

The Tapei of Papua New Guinea



The Tapei language, also called Mem, is spoken by almost 300 people who live along the Arafundi River in the East Sepik Province of Papua New Guinea. There are only two villages where Tapei is spoken — Awim and Imboin.

The people's staple food is sago, a starchy food made from the processed trunk of the sago palm. They also eat some garden produce, such as bananas and greens.

The Catholic Church began working in the Tapei area in the mid 1970s. Most people in this language group would call themselves Christians, although in fact many are only nominal Believers.

The whole Bible is available in Tok Pisin, Papua New Guinea's national and major trade languages. This is the language most commonly used in church, but the vernacular is also used to some extent. Many people (especially women and children) have limited proficiency in Tok Pisin.

Cross-cultural missionaries are needed to assist in Bible translation. An oral approach (such as recordings or Bible storytelling) could be helpful in this area.

Primary Religion:

Catholic

Disciples (Matt 28:19):

Many (nominal)

Churches:

Yes

Scripture Status (Matt 28:20):

None

Population (date):

290 (2005)



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Have They Heard The Gospel?

History of Christianity	The Catholic Church began working in the Tapei area in the mid 1970s.
Religious Practices and Ceremonies	Unknown
Is the Word of God Translated?	No
Other Forms of Gospel Presentations	Unknown
Audio Recordings of Gospel Available	None

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Group Description

Population all countries

World Population For This People 290
World Population (Date) 2005

Geography & Environment

Location along the Arafundi River in the East Sepik Province of Papua New Guinea.

Climate Tropical

Comments In addition to being an important source of food, the sago palm tree also provides building materials for people's houses, which are raised on posts five to ten feet off the ground.

Alternate Language Names

Percent Monolingual Unknown
Comment Women and children are less fluent in the Tok Pisin language.

Linguistically Related Languages

61%–74% with Nanubae [afk].

Neighboring Languages

Nanubae

Literacy

Unknown