

The Toura of Papua New Guinea



The hill country that surrounds the Toura coastal homeland is not good for farming. Families plant small gardens that supply vegetables for their own use, and men bring in game from the jungle. Sometimes they also hunt wallabies to earn extra cash. The coastal waters teem with fish, and several varieties of bananas give industrious gatherers goods to trade for other staples.

Along with other coastal groups, Toura speakers (the language is also spelled Doura) dread encounters with more aggressive hill people in their region. Toura communities have been robbed and vandalized by criminal elements from the hills, so most Toura are hesitant to trust strangers.

Christianity came to the area in the late 19th century, but without the mother tongue Scriptures. People misunderstood the message missionaries brought. Beliefs known as “cargo cults” emerged. Cargo cult is defined as “any of the religious movements chiefly, but not solely, in Melanesia that exhibit belief in the imminence of a new age of blessing, to be initiated by the arrival of a special ‘cargo’ of goods from supernatural sources based on the observation by local residents of the delivery of supplies to colonial officials.”

The churches are eager to have the Scripture in their own language to counter error with the living Truth. It will generate freedom from fear of spirits and release those bound to empty ritual. God’s Word in the Toura language will reveal the deception behind the power of traditional practices and cargo-related beliefs, giving Christians courage to lay them aside.

Primary Religion:
 Christianity

Disciples (Matt 28:19):
 16%

Churches:
 5

Scripture Status (Matt 28:20):
 None yet

Population (date):
 2,000



TOURA HOMELAND



The Toura of Papua New Guinea

Have They Heard The Gospel?

Who is Jesus Christ to them?

100% would call themselves Christian

Response To The Gospel

Some Toura speakers can understand the neighboring Waima language, and Toura believers also participated in the Waima New Testament dedication. Nearly all Toura people associate themselves with the Catholic Church, which was the first church to send missionaries to the area. The Catechist who oversees the Toura area reported that many people are nominal and are not exercising their faith. There is evidence of syncretism, and belief in some elements of the traditional religion (i.e. sorcery) remains strong.

Is The Word Of God Translated?

Using the Waima NT as a source text for computer adaptation, Toura translators will be able to provide a New Testament for their language group. Audio Scripture is also being planned for when the translations are completed.

Other Forms of Gospel Presentations Available

There are Christian radio broadcasts in English and Tok Pisin, languages which some Toura people can understand. The Bible is read in English in church. However, not all Toura people understand these languages well.

Cross-Cultural Missionaries Needed

The Toura people need to understand basic Biblical truths. In addition to Bible teaching, the Toura people need a translation of the Word of God into the language they understand best.

The Toura of Papua New Guinea

Group Description

Geographical/Environment

Ecosystem type	Semi-tropical
Climate	Hot and humid

Language/Linguistics

Attitude Towards Mother Tongue	Receptive
Second Languages	English, Tok Pisin, Motu, Abadi
Linguistically Related	Lala, Abadi, Motu, Waima
Neighbor Languages	Abadi, Mountain Koiali

Literacy

Adult Literacy	84.3%
Literacy Attitude	During interviews, the elementary school teacher from Toromoku village said she thought Toura people valued literacy. However, a teacher from Akuku village said Akuku residents are disinterested in literacy and education in general
Active Program	Schools in the area teach children in Toura during the first 3-4 years of their education.

Economics

Subsistence type	Hunter-gatherers
Occupation	Sell garden produce, meat, and fish at market
Income Sources	Vegetable, meat and fish
Products/Crafts	Traditional grass skirts
Modernization/Utilities	Solar panels, electric lights, corrugated roofing iron

Community Development

Health Care	Good
Comments	For medical assistance, residents in the Toura area travel to the Aid Post at Kuriva Mission Station. It is approximately 1 hour's walk from Toromoku, and further (approximately 2 hours) from Vasagabira. However, most patients will only walk as far as the Hiritano Highway, from where it is relatively easy to obtain a ride the rest of the way to the Mission Station. The Aid Post is always open. Occasionally a clinic will come to the villages to carry out child immunizations. The main illnesses reported in the area are malaria, TB, pneumonia and typhoid (during rainy season when the rivers flood into the villages). If people need to go to the hospital, then they go to the 3 Mile Hospital in Port Moresby. There are also traditional healers in the Toura area.

The Toura of Papua New Guinea

Diet	Good
Comments	Starchy “cooking” bananas, coconut, fish, star-fruit, bread, sweet bananas, bat
Energy/Fuel	Good
Clothing	Second hand western style clothing
Transportation	Walking, public transportation (usually in the back of a truck). Vasagabira village floods during rainy season, making the use of canoes necessary.
Leading Cause of Death	The main illnesses reported in the area are malaria, TB, pneumonia and typhoid

Society

Family Structures	Patrilineal
Neighbor Relations	Amiable
Authority/Rule	There are chiefs for each clan. However, chiefs do not have as much authority now as they traditionally held.
Social Habits/Groupings	Every person belongs to a clan.
Cultural Change Pace	Medium
Identification with National Culture	Similar
Recreations	Volleyball. Exchange of and consumption of betel nut is an important part of social interaction
Art Forms	Traditional grass skirts—each clan has a distinctive pattern they use to decorate their skirts.
Attitude to Outsiders	Receptive
Attitude to Changes	Receptive

Education/Youth

Primary Schools	9 (includes Primary, Elementary, and Community schools)
% Eligible Enrolled	Unknown. More than 225 Toura children are enrolled in school. However, many children who are enrolled do not actually attend class regularly.
Teacher to Student Ratio	Unknown overall; two elementary schools have the following ratios: 1: 15, 1: 19
Unmixed Schools	2-3
Language of Instruction Early Years	Toura, English
Language of Textbooks Early Years	English
Secondary Schools	There are no secondary schools in the Toura area. Students may attend secondary school in Port Moresby
Secondary School Enrollment	9+

The Toura of Papua New Guinea

Labor/Tasks

Household chores

Religion

Religions

1. Christianity
2. Traditional religion

Although the traditional religion is not officially practiced, some elements of it are still present.

Primary Religion

Christianity

The Toura of Papua New Guinea

Status of Christianity

Church Growth

Reached Classification	Evangelized
Total Baptized	Approximately 500
Lay Leaders	5+
Churches	5

History of Christianity

Year Began	1950s
By Whom	Catholic Church
Significant Events	The Catholic Church began working among the Toura people in the 1950s. Originally Toromoku was the church's center, but the center was moved to Kuriva in the late 1980s due to problems with flooding, resulting in lack of accessibility of Toromoku.

Scripture/Literature/Media

Available Scripture	None
---------------------	------

Organizations/Missions

Organization #1	Catholic Church
Ministry	Church
Adherents	Majority
Number of Congregations	4
Started	1950s
Total National Missionaries	One priest from another area of PNG visits the Toura once a month.
Total local workers	2
Organization #2	Assemblies of God
Ministry	Church
Adherents	20
Number of Congregations	1
Started	2000
Comments	Located in Vanapa.