



PROJECT PROFILE

Misaje Initial Goal Cluster*

PROJECT SUMMARY:

More than half of northwestern Cameroon's Misaje people are Christians, but few have separated themselves from old traditions involving spirit worship. Most concern themselves with providing enough food for their families, rather than pursuing education.

This project will encourage local churches to pursue literacy programs and Scripture classes, by providing alphabet charts, books and primers, picture books of Scripture stories, reading and writing books, plus poster sets with mother-tongue captions. In the process, translators will receive training, to prepare them for further Scripture translation. They'll also lay the groundwork for translating the "JESUS" film.



THE PEOPLE

When the Misaje people migrated from their original homeland several centuries ago, they settled in the northwest region of Cameroon. Since that time, small communities have developed distinct languages. All these groups share a close association with their land, as well as an agrarian lifestyle. Most families tend merely foods they need for survival. But some also grow coffee, cultivate corn or process palm products as cash crops.

A tribal chief holds authority in each Misaje village; his primary goal is to maintain harmony. While Western cultures credit a scientific cause and effect, these people assume a spiritual cause and effect. Part of the chief's job is to assure balance in the spirit world, to also maintain harmony in the natural one.

THE NEED

Church membership among the Misaje is estimated between 50 and 70 percent. But African traditional religion still wields tremendous authority in every community. The effort to keep balance between the natural and the spirit world carries over into rule-keeping among church members. This creates a focus on outward signs of obedience, rather than on God's work of transformation.

Misaje speakers need to be able to understand what God's Word teaches. They also need an opportunity to relate to God Himself through their mother tongue.

- **Location:** Cameroon, Africa
- **Number of Speakers:** 34,500 in six language groups
- **Project Goal:** Finding and training three translators per language group, translating portions of Luke for story booklets, producing alphabet books and charts, plus reading and writing books for literacy and Bible story posters for church use.
- **Year Project Began:** 2010
- **Expected Completion Date:** 2012



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THE PLAN

Several organizational partners are already involved in this project. They will help select and train three translators for each of six languages: Nchane, Saari, Mungong, Kemezong, Naame and Chung. The teams will use the recently published Noni translation—a related language—as a source text, from which to use computer adaptation for their new materials.

During these initial-goals, the scope of translation is quite limited. But project administrators see this project as a foundation and tremendous gateway for future work, including producing the “JESUS” film and the New Testament.

With these initial materials in their heart languages, church workers will have tools to use for discipleship training and evangelism. This could happen as quickly as two years from the project’s outset.

THE IMPACT

Local Misaje area Pastor Nelson noted, “Developing the Misaje languages into written form and having Scriptures in their languages will help people think positively about themselves and their identity. Having mother-tongue Scriptures will also help each people group truly understand the message of the Word of God.”

Pastor Emmanuel added, “Scriptures will be a powerful means of liberation, in the sense that the people will not feel they are second rate because they don’t have a ‘holy language.’ When Jesus speaks to them in the mother tongue they will say, ‘Wow, we are important!’”

Other local pastors are united in their enthusiasm, expecting that changes in individual lives will be significant, leading to transformation of the wider Misaje culture.

JOINING THE TEAM

The Misaje translators cannot complete their goals without your financial investment and prayer. Your financial investment makes translation possible, providing training, adequate computer equipment, translation supplies and living expenses for the translators’ families.

Your prayer helps translators and their families face problems like sickness, conflict and spiritual opposition that can threaten their work.

Call The Seed Company toll-free at 1-877-593-7333 or visit theseedcompany.org/projects to commit to invest and pray for the Misaje team.

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