

The Akateko of Guatemala and Mexico



representative photo

The Akateko people group is one of nine languages that make up the Guatemala Cluster. Though the languages are all in the Mayan family, no group's mother tongue can be easily understood by speakers of another.

A small number of Akateko live in and are native to Mexico. Their ranks have swelled to include many refugees so that there is now a sizeable number there with them.

The mountainous area where these people groups live is dotted with volcanoes. Most families engage in agriculture, raising plenty of food in the fertile soil. Some supplement their income, raising coffee, sugar, cardamom or bananas as cash crops. Sheep provide wool for a wide variety of woven and embroidered clothing and intricate handicrafts.

Among these indigenous peoples, about 70 percent are animists, who revere spirits in nature and of ancestors. About 30 percent are Christians, but their impact has been minimal.

Mayan religion pervades traditional rites, customs and ways of thinking. In recent years, foreigners have stirred a resurgence of interest in Mayan worldview, along with its religious practices.

Some Christian believers clearly demonstrate their faith through their choices and attitudes, but they long to better understand their relationship with God. How does He affect their daily lives and relationships? Many are asking for Old Testament Scriptures.

Primary Religion:

Christian/Animist

Disciples (Matt 28:19):

6%

Churches:

Yes

Scripture Status (Matt 28:20):

New Testament

Population (date):

48,500 (1998)



The Akateko of Guatemala

Have They Heard The Gospel?

Is the Word of God Translated?

The Akateko have a New Testament available. The translation team is working to finish the Pentateuch. The goal is to finish the entire Old Testament in their mother tongue.

How Have They Responded to the Gospel?

Christians here have asked how to apply Bible principles to relationships and in discipleship.

Other Forms of Gospel Presentations

Translators plan to produce print and audio Scripture. Christian leaders have pinpointed radio as one of the currently most effective media in reaching the area.