

Bitter Words, Sweet Words

Description:

a story to read or tell

Aim: to show just how effective translated Scriptures are in evangelism and church-planting

Audience: teenagers through adults, any number

Time: 5 minutes

Equipment: none

Scriptures to

Study: Hebrews 4:12, 2 Corinthians 3:14–18

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Narrator's Script:

It is a hot, sunny morning in the savannah grasslands of Ghana. Bakpando [bawk-PAWN-doe] village buzzes with excitement. A stranger has been spotted on the horizon! The villagers all know where he is heading because of the custom amongst the Konkomba people that all visitors must pay their respects to the chief. The chief's house is one of about twenty-five compounds in the village. Each compound is made up of several round, thatched huts linked together by a connecting wall to form a circle. Here the villagers wait. Who could the visitor be?

As soon as the stranger arrives, everyone's curiosity turns to fury! They recognize him as a pastor and pastors are NOT welcome in Bakpando. Bitter words follow: "Go away! We don't want to be preached at!" The Konkombas have enough problems of their own without a pastor coming and upsetting things. Life isn't always easy in Bakpando: accidents happen, people get sick and sometimes die. When misfortune comes, the people believe that they must have offended one of their ancestor spirits or that someone has been working witchcraft on them. To try and remove the curse, they go to the local soothsayer who tells them which spirit is angry and what sacrifice they must offer.

But the pastor has not come to preach. His words take the villagers by surprise: "Would you like me to teach you to read and write in your own language, in Konkomba?" The pastor explains that once they have learned to read, he will give them a portion from the New Testament to test their proficiency. Then they will be awarded certificates.

The idea of learning to read is so exciting! About twenty men ask to be in the first literacy class. They are eager and meet together for lessons several evenings a week. Their classroom is the shade of a tree with logs to sit on and the wall of a hut as a blackboard.

As time goes on, the students want to try out their reading skills and begin to tackle some passages from the Bible. Their interest grows and grows until one day they say to the pastor: “We like this matter. It is very sweet. We would like to follow this way.”

What a turn around! The villagers’ once-bitter words are transformed by the sweet words of Konkomba Scriptures and the Bakpando church is born.

Now Bakpando is just one of many Konkomba villages where this has happened. Seeing these churches grow shows that giving people God’s Word in their own language is vital for evangelism and church-planting.

Notes: