

The Sapiiny of Uganda



Uganda’s Sapiiny people call their language Kupsapiiny, sometimes spelled with an ‘a’ at the end. They live in eastern Uganda on the slopes of Mount Elgon. Traditionally they raise cattle, many Sapiiny also rely on subsistence farming, cultivating maize, beans, wheat and potatoes. They sell their produce when they are able, but poor roads in some areas make it difficult to transport their crops to the market. More than 60 percent of the Sapiiny people live in poverty.

Clan elders provide leadership and, along with traditional prophets, establish laws, norms and values. Circumcision, performed on adolescent boys, provides cultural identity. Some Sapiiny also practice female circumcision, although in secret because it is illegal.

Christianity came to the Sapiiny in the 1930s through the efforts of a large Christian denomination. Other denominations and Christian groups came in the 1970s. Now 70 percent of the Sapiiny people identify themselves as Christians, although only about half of those are deeply rooted in their faith and growing. Although they believe in the Creator, many see Him as distant. Many also fear ancestral spirits and practice traditional religion, keeping totems and relying on the revelations of local prophets and clan leaders for guidance.

The existing Kupsapiiny New Testament is not widely used. It is essentially a word-for-word rendering of the English Good News Bible and is not the way the Kupsapiiny naturally speak so they are beginning a new translation.

Primary Religion:
 Christian

Disciples (Matt 28:19):
 Maybe half

Churches:
 Many

Scripture Status (Matt 28:20):
 NT in progress

Population (date):
 181,000



KUPSAPIINY HOMELAND



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Have They Heard The Gospel?

Is the Word of God Translated?

Part of the problem with Scriptures previously published in Kupsapiiny is a linguistic one. The language needs special marks or letters that were not differentiated in the older translation. Also many churches have rejected it as a translation associated with one denomination. Leaders from all denominations and churches among the Sapiiny agree that they desperately need a new translation.

Urgent Need

The current New Testament is virtually unreadable, the Sapiiny believers have difficulty hearing and understanding God's Word and His will for their lives. Sapiiny church leaders believe that a clear and understandable presentation of God's truth will help combat destructive practices such as corruption, theft, drunkenness, fear of ancestral spirits, and female circumcision.

Other Forms of Presentations

The team also hopes that the production of readable booklets in Kupsapiiny will lead to increased literacy. There are Audio recordings and the Jesus Film.