

The Agatu of Nigeria



representative photo

The Agatu people live on their ancestral lands in Benue State, Nigeria. Most of the people are subsistence farmers, growing yams, guinea corn, millet, groundnuts and vegetables. Because many Agatu live along the Benue River, fishing is also an important source of food.

For the most part, the Agatu live peacefully with neighboring people groups. When disputes do occur, they are usually about land rather than religion. In particular, some serious disputes with itinerant cattle herders trying to claim Agatu land have broken out in violence.

Missionaries introduced Christianity to the Agatu about 100 years ago, and about 80 percent of Agatu would consider themselves Christians. The remaining Agatu practice African traditional religion or identify with a major world religion present in the region.

The Agatu already have the New Testament in their language; however, the people now feel a deep need to have the Old Testament, too. In the Agatu culture, the Old Testament will be very important as a bridge to understanding the New Testament, particularly for those who practice African traditional religion or another world religion.

Local churches from many denominations are enthusiastically supporting this project, and church leaders are eager to have a complete Bible. Recently, an increasing number of Agatu Christians have become involved with traditional religious practices while others have begun to embrace materialism. Sound teaching from the Scripture will help church leaders to refute these errors and guide their people.

Primary Religion:

Christianity

Disciples (Matt 28:19):

8%

Churches:

Yes

Scripture Status (Matt 28:20):

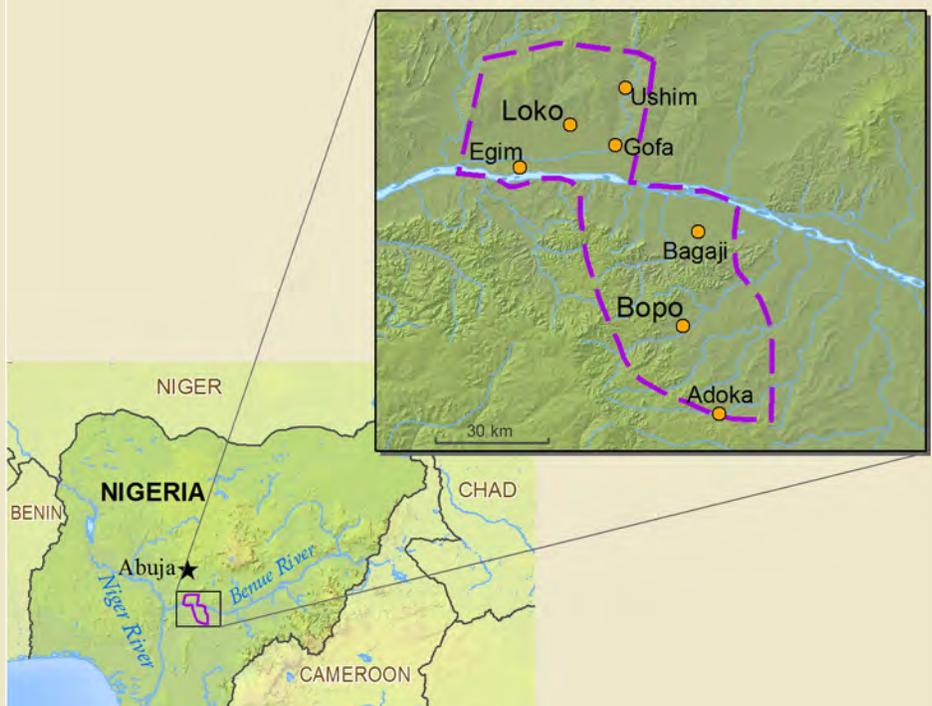
OT in progress

Population (date):

119,000



AGATU HOMELAND



Have They Heard The Gospel?

Is the Word of God Translated?

The Agatu already have the New Testament in their language; however, the people now feel a deep need to have the Old Testament, too. There is a project already well underway. As of right now, the translators have completed a first draft and team check of all the Old Testament books. Nevertheless, much work remains, such as consultant checks and community testing. As the translators move forward, printed Scriptures will be made available as trial editions, single books, and some times groups of books.

Other Forms of Gospel Presentations

The team also plans to produce audio versions of the Old Testament books simultaneously with the print versions. The audio Scriptures can easily be reproduced on cell phones and SD cards, thus making it possible to spread God's Word among the people quickly. Plans are also in place to produce the "Genesis" film as part of this project. The team will also undertake a revision of the New Testament in 2014 and 2015. The translators hope to complete the entire project in 2018.

There also exists short audio Bible stories and evangelistic messages. They explain salvation and give basic Christian teaching, see globalrecordings.net/en/language/2135.

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Status of Christianity

Religion and Response

Number of Churches

Church leaders are eager to see Agatu believers grow in their understanding of God's plan and how we are to live to please Him. As they have access to the whole Bible, many Agatu Christians will develop a more in-depth understanding of their faith as well as a growing commitment to God.

The local churches are also looking forward to using the Old Testament Scriptures in evangelism. Because the translators plan to release individual books in both print and audio as they are completed, Agatu believers will have in their hands a powerful tool for sharing the Gospel.