

The Ambul of Papua New Guinea



The Ambul people live on four small, isolated islands off the southern coast of the larger island of New Britain. Although they are geographically isolated, the Catholic Church was established there over 60 years ago. The people also have dealings with a local timber company, and so have access to money and goods, like sheet metal and timber for building houses, western-style clothing, and school materials.

There are primary schools but no secondary school. Teachers are difficult to keep due to the remoteness of the islands. New teachers come every year but half way through many give up leaving the extra load to be carried by fewer teachers. The children are first taught in Ambul and Tok Pisin. Then by grade 2 the children are transitioned to English which is government required.

Almost all Ambul consider themselves Christians and are very devoted to their faith. Even though they have churches and some outside contact, there are no Scriptures in their language. The church only uses Scriptures in Tok Pisin, which is not the language people use every day. There are Ambul people who could work on translation, but they need training, resources, and assistance to make it happen. Pray that God will provide the needed personnel and resources for the Ambul people to hear his word in their language!

Primary Religion:
 Christianity

Disciples (Matt 28:19):
 99%

Churches:
 4

Scripture Status (Matt 28:20):
 None

Population (date):
 1600 (2009)



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Have They Heard The Gospel?

Call Themselves Christian	99%
Believe In Jesus As God And Only Savior	Evangelized
Attitude to Christianity	Almost all of the Ambul people consider themselves Christians and most of them are very devoted to following their faith.
Attitude to Religious Change	The Catholic Church is well established in the Ambul area, and people are resistant to other denominations coming in.
Have Not Heard Who Jesus is	0%
Number Of Pastors	4
Comment	One Ambul catechist in each village
Response To The Gospel	Each of the four villages has its own church and many people attend church regularly. Throughout the language group, everyone is baptized into the Catholic Church as babies and people are confirmed when they are teenagers. Women's fellowship groups, youth groups, Sunday school and men's fellowship groups also take place throughout the area
Number Of Churches	4
History of Christianity, Year Began	1947 by the Catholic Church
Word Of God Translated?	No
Are Cross-Cultural Missionaries Needed?	Cross-cultural missionaries are needed to assist the Ambul people with Bible translation.

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Group Description

Geography & Environment

The Ambul people live on small coral islands off the coast of larger islands. This creates problems for fresh water and food, as well as land to plant their gardens. People canoe to the mainland to fetch water and plant and harvest their gardens.

Literacy

Active Literacy Program

No

Comment

Most adult men and women can read in Tok Pisin.

Economics

Subsistence Type

Comment

The people are farmers - tending gardens on the mainland. They also catch fish to supplement their diets.

Occupation

Most people work tending their gardens to raise food. A few people have jobs working for the timber company.

Income Sources

Selling food to other Ambul people; royalties from timber company

Community Development

Health Care

Comment

Fair

There are two health facilities in the area: a health center and an aid post. Both are open every day, but are sometimes out of medical supplies.

Diet

Comment

Good

People have garden foods, like sweet potatoes and bananas, to eat, along with fish that they catch.

Water

Comment

Poor

All of the Ambul villages are on coral islands. Only one has drinking water available on the island. People from the other islands transport all of the water they need from the mainland in canoes.

Electricity

At least one village has a generator that they use for lighting and a TV / DVD player. Generators are the only source of power, but are only used when fuel is available to power them.

Shelter Description

Many people have houses with sheet metal roofs and timber floors and walls, although some are in poor condition as they do not have additional supplies to maintain their houses.

Clothing

People wear western style clothing purchased in the provincial capital, Kimbe. For modesty, women and girls wear skirts rather than pants.

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Transportation

People travel throughout the area in locally made canoes. If they need to go farther away, like to the government station, they can pay to travel in a motor-powered dinghy.

Leading Cause Of Death

Malaria is the main sickness and cause of death in the Ambul area.

Education

Primary Schools

8

Comment

Each village has an elementary school, for grades prep through 2, and a primary or community school for grades 3 through 6 or 8.

Primary School Enrollment

Comment

Fewer girls than boys attend school.

Secondary Schools

0

Teachers

Comment

The Ambul area has a very difficult time retaining primary school teachers because it is so remote. New teachers come almost every year, but by a few months into the school year sometimes half of them have quit and gone away. The remaining teachers then have to pick up the slack, often teaching two classes each.

Language of Instruction Early Years

Ambul

Language of Textbook Early Years

Tok Pisin and Ambul

Language of Instruction Later Years

Tok Pisin and English

Comment

Elementary schools start teaching in Ambul and transition to Tok Pisin and English by grade 2. English is the government required language of instruction of grades 3 through 8, but often Tok Pisin is used in the classroom as well.

Language of Textbook Later Years

English

Comment

Only two elementary schools and two primary schools have any books.

Number of Schools Greater
Than 90% Homogenous

6

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Status of Christianity

Church Growth

Total Baptized

Comment

Every Ambul person was baptized as a baby, according to the Catholic church.