

The Ayi of Papua New Guinea



representative photo, [Papua girl](#) by Apple 2009 CC

The Ayi people live in 3 villages deep in the rain forest of Papua New Guinea about half way between the Sepik River and the government post of Nuku in the Sandaun Province, about 4 degrees south of the Equator. They are quite isolated with no roads in the area. It is a 12-hour walk to Nuku and a 2-hour walk to an airstrip in a neighboring language group.

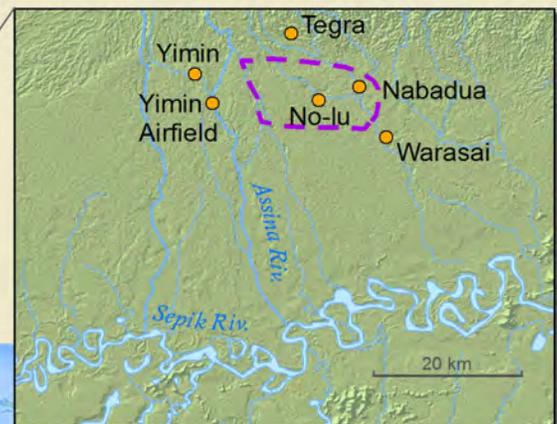
Each village is an entity in itself with occasional disagreements and fights between them, but also intermarriage. The first outside contact made with the Ayi people was sometime after World War II. Their ancestors were probably pushed south from the coast as other tribes came and gained control of more desirable land. They have had a hard life of gardening, hunting and fishing; a lack of medical help and education until recent times has kept their population low.

There are about 430 people who speak Ayi plus a western dialect of 350 called Pasi. It remains to be seen how well the Pasi dialect will be able to read literature in Ayi. Their language and four other languages belong to the Tama Language Family. The adult men also speak Tok Pisin when communicating with neighboring language groups. A government primary school was started at Nawalu village in 1978. Children from several villages attend there and are learning some English, the national language of PNG. Not many would have gone on to high school.

Economically, the people are subsistence farmers who are self-sufficient in regards to food supplies and housing. They earn some money by selling food crops and wild game at the Nuku market or local occasional markets.

The Ayi people came from an animistic tradition of fear and appeasement of evil spirits, sorcery and witchcraft. There was frequent warfare with neighboring tribes until the Australian government brought the area under its control in the late 1940's. The Roman Catholic Mission sent priests and national workers to visit the Ayi-Pasi area some years later. Today there is a Roman Catholic Church in each of the three Ayi villages. The churches use Pidgin English, the trade language, to teach the Christian message resulting in confusion, lack of understanding and inattention. Many do attend church services faithfully, but it is hard to know how much they understand. The Ayi people have been requesting God's Word to be written in their language since 1996.

AYI HOMELAND



Primary Religion:

Christianity

Disciples (Matt 28:19):

Many

Churches:

3

Scripture Status (Matt 28:20):

None

Population (date):

430 (2000)



The Ayi of Papua New Guinea

Have They Heard The Gospel?

Response to the Gospel	They have been requesting God's Word to be written in their language
Is the Word of God Translated	Neither the Old Testament or New Testament is translated; there are a few portions of the Gospel of Mark available.
Bilingualism	Adult men speak Tok Pisin
What Kind Of Missionaries Are Needed?	Bible Translators

The Ayi of Papua New Guinea

Group Description

Population all countries

World Population For This People	430
Urban Percent	0

Geography & Environment

Country	Papua New Guinea
Location	The Ayi people live in 3 villages deep in the rain forest of Papua New Guinea about half way between the Sepik River and the government post of Nuku in the Sandaun Province, about 4 degrees south of the Equator. They are quite isolated with no roads in the area. It is a 12-hour walk to Nuku and a 2-hour walk to an airstrip in a neighboring language group.
Ecosystem Type	Tropical Forest
Climate	Tropical Rain Forest

Language & Linguistics

Primary Language	AWING
Comment (Language)	Formerly the language was called Pasi. However, the 430 Ayi speakers have a different dialect from the western dialect of Pasi.
Linguistically Related Languages	Ayi, Pasi, and four other languages (not listed) belong to the Tama language family.
Neighboring Languages	This group is located just west of the Yawu dialect of the Yessan-Mayo.

Economics

Subsistence Type	Hunter-gatherers, Fishers and Agriculturalists
Income Sources	They earn some money by selling food crops and wild game at the Nuku market or more local occasional markets.
Comment (Economy)	Economically, the people are subsistence farmers who are self-sufficient in regards to food supplies and housing.

Community Development

Health Care (Quality)	Poor
Comment (Health Care)	

The Ayi of Papua New Guinea

Society & Culture

Neighbor Relations

Each village is an entity in itself with occasional disagreements and fights between them, but also intermarriage.

History Of People Group

The first outside contact made with the Ayi people was sometime after World War II. Their ancestors were probably pushed south

Education

Primary School

1

Comment (Education)

A government primary school was started at Nawalu village in 1978. Children from several villages attend there and are learning some English, the national language of PNG.

The Ayi of Papua New Guinea

Status of Christianity

Religion & Response

Items For Prayer Syncretism.

The Ayi people have been requesting God's Word to be written in their language since 1996.

The Ayi need a clear understanding of the Gospel.

History of Christianity in Group

Comments (History of Christianity)

The Ayi people came from an animistic tradition. There was frequent warfare with neighboring tribes until the Australian government brought the area under its control in the late 1940's. The Roman Catholic Mission sent priests and national workers to visit the Ayi-Pasi area some years later.

Scripture

Available Scripture Portions

Comment (Scripture)

The churches use Pidgin English, a trade language, to teach the Christian message. This often results in confusion, lack of understanding and inattention. Many do attend church services faithfully, but it is hard to know how much they understand.

They now have one Scripture portion in their language. Yawu Bible translators and a group from the Ayi villages translated the booklet "Jesus Has the Power to Save Us" (selections from Mark's Gospel). This booklet was distributed in July, 2002.