



# Wanji

## THE PEOPLE

About 28,000 Wanji speakers live in the mountains east of Mbeya, Tanzania. They are relatively isolated by the terrain and don't travel much outside their homeland, but they're known as a friendly and hospitable people. Most are farmers, growing crops such as potatoes, corn, beans and wheat to feed their families and sell for income.

## THE BACKGROUND

German missionaries brought Lutheranism to the Wanji about 100 years ago, and the Lutheran Church remains the largest denomination among the people today. Most Wanji claim to be Christians, but because they don't have the gospel in an understandable form, many continue to blend elements of their traditional animistic religion with Christianity. Wanji church leaders see this lack of depth, and they are eager to have God's Word in their language. Over the years they have tried several times to begin a translation program; however, they didn't have access to adequate training and resources, and weren't able to continue.

But now, church leaders have organized a translation and literacy team to attend workshops offered by SIL in Mbeya. The team has laid a foundation for translation with careful linguistic work. They developed a new way of writing their language and have been compiling a dictionary and studying how their language functions. Some team members are teaching Wanji 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.

## THE PLAN

Several times each year, the Wanji 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.



- **Location:** Tanzania
- **Number of Speakers:** 28,000
- **Project Goal:** New Testament plus Old Testament portions
- **Year Project Began:** 2005
- **Expected Completion Date:** 2015



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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 Wanji churches can't 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 Sangu translation team and for the Wanji 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.