

## Quechua

The Quechua are a group of indigenous South American tribes, comprising the Quechumaran linguistic stock and living mostly in Bolivia, Peru, and Ecuador. As direct descendants of the ancient and highly civilized Incan Empire, they are reserved and dignified. Their well-developed society survived the destruction brought by the conquering Spaniards. They were oppressed by the Spanish for centuries after the demise of their empire. Culturally and linguistically, the Quechua are related to the Aymara, a people group from the same regions of South America.



## Topography

The Quechua are spread across Bolivia, Ecuador, Peru, Chile, and northern Argentina. They live primarily in the Andes Mountains. Bolivia is a landlocked country in west-central South America, bordered by Brazil, Paraguay, Argentina, Chile, and Peru. In the northern part of the altiplano region of Bolivia is Lake Titicaca, the highest large, navigable lake in the world.

## History

The Quechua tribes, who appear originally to have lived in a small area of the southern highlands of Peru, became the most powerful element in the Incan Empire. Quechua was the official language of the Inca, and as the empire expanded, use of the language spread over a large area of South America.

After the Spanish conquest of Peru, Quechua remained the major language, and Spanish missionaries used it in western South America. Since the sixteenth century the descendants of the original Quechua people have remained largely pure blooded, retaining many elements of their culture and accepting few European customs.

The Quechua language prevails today. In 1975 it was recognized as one of three official languages in Bolivia (with Spanish and Aymara), and an official language of Peru (with Spanish). It is one of the few indigenous languages of the Americas to receive official recognition. It is spoken by several million people in Peru, Bolivia, Ecuador, Chile, and northwest Argentina in many dialects, including the Cuzqueño of southern Peru and the Quiteño of Ecuador.



## Culture

Quechuan culture was one of the most advanced in the western hemisphere before the coming of European conquerors in the sixteenth century. Many artistic and scientific achievements were inherited from the pre-Incan cultures of the Aymara, Nazca, and Yunca peoples. Under the Incan Empire, major advances were made in social organization, architecture, engineering, and military science.

*Quechua Society:* Quechuan communities center around the family, which includes several siblings and their spouses. The extended family is large and plays a major role in decision-making. Individuals may own livestock separately, but they farm the land together with their extended family.

Marriages are arranged with the consent of the parents and the approval of the community. Men and women are not considered adults until they are married. When a couple marries, they live with the groom's parents unless the bride's family is short on laborers.

## Religion

The Quechua live in constant fear of their gods. They believe that in order to appease *Pachamama*, the Earth Mother spirit, they must make some form of sacrifice such as an animal sacrifice or the pouring out of alcohol on the ground. Otherwise, misfortunes may happen to them or their families. Punishments, they believe, come in the form of accidents, bad luck, sickness, or bad weather. Quechua miners give offerings to *Tio*, a devil god whom they believe controls events in the mine, and *Awiche*, an old woman whom they believe protects them from mining accidents.

## SIM Involvement

SIM serves the Quechua of Bolivia and Peru through medical work, youth camps, community development, Theological Education by Extension, and radio and television programming. SIM workers desire to live out the love of Christ among the Quechua and draw believers together into churches.

## Scripture Availability

Bible portions have been translated in the Quechua language since 1907. In 1985, the New Testament translation was completed. In 1993, a translation of the entire Quechua Bible was printed.

## Urgent Prayer Need

Bingham Academy in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, urgently needs a [French teacher](#) to join their staff team in August. Pray that God will provide the right person to meet this need.

