

## The Tlacoapa Me'phaa of Mexico

A translation program was begun in Me'phaa of Tlacoapa in 1938 by Herman Aschmann and H. V. Lemley. Later 'Lem' and Millie Lemley continued the program after resigning from his agency. In 1975, the New Testament was published, but several factors made the book unusable to native speakers. Current ministry in the area is conducted by Iglesias Cristianas Tlapanecas (ICT), with support from Tlapanec Indian Ministries of Memphis, TN.

The people are steeped superstition and have a very hard time getting over these problems. They have not had extreme objection to the gospel such as many groups in Mexico have had, but their old animistic practices continue in their lives even for those who have accepted Christianity.

*Image  
Unavailable*

**Primary Religion:**

Animism / Christian

**Disciples (Matt 28.19):**

**Churches:**

2

**Scripture Status (Matt 28.20):**

New Testament (1975)

**Population (date):**

18,000 (2005)



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Item Name	Item Note	
<b>Have They Heard The Gospel?</b>		<b>Profile Summary</b>
Believe In The Local Traditional Religion (%)	95%	
Number Of Pastors	3	
Number Of Missionaries Working	3	
Response To The Gospel	Few believers grow in true discipleship as churches use archaic Spanish scriptures and bilingualism is limited.	
Number Of Communities	25	
Comment (Number Communities)	The larger number (25) includes smaller settlements of less than 100 people. There are 8-10 towns where the language is spoken.	
Number Of Churches	2	
Comment (Churches)	ICT has it's main church in the city of Tlacoapa, and maybe in one other of the 8-10 towns where the language is spoken -- which comprises the Municipio de Tlacoapa, Estado de Guerrero.	
Any Hinderance To Scripture Distribution?	Although practically all children learn Me'phaa as their mother tongue, and it is used in homes and public life, literacy in the language is not valued. Low quality control in the New Testament translation and an inadequate orthography at odds with the alphabet currently used in the bilingual government schools are barriers to its acceptance.	
Forms Of Gospel Presentation Available (Summary)	The 'Jesus' film in Me'phaa of Malinaltepec is useful in Tlacoapa. Aural intelligibility of Malinaltepec speech is quite high, but Tlacoapa speakers will never attempt to read that language.	
<b>Population All Countries</b>		<b>Group Description</b>
World Population For This People	18,000	
<b>Countries Where People Group Lives</b>		<b>Group Description</b>
Country Name	Mexico	
<b>Geography &amp; Environment</b>		<b>Group Description</b>
Map Features	The city of Tlacoapa is located at: 17° 16' 00" N, -98° 45' 00" W based on INEGI topo maps, and corroborated by GPS readings. It is located on the Río Tlacoapa, 3km north of its confluence with the Río Malinaltepec. Tlacoapa is in a deep valley 1500 m above sea level, while the whole language area ranges from 2600 m down to 1000 m. Access is through the city of Tlapa (pop. 55,000) via two possible routes: 1) Paved road S of Tlapa 38km (1 hr) to all-weather gravel road turn-off labeled Malinaltepec. Go 15 km toward Malinaltepec, and take right fork in 'San Miguelito', going another 15km through Monte Alegre to Tlacoapa (total 2.5 hr). 2) Take highway W out of Tlapa 40 km (1 hr) to Tlatlauquitepec. Go S on paved road 20 km. Leave pavement to right at 'cruzero' for Acatepec and Tlacoapa. It's about 25 km of dirt and gravel road thru Escalería Lagunas, Laguna Seca and Tlacotepec to Tlacoapa (total 3 hr).	
<b>Literacy</b>		<b>Group Description</b>
Comment (Literacy)	First language literacy rate: 3% Second language literacy rate: 40%	
<b>Religion &amp; Response</b>		<b>Status of Christianity</b>
Attitude To Christianity	Have been Christian since 1537	
Attitude To Religious Change	Somewhat Resistant	
<b>History Of Christianity In Group</b>		<b>Status of Christianity</b>
Year Began	1537	
Comments (History of Christianity)	Highly syncretized with animism	
<b>Scripture</b>		<b>Status of Christianity</b>
Other Forms Of Gospel Available: Recordings	Yes	
Other Forms Of Gospel Available: Film/Videos	Yes	