



## Trio & Wayana Tribes of Suriname

When World Team missionaries first encountered these indigenous people over 50 years ago, they were not met with open arms. Both the Trio and the Wayana were suspicious of their motives. More than once they considered killing them. Each tribe would soon learn not only about pure motives, but that the love of Jesus Christ would motivate them to do the same.

A full half century later, 98% are believers and are vigorously seeking out other tribes with the saving message of Jesus Christ.

### Language

Both the Trio and the Wayana speak their own indigenous Amerindian languages that had no written alphabet until World Team missionaries arrived in the 1960s.

Suriname is one of the most multilingual societies in the world with many speaking at least three languages. In all, sixteen languages are spoken, including the official language Dutch, French, the Creole street language, and Hindustani Sarnami.

### Religion

Until missionaries arrived in the 1960s the tribes practiced an indigenous religion that included sacrificial killings and infanticide.

Today, 98% of the tribes are Christian.



### People and Place

Suriname is a small country in South America and sits on the northeast coast between Guyana and French Guiana, with Brazil to the south. Much of the charm and appeal of Suriname lies in its diverse cultures and ethnic groups. A history of colonial occupation, immigration and slavery have contributed to the incredible mixture.

The population is also small, estimated at close to 500,000. The Trio and Wayana live in the dense rainforests that cover most of the country. Access to the interior region is difficult and limited to boat and some air transportation.



### History of World Team in Suriname

Although Christianity had been introduced by Dutch settlers centuries ago, apathy had invaded the church, leaving the people "Christianized but not converted". They had the Truth in their hands and heads but not the Holy Spirit to guide and change them! Education, evening Bible study, and youth clubs in the capital of Paramaribo allowed for the country's educated youth to hear the Gospel and respond.

In the late 1950s and early 60s the Lord began to burden the hearts of many to reach the Amerindian tribes of the interior regions. Although none had experience with reaching tribes located 200 miles upriver, the call of God was strong on their hearts and they obeyed. The two tribes were the Wayana and Trio. A government-sponsored airstrip building project, literacy, and medical care proved a winning combination for reaching the tribes. Today the Trio and Wayana are missionaries reaching out to newly discovered tribes that are inaccessible to outsiders.

**World Team**

# Tribal Watch-Care Project

## Ministry Needs Today

The Trio and Wayana churches are autonomous and led by a plurality of leaders. They have a missionary vision and are sending teams to unreached tribes still inaccessible to outsiders. But the churches are not yet fully established or ready to stand on their own. Church leaders have requested further, specific leadership training and World Team is committed to providing that support.

To this day the tribes remain isolated, living deep in the jungle and having little contact with the outside world. Because of this, they are vulnerable to false teaching and deception. The best example of this occurred only a few years ago when a plane load of outsiders came to a Trio village offering to build schools and provide generators. Their only request was permission to build a house for their god. The Trio replied that they already had a house for worshipping God, but the visitors told them Jesus was dead. Upon hearing this the Trio leaders ordered the false teachers to take their supplies and leave immediately.

The visitors were Muslims and wanted to build a mosque in the village. While the church leaders had wisdom to discern that the message was false, they had no understanding of Islam. World Team missionaries and national pastors were invited to spend a week with them opening the Scripture and studying what God says about false teachers and how to stand firm in the truth of God's Word.

## Workers Needed

This is but one example of why a team of Trio and Wayana-speaking missionaries is needed to provide watch-care and continue coaching and mentoring emerging leaders. Team members will spend the first term living among the tribes in order to learn their languages, customs, and culture. Throughout this time they will be mentored by missionaries experienced in the language and culture. Afterward, they will live in the capital city of Paramaribo but make scheduled trips to the different villages to further develop leaders. Part of their ministry includes developing and implementing a training curriculum.

Initiation of this watch-care ministry requires team members who exhibit a strong and intimate relationship with God and spouse to endure periods of isolation from urban living. Also vital are a strong understanding of tribal worldview, the ability to communicate within the context of the culture, and a commitment to teamwork.

## By air & by boat they came...

Plane after plane brought Indians from far away villages. Loaded canoes carried Indians and Bush Negroes from villages up and down the river to Lawa. They came from Suriname, Brazil, and French Guiana for the Interior Bible Conference.

Soon the village was bustling. Make-shift huts were filled to capacity. The sound of the cow's horn called people to the church. The conference was officially under way even though they had gathered three days earlier. They just couldn't wait to get started.

Each day's program included five speakers, with singing before and after each one. But that wasn't enough! The people rose at 4 a.m. and sang until about 6 a.m. when they would break for baths in the river and then breakfast. After the last speaker of the day and a short break to eat, they'd sing again until 10 p.m. This continued day after day.

As they met together, the Word of God went forth in power, hearts were pierced, conviction was evident, hope was awakened, and precious souls were snatched from darkness and brought into the kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Forty-nine received the Lord that week, sin was publicly confessed, forty-nine were baptized with their tribes people watching along the river bank. Then together we worshipped the Lord, participating in the Lord supper, many for the first time.

God has moved in the hearts of the Trio and Wayana people. Now He is directing them to reach other tribes upriver. Is God moving in your heart to equip these obedient servants in their calling? Do you know someone who has the skills or aptitude for this kind of ministry? Contact World Team today to learn more.



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