

## The Ichen of Nigeria



The sub-Saharan Ichen people are farmers in northeastern Nigeria. They live off their land, but poverty plagues them. West Africans use herbs, palm oil and groundnut oil to create deeply flavored sauces and soups, often adding chili peppers. Aromatic market and roadside snacks are barbecued or deep-fried. Common foods include rice, tomatoes, onions, corn, spinach, peppers, beans and pumpkin, cooked with fish, goat or mutton.

The first Gospel exposure here was in 1909; many churches have grown since. Local churches and community leaders are highly motivated to complete a translation of the Scripture. The Ichen area was badly affected by violent attacks in recent years and has frequent ethnic tension. Nigeria, the most populous African country, has diverse customs, languages, and traditions among its almost 400 ethnic groups.

Half the Ichen people in northeastern Nigeria claim faith in Christ and want to share the hope of the Gospel. Believers also desire in-depth church teaching. Mother tongue Scripture will support evangelism, spiritual growth, and preserve their language. Ichen is related to nearby Berom and Izere languages, which have God’s Word; computer adaptation from those will accelerate this translation.

**Primary Religion:**

Ethnic Religions

**Disciples (Matt 28:19):**

About half

**Churches:**

Yes

**Scripture Status (Matt 28:20):**

NT portions

**Population (date):**

50,000 (2006)



**ICHEN HOMELAND**



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### Have They Heard The Gospel?

Is the Word of God Translated?

Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Acts and James are finished. Translators are drafting and checking Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Galatians and 1, 2 and 3 John. Portions of Romans and Hebrews are being comprehension-tested in the communities, and ongoing training is planned for the team. "Thank you for encouraging us to speak our Ichen heart language without shame. Hearing God's Word read in our mother tongue gave us hope," a woman said, weeks after hearing Luke 6:43-45 read at a women's fellowship. Older women are being encouraged to mentor younger women and exhorted them all to bear good fruit.

Other Forms of Gospel Presentations

Audio recordings available.

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### Status of Christianity

#### Scripture

Urgent Need for Translation

Because of growing pressure from another major religion, Ichen Christians are fervent to complete their heart language Bible and read God's promises. Until now, churches have used Scripture in another language, which is understood only by some people.