

The Wayampi of Brazil & French Guiana



Speakers of Wayampi consist of the Amapari, in north-eastern Brazil and the Oiapoque, in south-eastern French Guiana. The Amapari and the Oiapoque are proud of their language and identity. Approximately 95% of the population is Animist, and approximately 5% are Christian. No other religions have a significant influence.

The Amapari and the Oiapoque live in an extended-family structure. The same term used for mother is also used for their mother’s sisters. The society is patriarchal and matrilocal—meaning that families generally stay near their mother’s family. The people generally marry within their tribal group to cross-cousins—this sometimes makes it difficult for young people to find potential spouses. They are a friendly people open to developing new relationships with those whom they perceive to have a genuine interest in them.

Daily sustenance is provided through hunting/gathering and farming. Staples of the diet include manioc, game, and crops they raise, such as corn. They live in thatched-roof houses which have no walls and may be one or two levels. Men generally wear loin cloths and women wear wrap-around skirts.

Needs range from medical-care, agricultural training, cultural adjustment, and education as they adjust to increasing contact with the outside world.

Scripture work has been made more difficult by the inability of expatriates to gain direct access to village areas. The New Testament was published in 2003, and portions of the Old Testament have also been published. The Jesus Film is available in this language. Distribution of completed literature remains a concern.

Primary Religion:
Animism

Disciples (Matt 28:19):
5%

Churches:
0

Scripture Status (Matt 28:20):
New Testament & Portions of Old

Population (date):
1200 (2000 SIL)



WAYAMPI HOMELAND



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Have They Heard The Gospel?

Call Themselves Christian (%)	5%
Believe In Jesus As God & Only Savior (%)	5%
Prophet/Good Man, But Not God's Son (%)	Less than 25%
Believe In The Local Traditional Religion (%)	97%
Have Not Heard Who Jesus is (%)	50%
Number Of Pastors	0
Number Of Missionaries Working	6
Response To The Gospel	Those who have heard the gospel have been mostly positive to what is being taught.
Not necessarily acceptance of Christ.	
Number Of Churches	0
Is The Word Of God Translated?	Jesus Film, New Testament (draft form), parts of Old Testament.
Translation Medium	Audio-visual
Any Hindrance To Scripture Distribution?	Political issues. Efforts to hinder distribution by anthropologist and her NGO workers with these people. Logistics: hard area to get into, permits, modes of travel.
Forms Of Gospel Presentation Available	Jesus Film, printed scripture
What Kind Of Missionaries Are Needed?	Indigenous missionaries needed, at present missionaries can not get permission to be in the area even as medical workers, etc. Disease and medical and dental needs. Optometrists. Agricultural help .

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Group Description

Countries Where People Group Lives

Country Name Brazil and French Guiana

Population

Population in Brazil 530
Population in French Guiana 650
World Population For This People 1200
World Population Source (Date) SIL (2000)

Geography & Environment

Location The upper region of North Perimeter Highway in the Brazilian State of Amapa, along the tributaries of the Amapari River in Brazil, and along the Oyapok River at the boundary of French Guiana and Brazil.

Countries Brazil and French Guiana

Ecosystem Type Tropical Forest

Geological Type Other

Elevation 800 ft

Longitude 54W

Latitude 1N

Climate Humid tropical rain forest. About 200 inches of rain per year mostly during the rainy season of December to April (or even later). Average high is 90 degrees, with 90% humidity.

Language & Linguistics

Primary Languages Wayampi, Amapari; and Wayampi, Oiapoque

Comment (Alternate Names) Guaiapi, Guayapi, Oiampí, “Oiampipucu” (pej.), Oyampí, Oyampík, “Oyampipuku” (pej.), Oyanpík, Waiampi, Waiãpi, Wajapae, Wajapuku, Wayapae, Wayãpi

Attitude Towards Mother Tongue Very receptive

Percent Monolingual (%) All speak their native language. 80% and monolingual, with no more than 16% are bilingual. Growing amount of competence in Portuguese.

Second Languages Less than 20% speak Portuguese.

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Linguistically Related Languages	EMERILLON
Comments (Neighbor Languages)	Others in areas somewhat distant from Wayampi include Apalai .

Literacy

Literacy Attitude	Very receptive
Active Literacy Program	Young men in Amapari area have jobs to teach. They are paid by the non-governmental organization called Center for Indigenous Education.
Publications In Vernacular	20 books including hymns and teaching materials.
Comment (Literacy)	Very receptive to literacy, but in the beginning there was skepticism that literacy would work. Previously the literacy program had failed because they were teaching Portuguese. In 1991 the anthropologists gained control of the education program.

Economics

Subsistence Type	Fishers, Hunter-gatherers, Agriculturalists, Craftsmen
Average Annual Income	Older people (60 years or older) receive around \$50 per month. Those part of education and medical transport also receive about \$50 per month. However, there are very few who receive this type of income.
Occupation	Hunter-gatherers, teachers, medical "monitors" who engage in the transport of medical supplies and in transporting patients to where they can get medical help.
Income Sources	Artifacts, Brazil nuts, manioc meal
Products / Crafts	Bows & arrows, hammocks, baby slings, beads (necklaces), and headpieces (toucan breast-feathers).
Trade Partners	Trade is strictly relational (a way of forming alliances), not meant for profit.
Modernization / Utilities	Outboard motors, TV, videos, radios, two-way radios, solar panels, propane tanks, stoves, axes, shotguns, rifles, handguns, and a village car
Comment (Economy)	They have done some mining of gold in certain areas.

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Community Development

Health Care (Quality)	Fair
Comment (Health Care)	They have indigenous health monitors and some nurses. They can be brought to the city for operations and exams, but when they return they have little follow up with medications. Some limitations due to language barrier.
Comment (Health Care)	Quite effective health care situation. The University of Sao Paulo (UNIFSP) medical school is under contract from the government to provide health care for all the Indians of the Xingu. Much better health care than the average interior Brazilian. They have a health clinic post in the village. Indians in the area come for health care there. They have their own trained health care people.
Diet (Quality)	Good
Comment (Diet)	Eat game, plant manioc, sweet potatoes, corn, palm fruits, sugar cane, papaya, cashews, bananas, and other fruit.
Comment (Diet)	Corn (has spiritual significance), manioc and manioc products, monkey, fish, fruits, beans and rice (when they can buy it), squash, watermelon, popcorn, honey
Water (Quality)	Good
Comment (Water)	A fresh water well
Water (Quality)	Fair
Comment (Water)	Villages are usually 2-3 hours hike between each other, so there is not a lot of pollution that travels downstream.
Shelter Description	Thatched roof. Usually one level, but sometimes two. No walls, no separate rooms.
Electricity	Solar panels for radio and electronic equipment. Batteries.
Comment (Energy)	In emergencies there are generators run by gasoline in some villages.
Clothing	Men: loin cloths. Women: wrap-around skirts and beads. Sometimes they'll wear T-shirts when it is cold.
Transportation	Canoes, walking (within the indigenous area). When they want to go to the city there is a road and a vehicle.
Infant Mortality Rate	Approximately 1 out of every 10
Life Expectancy	60 years
.Leading Cause Of Death	Children: malaria. Adults: viral diseases, accidents, cancer, pneumonia, and diarrhea.

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Judicial / Punishment System

Shame culture: If it is a serious offense, then it is necessary to leave the village for a time. The chief makes the decision. For serious offenses the chief will consult other advisors (who are chiefs) as well.

Society & Culture

Family Structures

They have an extended family structure. Lots of solidarity. For instance a mother's sisters are also called mothers. They marry within their own villages (generally marry cross-cousins). It is patriarchal, but it is largely matrilineal (they live near their mother's family rather than living near their father's family).

Neighbor Relations

Friends or relatives. Men get along better with non-relatives than the women. However, among the three groups of the Amapari area, they do not completely trust each other and sometimes become jealous of each other.

Authority / Rule

Chief (local leader/owner of the village). There is also an indigenous association through which they relate to the outside world, but usually they choose a younger, more nationally integrated, non-traditional leader.

Social Habits/Groupings

Extended family

Cultural Change Pace

Slow to Medium

Identification With National Culture

Distinct

Self Image

Prestigious

Comment (Self Image)

Lots of cultural pride and get frustrated by the way they are treated. They are treated like children (unsophisticated).

Celebrations

Traditional festivals for corn, certain animals, and fish. Re-enactment's are a way to ensure better results of harvesting and hunting. Some are done at night and others during the day. They hold the festivals often enough to pass down traditions.

Puberty rites: For girls after their first and second menstrual cycles. The adults weave large ants into a band of grass and allow them to bite the girl on various parts of her body. Other children present are also involved in the ceremony and are bitten by the same ants, which are no longer as active. They see it as a vaccination against laziness.

Shaman celebration

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Recreations	They like to groom each other by getting lice out of people's hair. They fellowship and hang out together. The kids play in the river, men go hunting, and boys like to go out and watch birds. There are parties (festivals or otherwise) in which fermented manioc is consumed in large quantities.
Art Forms	Body painting, crafts
Media	Radio, exposure to TV, VCR, and cassette tape players.
Local Language Broadcasting	None
Comment (Attitude To Outsiders)	They are not receptive to Brazilian miners because they brought measles which killed off a large population in the past. Generally they like people who like them.

Youth

Labor and tasks (6-12 year olds)	Girls: take care of younger siblings, they grate manioc, collect fruit. Boys: learn to hunt, start bringing food home when successful.
Youth Problems (Teens)	Lack of potential spouses due to social structure (only marry cross-cousins). Buying liquor not made in the village. Sexual relations with Brazilians which bring disease. Suicide. No older role models for teens who have outside contact.
Youth Greatest Needs (teens)	Being valued. Finding work for themselves and learning how to adjust to outside world.
Comment (Youth)	Young men feel more of the social pressure. They have more exposure to the outside than the women do.

Education

Primary Schools	Two schools in French Guiana
Secondary Schools	0
Language of Textbooks Early Years	Wayampi, Portuguese
Number Of Schools > 90% Homogeneous	100%

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Status of Christianity

Religion and Response

Religious Practices & Ceremonies Festivals

If sickness is determined then they go to a shaman and the shaman will blow smoke (from some type of leaf) on the ill person. Sometimes after being treated by the shaman, some people show spiritual manifestations and they will try to develop these under the direction of a shaman. During this time they will observe many taboos such as no hunting and only eating certain foods. Some are able to develop into a shaman after this process.

Sometimes a spirit will speak through a shaman and the people will gather around and ask questions of the spirit. The main role of the shaman seems to be to keep uneasy peace with the spirit world.

They will observe taboos at certain times (such as when sick). After a baby is born there are certain taboos observed to avoid the attention of the anaconda spirit, which likes to make children sick.

Attitude To Christianity

Somewhat receptive

Attitude To Religious Change

Indifferent

Comment (Attitude to Religious Change)

Attitude is variable: one group is very receptive and there are some who are indifferent. One group has been heavily influenced by secular anthropologists against religious change.

Resistance / Receptivity

There is growing receptivity.

Religious Analogies & Bridges

Folktale mythology about the god creating the world and life was easy. Bows and arrows hunted by themselves and manioc grated itself. It was a Garden of Eden type of living.

Items For Prayer

Growth and courage for Christians.

Deepening acquaintance with God's Word and lives which reflect God's character.

Defeat of Satan in the area.

That God will bring together logistics of New Testament checking with native speakers and for New Tribes and SIL to come to a consensus in the checking process.

Anthropologist resistant to Christianity

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Spiritual Climate And Openness	Variable
Comment (Religion)	Growing receptivity influenced by Jesus film.
Recommended Approaches	Work through existing mission organizations.
Current Needs	Indigenous missionaries needed. Medical and dental needs. Optometrists. Agricultural help.

History of Christianity In Group

Year Began	1983
Significant Events	First conversions were in 1993. Missionaries were expelled in 1996. Anti-Christian campaigns by anthropologist to prevent the spread of Christianity among the Wayampi. (ongoing issue).

Scripture

Translation Status	In Progress
Available Scripture	Portions of Old Testament, published in 1989
Available Scripture	New Testament published in 2003
Form Of Scripture Available	Printed
Comment (Form of Scripture Available)	Jesus Film
Scripture Use	Private use only
Comment (Scripture)	Full Bible is not anticipated at this time.
Other Forms Of Gospel Available	Yes for Literature and Film/Videos. Audio recordings are available from Global Recordings Network. No for Radio

Missions and Churches

Organization Name	New Tribes Mission
Main Ministry	Medical, Bible Translation, Church Planting, Evangelism, Literacy
Comment (Main Ministry)	The goal of church planting has not been accomplished yet
Number Of Expatriate Workers	1
Number Of National Workers	6
Number Of Workers Using Local Language	3+, others are still learning the language