



## PROJECT PROFILE

# Avatime New Testament

### THE PEOPLE

The homeland of the Avatime people (pronounced a-vah-TEE-may) is located in the mountainous southeastern region of Ghana, also known as the Southern Volta region. Primarily subsistence farmers, they live in traditional settlements scattered throughout the mountains. Economic activities revolve around bartering and selling extra produce such as corn, cassava and fruit. Village government is organized around a traditional chief system, with an overall chief who resides in one of the larger towns. Annual festivals are celebrated with pomp and pageantry and conducted in the local language. The literacy rate of the Avatime is less than one percent.

### THE BACKGROUND

People of this region were introduced to Christianity about 100 years ago, and most churches are either Presbyterian or Roman Catholic. Less than 10 percent of the population attends church regularly, although an additional number are nominal Christians. Traditional religion, with spirit possession, is widely practiced alongside Christianity, and believers often mix the religious practices together.

Churches have traditionally used Ewe, the regional language of wider communication, in church services and for reading Scripture. But many churchgoers follow the form of worship without understanding the message. Pastors and priests resort to using the local Avatime language for announcements and other items requiring community involvement.

### THE NEED

The Bible is available in the regional language of Ewe, however the average Avatime church attender doesn't understand Ewe well enough to grasp Biblical concepts. Without God's Word in a language they can understand, believers often have disagreements about their lifestyle decisions, and religious practices from the traditional spirit worship creep into the church. They need the Bible as the source of divine authority.

Christians show a strong desire to use the mother tongue in church, and the community has asked for help in translating God's Word into Avatime.

### THE PERSONNEL

God has called an experienced and well-qualified Ghanaian project manager who is committed to bringing Scripture to the Avatime in their heart language. Divine Mununkum was trained and worked with a Wycliffe team in a cluster of languages in northern Ghana that included his own mother tongue, a language that is related to Avatime. Access to Scripture in his own language has motivated him to reach out to other language groups in Ghana that are still waiting for translation.

Additional training has prepared Divine to lead in the linguistic analysis of the Avatime language, and he will reside in the language area with



- **Location:** Ghana, West Africa
- **Number of Speakers:** 24,000
- **Project Goal:** Completion of the New Testament
- **Year Project Began:** 2005
- **Expected Completion Date:** 2017



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his family. He comes to the project with support for his own personal needs, but Divine doesn't have the financial resources to hire local language speakers to help with the translation or to provide for additional project expenses.

### THE PLAN

During the first two years, Divine will begin the linguistic analysis of Avatime and develop a trial alphabet. He also plans to establish a language committee who will provide community leadership in moving the project forward. Building a translation team by identifying and training local people in basic translation skills while drafting the Gospel of Mark will also be a major priority.

The team expects to complete the New Testament in only nine years. The New Testament translation of Lelemi, Divine's mother tongue, will serve as the source text for drafting into the related language of Avatime, and Divine will assess the appropriateness of using a computer software tool, such as Adapt-It, to speed the process of producing the first drafts of Scripture.

The Southern Volta region where the Avatime people live is home to three additional related language groups. During this initial stage of the project, Divine plans to investigate the relationships between the languages and explore the possibility of incorporating these languages into the project in a multi-language project structure.

### THE RESULT

By the end of 2014, this translation project will provide the New Testament for the Avatime people in the language that speaks to their hearts. Churches will be strengthened and individual believers will be encouraged in their personal spiritual growth. Having understandable Scripture will also empower Avatime Christians to prepare effective evangelism materials to reach out to the non-Christians in their communities. Literacy activities will enable the people to use the translated materials effectively. This initial project may also open the door to translation in three additional languages in the region.

### JOINING THE TEAM

Funding from Seed Company partners will provide part-time salaries, training, travel costs for consultants and translators, and project supplies and materials. Local Avatime churches will contribute people and other kinds of resources to the project.

The translation team also needs partners who will faithfully pray for all aspects of this project—for the people, the progress and the reception of God's Word in Avatime. Strong prayer support is vital to the successful completion of the translation so Avatime Christians will be able to hear God speaking directly to them through the Scriptures. Please take time to prayerfully consider your part in meeting this need. Call The Seed Company toll-free at 1-877-593-7333 to let us know of your commitment.

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