

**WEEK OF
PRAYER**

Day 4

West Africans take lead in sharing Bible stories

Mrs. Lombena transitions with ease from the standard West African greetings into the story of Jesus and the woman caught in adultery. The Togolese man listening to the story is quickly attentive to her vivid storytelling. What follows is a lively discussion about the truths and implications of the Bible story she had crafted into his native tongue.

With sincerity on his face, he asks her to pray for him in the name of Jesus, the One who came not to condemn but to save. Rev. Essodina Ayewa, her trainer who has been watching from the side, steps up to lay hands on the man as they pray.

“When you tell a story from the Word of God, it’s powerful! It affects someone. He listens, he is penetrated,” says Ayewa.

Lombena, along with nearly 40 other students, has recently graduated from a three-year program at the Baptist Bible Institute of Togo (IBBT). For the first time, their curriculum includes training in orality methods—one component of which is the art of crafting and sharing biblical stories with people who prefer oral communication methods over written ones.

“We hear about the joy that animates the people who listen to the Bible stories all the time,” reports IBBT director Rev. Dombe Tchalaré. This has led him to require that all students receive the training, and he envisions creating a dedicated “School of Orality” within the Bible institute.



MAIN IMAGE: Mrs. Lombena discusses a Bible story with a Kabiyé man using the orality methods she learned at the Baptist Bible Institute of Togo. After sharing the story, they had a lively discussion about its truth and implications in his life.

SECONDARY IMAGE: IMB missionary Katee Sheppard*

*names changed for security



MAIN IMAGE: Master orality trainer and evangelist Seni Zougrana tells the story of the crossing of the Red Sea to pastors and students during a StoryTogether workshop, a strategic IMB orality project. The training program equips students to evangelize and disciple oral preference peoples using stories crafted and told from the Scriptures.

Ayewa highlights how the orality training has been an important complement to their classic theological education.

“It gives them practical knowledge: how they can preach, do evangelism, counsel and address doctrinal issues” using stories from the Bible.

The orality education is also unique as the first training in Togo being led entirely by African believers who were originally trained by IMB missionaries.

IMB missionary Katee Sheppard*, alongside a team of nationals in five countries, has been effectively using Bible storying for over a decade in a ministry to truck drivers. She says the drivers are normally closed to gospel conversations, but they love the stories.

“They ask questions about the stories and God opens doors to tell them Bible stories that lead many to Christ,” Katee says.

Katee’s team understood the value of training more people and, to date, IMB missionaries have equipped more than 25 national orality trainers across several African countries. Together they have led orality workshops and seminars for thousands of believers representing dozens of languages.

Evangelist Seni Zougrana is one of the trainers who leads orality workshops. He discusses both the joy and responsibility given by Revelation 7:9.

“That day we’re going to sing the same song in our different languages. Imagine the melody it will give!”

Pray for the African orality trainers as they continue to organize and teach others how to effectively use Bible storying to share and teach God’s Word.

Pray that the graduates of IBBT will put into practice the orality skills they have acquired when they return to their towns and villages.

Pray for the unreached people groups of Sub-Saharan Africa, asking God to confirm in their hearts the truth of the stories they hear.

pray