

## The Kwoma of Papua New Guinea

The Kwoma people live in the Waskuk Hills of the East Sepik Province and the adjacent low-lying country to the north and west. The hill areas rise to about 486 meters. Villages in the low areas are scattered along branches of the Sanchi River. The Kwoma people are divided into two dialect areas: The Nukuma dialect in the lowlands, and the Kwoma dialect in the hills. While there are some linguistic differences between the dialects, socially there are strong feelings about the differences. Each dialect group desires their own New Testament.

The Kwoma are farmers, and survive on sago (a starchy staple food made by processing the inside of the trunk of the sago palm) and garden crops such as banana, taro, yam, and greens. In addition to growing crops for personal consumption, they also engage in cash cropping and sell coffee and coco. Recently (2002-2003), they have also started planting vanilla, a lucrative crop.

A translation of the New Testament in Kwoma was completed in 1975, but the people feel that it is hard to understand and have persistently made requests for a revision. The Nukuma dialect speakers have also made a request for a translation in their dialect.

Image  
Unavailable

**Primary Religion:**

Christian

**Disciples (Matt 28.19):**

25%

**Churches:**

27

**Scripture Status (Matt 28.20):**

New Testament

**Population (date):**

3,630+ (2000)



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Item Name	Item Note	
<b>Have They Heard The Gospel?</b>		<b>Profile Summary</b>
Call Themselves Christian (%)	40-50%	
Believe In Jesus As God & Only Savior (%)	25%	
Prophet/Good Man, But Not God's Son (%)	30-95 %	
Believe In The Local Traditional Religion (%)	70-85%	
Have Not Heard Who Jesus is (%)	0%	
Number Of Pastors	8	
Response To The Gospel	The Kwoma responded positively to the Gospel, and churches were started. There was a big revival in 1983. Since the year 2000 there has been a falling away from the church because of false teaching that Christ would return on the eve of the new millennium. Since then certain elements have been encouraging a return to traditional customs. Western materialism has also had a negative effect on the church. Its strength varies from congregation to congregation.	
Number Of Communities	14	
Comment (Number Communities)	There are 14 communities: 6 in the Kwoma dialect, 8 in the Nukuma dialect	
Number Of Churches	27	
Is The Word Of God Translated?	Kwoma New Testament (Kwoma (Waskuk) dialect) 1975 - Now out of print. People say it is unclear, and the Nukuma say they are not able to read it.	
Any Hinderance To Scripture Distribution?	<p>A New Testament translation was completed in 1975 in the Kwoma dialect of the Kwoma language. It is now out of print, and there are very few copies of the Kwoma/Waskuk New Testament available now. This translation was seldom used because the people have difficulties understanding it (in some places it seems too literal, and it was not written in a style that is similar to how the people use their language orally). There is also the concern that because so few Kwoma speakers helped in the initial translation, it is not acceptable to the majority of the people. People who speak the Nukuma dialect of Kwoma do not use the Kwoma New Testament because they feel the dialects are too different for them to be able to understand the Kwoma.</p> <p>The literacy rate is much higher in Tok Pisin than in Kwoma. Most people under 30 can read and write in Tok Pisin and many in English as well. Although New Testaments have been available to the people in their heart language, they think that it is an unclear translation and needs to be revised. For this reason they do not use it, and most of the original copies that were printed and distributed have deteriorated. There would be a need to do some vernacular literacy work in order to help the people make use of a revised translation. There is reportedly little or no interest in reading for enjoyment; any interest in literacy is specifically in Scripture reading, and members of the group state that there is a large need for a vernacular literacy program. However, during the 1960s and 1970s, a translation team working among the Kwoma had very little success with vernacular literacy, but found there was a great interest in Tok Pisin literacy.</p> <p>Some speakers of the language say, "The request is made to revise [the New Testament] as young people are losing their language and others are illiterate." Many church leaders want the vernacular New Testament so that the people will understand the Scriptures better. They feel that Tok Pisin (the national trade language) is inadequate. Church sermons are in the local language, as are some songs.</p>	
What Kind Of Missionaries Are Needed?	<p>The Kwoma (especially church leaders) have repeatedly asked for a translation team to come and help them revise their New Testament. They also want to have a translation done in the Nukuma dialect. Local church leaders are willing to work together to revise the Kwoma New Testament, though assistance from translation experts will be required. Also, for a Nukuma dialect adaptation, assistance will be required. They have made requests for a vernacular literacy program and expressed a need for Christian teaching based on the Scriptures.</p> <p>There is also need for improved health care, especially for women and children.</p>	
<b>Population All Countries</b>		<b>Group Description</b>
Comment (World Population)	3630+ (2000 census); 1662+ Nukuma Dialect, 1968+ Kwoma dialect (Census 2000)	
<b>Countries Where People Group Lives</b>		<b>Group Description</b>
Country Name	Papua New Guinea	

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Item Name	Item Note	Group Description
<b>Geography &amp; Environment</b>		<b>Group Description</b>
Location	Ambunti District of the East Sepik Province of Papua New Guinea, in the Waskuk Hills and along the Sanchi River	
Country	Papua New Guinea	
Ecosystem Type	Tropical Forest	
Geological Type	Riverine	
Elevation	50 m to 400 m	
Longitude	E 142.40204	
Latitude	S 4.23523	
Climate	Hot and humid; wet season (November to May) and dry season (June to October)	
Comments (Geography & Environment)	numerous mosquitoes	
<b>Language &amp; Linguistics</b>		<b>Group Description</b>
Primary Language	KWOMA	
Alternate Language Names	WASHKUK	
Comment (Alternate Names)	Waskuk	
Dialects	NUKUMA	
Dialects	KWOMA	
Attitude Towards Mother Tongue	Somewhat receptive	
Percent Monolingual (%)	1-2%	
Second Languages	ENGLISH	
Comment (Second Language)	Tok Pisin is used extensively by men and women of all age groups. Only small children and older people may be less proficient in Tok Pisin than the vernacular.	
Comments (Related Languages)	Kwanga [kuj], Mende [sim]	
Comments (Neighbor Languages)	Yawu, Manambu, Yessan-Mayo, Kwanga, Iatmul	
<b>Literacy</b>		<b>Group Description</b>
Adult Literacy Percentage	52.8%	
Literacy Attitude	Somewhat receptive	
Active Literacy Program	Yes	
Comment (Active Literacy Program)	PIM has an active Tok Pisin program in most of the villages. Publications in MT: Kwoma (Washkuk) New Testament 1975, various literacy materials were published in the 60's and 70's but are all out of print now.	
Comment (Literacy)	Speakers of the Nukuma dialect do not feel that they can use the Kwoma translation.	
<b>Economics</b>		<b>Group Description</b>
Subsistence Type	Agriculturalists	
Comment (Subsistence Type)	farmers, sago production, gardening, fishing	
Average Annual Income	National average is 760 USD (Gross National Income per capita according to UNICEF); local residents report 20 Kina (5USD) to 400 Kina (100 USD) per year.	
Occupation	Subsistence Farmers. Gardening, canoe building, house building.	
Income Sources	Selling garden produce and sago at market. There is some difficulty in selling produce because of transportation difficulties. They also grow cash crops such as coffee and coco. They are starting to grow vanilla as well. Some people make money selling petrol or products in small family-owned stores.	
Products / Crafts	Wood carving	
Trade Partners	Manambu, Brugnawi village (Iatmul), Yessan-Mayos. Exchange sago for fish.	
Modernization / Utilities	outboard motors, hand tools, sewing machines, coffee hullers, water tanks.	
<b>Community Development</b>		<b>Group Description</b>
Health Care (Quality)	Poor	

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Item Name	Item Note	
Comment (Health Care)	Limited by lack of medications and personnel at Ambunti and village Aid Posts. There are village health workers in each village.	
Diet (Quality)	Fair	
Comment (Diet)	Fair to good. Includes sago, banana, taro, yams, greens, fish, game	
Water (Quality)	Fair	
Comment (Water)	Fair to good.	
Shelter Description	Good	
Electricity	None	
Energy/Fuel (Quality)	Fair	
Comment (Energy)	firewood, kerosene, petrol	
Clothing	Fair. Second hand, western style clothing	
Transportation	Air travel comes into Ambunti, Nagari and Merisei, but individual villages must be reached by water (canoe). Some villages are connected by trails.	
Infant Mortality Rate	Low. National average is 56.53/1,000 live births (PNG national average according to <a href="http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/pp.html#People">http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/pp.html#People</a> )	
Life Expectancy	60 years	
Leading Cause Of Death	malaria, death after childbirth and respiratory diseases	
<b>Society &amp; Culture</b>		<b>Group Description</b>
Neighbor Relations	Good	
Authority / Rule	Clan leaders and elected ward members	
Cultural Change Pace	Medium	
Identification With National Culture	Distinct	
Self Image	Neutral	
Comment (Self Image)	independent and self-reliant, feel equal to others, like to meet strangers	
Judicial / Punishment System	Disputes are dealt with through the village court system. More serious cases are decided at Ambunti.	
Celebrations	Christmas, Easter, New Year, PNG Independence, sport tournaments, occasional discos. The Catholic church has many additional celebrations.	
Recreations	Sports for young people	
Art Forms	Wood carving, dancing and singing, pottery making	
Local Language Broadcasting	None	
Attitude To Outsiders	Somewhat receptive	
Comment (Attitude To Outsiders)	receptive to expatriates and nationals they know	
Attitude To Change	Somewhat receptive	
Comment (Attitude To Change)	appreciative of community development	
<b>Youth</b>		<b>Group Description</b>
Labor and tasks (6-12 year olds)	Boys play, while girls help their mothers with cooking, gardening and child care.	
Youth Greatest Needs (teens)	Well-grounded education in the mother tongue, continuing education opportunities in practical skills.	
Comment (Youth)	Approximately 25% of the population has completed Grade 6 and approximately 3% has completed Grade 10.	
<b>Education</b>		<b>Group Description</b>
Primary Schools	15	
Primary School Enrollment	1200	
Secondary Schools	1	
Secondary School Enrollment	60	
Percent Of Eligible Students Enrolled	40%	

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Item Name	Item Note
Teacher To Pupil Ratio	Between 1:30 and 1:40
Comment (Language Of Instruction)	English, Tok Pisin, very little vernacular
Comment (Language Of Textbook)	English
Number Of Schools > 90% Homogeneous	probably 7
Comment (Education)	There are no homogeneous secondary schools.

### Church Growth

### Status of Christianity

Reached Status	Selected
Reached Classification	Evangelized
Total Baptized	Over 2000
Lay Leaders	More than 50
Bible Schools	1
Comment (Bible Schools)	Nagari Bible School
Christian Clinics/Hospitals	2
Comment (Christian Clinics/Hospitals)	Ambunti and Meresei
Christian Literacy Centers	1
Comment (Christian Literacy Center)	PIM
Comment (Church Growth)	The church has been actively growing since 1980.

### Religion & Response

### Status of Christianity

Religious Practices & Ceremonies	Each denomination has its own ceremonies practiced by its adherents.
Attitude To Christianity	Somewhat receptive
Comment (Attitude Religious Change)	Some people report that people are very resistant, while others say they are somewhat receptive.
Resistance / Receptivity	Receptive on a superficial level, however there is some maintenance of traditional practices.
Spiritual Climate And Openness	They are receptive to hear the gospel.
Comment (Religion)	Though overall people are receptive, it has been reported that some people are a bit resistant.
Recommended Approaches	As far as Bible translation, a revision of the Kwoma New Testament is recommended, and a translation in the Nukuma dialect is recommended. Church leaders and individuals have sent many written requests to agencies over the last 10 or more years.
Current Needs	The Kwoma have repeatedly asked for a translation team to come and help them revise their New Testament. They also want to have a translation done in the Nukuma dialect. Local church leaders are willing to work together to revise the Kwoma New Testament, though assistance from translation experts will be required. Also, for a Nukuma dialect adaptation, assistance will be required. They have made requests for a vernacular literacy program and expressed a need for Christian teaching based on the Scriptures.
	There is also need for improved health care, especially for women and children.
Items For Prayer	Need for vernacular literacy program
Items For Prayer	Christian churches in the Kwoma area – for spiritual growth
Items For Prayer	Missionary for revision of the Kwoma New Testament, translation of the Nukuma dialect New Testament.
Items For Prayer	Fear of evil forces
Items For Prayer	Pastors, Christian leaders – that they will stand firm and be good models

### History Of Christianity In Group

### Status of Christianity

Year Began	1920s
By Whom	Roman Catholic Church
Significant Events	Ambunti patrol post was founded in 1924; Catholic missionaries came soon afterwards. Assemblies of God came in the mid 70's, South Seas Evangelical Church in the early 70's, and Seventh Day Adventists in the mid 70's.

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Item Name	Item Note	Status of Christianity	
<b>Scripture</b>		<b>Status of Christianity</b>	
Translation Status	Revision		
Available Scripture	New Testament		
Comment (Form of Scripture Available)	Printed Kwoma New Testament 1975, Tok Pisin Bible, various English Bibles		
	Completed New Testament, waiting for revision and a dialect adaptation for the Nukuma dialect.		
Scripture Published When	1975		
Scripture Use	Hardly at all		
Comment (Scripture)	There is a Bible in Tok Pisin, the language of wider communication. Also, there is a Tok Pisin version of the Jesus video, which was shown in some villages in 1995. Most people can understand Tok Pisin.		
Other Forms Of Gospel Available: Literature	yes, Tok Pisin		
Other Forms Of Gospel Available: Recordings	No		
Other Forms Of Gospel Available: Film/Videos	yes, Tok Pisin		
Other Forms Of Gospel Available: Radio	No		
<b>Missions and Churches</b>			<b>Status of Christianity</b>
Organization Name	Christian Outreach Centre		
Number Of Adherents	50		
Number Of Congregations	1		
Organization Name	Pacific Islands Ministries		
Comment (Organization)	Prepare Tok Pisin Sunday school materials, sawmill, outboard motor repairs, leadership training, Tok Pisin prep schools		
	Ministry includes educational work in Tok Pisin and English		
Year Started	1977		
Number Of Expatriate Workers	4		
Comment (Expatriate Workers)	occasional guest helpers		
Number Of National Workers			
Number Of Local Workers	about 100		
Number Of Workers Using Local Language	0		
Organization Name	South Seas Evangelical Church		
Comment (Organization)	Local language is used.		
Comment (Main Ministry)	evangelism, church planting, medical training, community development		
Year Started	1970s		
Number Of Adherents	500		
Number Of Congregations	9		
Number Of Expatriate Workers	2		
Comment (Expatriate Workers)	their two missionaries are seconded to PIM; plus occasional guest helpers		
Organization Name	Roman Catholic Church		
Comment (Main Ministry)	also Medical Training		
Year Started	1920s		
Number Of Adherents	1,500		
Number Of Congregations	6		
Number Of Expatriate Workers	3		
Number Of Workers Using Local Language	0		

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<b>Item Name</b>	<b>Item Note</b>
Organization Name	Assemblies of God
Comment (Organization)	Only active in Ambunti Station
Comment (Main Ministry)	evangelism, church planting
Year Started	1970s
Number Of Adherents	50
Comment (Number Of Adherents)	50 Kwoma + people from other language groups
Number Of Congregations	1
Number Of Expatriate Workers	2
Number Of Workers Using Local Language	0
Organization Name	Seventh Day Adventists
Comment (Main Ministry)	evangelism, church planting, and medical
Year Started	1970s
Number Of Adherents	500
Number Of Congregations	5
Number Of Expatriate Workers	0
Number Of Workers Using Local Language	0
Organization Name	Church of Christ
Comment (Main Ministry)	evangelism, church planting
Year Started	2000
Number Of Adherents	30-50
Number Of Congregations	1
Number Of Expatriate Workers	0
Number Of Workers Using Local Language	0