

## The Waima of Papua New Guinea



Hill country surrounds the coastal homeland of the Waima people. Hacking away the overgrowth, families plant gardens that supply most of their vegetables. Practiced Waima hunters find plenty of game in the verdant jungles. Sometimes they hunt wallabies to earn extra cash. They also catch fish to trade for cooking bananas and other staples their families enjoy.

Higher in the hills, more aggressive people hide in the jungles. Waima speakers and other coastal people groups maintain a tenuous distance from these potentially threatening neighbors. Robberies and other criminal activities nearby have made the “lowlanders” rather reluctant to embrace strangers.

Christianity came to the Waima area in the late 19th century, but without the mother tongue Scriptures. People misunderstood the message of Christ, but they embraced the physical improvements, the cargo, that the Christian workers brought. That left churches fighting a strong undertow of “cargo cult” beliefs and they are eager to have the whole Bible in their own language.

Scripture in the mother tongue will counter error with the living Truth. It will generate freedom from fear of spirits and release those bound to empty ritual. God’s Word in the Waima language will reveal the deception behind the power of traditional practices and cargo-related beliefs, giving Christians courage to lay them aside.

**Primary Religion:**  
Christianity

**Disciples (Matt 28:19):**  
17%

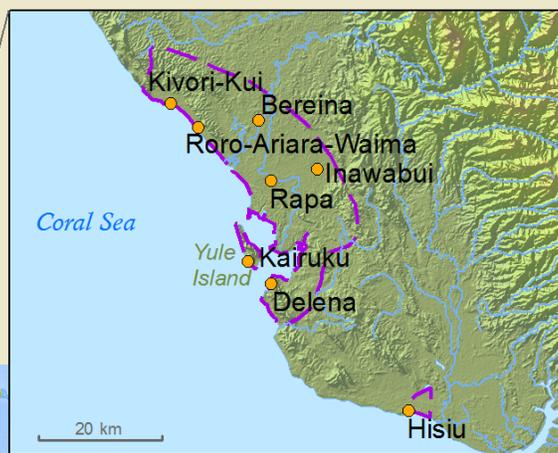
**Churches:**  
Yes

**Scripture Status (Matt 28:20):**  
OT and Audio Scripture

**Population (date):**  
15,000



### WAIMA HOMELAND



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### Have They Heard The Gospel?

Response To The Gospel

People misunderstood the message of Christ, but they embraced the physical improvements that the Christian workers brought. That left churches fighting a strong undertow of “cargo cult” beliefs. The *Encyclopaedia Britannica* defines a cargo cult as “any of the religious movements chiefly, but not solely, in Melanesia that exhibit belief in the imminence of a new age of blessing, to be initiated by the arrival of a special ‘cargo’ of goods from supernatural sources — based on the observation by local residents of the delivery of supplies to colonial officials.” It involves a hope for a better future marked by a dramatic, supernatural bestowing of material goods, such as they observed the Allies dropping to their armies in World War II. As a result, an age of paradise with a renewal of threatened social relationships would be ushered in.

Is The Word Of God Translated?

After the translation team completed and published the New Testament in the Waima language, the advisors went to their home country for a furlough. Before leaving, they asked the local team members to consider whether they wanted to translate the Old Testament. In response, the eager team started the Old Testament translation on their own, before the advisors’ return!

Other Forms of Gospel Presentations

There are audio recordings.

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### Status of Christianity

#### Scripture Use

Waima churches wait enthusiastically for the entire Word of God, for both personal and corporate use. Recognizing the impact of their own New Testament on their people, they urgently want to share what they have received. The Waima New Testament (NT) has generated interest among three smaller people groups who would now like to have the Scriptures in their own languages. They will use the Waima NT as a source text for a computer adaptation. The Waima team will help them and also work on the Old Testament. Audio Scripture is also being planned as the translations are completed.