



Nyakyusa-Ngonde

THE PEOPLE

More than a million Nyakyusa-Ngonde speakers live in south-west Tanzania and northern Malawi (where they are called the Ngonde). In the past, they were powerful and wealthy traders who rivaled the Islamic traders on Tanzania's Swahili Coast. Today the community includes many well-educated members, including pastors with advanced theological training. The people grow crops such as corn, millet and plantains (cooking bananas), which comprise a large part of their diet.

THE BACKGROUND

German missionaries first brought Christianity to the Nyakyusa about a century ago. They helped the people develop an alphabet and translate the Bible. This Bible was reprinted in 1995, but it uses the old German-based spelling system, and it is written in a little-known dialect. Most people, can't understand this version of the Bible and don't use it. Despite about 100 years of Christianity, many of the Nyakyusa are Christian in name only and continue to practice elements of their traditional animistic religion. Without access to God's message in an understandable form, many people have never experienced the love and grace of Christ and lack the foundational truths that lead to practical applications for Christian living.

Nyakyusa church leaders recognize the need for another version of the Bible and other materials in their language. They began paying the travel expenses for a translation and literacy team to attend workshops offered by SIL in Mbeya, Tanzania. The team started work in 2003 and has laid a foundation for translation with careful linguistic work. They developed a new way of writing their language, and they have been compiling a dictionary and studying how their language functions. Some team members are teaching Nyakyusa people to read so they will benefit from the new translation. The team began by drafting Jonah, Ruth and Mark, and their progress will continue from there.



- **Location:** Tanzania
- **Number of Speakers:** 1,050,000
- **Project Goal:** New Testament plus Old Testament portions
- **Year Project Began:** 2005
- **Expected Completion Date:** 2015



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THE PLAN

Several times each year, the Nyakyusa translation and literacy team joins teams from nine other language communities at the workshops in Mbeya. Some workshops cover topics such as dictionary compilation, alphabet development, discourse analysis and computer use. Others focus specifically on certain books of the Bible. During these sessions, participants work with each other and with trained biblical scholars to understand the meaning of the various Scripture books. This collaboration and sharing of resources speeds up and improves the quality of translation.

SIL members in Uganda and Tanzania serve as advisors, linguists and consultants to assist the teams. Several Tanzanians fill important project roles, and more will join the staff in the future. An advisory council of Tanzanian church leaders meets annually with the advisors and consultants to discuss progress and to plan the next steps for each translation team. Even as they work, team members continue to explore new approaches and technological resources that may benefit their work and lay a foundation for Bible translation into additional languages of the region.

JOINING THE TEAM

The Nyakyusa churches cannot accomplish their goals alone. They need your help. Your financial partnership will provide computers, translation materials and salaries for the translators. It will also supplement travel costs for workshop facilitators and consultants who work closely with the teams. Please prayerfully consider how God might use your gift to speed the translation of His Word.

The team is also in great need of your prayers. Translators and their families will depend on your prayer support as they give of themselves to see the Scriptures in their language. Consider making a commitment to pray regularly for the Nyakyusa translation team and for the Nyakyusa speakers who are waiting to hear about the love of Christ. Please call The Seed Company toll-free at 1-877-593-7333 to express your commitment.

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