

**MISSIONS ATLAS PROJECT
AREA OF THE WORLD
COUNTRY**

Snapshots Section

Country Name: Republic of Guinea-Bissau

Country Founded in: September 24, 1973

Population: 1,503,182

Government Type: republic

Geography/location in the world: Guinea Bissau is below Senegal and above Guinea on the West African coast. It is generally hot and humid since it lies in a tropical zone.

Number of people groups: 29

Picture of flag:



Religion Snapshot

50 % of the population still practice some form of their traditional indigenous beliefs. These beliefs will vary from ethnic group to ethnic group.

45% of the population is Muslims

5% are "Christian adherents."

Government interaction with religion:

The Constitution supports religious liberty. The government tolerates all religions but does require religious groups to obtain licensure. Missionaries may work in the country.

<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/pu.html>

<http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2007/90102.htm>

Country Profile

Basic Facts

Country Name: Republic of Guinea-Bissau

Demographics:

The estimated population of Guinea Bissau is 1,503,182.

Children up to fourteen years of age account for 41% of the population. There are 307,353 male children between the ages of newborn to fourteen years of age. There are 308,726 female children between these same ages. Adults between the ages of fifteen and sixty-four years of age account for 55.9% of the population. There are 404,747 males in this age category and 436,245 females. In the last age category, sixty-five years and above, there are 18,819 males and 27,292 females. This 65 and over group accounts for 3.1% of the population. The median age for males is 18.6 years, and the median age for females is 19.8 years.

The birth rate is 36.4 births for every 1,000 people. There are an estimated 4.72 children born to every woman. The infant mortality rate is 101.64 deaths for every 1,000 live births. The death rate is 16.05 deaths for every 1,000 people. The life expectancy for the total population is 47.52 years. The life expectancy for males is slightly lower at 45.71 years while the life expectancy for females is slightly higher at 49.39 years.

There are twenty-nine different people groups in Guinea Bissau. Approximately, ninety-nine percent of the population is of African descent. The remaining one percent is comprised of Europeans and mulattos. About thirty percent of those of African descent are from the *Balanta* people group while about twenty percent are from the *Fula* people. Another fourteen percent are from the *Manjaca* people.

The risk of infectious diseases is very high. Travelers should be aware that bacterial and protozoal diarrhea, hepatitis A, schistosomiasis, and typhoid fever might all be contracted from polluted water or food. Other risks include: malaria and yellow fever. There were also reported cases of meningococcal meningitis in 2008.

AIDS is a risk. In 2001, the HIV/AIDS adult prevalence rate was ten percent. Approximately a reported 17,000 people had contracted AIDS in 2001 while 1,200 people had died because of AIDS. The number of people and children who actually have been infected by HIV/ AIDS is probably substantially higher.

Language:

Portuguese is the official state language, but most people use *Crioulo* to communicate. *Crioulo* is based on a mixture of Portuguese and different African languages. *Balanta* is used by many people as a trade language as is *Fula*. *Mandinka*, *Mandyak*, and *Pepel* are other commonly used languages.

[Guinea-Bissau Languages - Fula](#)

Society/Culture:

There are several important holidays in Guinea Bissau. September 24, which commemorates the day that Guinea Bissau gained its independence from Portugal, is the most popular holiday. International Women's Day in March and Labour Day in May are also nationally recognized. For Muslims, the end of Ramadan in October and Tabaski in December are important feast days. Christian families will celebrate Christmas in December. The mixing of Catholic beliefs with traditional ethnic beliefs has led to the widespread practice of Carnival with people participating in dancing and music festivities.

Family life is very important in Guinea Bissau. Most people groups are patrilineal with the oldest male of the clan having influence over younger members. Marriages may be polygamous among Muslim and traditional ethnic groups with some groups still requiring a traditional bride price be paid by the groom to the family of the prospective bride. Wives are expected to have several children.

Children may be at risk for exploitation. Their fathers usually give girls in marriage at young ages. As mentioned below, boys may be indentured to a religious leader. Both boys and girls are expected to work for their families.

Health care in Guinea Bissau is usually reserved for those who are close to death or have very serious health conditions. There are few hospitals and even fewer medical resources. Doctors receive salaries from the government when funds are available; however, they serve without the guarantee of a salary simply because they wish to save lives. Basic medical supplies like needles and gloves may be in short supply. Even though the risk of AIDS is very high, needles may be reused if there are no other needles available. Medical supplies and volunteer doctors or dentists would be welcomed.

Children are often the most vulnerable to diseases and malnutrition. Malaria is the number one cause of death for children under five. While there is an agreement with Portugal that provides the opportunity for some of the sickest children to go to Portugal for medical treatment, this opportunity requires a great deal of money for passports and other types of legal travel documents. Children with handicaps are often abandoned in the bush because they are thought to be inhabited by demons. Their families also abandon children with AIDS or leprosy. Missionaries that have the resources try to help these children either get to orphanages or Christian families. Volunteers are needed to help in local orphanages.

[UNICEF: Fighting child trafficking in Guinea-Bissau](#)

Government:

The government is officially considered a republic. President Joao Bernardo 'Nino' Vieira, who assumed power in October of 2005, leads the country. In the 2005 election Vieira received 52.4% while his political opponent Malam Bacai Sanha received 47.6%. The next elections are scheduled to take place in 2010 as the constitution allows presidents to serve for five year

renewable terms. The president appoints the prime minister and also appoints the supreme court justices. The president is a member of the African Party for the Independence of Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde (PAIGC). This political party is the most influential party in Guinea Bissau politics today.

The current prime minister is Prime Minister Martinho N'Dafa Cabi. President Vieira allowed the appointment of Cabi to proceed after being under pressure from the National Assembly. Cabi has served since April 2007. Vieira's own choice, Aristide Gomes, had to leave office after a vote of no confidence was passed by the three main political parties in power in Guinea Bissau.

The *Assembleia Nacional Popular* or National Assembly is a unicameral body which serves as the legislative branch of the government. One hundred representatives, work together for four years at a time. The Assembly members are usually selected by the votes of regional council members. Before 1991, when a multi-party system was instituted, all representatives had to belong to the PAIGC. The last elections were held in 2004. In that election, President Vieira's party, the PAIGC, gained forty-five seats while the Party for Social Renewal (PRS) got thirty-five seats. The United Social Democratic Party (PUSD) sent seventeen representatives. The Electoral Union (UE) only gained two seats while the United Popular Alliance (APU) got only one. The next elections are supposed to occur at some time during 2008.

Under the National Assembly are regional councils that are elected through popular vote. The city of Bissau is actually considered its own autonomous section. The other divisions are Biombo, Bafata, Bolama, Cacheu, Oio, Gabu, Tombali, and Quinara. These divisions are further subdivided into thirty-seven more sectors.

The current law system is based upon the constitution which was originally instituted in 1984 but which was amended twice in 1991 and twice in 1996. French civil law strongly impacted the courts of Guinea Bissau and the government also accepts compulsory ICJ jurisdiction. The highest court in the land is the Supremo Tribunal da Justica. The nine justices who serve on this court hold the final authority over all appeals in both criminal and civil cases. Under this court are nine regional courts. In the first court of appeals, justices preside over all felony cases and also hear arguments for civil cases that involve monetary issues over \$1000 dollars. There are additional sectoral courts for misdemeanor criminal cases and for civil cases which involve monetary issues under \$1000 dollars. Judges who serve in these lower courts do not necessarily have to be trained lawyers. Because of the cost of taking cases to trial, many people choose to ask traditional leaders to help resolve issues before attempting to use the official system.

During the political controversies of 1998, the United States government decided to have all of its embassy employees leave the country in order to ensure their safety. The U.S. Ambassador to Senegal currently presides over diplomatic endeavors between the United States and Guinea Bissau. U.S. citizens who are traveling in Guinea Bissau must go to the U.S. embassy in Dakar, Senegal, to receive help. Consequently, the government of Guinea Bissau does not currently appoint an official representative to Washington D.C. either.

<http://www.mapsofworld.com/guinea-bissau/guinea-bissau-political-map.html>

<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/pu.html>

<http://www.infoplease.com/country/profiles/guinea-bissau.html#political>

<http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/5454.htm>

http://encarta.msn.com/fact_631504776/guinea-bissau_facts_and_figures.html

Worldmark Encyclopedia of the Nations

Economy:

The citizens of Guinea-Bissau live in one of the poorest countries in the world. On the United Nations Human Development Index, Guinea Bissau is listed as 175 out of 177 countries surveyed. Guinea Bissau received \$79.12 million in external aid. Accrued debt was \$941.5 million. The civil war and continual political upheaval has caused the economy to experience extreme fluctuations.

The total GDP in 2007 was \$901.2 million. The growth rate of the GDP in 2007 was 3.7%. Sixty-two percent of the GDP came from the agricultural sector while service related endeavors accounted for twenty-six percent. The remaining twelve percent of the GDP came from industrial efforts. The annual income per family is only about \$600 per year.

There are 480,000 people currently working as part of the labor force. Eighty-two percent of these workers engage in some type of agricultural pursuit. The cultivation of cashews is a predominant occupation for farmers although many are only subsistence farmers—only growing enough to feed their own families. Other agricultural products include: rice, corn, beans, cassava, peanuts, palm kernels, and cotton.

Eighteen percent of the labor force are involved in some type of industrial or service related jobs. Industries include different types of agricultural processing and the making of beer and soft drinks. The industrial production growth rate is 4.7%. In the future, if oil deposits off the coast of Guinea Bissau are developed, oil refinery might provide a valuable new source of revenue. However, current efforts have been unproductive. There may also be the possibility of developing endeavors in the mining of phosphates or other minerals; however, right now the cost of developing such industries is too great for the beleaguered economy.

Legal exports come to \$133 million f.o.b. India receives 76.1% of the exports while Nigeria gets 18.1%. Italy uses the last 1.4%. Exports include: cashew nuts, shrimp, peanuts, palm kernels, and sawn lumber. Cashews are the largest legal export.

Legal imports cost \$200 million f.o.b. Import partners include: Portugal, Senegal, Italy, and Pakistan. Imports include: foodstuffs, machinery and transport equipment, and petroleum products. In 2004, oil imports were 2,463 bbl/day.

Recently there have been news reports that indicate that the illegal export and trafficking of drugs has become a major source of income for people. People will import drugs like cocaine from South America and then proceed to export these drugs to destinations in Europe. Some BBC news sources indicated that high level government officials may be involved in the drug trade. With the flow of drugs from the Caribbean being somewhat curtailed due to increased international efforts to stop smuggling, Guinea Bissau may be in the process of becoming a major hub in the smuggling of drugs into Europe. As with any area where drug trafficking

becomes prevalent, other criminal activities also tend to increase. Visitors to the area should be increasingly cautious. Violence between rival drug cartels seems to be a possibility.

Visitors further need to be aware of the lack of ability to use credit/ debit cards safely within Guinea Bissau. The people generally operate a cash-based society. Travelers should consider leaving all unessential credit cards at home. Also, they should be careful about showing too much cash at one time as they might draw the attention of potential robbers.

<http://www.undp.org/>

<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/pt.html#Geo>

http://www.travel.state.gov/travel/tips/safety/safety_1747.html

Literacy:

Literacy efforts are an important aspect of missions in West Africa. Because of the disruption caused during the civil war years, many schools were destroyed and have not been rebuilt due to the poor economic situation. This is especially true in rural areas where the teacher to student ratio could be 44 to 1. Teachers usually teach in Portuguese or Crioulo which can also be problematic since most of the children speak the language of their own ethnic group. Teaching tools need to be developed for the language of each particular ethnic group. Also, teachers need more training about proper educational practices.

In 2003, only 42.4% of the entire population could read and write. About 58.1% of the male population was literate while only 27.4% of the female population was. Often boys receive more education opportunities than girls since families wish girls to marry early and help in the home with other children.

Families that cannot afford school fees may choose to send their sons to a Qu'ranic school for further education. Some Senegalese marabouts (religious teachers) have been coming to Guinea Bissau and offering free Qu'ranic education if families will send their boys to live in Senegal. These marabouts will sometimes take the boys and force them to beg on the streets of Senegal instead of offering them a quality education. These boys, who are sometimes called talibe, are not given proper nourishment and may be beaten. International organizations are working to stop this practice. They are also working to return such boys to their families.

http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/guineabissau_1963.html

[UNICEF: Giving girls a better education in **Guinea-Bissau**](#)

Land/Geography:

Guinea Bissau is a coastal country in West Africa. Its geographic coordinates are 12 00 N and 15 00 W. Guinea and Senegal both border Guinea Bissau. There is 350 km of coastline. It is approximately slightly less than three times the size of Connecticut.

The close to the ocean is a coastal plain dotted with mangrove swamps. From there, the land becomes heavily wooded before changing to a savanna in the far northern part of the country.

The total land area is 28,000 sq km while water covers 8,120 sq km. Approximately 8.31% of the land is arable while 6.92% is used to plant permanent crops. An additional 84.77% is used for various other purposes. Farmers irrigate about 250 sq km of land.

Bissau is the capital city. Bissau lies near the opening of the Gebu River and thus serves as a major port for Guinea Bissau. The Osvaldo Vieira International Airport is also located in Bissau. Bissau is more developed than other major cities. However, streets may still lack electricity. Travelers should be careful and not venture out at night without appropriate help because of the danger posed by thieves.

The Portuguese originally established Bissau around 1687 as trading enclave on the mainland. In 1942, it became the capital of the Portuguese colony. When freedom fighters began to gain territory in the bid to gain independence from Portuguese control, Madina do Boe became their base of operations. However, after complete independence from Portugal occurred in 1974, Bissau once again became the capital city.

The weather is generally hot and humid. From June to November, rain falls often. Travel may become difficult during this time because dirt roads can become quagmires. However, during the dry season that lasts from December to May, harmattan winds will blow across and could cause brush fires or reduce visibility. Temperatures may range between eighty-six to ninety-three degrees with March to May being the hottest months of the year.

There are many different modes of travel in Guinea Bissau. The closest airport is about eight kilometers from Bissau. For travel further inland, people may choose to use bush taxis or travel on ferries. Bush taxis are sometimes old trucks or buses. Many people use the bush taxis or ferries so overcrowding is usually a problem. Also, these modes of transportation may have slightly irregular schedules. Visitors should allow extra time in their travel plans for unexpected waits or delays. Furthermore, during the wet season, travelers often find that traveling by canoe is easier because many roads are under water. Visitors who wish to travel between Senegal and Guinea Bissau by boat or taxi should be aware that fighting sometimes occurs in the Casamance Region.

Visitors to Guinea Bissau must have a valid passport, a return ticket, and an approved visa. Because the government of Guinea Bissau has closed its U.S. embassy, travelers, at this time, cannot obtain an entry visa while still stateside. Rather, they must travel to the Guinea Bissau embassy in Senegal or Portugal. While some people may be able to get a visa once they arrive in the Guinea Bissau, this procedure is risky and difficult. Wise travelers will attend to the visa in Senegal or Portugal before venturing further.

<http://www.lonelyplanet.com/worldguide/guinea-bissau/>

http://encarta.msn.com/encyclopedia_761569703/Guinea-Bissau.html#s2

http://encarta.msn.com/encyclopedia_761563759/Bissau.html

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bissau>

<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/248853/Guinea-Bissau>

http://www.travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_1131.html

History

The earliest inhabitants of modern Guinea Bissau were savanna dwellers who specialized in hunting and fishing along the coastal areas. Some of these inhabitants may have lived there as early as 9000 BC with later settlers coming around 4000 BC to engage in early millet farming. Both the empires of Ghana and Mali probably controlled the area at some time.

The Portuguese began to explore the islands off the coast of Guinea Bissau in the early 1440's. Explorers officially claimed the Cape Verde islands for the Portuguese king in 1460 and began to establish some trading forts on the islands. From this time until 1981, the history of Cape Verde and Guinea Bissau are closely intertwined.

The Portuguese crown sent people that were labeled as "malcontents" to settle the Cape Verde Islands. Thus, when the Catholic Church started to expel Jews from Portugal and Spain, many were actually sent to live in Portuguese controlled portions of Africa. Sometimes these Jewish settlers took African wives from among the local peoples, and a new people group known as the *lancados* formed. These *lancados*, while seen as outcasts by the Portuguese overlords, became extremely active as intermediaries between the traders and the indigenous peoples. Their unique language, which became known as *Criuolo*, is still the major trade language of Guinea Bissau today.

The traders, which established posts on the islands, were interested in the exchange of European goods for slaves. Slaves were first sent to Europe to work as house servants, but with the discovery of the New World and the establishment of Brazil, slaves were exported to work on plantations and in mines. The need for plantation slaves sharply increased the number of people being exported through the Portuguese settlements on Cape Verde.

The Portuguese and *lancados* were happy to receive slaves from the mainland. Although they probably would have liked to extend their base of power further into the interior, they mainly were able to interact with coastal groups. Dyula traders would bring war captives from different African empires and sell them to the traders who would then take them to Cape Verde for exportation to Brazil. Because of the competition among different traders, some of the slaves were actually branded before being shipped. Captives most often were treated with brutality, and many did not survive the trip to the New World.

While the British and the Americans began to outlaw the slave trade during the early and mid-nineteenth century, the Portuguese still allowed some exporting of slaves. Only when the exportation of peanuts, hides, and ivory became more profitable did the slave trade really dimmish.

After the Berlin Conference of 1884-1885 where different European powers delineated areas of power in Africa, the Portuguese began to seriously attempt to assert more power over the interior of modern day Guinea Bissau. These attempts, known as pacification campaigns, eventually resulted in the Portuguese taking control of the mainland by 1915.

With this establishment of Portuguese control, the Portuguese overlords launched new educational objectives in an attempt to bring Portuguese language and culture to the indigenous peoples. These educational efforts basically sought to teach the indigenous peoples the language and customs without really seeking to advance them too far. With knowledge of the language and basic grasp of customs, the indigenous peoples could be considered "civilized and Christianized" while still being exploited as cheap contract labor.

The first attempts towards independence from Portugal began with the establishment of the *Partido Africano da Independência de Guiné e Cabo Verde* (PAIGC) in 1956. Amilcar Cabral led this joint venture between Cape Verdians and the people of Guinea Bissau. While the first attempts were pacifistic in nature, the rebuffs meted out by the Portuguese government led to the advent of armed resistance in 1963. The war of independence only ended with the toppling of the Salazar regime in Portugal and the recognition of Guinea Bissau in 1974. Subsequently, independence for the Cape Verde islands was not officially declared until 1975. Because Amilcar Cabral had been assassinated, Luis de Almeida Cabral, his brother, assumed leadership of Guinea Bissau.

Luis de Almeida Cabral retained power in Guinea Bissau until his government was forced to cede power to João Bernardo Vieira as a result of a coup. Vieira's government did not want to unite with Cape Verde. Although a provisional government held power from 1980 until 1984, Vieira maintained leadership of the government. In 1984, the National Popular Assembly was re-instituted, and a new constitution was ratified. Vieira retained presidential power as well as retaining leadership over the PAIGC and the armed forces.

In 1994, elections were held, and Vieira won. However, the years before the presidential elections and through 1999, when military rebels overthrew Vieira, were fraught with coup attempts and unrest. Ansumane Mané, a general whom Vieira dismissed, instigated the most famous coup attempt. His coup attempt, which led to Vieira to involve Senegalese troops, is actually called the Guinea Bissau Civil War.

After the military wrested power from Vieira, they allowed new elections to occur, and Kumba Yala of the Social Renovation Party won. Yala's government did not ratify a new constitution and was slow to allow legislative elections to proceed so in September of 2003 General Verrissimo Correia Seabra insisted that Yala' resign. The Committee for Restoration of Democracy and Constitutional Order assumed temporary control of the government until Henrique Rosa assumed presidential power. In 2004, legislative elections were held, and Carlos Gomes Junior became the new Prime Minister.

When presidential elections were held in 2005, former President, João Bernardo Vieira, won and assumed power. Shortly thereafter, Vieira deposed Prime Minister Gomes because of his refusal to acknowledge Vieira's appointment as President. Aristide Gomes was Vieira's choice of prime minister; however, the three major political parties were displeased with Gomes' leadership. In 2007, the National Popular Assembly called for Gomes to be replaced. Vieira did not agree with such an action but was faced with the possible dissolution of the government and civil unrest. After Gomes finally resigned, Vieira appointed Martinho N'Dafa Cabi as Prime Minister. As of June 2008, Vieira still serves as President, and Cabi retains power as the Prime Minister.

Lobban, Richard, Peter Mendy, and Michael Karibe. *Historical Dictionary of the Republic of Guinea-Bissau African Historical Dictionaries ; No. 22.* Lanham, Md. Scarecrow Press, 1997.

<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/248853/Guinea-Bissau>

<http://www.infoplease.com/ce6/world/A0858526.html>

http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/country_profiles/1043376.stm

<http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/5454.htm>

Christian History

Franciscan priests first began evangelizing indigenous coastal peoples in 1462. However, work in Guinea Bissau was put under the jurisdiction of the diocese of St. James of Cape Verde. Work continued somewhat sporadically. More priests came in 1866, but only one priest was active by 1929. In 1940, the Portuguese government made a special agreement with the Holy See, and missionary work revived. A prefecture apostolic was established in 1955 in Bissau. Pope John Paul II visited Guinea-Bissau in 1990.

Protestant work in Guinea Bissau began in 1939 with the arrival of WEC missionaries. Until 1990, they were the only missionaries in the country, but out of their work grew the most influential Protestant Church, the *Igreja Evangelica da Guine*. People that convert to Christianity often face many challenges from their family and friends. They may face shunning and misunderstanding as they abandon traditional ways.

Syncretism is a continuing problem. For example, people may be drawn to Christian beliefs but are still afraid to relinquish ancient superstitions. Among some Islamic peoples, his father places a special necklace called a *juju* around the neck of a young baby boy. The *juju* holds two verses from the Koran and is thought to protect the boy from evil influences. A boy or man that is interested in the teachings of Christianity will still have great difficulty taking off the *juju* because of his fear of retaliation by evil spirits.

During the civil war, priests worked with WEC affiliates and other Christian groups to help supply humanitarian aid. Furthermore, the Bishop of Bissau actively tried to counteract uprisings against the government.

"Guinea-Bissau, The Catholic Church in." *New Catholic Encyclopedia*. Vol. 6. 2nd ed. Detroit: Gale, 2003. 575-576. *Gale Virtual Reference Library*. Gale. Southwestern Baptist Theological. 18 Apr.

2008 <<http://go.galegroup.com/ps/start.do?p=GVRL&u=txshracd2553>>.

World Christian Encyclopedia Volume I

Religion

All information unless otherwise noted is from World Christian Encyclopedia Volume I

Non Christian

Islam

The *Fula* and *Mandingo* peoples are predominantly Muslim. They first brought Islam to the area. Approximately 45% of the current population is nominally Muslim. Muslims have been working actively since the early 1970's to convert traditional religionists to Islam.

As more people leave their traditional belief systems, the number of Muslims is expected to grow rapidly. The Portuguese colonists actually encouraged some peoples to show an interest in Islam as they felt that such an interest would counteract the power of the traditional religious rulers and thus increase their own ability to dominate the different ethnic groups.

Guinea Bissau has participated in the Islamic Conference and does receive monetary donations from Saudia Arabia and Kuwait.

<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/248853/Guinea-Bissau>

Testemunhas de Jeova (Jehovah's Witnesses)

This group began work in 1980. In 2001, there was one congregation with 111 congregants. There were 300 affiliates.

Traditional Religions

Each individual ethnic group has their own belief systems based upon the idea of a supreme being that oversaw creation. Usually people use spirit mediums to intervene in the supernatural world. Ancestor worship is also quite prevalent.

More people are becoming syncretistic by mixing Islamic beliefs or Christianity with their basic traditional beliefs because of the perceived economic advantages offered by both of these groups.

Catholic Church

The first Catholic missionaries started work as early as 1462. One diocese is located in Bafatá. Carlos Pedro Zilli currently serves as the bishop of this diocese. The diocese was erected in 2001. It covers 9,515 square miles.

In 2006, there were 33,000 Catholics in the diocese. There were seventeen priests, and eleven parishes. That meant that there were 1,941 per priest.

The second diocese is located in Bissau. It was elevated in 1977. It covers 4,438 square miles. José Câmna na Bissign is the current bishop.

In 2004, there were fifty-five priests and 89,000 mass attendees. Twenty-four parishes existed.

<http://www.catholic-hierarchy.org/country/dgw2.html>

Christian/Evangelical

Assembleias de Deus

Brazilian missionaries started work in 1974. In 2001, there were six congregations and a total of 200 members. There were 680 affiliates.

Igreja Evangelica da Guine (Evangelical Church of Guinea Bissau)

This church was started in 1939. In 2001, there were 105 congregations and 6,000 congregants. There were 9,500 affiliates.

Igreja Adventista (Seventh Day Adventists)

This group began work in 1965. In 2001, there were two churches and 313 congregants. There were 650 affiliates.

Igreja Anglicana (Anglican Church)

This church is part of the Diocese of Gambia and Rio Pongas. In 1995, there was one congregation with 150 members. There were 250 affiliates.

Igreja Nova Apostolica (New Apostolic Church)

This church began work around 1970. There has been tremendous church growth in the last several years. In 2001, there were five congregations and 300 members in all. There were 500 affiliates.

People Groups

13440

Arab, Levantine (1,144)

The Arab Levantines originally probably migrated from the Arabian Peninsula. They speak a language called North Levantine Arabic. While many were once nomadic, some have begun to settle in mountainous villages.

The people are predominantly Muslim. Only about 0.02% are evangelical Christians.

Tracts and an unbound Bible are available in their language. Worship music and gospel recordings are also available in their language.

13442

Badyara (4,100)

The Badyara people live in northeastern corner. They speak a language called Badyara and are part of the Atlantic people cluster. Speakers may also be able to communicate in the Mandinka language. Some alternate names for this people group include: Badara, Badian, Badjara, Badyaranke, Pajade, Pajadinka, Gola, and Bigola.

Most primarily earn their living as subsistence farmers. However, the Badyara people earn extra money by extracting money from beehives and also by producing excellent cotton cloth. Most villages consist of only 100 to 500 people.

The people are predominantly Sunni Muslims. The number of evangelical Christians is unknown.

The Bible is not available in their language, and the Jesus film is inaccessible. Gospel recordings exist.

13443

Bainouk (7,029)

The Bainouk people live south of the Casamance River. They speak a language called Bainouk-Gunyaño which is a separate language from that spoken by the Bainouk of Senegal and Gambia. They belong to the Atlantic people cluster. Some alternate names for this people group include: Banyum, **Banyun**, Bagnoun, Banhum, Bainuk, Banyuk, Banyung, Elomay, or Elunay.

The people predominantly practice ethnic religions. Only about 0.54% of the population are evangelical Christians.

The Bible has not been translated into their language, and the Jesus film is inaccessible. Gospel recordings exist.

Banyuns are very communal people. They love to live and work together as one huge family. Christians face persecution in the form of becoming virtually invisible to their non-Christian neighbors. One example of this is when a Christian tried to build a house. Usually, the building of a house is a community-wide event with everyone pitching in to get the roof up and to help their friends and neighbors. When a Christian man started to build a house, he had to struggle to do it with no help. Because of the strong sense of community among the Banyun, this type of peer pressure is extremely difficult to bear. Prayer is needed for the Banyun believers as they strive to stand strong against such fierce peer pressure.

13444

Balanta (280,908)

The Balanta people live in the central coastal region and the north central region. They speak a language called Balanta-Kentohe, which is also spoken in The Gambia. Their language is completely separate from the Balanta-Ganja spoken in Senegal.

The Balanta primarily practice ethnic religions. To them, the creator god is very removed from the daily lives of the people. They will try to worship spirits in the hopes of reaching the supreme god. Approximately 0.10% of the population is evangelical Christians.

Portions of the Bible have been translated into their language, and the Jesus film is accessible. Gospel recordings also exist.

The Balante people believe in witchcraft and will often go to the witch doctor for help with their ailments. For example, one witch doctor told the women of one area that they must not wear sandals to work in the rice fields during the rainy season. He proclaimed that all of the people who defied his order would not be able to grow their rice that season. One Christian believer defied his orders and showed the rest of her town that Jesus was more powerful than the witch doctor. Although she wore sandals, her crops grew well.

The Balanta people take funerals very seriously. They are afraid that the person's dead spirit will come back to hurt the folks that prepared the funeral if the spirit is displeased with the arrangement. People place several yards of new material in the grave of the departed person. They place bowls of food there for the person to eat in the afterlife. The Balanta also believe that the observance of certain rituals will insure that loved ones in the afterlife will be able to enter paradise.

The Balanta people are farmers and fishermen. They also raise animals. Their primary crop is rice. The Balanta people perform very elaborate tea ceremonies that can last up to three hours. At first, the brewed tea is quite strong; however, later cups become weaker and more palatable.

When the Balanta people first build their houses, they have a weak foundation. They take sun baked bricks and put them into two rows. The bricks are turned sideways, however. Missionaries have used this common architectural concept to explain how Christians must build their lives on a solid foundation---Jesus Christ.

The Balanta people were very interested in independence from Portugal. They highly valued the concepts of freedom and thus participated in the guerilla movements against Portuguese rule during the 1960's and 1970's.

http://www.ntm.org/senegal/news_details.php?news_id=3133
http://www.ntm.org/senegal/news_details.php?news_id=3235
<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/248853/Guinea-Bissau>

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Balanta-Ganja (1,400)

The Balanta-Ganja speak a language called Balanta-Ganja and are part of the Atlantic people cluster. Some alternate names for this people group include: Alante, Balanta, Bandal, Belanda, Ganjowo, or Kandawo.

The people predominantly practice ethnic religions. The number of Christian adherents is unknown.

The Bible has not been translated into their language, and the Jesus film is not accessible. Gospel recordings exist.

13448

Basari (351)

The Basari people live in the northeastern part of Guinea-Bissau. They speak a language called Basari and are part of the Atlantic people cluster. Some alternate names for this people group include: Onian, Onëyan, Ayan, Biyan, Wo, or Basari.

Most of the Basari people live in small villages of 100 people or less. These villages are often hard to reach because the flooding during the rainy season turns the dirt roads to impassable quagmires. The land has a very harsh environment. During the dry season, the trees may lose all of their greenery and the water holes could dry up. Most people depend on creeks or very deep hand dug wells for their water source.

The traditional Basari home is made of mud walls and a mud floor but the roof is made of bamboo rafters and grass. Wealthier Basari men can sometimes afford to build houses with handmade concrete blocks. These houses are square in shape. The roofs of the concrete houses are still made of tightly woven grass. The Basari are well-known for their well constructed roofs. In addition to their houses, the Basari usually have a pen for the cattle, a barn made of bamboo, and a chicken coop. The barn serves as shelter for the goats at night.

The Basari are primarily farmers and herders. Cattle, goats, and chickens are important commodities for the Basari. Goats, chickens, and some fish provide meat for the Basari. Rice and millet are staple crops of the Basari. They also grow honey to use and sell.

Basari women are expected to cook and keep house. The Basari girls are taught all of the chores at a very young age so that they can help their mothers with the food preparation and with the other daily necessary chores. Cooking is often done over an open fire when the weather permits. Women highly prize plastic buckets because they are useful when washing clothes and dishes. Most of the time clothes and dishes are washed without the benefit of soap because the soap is too expensive.

The Basari primarily follow traditional ethnic religions. Because of their wish to withstand the pressure of the Muslims, the Basari have clung strongly to their animistic ancestral beliefs. Men will sacrifice a rooster on a special rock near a shrine in order to petition the spirits. Men may also present a grain offering to the spirits in the hopes that they will have a good harvest. The number of evangelical Christians is unknown. The Basari are more open right now to other religious beliefs than they have ever been. They desperately need missionaries to go and teach them about God. In fact, one mission's organization believes that the Basari are the most open ethnic group to the gospel. The people that are believers need strong Bible teaching. The new believers have a daily struggle not to return to animistic beliefs because of their lack of real Biblical knowledge.

The New Testament has been translated and gospel recordings are available. The Jesus film is currently inaccessible.

<http://www.crfmedia.com/Video-WA/index.htm>

13449

Biafade (47,255)

The Biafade people live north of the Nalu in Central southern part of Guinea Bissau. They speak a language called Biafade and are part of the Atlantic people cluster. Some alternate names for this people group include: Beafada, Biafar, Bidyola, Bedfola, Dfola, or Fada.

The people predominantly practice folk Islam. There are only about five Christians among this people group.

The Bible has not been translated into their language. The Jesus film is accessible. Gospel recordings exist.

13450

Bijogo (52,020)

The Bijogo people live on the islands of Roxa and Bijago. They speak a language called Bidyogo. The dialects are Anhaqui, Kagbaaga, Kamona, or Kajoko. Some alternate names for this people group include: Bijago, Bijogo, Bijougot, Budjago, Bugago, or Bijuga.

The people predominantly practice ethnic religions. Only about 0.44% are evangelical Christians.

The New Testament had been translated by 1975. The Jesus film is available. Gospel recordings exist.

13453

Caboverdian Mestico (175,748)

The Caboverdian Mestico live in the Bijagos Islands. They speak a language called Upper Guinea Crioulo. The dialects of their language are Bissau-Bolama Creole, Bafatá Creole, and Cacheu-Ziguinchor Creole. This is a major trade language. Approximately 600,000 people speak this as their second language. Some alternate names for this people include: Kiryol, Portuguese Creole, Kriulo, and Guinea-Bissau Creole.

The people are predominantly Roman Catholic. The number of evangelical Christians is unknown.

Portions of the Bible had been translated by 1936. A grammar book has also been developed. The Jesus film is inaccessible. Gospel recordings exist.

47048

Deaf (7,267)

The Deaf people of Guinea Bissau come from many different ethnic groups. At this time, there seems to be no national sign language in use in Guinea Bissau. No other information is currently available.

Fulani (sub-groups Fula Jalon and Fulakunda)

The Fulani work with cattle and other herd animals. They also raise many different types of food crops like millet, peanuts, and rice. The men usually watch the herds while the women will do the milking, garden work, and other types of household chores. Some women may take dairy products to the local market to sell.

The cattle raised by the Fula Jalon are a special breed called Ndama that live well in their tropical climate. The Ndama cattle have been especially bred to withstand the bite of the tsetse fly.

The Fulani are predominantly Islamic

Children are divided by ages into special groups with three levels of leaders. The groups will attend school and other social functions together. Most children will attend Quranic schools at the local mosque. When a boy enters his early twenties, his family will help him find a bride. Usually the prospective groom will have to work some time for the bride's family before winning her hand in marriage. Most men will marry four wives—as Muslim tradition allows. Girls are kept under the strict supervision of their mothers until they marry and then are controlled by their husbands and his family.

There are very few Christians among the Fulani. They are considered to be one of the least reached people groups. Multiple agencies are involved in missions work, but there is still no formally established church. Because their cultures and traditions are steeped in Muslim thought and faith, they are very resistant to the gospel. Although there are some portions of the Bible that have been translated, they are not been fully used by the people. The Jesus film and gospel recordings are also accessible. Much prayer is needed to break the Satanic power holding the Fulani people captive.

13456

Fula Jalon (1,172) Please see *Fulani* entry above for more information

The Fula Jalon are a sub-group of the larger Fulani people group which can be found in several countries throughout West Africa. They speak a language called Pular. There are no known evangelical Christians.

13457

Fulakunda (358,827) Please see *Fulani* entry above for more information

The Fulakunda people are a sub-group of the larger Fulani people group which can be found in several countries throughout West Africa. They were once the indentured servants or slaves of

other Fulani groups. They speak a language called Pulaar. In Guinea-Bissau, they live in the north central and northeastern regions.

Only 0.04% of the people are evangelical Christians. The New Testament had been translated into their language by 1997. The Jesus film and other Christian videos are accessible. Gospel recordings and radio broadcasts can be heard.

13458

Jahanka (6,363)

The Jahanka people can be found throughout West Africa and are often called the Holy Men of Africa because so many of the Jahanka men are Islamic clerics. These clerics often travel from one place to another with different followers moving with them. They will also settle in villages and teach Quranic schools. Some may even have farms although these farms are most often worked by young boys in exchange for Quranic teaching.

Heritage is very important to the Jahanka. They trace their lineage back decades. They probably originated from four different groups of Soninke peoples. The Jahanka believe that they originated from a place on the Niger River in Mali. Scholars believe that they spent some time during their formation as a people around Jahaba on the Mali-Senegal border. During the fifteenth or sixteenth century, there was a very powerful Islamic cleric named al-Hajj Salim Suwari who strongly influenced the belief systems of the Jahanka. The reason that the Jahanka are so highly respected today as religious clerics is because they are the keepers of Suwari's teachings and divination practices.

Suwarian Islamic beliefs differ in some very important ways from mainstream Islamic teaching. First of all, a high emphasis is placed on divination and the making of charms. Clerics also practice medicine. The most important difference is the Suwarian refusal to practice jihad. They are very apolitical people. They believe that life should be devoted to study and prayer.

The Jahanka people live in the midst of the Mandinka people group and have actually adopted many of their social customs. They may often use Mandinka as an every day language although they also use a Soninke language too. The language that many people call the Jahanka language is actually a mixture of Arabic and a Soninke language.

Marriage ties are very important in the Jahanka culture. Marriages, as in many Muslim cultures, are arranged by the parents. They very carefully match their daughters to Jahanka males. This practice may cause girls to have to move hundreds of miles from the home of their birth when they marry. Jahanka communities are tied by these alliances because the ties formed by the marriages remain strong throughout several generations. Jahanka males may occasionally marry outside of their own ethnic group but this is only done once. With an average of four wives per male, this practice does not make a huge impact on the genetic lineage of the Jahanka clans.

Jahanka villages have very set social structures. Clans live in the same area of the village but are subdivided into groups called sos. The sos are made of people who are all descended from the same common ancestor. Each so is further divided into lus which are the basic extended families

of a single male patriarch and his sons and their families. The so leader will parcel out money that is derived from gifts to the clerics and from any trading that is done. Groups will also have special economic designations. There is, of course, the cleric group. There can also be clans of artisans, clans of merchants, and even a former slave class.

All Jahanka males attend Quranic schools led by a prestigious Jahanka cleric that has trained for years in Suwarian magic. Other ethnic groups may also send boys to these schools to receive the specialized Quranic education. The boys that travel from great distances will stay with host families in the village and will become a labor source for the village since they will pay for their schooling by tilling the fields of the host and the Quranic clerics. Boys strongly wish to get higher levels of education so that they can become prestigious clerics. Usually, only a very few select students (including those direct descendents of the present cleric) will get to study the advanced Quranic texts and the very secret Suwarian practices. Girls are not allowed to attend school. They must learn household chores and how to be good wives and mothers. They will also work in the fields.

The Jahanka clerics are well-known for their medicinal practices. Sometimes people will travel great distances to be treated by a specialist. The medicines are largely based upon herbs that can be found in the Senegambian area. Magical amulets are also used for healing.

The Jahanka do not respect loud, boisterous people. They believe that it is extremely important to be quiet so that one can focus on prayer and study.

42198

Jola (41,616)

The Jola or Diola people are one of the largest ethnic groups living in the Casamance area. They are divided into several different subgroups as different clans migrated and separated. Most speak many different dialects now.

The Jola that live in rural areas are primarily farmers. Several of the subgroups that live near the ocean in the wetlands grow rice with specialized techniques that were developed over several centuries. The Jola built special irrigation dikes to catch the rainwater near the coast so that they could have water to grow the rice. Usually both men and women work in the rice paddies.

Before there was easy access to modern roads, most Jola children lived in the same village as their parents and ancestors. The Jola were and still are very family oriented. They live in a patrilineal society where a nuclear family consists of the grandfather, his wives and children, his son's wives and children, and any unmarried women of the family. Each nuclear family also tends to live close to extended family members. Most of the Jola villages would have anywhere from 200 to 2000 inhabitants. There was no main leader until the colonial days, however. Usually a group of older men would serve as advisors.

As a group, the Jola are very strong Muslims. Because of the importance of familial ties, people who are interested in Christianity often find it very difficult to actually convert. The Jola began accepting the Muslim faith in the late 1800's. Muslim traders would come and sell goods in the

market and also talk about the glories of Islam. A marabout from Mauritania named Sharif Mahfuz also evangelized the Jola. Most Jola don't follow a specific marabout, but they do belong to the Sufi tariqa. The Jola will also keep certain beliefs and traditions from their animistic past. Most young boys go through an initiation ceremony called the bukut where they go on a retreat and are taught about important Jola ideals. Some Jola will also still visit the animistic shrine called the sinaati when they are ill.

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Jola-Fonyi (6,500)

The Jola-Fonyi speak a language called Jola-Fonyi. They predominantly practice Islam. Only approximately 0.0035% of the people are evangelical Christians.

Portions of the Bible have been translated into their language. The Jesus Film and other Christian videos are accessible. Gospel recordings exist.

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Jola-Bayot (2,200)

The Jola-Bayot people live along the Senegalese border. They speak a language called Bayot.

The people are predominantly Muslim. Only about .0031% of the people are evangelical Christians.

The Bible has not been translated into their language, and the Jesus film is inaccessible. Gospel recordings exist.

13463

Kasanga (1,040)

The Kasanga people live near Felupe. They speak a language called Kasanga. Some people are also familiar with Mandinka. They are part of the Atlantic people cluster. Some alternate names for this people group include: Cassanga, Kassanga, I-Hadja, and Haal.

The people predominantly practice ethnic religions. The number of evangelical Christians is unknown.

The Bible has not been translated into their language, and the Jesus film is inaccessible. Gospel recordings exist.

13464

Kobiana (832)

The Kobia people live near Banyun. They speak a language called Kobia which is lexically somewhat similar to Bainouk and Kasanga. Some speakers may also be familiar with Mandyak. They are part of the Atlantic people cluster. Some alternate names for this people group include: Cobiana, Uboi, or Buy.

The people predominantly adhere to ethnic religions. The number of evangelical Christians is unknown.

The Bible has not been translated into their language, and the Jesus film is inaccessible. Gospel recordings exist.

13466

Mandinka (139,414)

The Mandinka people are a prominent West African people group. In Guinea Bissau, they live North central, central, and northeastern regions. They speak a language called Mandinka and are part of the Malinke people cluster. Some alternate names for this people group include: Mandinga, Mandingue, Mandingo, Mandingue, or Manding.

The Mandinkas primarily practice a form of Sunni folk Islam. Centuries ago Muslim traders came to the great Mali Empire from whence most Mandingo peoples originated and converted the Mandingos to Islam. Most modern Mandinkas really don't have a firm grasp on deep Islamic thought. Rather, they follow the outer rituals like circumcision and going to the mosque. However, they will also still consult marabouts for amulets or other types of magical helps. They may also sacrifice chickens in order to appease the spirits.

The number of evangelical Christians is unknown. They are considered to be a least reached people group. Multiple mission agencies are involved in trying to reach the Mandinka, but progress is slow because of the Mandinka's resistance to the gospel.

The New Testament has been translated, and the Jesus Film is available. Gospel recordings can also be found.

The family unit is very important in Mandinka life. The father is the supreme authority of the family. There are three distinct social strata too. Artisans are greatly respected and held in great awe for their talents. The other two classes are free-born and in the past there was also a slave strata. Marriages may be polygamous for men. Girls' marriages are arranged for them by their fathers.

13467

Mandyak (135,594)

The Mandyak people live in West and northwest of Bissau. They speak a language called Mandjak. The dialects of Bok, Likes-Utsia, Cur, Lund, and Yu. They are part of the Atlantic people cluster. Some alternate names for this people group include: Mandjaque, Manjaca, Manjaco, Manjiak, Mandyak, Manjaku, Manjack, Ndyak, Mendyako, or Kanyop.

The people predominantly practice ethnic religions. Only about 0.04% are evangelical Christians. The International Mission Board does not engage this group.

Portions of the Bible had been translated by 1968. The Jesus Film is accessible, and gospel recordings exist.

The Mandyak people were some of the first to interface with the Portuguese. They soon established profitable trading agreements with their European visitors.

<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/248853/Guinea-Bissau>

13468

Mankanya (31,212)

The Mankanya people live Northwest of Bissau. They speak a language called Mankanya. The dialects are Burama and Shadal. and are part of the Atlantic people cluster. Some alternate names for this people group include: Mankanha, Mancanha, Mancagne, Mancang, or Bola.

The people predominantly practice ethnic religions. Only .017% of the people are evangelical Christians.

Portions of the Bible had been translated by 2000. The Jesus film and gospel recordings exist.

13469

Maswanka (12,301)

The Maswanka people live in the North Central region of Guinea Bissau; however, they also have settlements in Gambia. They speak a language called Mansoanka which is not inherently intelligible with Balanta or Mandinka. However, some linguists feel that their language should be called 'Mandinkalized Balanta.' They belong to the Malinke people cluster. Some alternate names for this people group include: Mansoanca, Maswanka, Sua, Kunant, and Kunante.

The people are predominantly Sunni Muslims. The number of evangelical Christians is unknown.

The Bible has not been translated into their language, and the Jesus film is inaccessible. Gospel recordings exist.

13470

Nalu (6,242)

The Nalu people live in southwestern part of Guinea Bissau near the coast. They also have villages in Guinea. They speak a language called Nalu. The people may also speak Susu. They are part of the Atlantic people cluster. Two alternate names for this people include: Nalou and Black Baga.

The people are predominantly syncretized Muslims. The number of evangelical Christians is unknown. Reportedly the Nalu people living in Guinea Bissau are somewhat unreceptive towards receiving outside visitors. However, some of the Nalu in Guinea are friendlier towards international visitors.

The Bible has not been translated into their language but the Jesus film is inaccessible. Gospel recordings exist.

<http://www.ntm.org/guinea/prayer.php?page=Prayer+Updates&p=0>

13472

Papel (127,730)

The Papel people live on Bissau Island. They speak a language called Papel which is close to Mankanya and Mandyak. They belong to the Atlantic people cluster. Some alternate names for this people group include: Pepel, Papei, Moium, or Oium.

The people predominantly practice ethnic religions. The number of evangelical Christians is unknown.

Portions of the Bible had been translated as early as 1981, but the entire New Testament was not finished until 1996. The Jesus film is accessible, and gospel recordings exist.

The Papel people were another group that established strong trade agreements with the first Portuguese explorers; however, the Papel rulers were adamant about maintaining their own land boundaries.

<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/248853/Guinea-Bissau>

13473

Portuguese (520)

The Portuguese living in Guinea Bissau may have come during the time when the country was a colony of Portugal. They speak Portuguese. They predominantly practice some form of Christianity, but the number of evangelical Christians is unknown.

13474

Soninke (8,854)

The Soninke people live in Mali, Senegal, Mauritania, The Gambia, Cote D'Ivoire, France, and Guinea Bissau. They speak a Mande language called Soninke. In Guinea Bissau, the Soninke who choose to live among the Fula or Mandinka may speak that language as well. The subgroups among the Soninke include: Aser, Aswanik, Gadyaga, Marka, Markanka, Nono, Saracole, Serahuli, Sarawule, Tonbakai, and Wakove. Some alternate names for the Soninke include: Sarakole, Serahuli, Azer, and Toubakai.

The Soninke people are predominantly Muslim. They were first converted by the Almoravids in the eleventh century. Those Soninke that aren't Muslim usually follow traditional indigenous religious practices. There are very few believers and no established church because the persecution from the Muslims adherents is so intense.

Portions of the Bible have been translated, and the Jesus Film is available. Gospel recordings can also be found.

All community life centers around the family and the village. The Soninke people are very concerned about appeasing the spirits. They believe that each soul comes to the child when the child is named on the eighth day and leave the body each night as the child sleeps. People are concerned that witches might seize the soul of the child. They also believe that the soul will wander around the earth after death until it reunites with the body. They will ask the gessere, the village priest, to help them make the spirits happy. They watch anxiously for the fox and hyena who predict when the New Year should begin.

The Soninke have a very strict social structure. Men of the clergy receive training in Arabic. Most of the other men are traders or farmers. Many men today actually leave the village for months and sometimes even years at a time in order to work as migrant laborers in neighboring areas

Polygamy is acceptable among the Muslims, but it is not as widely practiced today because of economic reasons. The prospective groom must pay a bride price that usually consists of clothing that the bride can use for her trousseau and also a payment to the family of the bride.

Men have the supreme authority in the household, and elders are looked to for wisdom and advice. Today, though, because many of the men are traveling for months at a time, women are beginning to have a slightly stronger power among the Soninke. Muslim law allows daughters to inherit a small portion from their father's estate.

13475

Susu (4,149)

The Susu people live in Guinea, Sierra Leone, Senegal, The Gambia, and Guinea Bissau. The Susa people speak a Manding language called Susa. Their language is so similar to the Yalunka language that often people can't tell them apart. The Susa people are also known as the Susoo, Soussou, Soso, or Sose people.

Supposedly the first Susa people lived in the western Sudan as part of an empire led by Sumunguru Kante. After that empire was demolished, they began moving towards Guinea and eventually into other areas as well.

The Susa people are predominantly Sunni Muslims. In fact there are fewer than 100 known Christian adherents. They are considered to be one of the least reached people groups. A Portuguese priest did have contact with the Susa in the 1600's but he found that they were already staunchly Muslim.

The New Testament has been translated, and the Jesus Film is available. Gospel recordings can be found.

Familial relationships are very important to the Susa people. The clan is called a bankhri. All the people of a bankhri believe that they are somehow descended from the same ancestor. The next family unit is made of the extended family and is called khabile. The members of the khabile may live far apart geographically, but they value the blood ties between family members. The closest familial unit is the dembaya. The dembaya is made of the head of the household, his wives, and children. The dembaya only breaks up at the death of the head of the household, and then the sons create their own separate dembayas. The dembaya may also consist of other dependents like the children of a brother or sister that have been sent to live with the family for some reason. Young girls that have been promised in marriage at their birth to a member of a dembaya may live with the prospective family until right before the marriage ceremony. Then the girl will go home just long enough to be married and then return to her husband's house.

The Susa believe that polygamy is acceptable. Most marriages are made for the advantage of the family. Girls will be betrothed before or immediately after birth. Boys are often encouraged to marry one of his cousins from his mother's family. Grooms will bring kola nuts to his bride's family and will also perform services for them. Usually this service involves working in their fields for a time. Mothers-in-law are greatly respected by the grooms, and the grooms must also help the bride's family financially whenever the fathers ask. If they refuse to help, they are disgraced. Brides are expected to be virgins at the time of their marriage, and if they are not, they could have their head shaved or be beaten.

Births and funerals are very important to the Susa. At the time of birth, a very special ceremony takes place. Family members chew a kola nut and then put it in a cup for the baby to eat. This must take place before the baby first tastes its mother's milk. This ritual symbolizes that the family is introducing the child to the world and also is showing the child how to eat. Funerals must never be attended by women. Men do the burying and, the body must be buried immediately.

The Susa are farmers but they are also well known as traders. They will grow peanuts and rice. Women are usually the tenders of the peanut crop, and what they earn from their own peanut crop may be used for their own financial needs.

42188

Wolof (7,015)

The Wolof people live in many different countries throughout Western Africa. They are a very influential people group. They speak a language called Wolof and are part of the Atlantic-Wolof people cluster. Some alternate names for this people include: Ouolof, Yallob, Walaf, Volof, or Waro-Waro.

The Wolofs are staunch Sunni Muslims. Usually, the Wolofs belong to one of three brotherhoods—the Tijani, Mouridism, or Qadiri. Some women still practice traditional beliefs, and most people believe that spirits must be appeased by following the orders of the marabout and by wearing amulets. Only 1% of the population is evangelical Christians.

The New Testament has been translated into their language. The Jesus film and other Christian videos are accessible. Gospel recordings exist.

In rural areas, the Wolof mainly raise peanuts, sorghum, and millet. The peanuts are raised to sell while the millet is used as the staple crop. Women will also have gardens in order to have other types of food for consumption. A favorite dish of the Wolof is rice and fish. Men will cut down the vegetation in an area and then plant their crop. Cutting down all the vegetation and overuse of the soil has led to poorer crop yields. More and more Wolof are headed to the cities where they hope to find employment. In the city, both boys and girls are allowed to attend school. Women may become teachers or nurses or even enter other professions.

There is a very definite social strata in the Wolof culture. People may belong to a freeborn class. This class has the highest social ranks but can also contain peasant farmers. People of nobility or high social rank are expected to behave very circumspectly in public both in their manner of dress and in their attitudes and actions. What might be permissible for a lowborn person would be frowned upon in one of high rank. The second social strata is made of people whose ancestors were once slaves. The social rank in this class depends on what type of family owned the ancestors as slaves. If the family was owned by a high ranking family of the nobility, then the descendants have a higher than those of a family whose former masters were peasants. The third social class is a class of artisans. The artisan class will have blacksmiths, weavers, singers, and other types of specialized professionals. Blacksmiths' skills are greatly appreciated. Pottery, also a necessity in village life, is also greatly prized.

Polygamy is allowed. Men and women in the city are less likely to engage in polygamy than in rural areas because the women have more autonomy in their choices. Marriage across social castes is not generally allowed. In rural areas, extended families live in the same compound, but each wife will have her own house for herself and her children. In the city, there is a trend for nuclear families to live in separate houses from their extended families, but usually they will all live in the same neighborhood.

<http://www.joshuaproject.net/profiles/text/t110856.pdf>

Missiological Implications

1. Evangelical Christians and churches should develop methods to reach the large numbers of people in Guinea Bissau who adhere to ethnic or traditional religions and share these methods with believers in Guinea Bissau. Attention to the “People Groups” material above shows that over 700,000 people follow traditional religion with many more practicing some form of folk Islam.
2. Evangelical Christians and churches should develop methods of witness to followers of Islam and train believers in Guinea Bissau in the use of these methods

3. Evangelical Christians and churches should develop methods of sharing the Good News of Jesus with Roman Catholics and train local believers in the use of these methods
4. Evangelical Christians and churches should seek ways to meet the physical needs of people in Guinea Bissau. The economic situation in Guinea Bissau is quite desperate. These needs exist in the areas of health, food, and subsistence. Medical and dental help are intensely needed.
5. Evangelical Christians and churches should help meet the needs for education among the peoples of Guinea Bissau. The people in Guinea Bissau struggle to provide education in face of the growing difficulties of providing food and shelter.
6. Evangelical Christians and churches should provide training in the methods of Bible Storying for use in the country.
7. Evangelical Christians and churches should provide some guidance in leadership training for the evangelicals in Guinea Bissau. This training should center on lay training and small group methods rather than simply training professional, full time ministers.
8. Evangelical Christians and churches should provide needed Christian resources such as Bible translations, the Jesus Film, and evangelistic helps for the peoples in Guinea Bissau.



Pictures Links

<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/pu.html>

<http://www.peoplegroups.org/MapSearch.aspx?country=Guinea-Bissau>

<http://digioll.library.wisc.edu/AfricaFocus/?id=Africana.Almada01>