



# Papua

## Tribes in Transition

Modern life is colliding with centuries of unchanged tradition among the remote tribal peoples of Papua, one of the world's last frontiers. Television and even cell phones have made their way deep into the jungle interior long dominated by arrows, stone axes and pagan traditions. Within a few short generations many Papuans have made the transition from Stone Age practices to the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Thankfully, in some regions, these rapid changes have been preceded by pioneer missionary efforts and a movement of God's Spirit among a handful of tribes.

However, there is an urgent need for more workers and prayer warriors to further the work of the Gospel throughout Papua so that its people don't trade ancient religious practices for a new set of modern or secular idols. Join us to see the Gospel make inroads into these yet unreached regions.

### Location:

Papua, once called Irian Jaya, is the eastern-most province of the Indonesian archipelago. Papua's rugged jungle and swamp terrain is home to an incredible diversity of flora and exotic animals. New species of frog, fish, plants and mammals are still being discovered. For years, the challenging terrain and lack of roadways isolated villages from one another and the outside world. Even today, airplanes are essential to reaching the interior.



### Customs:

Papuan life is all about relationships. Today, long-held traditional tribal and family loyalties are clashing with the new attractions of modern urbanization. Tensions are also arising from the influx of other ethnic groups, causing issues with land ownership and the inevitable loss of identity.

### Language:

Bahasa Indonesia is the official language of Papua. However, this land has a vast number of tribal languages spoken within a relatively small land area. With over 250 known languages, Papua's population of about 2.5 million is only 0.04% of the world's population but has 4% of the world's languages. Many of these are still unwritten and only three languages have a complete Bible translation. World Team has worked with the national church to complete translations of the Dani, Hupla and Yali Bibles.

### Religion:

Although many Papuans claim to be Christian, this does not accurately reflect the number of born-again believers. Traditional animism, the worship of ancestors and spirits, still heavily influences people's lives. Islam is rapidly gaining influence through the influx of transmigrants from other overpopulated islands of Indonesia. The church today has a strong presence in some areas; however, there is still a great need for biblically-based leadership and discipleship training in Papua.



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## World Team in Papua

In October 1948, the vision of reaching the interior tribes of Papua was born in the hearts of the leadership of Regions Beyond Missionary Union (merged with World Team in 1995). After years of pleading with God and negotiating with government authorities, the first RBMU missionary entered Papua in February 1954. These early pioneers opened vast areas of interior Papua, sharing the Gospel of Christ with the Stone Age tribes. Some of the early missionaries were martyred while many others have had long and fruitful ministries. Bible translations were begun, literacy programs and Bible schools developed, and souls won into the Kingdom.

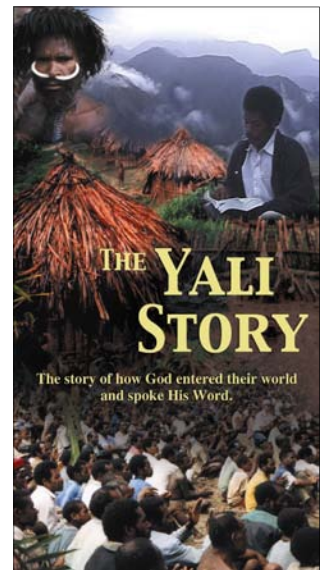
Today there are more than a dozen World Team families serving the people of Papua as church planters, translators, Bible teachers, pilot/mechanics, and school teachers. World Team Papua is working together with the national church to accomplish God's plan for the people of Papua.

## Papua Today

Papua is developing at an unprecedented rate. Traditional constraints that once held social behaviors in check are now weakened and most young people are ill-prepared for today's modern social pressures. Health and education systems are in great need of continuing development. The average life expectancy of 40 to 50 years is 15 years less than the Indonesian national average. Promiscuous behavior in conjunction with poor education is leading to alarming reports of the spread of HIV/AIDS. In addition to church planters, disciplers and trainers, World Team Papua is looking for others to join them and fill specific ministry needs.

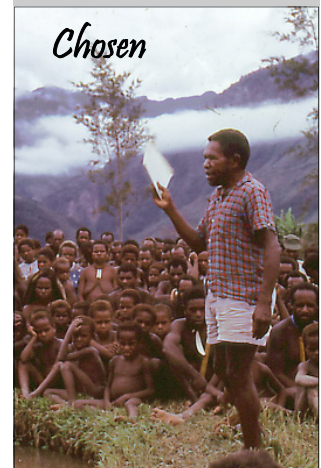
- Youth workers are urgently needed. The younger generation is growing up in a vastly different world than that of their parents.
- Pilots are in great demand. World Team's flight operation, Tariku Aviation, serves the national GIDI churches in the Mamberamo River region as well as some of the highland regions.
- Hillcrest International School has immediate openings for administrators and teachers in a variety of specialties. Visit [www.hismk.org](http://www.hismk.org) or contact World Team for more details.

New workers with a heart to bring the Gospel to this Papuan generation and the next are urgently needed. Be they unevangelized or in need of re-evangelizing, the fact remains...many people living in Papua have yet to hear and respond to the Gospel.



### THE YALI STORY

The story of how God entered their world and spoke His Word. Available in VHS or DVD format, including a 28 minute documentary and conversation with missionaries as they reflect on lessons to be learned from the Yali story. (\$10.00 US)



### CHOSEN

The story of the Dani whom God brought out of darkness. An amazing story of transformation of people and culture. (Complimentary copies of this booklet available upon request.)

World Team has a passion to see the Gospel reach every town and village in Papua. We are looking for others who share our passion - people to join the team in Papua, others who will pray strategically, and those willing to give sacrificially toward this ongoing ministry. To learn more, please contact World Team today.



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