Those who receive Scripture in their heart language experience transformation, but those who are doing the translation work are also experiencing changes in their own lives!

You can read all of Lucas' story and see how God's working in Nyagbo Sroe by visiting wycliffe.org/feast.

SWEET WAYS TO STUDY SCRIPTURE

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A GLIMPSE OF GHANA

Africa is the world's second-largest continent in both size and population. The continent is composed of 54 different countries. Across this geographically and culturally diverse continent, more than 2,100 languages are spoken — approximately 30 percent of the world's total languages.

Ghana was the first sub-Saharan African nation to be colonized by Europe, and also the first to gain independence from colonial power. Ghana is not only rich in history, but also languages and landscape — ranging from valleys to mountains and even boasting the tallest waterfall in West Africa.

In Ghana, organizations like the Ghana Institute of Linguistics, Literacy and Bible Translation (GILLBT) are working to ensure that every Ghanaian has access to Scripture in the language and form they understand best. GILLBT also works so that local Ghanaian churches understand the significance of Bible translation and get involved. Praise God for the ways he's working in the hearts of Ghanaians!

You can make a difference in countries around the world by joining our prayer team. Sign up at wycliffe.org/prayer to receive bi-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 for the work of Bible translation across Africa. There are still hundreds of communities waiting to experience God's love in the language that speaks directly to their hearts.
- » As local organizations and churches take ownership of the work of Bible translation in their respective communities, ask God to provide more people to participate in this life-changing work.
- » Pray that God would continue to call translators like Lucas, so more people will know the God who speaks their language.

GHANA FAST FACTS

POPULATION:

26,428,000

NUMBER OF LANGUAGES WITH ...

No Scripture: **27**

Scriptures portions: **6**

New Testaments: **32**

Bibles: **22**

**Statistics are from wycliffe.net.*