

The Ambele of Cameroon

*Image
 Unavailable*

The Ambele people are located in ten villages stretching for many miles down one valley; two of the villages are in another valley quite distant from the rest. On the whole, they live in a relatively remote area. Many of the villages are almost a full day's hike to the nearest road. The southernmost village of Olorunti is served by a road leading to Widikum. At one time, the bridge along this road had been washed out by one of the many frequent rainstorms occurring in this region. No running water is available other than the active streams in the valley, and there is no electricity. The rainforest is very thick, and the mountain slopes, steep. Nearly everyone travels on the many footpaths joining the villages. This village area would be considered a difficult allocation. A definite need for Bible translation exists. Each village has two or three different churches, whether Catholic, Presbyterian, New Apostolic, or Church of Christ. Church attendance is low, and even those who are regular members have little Scriptural foundation to their faith. Church leaders admit that the majority of Christians equally follow traditional beliefs and practices. Comprehension of English and Pidgin are not sufficient to enable the people to grasp deep spiritual truths of the Bible, and they understand little of any language other than the mother tongue. A translation of some Scriptures is imperative, and we suggest that one wait for local initiative before starting a language project. In the meantime, a need for evangelism and training of leaders in the Scripture also stands. Both can be accomplished through long-term intensive Bible studies. Some Bible school students and nurses who visited found a positive response to their work, but one village eventually became unwelcoming.

Primary Religion:

Animism

Disciples (Matt 28.19):

1 - 2%

Churches:

12

Scripture Status (Matt 28.20):

None in this language

Population (date):



Map Unavailable

The Ambele of Cameroon

Item Name	Item Note	
Peoples Profile		Group Description
Countries Where People Group Lives	Cameroon	
Religion Population Percent	Animism	
Have They Heard The Gospel?		Profile Summary
Call Themselves Christian (%)	2-5%	
Believe In Jesus As God & Only Savior (%)	1 - 2%	
Believe In The Local Traditional Religion (%)	95%	
Have Not Heard Who Jesus is (%)	<5%	
Number Of Pastors	5	
Number Of Missionaries Working	0	
Response To The Gospel	Indifference	
Number Of Communities	10 villages	
Number Of Churches	12	
Is The Word Of God Translated?	No	
Any Hinderance To Scripture Distribution?	Low literacy rate in English. None in other languages.	
Countries Where People Group Lives		Group Description
Country Name	Cameroon	
Geography & Environment		Group Description
Location	Widikum-Menka Subdivision, Momo Division, North West Province Cameroon	
Country	Cameroon	
Ecosystem Type	Tropical Forest	
Geological Type	Mountain Valley	
Elevation	1000 feet	
Longitude	6* N	
Latitude	9* E	
Climate	Warm and humid most of year; frequent rain	
Comments (Geography & Environment)	This is an isolated or remote region - hardship location. Difficult to access, especially when the road to Olorunti is closed due to a washed-out bridge.	
Language & Linguistics		Group Description
Primary Language	AMBELE	
Comment (Language)	Ambele is so different from the surrounding languages that they would not be able to use a translation other than the mother tongue. Comprehension of English is minimal. They would do better with Scriptures in Pidgin. Translation into Ambele is imperative.	
Dialects	An alternate name is Bata'o.	
Attitude Towards Mother Tongue	Very receptive	
Comment (Second Language)	The only adequate and widespread second language is Cameroonian Pidgin English.	
Other Mother Tongues Of This Group	Atong, Menka, Denya, Manta, and Busam	
Language Stability	Very stable and viable for years to come.	
Corrections To Ethnologue Entry	Change to read: eleven villages, population 3,600 (year 2000 est.), Widikum-Menka Subdivision.	
Literacy		Group Description
Comment (Literacy)	Literacy rate is very low	
Economics		Group Description
Subsistence Type	Hunter-gatherers	

The Ambele of Cameroon

Item Name

Item Note

Occupation	Hunter-gatherers, very small-scale farming, some fishing
Income Sources	Trade and sale of produce and wild meat
Trade Partners	Neighboring groups
Modernization / Utilities	Tin roofs, kerosene lanterns
Comment (Economy)	Largely non-monetary subsistence economy

Community Development

Group Description

Health Care (Quality)	Fair
Comment (Health Care)	There are a few small clinics in the area. One freelance nurse works out of his home in Awi, and he will send patients to the traditional healer if he cannot do anything to help.
Diet (Quality)	Fair
Comment (Diet)	Mostly wild fruits, roots, and meat.
Water (Quality)	Good
Comment (Water)	Many fresh streams run through the region.
Shelter Description	Mud-brick with tin roofs, some thatch.
Energy/Fuel (Quality)	Fair
Comment (Energy)	Wood, often wet wood
Clothing	T-shirts and pants for men, dresses in African prints for women. Everyone is clothed, but material is often worn out. Many people wear shoes, which also are in poor condition.
Transportation	By foot. The village of Olorunti has motor vehicle access at times.
Comment (Community Development)	Only Olorunti has active projects: road maintenance, water supply, and school construction.

Society & Culture

Group Description

Authority / Rule	Local leadership includes a chief and village council. Some villages only have a representative because the actual chief lives outside the area. The nearest government official is the Subdivisional officer in Widikum.
Cultural Change Pace	Medium
Identification With National Culture	Similar
Self Image	Neutral
History Of People Group	Always lived in this region
Comment (Culture)	Still very traditional way of life with some modern/Western introductions

Youth

Group Description

Labor and tasks (6-12 year olds)	Hunting, gathering, farm work, caring for younger children, collecting water.
Comment (Youth)	Very little opportunity for economic or educational advancement.

Education

Group Description

Primary Schools	One for each of the ten or eleven villages
Primary School Enrollment	120-300 per village, average 150
Secondary Schools	One exists in Akanunku among Atong people group.
Percent Of Eligible Students Enrolled	90%
Teacher To Pupil Ratio	1:40
Language Of Instruction Early Years	English
Language Of Textbooks Early Years	English
Language Of Instruction Later Years	English
Language Of Textbooks Later Years	English
Number Of Schools > 90% Homogeneous	Most schools have only Mother Tongue speakers.

The Ambele of Cameroon

Item Name

Comment (Education)

Item Note

The quality of education is poor for most, since instruction typically begins in English. In the early years some teachers resort to Ambele, especially when teaching on flora and fauna. Some continue to use Pidgin when students absolutely do not understand.

Church Growth

Status of Christianity

Reached Status

Reached

Reached Classification

Unevangelized

Lay Leaders

10

Christian Clinics/Hospitals

3

Comment (Church Growth)

Churches have been established here for about fifty years. Most members have very little understanding of Scriptural truth, and leaders have only minimal training. Believers have a very shallow foundation in the faith and syncretism is highly common. Nearly all Ambele adhere to traditional beliefs and practices.

Religion & Response

Status of Christianity

Attitude To Christianity

Somewhat receptive

Attitude To Religious Change

Indifferent

Resistance / Receptivity

Many are open. In Awi, for example, some weekend Bible studies held by visiting evangelists were eventually forcefully stopped by local residents.

Spiritual Climate And Openness

Overall, the people are hungry for a deeper knowledge of Christianity. Most people live in fear everyday of not placating the ancestral spirits.

Comment (Religion)

Syncretism among Christians is nearly 100%.

Recommended Approaches

They need in-depth Bible study, preferably in Ambele, though Pidgin may help to a point.

Current Needs

They need evangelists, pastoral training, Bible education.

Items For Prayer

Pray for complete openness and hunger for the Word of God. Pray for true repentance, conversion, baptism, and discipleship as well as some Bible translation.

History Of Christianity In Group

Status of Christianity

Year Began

1950's

By Whom

Roman Catholic Church

Scripture

Status of Christianity

Form Of Scripture Available

None

Reason For Urgent Need Of Translation

Church is nominal, syncretism abounds. There are very few authentic believers.

Comment (Scripture)

Definite need for translation in Ambele. It is unlike any of the surrounding languages.