

# Jeremy and Mandy Hambrice

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The Hambrice family serves in the remote Eastern Highlands Province of Papua New Guinea, ministering to the Wantakia tribe in the village of Pinji. Their vision extends beyond Pinji, as they seek to reach the nine surrounding villages with the gospel.



## Church Planting and Discipleship

By God's grace, the Hambrices and their team planted a church in 2020 and have since been actively discipling and teaching the local believers. Their ministry initially involved large village outreaches, where they taught chronologically from Creation to Christ and through the end times over three-month periods. Their second outreach in 2022 reinforced these teachings.

Now that the church is established, they focus on smaller, in-home Bible studies with those who show interest. The church meets on Sundays, primarily led by local Bible teachers in training. Women from the church lead a children's Bible study on Saturdays, and an adult Bible study is held in a round hut on Friday nights. Their next major step is planting a church in a neighboring village in the coming year.

## Goals

The Hambrices are committed to discipling and strengthening the local church to maturity, ensuring that elders and deacons are raised up to lead the congregation independently while remaining firmly rooted in God's Word.

Another major goal is Bible translation. Significant progress has already been made, and they are committed to continuing this work so that the Wantakia people can access the Scriptures in their own language. They also plan to establish a youth ministry in the next year to engage teenagers with the gospel.

Additionally, they support a literacy program, now fully run by local believers, to equip more people to read God's Word for themselves.

## The People They Serve

The Wantakia people are primarily planters and gatherers, living in small round houses made from jungle materials. Their daily lives revolve around cooking over open fires and cultivating coffee trees, which provide income through sales to roasters in larger towns.

Spiritually, the Wantakia people hold animistic beliefs, convinced that all things possess spirits. They live in fear of spirit beings, believing that a distant, evil creator made these spirits to harm mankind. Their way of life revolves around appeasing and manipulating these spirits to avoid misfortune.

## Challenges

The Hambrices face several challenges in ministering to the Wantakia people, including:

1. Lack of Interest Among Unbelievers: Many in the village remain indifferent to God's Word, making outreach difficult.
2. Opposition from Other Religious Groups: Unbiblical teachings from local Lutheran and Seventh-Day Adventist groups, which are heavily syncretized with animistic beliefs, create confusion and resistance.
3. Faithfulness in Leadership: Developing strong, committed local leaders is a constant challenge as the church grows.

## Spiritual Landscape

Out of approximately 500 villagers in Pinji, around 150 have come to faith in Christ. However, they remain the only believers in a language group of 10,000 people. The Hambrices are working to change that by spreading the gospel to more villages and strengthening the local church.

## Looking Ahead

Through church planting, discipleship, Bible translation, and literacy programs, the Hambrices remain steadfast in their mission to bring the truth of the gospel to the Wantakia people. They continue to trust in God's provision as they work toward expanding His kingdom in Papua New Guinea.