

The Fas of Papua New Guinea

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The Fas language group is located in the foothills of the Bewani Mountains in the Sandaun Province of the Sepik Area of Papua New Guinea. Their population is estimated to be more than 1,600 spread across 17 villages and numerous hamlets. The area is hot and wet with an annual rainfall of about 100 inches. Villages built on ridges receive cool breezes, and nights can be quite cool. The people do little gardening and depend on hunting and sago, which is the main staple. Houses are built on posts and tend to be quite large. Teenage boys group together into their own houses rather than living with the family unit. Various missions have worked amongst the Fas, including the Catholic, Seventh Day Adventist and Christian Missions in Many Lands/Christian Brotherhood Church. However there are still many fears connected with sorcery, and while traditional religious practices are not done openly, old beliefs are still prevalent. A translation team worked with the Fas people from 1977 to 1987 and began work on translating the NT. A good foundation was laid, but who will finish the work?

Primary Religion:

Christian Nominal

Disciples (Matt 28.19):

Churches:

14

Scripture Status (Matt 28.20):

Portions

Population (date):

1,600 (1988)



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Item Name	Item Note	
Have They Heard The Gospel?		Profile Summary
Call Themselves Christian (%)	>90%	
Comment (Call Themselves Christian)	The majority of the Fas would call themselves Christians.	
Believe In The Local Traditional Religion (%)	Some still follow ancestral beliefs, although traditional religious practices are not done openly.	
Response To The Gospel	There have been both Christian Missions in Many Lands (CMML, also known as Christian Brotherhood Church - CBC) and Roman Catholic missions among the Fas, and the people have responded relatively well to the gospel. However, at this point much of the Catholicism tends to be nominal and there is still a lot of sorcery going on and some areas still have a house Tamboran, a center of traditional religious practices. Singsings are also still fairly common in some of the Catholic areas.	
Number Of Communities	There are 17 villages and numerous hamlets.	
Number Of Churches	14	
Comment (Churches)	Three villages are CBC (Christian Brotherhood Church), Kilifas, Fugumi and Wara Mayu. The rest of the villages are Catholic. It is reported that the SDA have worked with this people group, but no further information as to whether they have a church or continuing mission with the Fas.	
Is The Word Of God Translated?	The scripture portions that were translated between 1977 and 1987 were never printed. However, when some agency members visited in 1998, they intended to print several Scripture portions and some primers to be delivered to the people at Kilifas. Mark has been consultant checked and several books were drafted including the Gospels, Acts, Galatians, Timothy, Titus, James and parts of Genesis.	
Any Hinderance To Scripture Distribution?	Translation is still incomplete and someone needs to come to continue the work. Some of the older men are literate in Tok Pisin and can be taught to read and write in Fas. Children are learning to read and write at CMML primary schools and a secondary school. Most, however, do not continue after grade 6.	
Forms Of Gospel Presentation Available (Summary)	It is reported there are no forms of Gospel presentations available for this people group.	
What Kind Of Missionaries Are Needed?	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. A translation team began to translate Scripture into the Fas language, but left in 1987 for family reasons. The people want very much to have a new team come to complete the translation work that was started. There is also need in the area of education.2. The vernacular preschool program operated for 2 years in the late 1980s but is presently closed. People are very eager to have vernacular schools again.	
Population All Countries		Group Description
World Population For This People	1,600	
World Population (Date)	1,600 (1988)	
Countries Where People Group Lives		Group Description
Country Name	Papua New Guinea	
Geography & Environment		Group Description
Location	Located in the Foothills of the Bewani Mountains in the Sandaun Province of the Sepik Area of Papua New Guinea.	
Country	Papua New Guinea	
Ecosystem Type	Tropical Forest	
Geological Type	Mountain, Slope	
Elevation	600-1,200 feet	
Longitude	142 E	
Latitude	3 S	
Climate	The climate is hot and humid. There is no marked dry season. The temperature is 20-26 degrees Celsius and an annual rainfall of 2,500-3,000 mm.	
Comments (Geography & Environment)	The geological type is also reported to be riverine.	
Language & Linguistics		Group Description
Primary Language	FAS	
Alternate Language Names	BEMBI	

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Item Name	Item Note
Dialects	WESTERN FAS
Dialects	EASTERN FAS
Attitude Towards Mother Tongue	Somewhat receptive
Second Languages	Tok Pisin
Comment (Second Language)	Almost all but the older people are bilingual.
Linguistically Related Languages	NAI
Linguistically Related Languages	BAIBAI
Linguistically Related Languages	KWOMTARI
Linguistically Related Languages	GURIASO
Linguistically Related Languages	PYU
Neighboring Languages	SERA
Neighboring Languages	PAGI
Neighboring Languages	PUARI
Comments (Neighbor Languages)	It is reported that 'One' is another neighboring language. However, the report does not indicate whether it is 'One, Southern', or 'One, Northern'.

Literacy

Group Description

Adult Literacy Percentage	35%
Percent Literate For Men	46%
Percent Literate For Women	22%
Literacy Attitude	Very receptive
Active Literacy Program	No
Comment (Active Literacy Program)	Vernacular prep schools were begun in 1987 but have discontinued after a couple of years due to the absence of a translation team. The people are eager to have the prep schools going again.
Publications In Vernacular	Story books and 12 primers have been produced in the language.
Comment (Literacy)	People like to learn things and are very supportive of the Community School Teacher.

Economics

Group Description

Subsistence Type	Hunter-gatherers
Comment (Subsistence Type)	This people group are traditionally hunters-gatherers, but now many grow crops too.
Average Annual Income	The average annual income for all of PNG is \$930.
Occupation	Mainly hunters and crop growers.
Income Sources	Crops are the main sources of income.

Community Development

Group Description

Health Care (Quality)	Fair
Comment (Health Care)	There is a clinic at Kilifas.
Diet (Quality)	Fair
Comment (Diet)	Mainly Sago.
Water (Quality)	Fair
Comment (Water)	It is reported there are several spring waters.
Shelter Description	Traditional houses made from bush materials and are relatively large.
Clothing	Mainly Western Style Second hand clothes (skirts and long shirts or t-shirts for ladies; shorts and t-shirts for men).
Transportation	There are airstrips in Fas, Utai, and Kilifas. There are no roads in the area so the Fas people travel by following the rivers.
Infant Mortality Rate	The national average infant mortality rate is reported to be 56.53 per 1,000 live births (national average according to: http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/pp.html#People).

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Item Name	Item Note	
Life Expectancy	The national average life expectancy is reported to be 63.83 years (national average according to: http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/pp.html#People).	
Leading Cause Of Death	Untreated illnesses.	
Society & Culture		Group Description
Family Structures	Polygamy is still practiced in some areas, with men having up to 3 wives.	
Social Habits/Groupings	Traditional Men's houses have disappeared, however many teenage boys group together in their own houses rather than living with their family units.	
Celebrations	The Fas people still hold traditional dances in some areas.	
Recreations	Chewing betel nuts, telling stories, and cooking.	
Art Forms	Kundu's (a type of drum) are still made and used, more so in the Catholic villages. They also have little hand held garamuts (a hollowed tree trunk hit with a large stick) to send messages from village to village and/or for singsings.	
Comment (Local Language Broadcasting)	There are Tok Pisin and English broadcasts (maybe understood by some) but do not know how many have radios.	
Attitude To Outsiders	Somewhat receptive	
Comment (Attitude To Outsiders)	Initially in the 1970s they requested a translation team, and when that team left at the end of the 1980s, they requested another team to come to complete the work.	
Youth		Group Description
Labor and tasks (6-12 year olds)	Collecting water, washing pots and clothes, feeding animals, collecting firewood, and looking after younger siblings.	
Comment (Youth)	As reported on the 2000 Census, the proportion of those over 10 who've ever attended school is 35%. Of those, only 45% completed grade 6 and only 3% completed grade 10.	
Education		Group Description
Comment (Primary Schools)	There are community schools in four villages. Each school offers only two grades per year. The Catholic Mission operates three schools, and the Christian Brotherhood Church operates one school.	
Language Of Instruction Early Years	English	
Language Of Instruction Early Years	Tok Pisin	
Language Of Textbooks Early Years	English	
Language Of Textbooks Early Years	Tok Pisin	
Comment (Language Of Instruction)	Vernacular Preschools were begun in 1987 but were discontinued after a couple of years due to the absence of a translation team. Current language of instruction is Tok Pisin, and English.	
Comment (Education)	Some secondary school students attend the Green River High School (CBC) and some attend Vanimo High School. A few also travel to attend a Catholic Vocational School for girls at Wasengla.	
Church Growth		Status of Christianity
Reached Status	Reported	
Reached Classification	Evangelized	
Religion & Response		Status of Christianity
Religious Practices & Ceremonies	Singsings are held, especially in the Catholic areas. There is a lot of sorcery.	
Attitude To Christianity	Somewhat receptive	
Attitude To Religious Change	Somewhat receptive	
Resistance / Receptivity	While the majority of the Fas would call themselves Christian, there are still many fears connected with sorcery and many hold ancestral beliefs.	
Recommended Approaches	The Christian Brotherhood Church leaders are very keen for a group to do translation. But local men could also be trained for translation work.	
Scripture		Status of Christianity
Available Scripture	Portions	
Form Of Scripture Available	Printed	

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Item Name	Item Note
Comment (Form of Scripture Available)	Translation work was started in 1977 by a couple that left in 1987. However, a dictionary was started, several grammar papers were written, Mark was consultant checked and several books were drafted including Matthew, Luke, John, Acts, Galatians, Timothy, Titus, James and parts of Genesis. There has been no further work done since 1987. The people have written and requested that another team be sent to help them finish the task.
Scripture Published When	1987
Scripture Use	Unknown
Comment (Scripture Use)	The Scripture portions that were translated between 1977 and 1987 were never printed. When translation team members visited in 1998, they intended to print several Scripture portions and some primers to be delivered to the people at Kilifas.
Reason For Urgent Need Of Translation	A good foundation was laid and the people are keen to have a team back to finish the translation work that was started. When 2 men from the translation agency visited in 1998 they organized a meeting in Kilifas (where the previous translators had lived) and invited the people from Fufumui. They attended in big numbers from other villages, about 20 men in all. They all expressed a strong desire to have the translation finished. Three men later attended a Translation Course run by the translation agency in Amanab, October 1998 and produced 3 parables that were later printed in shell book form.
Comment (Scripture)	Sampela Stori bilong Jisas (Portions from the Gospels), 1987, W. Baron. This people group has access to the Tok Pisin Bible. Although there are no films or videos in Fas, the 'Jesus' video is available in Tok Pisin. There are no radio broadcasts in Fas, but there are broadcasts in Tok Pisin and English.
Other Forms Of Gospel Available: Literature	No
Other Forms Of Gospel Available: Recordings	No
Other Forms Of Gospel Available: Film/Videos	No
Other Forms Of Gospel Available: Radio	No

Missions and Churches

Status of Christianity

Organization Name	Roman Catholic Church
Comment (Organization)	It is reported that much of Catholicism tends to be nominal and there is still a lot of sorcery going on and some areas still have a house Tamboran, a center of traditional religious practices. In addition, singsings are also still fairly common in some of the Catholic areas.
Main Ministry	Other
Comment (Main Ministry)	It is reported that the main ministry is 'Church and Education'.
Number Of Congregations	14
Comment (Number Of Congregations)	The Catholic Mission has two stations, one at Fas and one at Utai. They run three community schools, in Fas, Utai and Sumumini.
Organization Name	Christian Brotherhood Church (see CMML)
Main Ministry	Bible Translation
Comment (Main Ministry)	The CBC's ministry is reported to be church work and education as well as Bible translation. The CBC run a community school In Kilifas. The agency translators lived in Kilifas from 1978–1987 and it was men from Kilifas and Fugumui (also a CBC village) that worked with them. It was the people of Kilifas who sent a letter to the translation directors asking for a new team, and the 3 men who attended the Translation Course in 1998 were from CBC Churches.
Comment (Number Of Congregations)	The CBC is reported to be present in 3 villages: Kilifas, Fugumi, and Wara Mayu but it is not clear if 3 is representative as being the total number of congregations for this people group.
Organization Name	Christian Missions in Many Lands (see PB)
Comment (Organization)	The CMML is also known as 'Christian Brotherhood Church' - CBC.