

## The Vanimo of Papua New Guinea



The Vanimo language group is said to have come from the area of Lake Sentani, now part of Indonesia. They traveled along the coast of New Guinea over one-hundred years ago to where they are now settled in three villages, between Vanimo town and the Papua New Guinea and Indonesia border. Lonely Planet says, "The coast between Vanimo and the Indonesian border is crammed with superb beaches, waterholes and lagoons, pretty creeks and picturesque villages." The Vanimo men fish the lagoons and reefs, going out in outrigger canoes from which they stand, balanced to throw their spears at the reef fish. The women, some marked with tattoos and scarification patterns, make clay cooking pots. Traditional culture, however, is not what it used to be, having assimilated to it the Catholic church, the village club for drinking beer and watching videos, and the typical Papua New Guinea markers of development—tin roofing, tin meat, a generator, and rice. One observer reported that for one traditional singsing—drums, dancing, chanting, costumes, spirits—the people from Warimo village brought in a truck load of beer, and they wore second hand clothes under their leaves and feathers. Despite the fact that a fair amount of Western influence has seeped into their lives, their mother tongue is still of great importance to them. Tok Pisin is secondary to the Vanimo language, and the people expect to be using it far into the future. The only place where Vanimo is not the dominant language is in the church.

Some things remain the same and some things have changed in the way that the Vanimo people live, but the fact remains that Satan uses both old and new to keep his hold on the Vanimo people. There is a need for a Bible in the Vanimo language in that there is a need for the Vanimo people to come to a knowledge of the Truth.

**Primary Religion:**

Christian

**Disciples (Matt 28.19):**

33%

**Churches:**

3

**Scripture Status (Matt 28.20):**

None in mother-tongue

**Population (date):**

2,200 (2003)



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Item Name	Item Note	
<b>Have They Heard The Gospel?</b>		<b>Profile Summary</b>
Call Themselves Christian (%)	>50%	
Believe In Jesus As God & Only Savior (%)	33%	
Believe In The Local Traditional Religion (%)	66%	
Have Not Heard Who Jesus is (%)	0%	
Number Of Pastors	2	
Comment (Pastors)	1:889 (Catholic catechists only)	
Number Of Missionaries Working	2	
Comment (Number Of Missionaries)	2, based on missionary ratio of 1:1,333 and population of 2,200. (Catholic priests (2) are expatriate)	
Response To The Gospel	Indifference	
Response To The Gospel	The Catholic church was established before 1900, and expatriate Fathers from different orders have worked in the area to the present day. In the last decade, an increasing number of people are going to other churches in Vanimo town. Christianity is probably to some degree nominal, and there is continued participation in traditional religion.	
Number Of Communities	3	
Comment (Number Communities)	3 villages: Lido, Warimo, Yako	
Number Of Churches	3	
Comment (Churches)	One church in each village.	
Is The Word Of God Translated?	The Bible has not yet been translated into Vanimo.	
Translation Medium	None	
Any Hinderance To Scripture Distribution?	Literacy is a valued skill. Early in 1993, a translation agency received a request from the Vanimo speaking people for help in devising an orthography for their language. In response, a local workshop was conducted. This resulted in the establishment of an orthography and the development of vernacular prep-schools. Consequently there is a strong foundation of vernacular literacy.	
Forms Of Gospel Presentation Available (Summary)	Literature: yes Films/videos: yes	
What Kind Of Missionaries Are Needed?	There is a Tok Pisin version of the Jesus video, though it probably has not been shown in the area. The Tok Pisin Bible is available and used. Most people are able to understand and read Tok Pisin  As for Bible translation, local Vanimo speakers may be able to take on the task because of a relatively high level of education in the area, though training and consulting would still need to be given by outside experts. There is a need for missionary assistance in that capacity at least.	
<b>Population All Countries</b>		<b>Group Description</b>
World Population For This People	2,200	
World Population (Date)	2003	
Comment (World Population)	2,200 is likely to be the world population.	
<b>Countries Where People Group Lives</b>		<b>Group Description</b>
Country Name	Papua New Guinea	
<b>Geography &amp; Environment</b>		<b>Group Description</b>
Location	Sandaun Province, on coast between Vanimo and the Indonesian border.	
Country	Papua New Guinea	
Ecosystem Type	Tropical Forest	
Ecosystem Type	Other	
Geological Type	Coastal	

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Item Name	Item Note
Elevation	Sea level to 150 meters
Longitude	E 141.274500
Latitude	S 2.663273
Climate	Warm with a coastal breeze which helps make the evenings fairly comfortable.
Climate	Tropical; northwest monsoon (December to March), southeast monsoon (May to October); slight seasonal temperature variation.
Language & Linguistics	
Primary Language	VANIMO
Attitude Towards Mother Tongue	Very receptive
Percent Monolingual (%)	0%
Second Languages	Tok Pisin, some English
Linguistically Related Languages	SANGKE
Linguistically Related Languages	SKO
Linguistically Related Languages	WUTUNG
Neighboring Languages	WUTUNG
Neighboring Languages	SANGKE
Neighboring Languages	KRISA
Neighboring Languages	SKO
Neighboring Languages	KILMERI
Active Language Programs	No
Literacy	
Adult Literacy Percentage	89%
Literacy Attitude	Very receptive
Active Literacy Program	No
Publications In Vernacular	A Franciscan Father produced a Christmas mass in the 1950's.
Comment (Literacy)	Surveyors encountered eagerness to have tokples reading materials made available, and one young woman remarked to them that she was "hungry for books."
Economics	
Subsistence Type	Fishers
Subsistence Type	Hunter-gatherers
Subsistence Type	Agriculturalists
Average Annual Income	\$760 US (PNG Gross National Income per capita according to UNICEF)
Occupation	Fishing, garden work, operating Public Motor Vehicles, some educated individuals working as teachers, in government, a doctor, a lawyer.
Income Sources	Selling produce at market, income from a couple locally operated Public Motor Vehicles. There is a surfer guesthouse in Lido, some employed individuals contribute income to the communities.
Products / Crafts	Clay pots, fish nets, canoes.
Trade Partners	Neighboring groups at markets.
Modernization / Utilities	A couple motor vehicles and dinghies with outboard motors, some radios, a camera.
Community Development	
Comment (Health Care)	There is a hospital in Vanimo town, less than an hour travel, and one aid post in the language area.
Diet (Quality)	Good
Water (Quality)	Good

## The Vanimo of Papua New Guinea

Item Name	Item Note
Shelter Description	The homes are constructed of both traditional (sago leaf thatched roofs, sago branch walls, and split black palm floors) and processed materials (struts, beams, planed boxes, doors, and nails).
Electricity	Probably a small generator for showing videos.
Comment (Energy)	Available fuel in Vanimo town for vehicles and outboard motors, and kerosene for lamps. Firewood for cooking.
Clothing	Second hand, western style.
Transportation	There is an airstrip at Vanimo, and an all weather road that links all of the Vanimo speaking villages. PMVs travel between the villages on the road, and there is the possibility of transport by ship from the harbor in Vanimo.
Infant Mortality Rate	56.53: 1,000 live births (Papua New Guinea national average according to <a href="http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/pp.html#People">http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/pp.html#People</a> )
Life Expectancy	63.83 years (Papua New Guinea national average according to <a href="http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/pp.html#People">http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/pp.html#People</a> )
Leading Cause Of Death	Untreated illnesses
Comment (Community Development)	Proximity to Vanimo town, access to a road, and a relatively high number of educated individuals means that there is potential for Vanimo speakers to take responsibility for a significant part of a Bible translation program in their language.
<b>Society &amp; Culture</b>	
	<b>Group Description</b>
Neighbor Relations	Peaceful.
Social Habits/Groupings	4 clans, 16 sub clans
Cultural Change Pace	Medium
Identification With National Culture	Similar
Comment (Culture)	Many cultural taboos for both men and women are still enforced. Outwardly there is much Western influence with houses constructed from roofing iron and sawn timber.
<b>Education</b>	
	<b>Group Description</b>
Primary Schools	2
Primary School Enrollment	300+/-
Secondary Schools	None in the language group, but some attend in Vanimo town and others elsewhere.
Teacher To Pupil Ratio	There are three teachers from the area that speak the Vanimo language.
Language Of Instruction Early Years	Vanimo
Language Of Instruction Early Years	English
Comment (Education)	While English is used in the classroom, the children use the vernacular out on the playground, and both teachers and administrators expressed interest in vernacular preschools. Many students who attended the Vanimo primary schools have gone on to further their education at Vanimo High School, Sogeri National High School, University of Papua New Guinea, University of Technology-Lae, Goroka Teacher's College, and Lae Tech.
<b>Church Growth</b>	
	<b>Status of Christianity</b>
Reached Status	Evaluated
Reached Classification	Evangelized
Lay Leaders	Catechists in each village.
Bible Schools	There is a Catholic school, vocational training center, and formation training center in the wider area, though none in the Vanimo speaking villages.
<b>Religion &amp; Response</b>	
	<b>Status of Christianity</b>
Resistance / Receptivity	Expatriate priests are interested in using a mother tongue Bible for church when there is only one language in the parish, but when the parish includes more than one language group, it is necessary to use Tok Pisin in church.
Comment (Religion)	Majority Catholic and may not be open to other denominations. Each village has a "club" for drinking beer and watching videos, and there seems to be village participation in traditional singing which are more or less tied to traditional spiritual elements. Christianity is probably to some degree nominal.

# The Vanimo of Papua New Guinea

## Item Name

Recommended Approaches

## Item Note

For Bible translation, probably the best approach is for outside workers to take a consultant or facilitator's role and work with Vanimo speakers doing the translation since education is high among Vanimo speakers and they are probably able to financially support translators on their own.

## History Of Christianity In Group

## Status of Christianity

Year Began

1886

Comments (History of Christianity)

Began by: German and Dutch S.V.D. Fathers, then Franciscans, and then Passionist Fathers.

## Scripture

## Status of Christianity

Translation Status

Definite

Available Scripture

None

Form Of Scripture Available

None

Scripture Use

Individuals & some churches

Comment (Scripture)

The Vanimo use the Tok Pisin Bible and it is used in churches and by some individuals.

Comment (Scripture)

This community would be quite able to produce a local translation body who could select and support national co-translators working alongside a facilitating expatriate team.

## Missions and Churches

## Status of Christianity

Organization Name

Roman Catholic Church

Comment (Organization)

Melanesian Pidgin is spoken by workers; however, there is a current willingness to use the mother tongue.

Comment (Organization)

A minority of Vanimo speakers have associated themselves with denominations other than Catholic, and they go to Vanimo town for worship. The number of other denomination adherents is probably increasing.

Year Started

Before 1900

Number Of Adherents

Majority of group.

Number Of Expatriate Workers

2 Catholic Fathers in Vanimo parishes and other Fathers in the area are expatriate.

Number Of Local Workers

3 catechists

Number Of Local Workers

3

Number Of Workers Using Local Language

Very little.

Organization Name

Assemblies of God

Organization Name

Christian Brotherhood Church (see CMML)