Traditionally, the Esimbi are an oral society, and each village has its own chief who is responsible for upholding cultural traditions.

Fear is the unifying motivator that holds their communities together—the glue that binds and controls all the individuals of the society. Sadly, it permeates every aspect of their culture. Esimbi traditionalists continually petition their dead ancestors to provide for their physical needs. Many younger people are shunning traditional witchcraft but naively replacing it with “modern” witchcraft from other cultures.

The estimated population is 55,000. Tribal fighting and political unrest in 2018 left a handful of Esimbi villages deserted. Many have fled to other parts of the country for safety.

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Cameroon

The Esimbi

People at the end of the Road

Who are the Esimbi?

God has blessed the Esimbi people with a fertile land, and they are skilled farmers and hunters. They do all their farming with hand tools and are well-known in Cameroon for their peanuts. Socially, they are hospitable and place a high value on harmonious relationships.

Yet they are poor, have low self-esteem, and, largely as a consequence of the remoteness of their area, are viewed by other Cameroonians as backward.

Satan has kept them in bondage for generations. A great spiritual battle is raging for their souls. Today, however, a beacon of God’s light is shining on the Esimbi.

In 2018, the books of Mark and Luke were published in their language. Just prior to that, eight Esimbi excitedly accepted Jesus through a verbal explanation of the gospel in light of their own traditional atonement sacrifice of a ram. Central to their culture, this familiar illustration “validates” the credibility of Jesus in their minds. It is a stepping stone that gives them the “bridge” of familiar understanding they need to accept the unfamiliar gospel of Jesus.

Where Do They Live?

The Esimbi people live traditionally in a remote area of the North West region of Cameroon, at the end of the road. Some live across the border inside Nigeria. Many, especially young adults, have moved to other parts of Cameroon.

From Darkness to Light

World Team among the Esimbi

World Team workers began church planting among the Esimbi in 1987. Four missionary families lived with the Esimbi; the last family left in 2006. Eight churches were planted, and a pastoral training program was established. The alphabet was developed, and Bible translation and literacy work were launched.

In 2009, the language project was handed over to the Cameroon Association for Bible Translation and Literacy (CABTAL), and in 2016, World Team missionaries returned to work in cooperation with CABTAL.

Since that time, God's miracles among the Esimbi have been mind-boggling. The Esimbi New Testament was dedicated in 2024 with great rejoicing among the people.

Recent tribal warfare and civil war have greatly affected the area, and creative work strategies are being developed with the Esimbi people in other areas of the country.

Ministry Overview

People	The Esimbi
Language	Esimbi
Location	Cameroon, Africa
Opportunities	• Literacy—train local literacy teachers, and assist in the production of literacy materials (1-2 years) • Linguistics—assist in the completion of an Esimbi dictionary (1-2 years)

God wants to transform Esimbi hearts, revealing the life-changing gospel in their mother tongue. He wants to declare his love to them, turn them from witchcraft to himself, and teach them to walk in the power of the Holy Spirit.

May the next generation grow up with a knowledge of God's Word and the life-saving grace of our Lord, Jesus Christ.

Is God leading you to go or to support this ministry through your prayers and gifts?

Join the Team!

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