

Missionary Atlas Project

West Africa

Sierra Leone

Snapshots Section

Country Name: Republic of Sierra Leone

Country Founded in: April 27, 1961

Population: 6,144,562

Government Type: constitutional democracy

Geography/location in the world: Sierra Leone lies between Guinea and Liberia along the North Atlantic seaboard in West Africa. Its geographic coordinates are 8 30 N, 11 30 W. The temperature averages about 81 degrees in coastal and mountainous areas. The rainy season lasts from approximately May to October. The heaviest rains come between July and September. Humidity is fairly high.

Number of people groups: 20 African ethnic groups 90% (Temne 30%, Mende 30%, other 30%), Creole (Krio) 10% (descendants of freed Jamaican slaves who were settled in the Freetown area in the late-18th century), refugees from Liberia's recent civil war, small numbers of Europeans, Lebanese, Pakistanis, and Indians

Picture of flag:



Religion Snapshot

Major Religion and % of population: Muslim 60%,

All religions and % for each: Muslim 60%, Christian 10%, indigenous beliefs 30%

Government interaction with religion: The constitution provides for religious liberty. There is no specific ministry with which religious groups must register. Missionaries, like other foreign nationals, do have to pay a special fee to be able to enter the country.

Sierra Leone Country Profile

Basic Facts

Country Name: Republic of Sierra Leone

Population:

The estimated population of Sierra Leone is 6,144,562. Children up to fourteen years of age account for 44.8% of the population. There are 1,349,878 male children between the ages of newborn to fourteen years of age. There are 1,400,297 female children between these same ages. Adults between the ages of fifteen and sixty-four years of age account for 52% of the population. There are 1,531,763 males in this age category and 1,664,996 females. In the last age category, sixty-five years and above, there are 92,360 males and 105,268 females. This 65 and over group accounts for 3.2% of the population. The median age for males is 17.2 years, and the median age for females is 17.7 years.

The birth rate is 45.41 births for every 1,000 people. There are an estimated 6.01 children born to every woman. The infant mortality rate is 158.27 deaths for every 1,000 live births. The death rate is 22.64 deaths for every 1,000 people. The life expectancy for the total population is 40.58 years. The life expectancy for males is slightly lower at 38.36 years while the life expectancy for females is slightly higher at 42.87 years.

There are approximately 32 different people groups in Sierra Leone. Ninety percent of the population is from African ethnic groups. The Temne account for thirty percent of the population while the Mende account for another thirty percent. Creoles, who are descendants of freed Jamaican slaves, account for another ten percent of the population. There are also refugees from Liberia's recent civil war, small numbers of Europeans, Lebanese, Pakistanis, and Indians.

The risk of infectious diseases is very high. Travelers should be aware that bacterial and protozoal diarrhea, hepatitis A, schistosomiasis, and typhoid fever may all be contracted for polluted water or food. Other risks include: dengue fever, malaria, and yellow fever. Lassa fever can also be contracted.

Language:

English is the official language, but only the most educated use this as their lingua franca. In the southern part of the country, Mende is more commonly used; and in the north, Temne is used. Krio, which is a mixture of English and several other languages, came to Sierra Leone when the British repatriated the freed slaves there in the 1800's. About ninety-five percent of the population can understand Krio.

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

Society/Culture:

The people of Sierra Leone are beginning to recover after several years of civil war. During the civil war, people experienced atrocities. Rebels would chop off hands, legs, and other appendages as a method of terrorizing victims or disciplining child soldiers. Thousands of children were taught to be child soldiers or used as sex-slaves. Many times children would be kidnapped from their villages or taken after watching their parents be shot. The children were fed

drugs until they were addicted. Then they were given guns and told to shoot in order to obtain more drugs. Many different NGO's are working to re-educate these child victims to learn to handle conflict in non-violent ways. The children also need to be taught job skills so that they can survive. Most of the victims have been scarred by the violence emotionally, socially, and physically. Many of the families of the victims do not want to associate with the children because they fear them. Many others are orphans with no families.

Travel in and around Freetown is easier than in other areas. Visitors should still know that petty theft of wallets and other valuables is quite common. Passports are highly valued by criminals and may be stolen. Cash must be used as credit cards and travelers' checks are generally not accepted. Places that do accept credit cards may illegally sell the numbers for profit. ATMS are not common. Visitors are usually prohibited from importing more than 10,000 dollars at a time.

People traveling to rural areas in Sierra Leone should be cautious. People who demand money in return for safe passage set up sometimes-unauthorized roadblocks. On the Liberian and Guinean borders, there are still armed bandits who roam freely and may attack any prosperous looking travelers. The government does require entry and exit visas along with yellow fever vaccinations. Anti-malaria medicine is also recommended. Visitors are not allowed to take pictures of certain buildings without governmental permission. Also, visitors should not take pictures of people without asking and receiving permission. This is especially true in Muslim areas.

Greetings and dress are very important in Sierra Leone. Dress is usually conservative. People who are visiting with dignitaries (especially in urban areas) should wear lightweight suits. Greetings in business situations usually include exchanging business cards and shaking hands. Business is never attended to until lengthy greetings have occurred.

The family unit is very important in Sierra Leone. The eldest male or female is greatly respected and has considerable influence over younger family members. Maternal uncles also hold considerable power in the familial structure. Land and possessions are usually passed through the patrilineal lines.

The chief of the village is the holder of all the land. People who wish to live on and work the land must receive permission from the chief to do so. Men will do the heavy labor of planting, but women do the hoeing and tending of crops.

Women also take care of all of the household chores and the raising of the children. Children are carried on their mothers' backs for the first year of life. Children who can go to school are considered fortunate because of the deterioration of the public education system during the civil war. Most children receive training in survival skills and other needed skills from their parents or other villagers. Secret societies play an important role in the education process. These secret societies are generally connected to the practice of traditional ethnic religions.

The most common food in Sierra Leone is rice. People will eat rice just about every meal of the day but will add various types of sauces and other vegetables to it. Chicken bones are considered to be a delicacy. Snacks might include: mangoes, pineapple, fried plantains, potato or cassava chunks with pepper sauce, small bags of popcorn or peanuts, and skewers of grilled meat. Poyo,

which is a type of palm wine, is often sold in small bars along the road where men may gather to discuss important issues. Sometimes palm wine will be poured out on the ground at important ceremonies as a way of honoring the dead. Kola nuts are valued and can be given as gifts during certain ceremonies or greetings. Individual ethnic groups have different customs concerning the use of Kola nuts.

There are many different holidays in Sierra Leone. Christians celebrate Good Friday, Easter Monday, and Christmas Day. Due to the British cultural influence, Boxing Day is also celebrated on December 26th. Muslims celebrate Ramadan, the Birth of the Prophet, and the Feast of the Sacrifice. New Year's Day and Independence Day (April 27th) are celebrated by all Sierra Leonians. When important personages like chiefs or other civil leaders die, funeral ceremonies will also be celebrated. Sometimes these celebrations may take days or weeks. These celebrations generally call for the cessation or postponing of other activities.

<http://www.everyculture.com/Sa-Th/Sierra-Leone.html>

Government:

The current government was re-formed at the end of the civil war in 2002. Successful elections in 2007 marked a hopeful new era for the government in Sierra Leone. The capital is located in Freetown. It is a constitutional democracy. There are three main political divisions and one political area. The current constitution was written in 1991 but has been subsequently amended several times. The current president is Ernest Bai Koroma, and he was elected in September of 2007. He functions as both the head of state and the head of the government. The President is supposed to serve a five year term which is renewable once. In the last elections, Koroma won 54.6% of the vote while his opponent Solomon Berewa won 45.4% of the vote. A cabinet of ministers who are appointed by the President but approved by the House of Representatives serve as advisors to Koroma.

A unicameral Parliament functions as the legislative body of the government. There are 112 elected seats for parliamentarians with an additional twelve seats for elected paramount chiefs from different areas. The elections for the parliamentarians and the paramount chiefs are held separately. In the election held in August of 2007, the APC won fifty-nine seats while the SLPP won forty-three seats. The PMDC gained ten seats. President Kororma serves as the leader of the APC (All People's Congress) Darlington Morrison is the leader of the PLP (Peace and Liberation Party). Charles Margai heads the PMDC (People's Movement for Democratic Change) while Solomon Berewa leads the SLPP (Sierra Leone People's Party).

In rural areas, the paramount chiefs still have the most power. The chiefs are the holders of the land. They decide how the land will be used. They usually arrange leases for the people. As people do have different types of civil issues, they will go to the chief before they will go to the police. This may be largely because many times the police will expect a bribe before "justice" is meted out. The paramount chiefs are selected at the local or regional level. They usually serve a life term. As order is restored, the paramount chiefs are beginning to work with other government agencies to collect taxes.

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

Economy:

As with every other part of life in Sierra Leone, the civil war completely disrupted the economy. Rebels from the RUF took control of the lucrative diamond mines in the north in order to finance their military activities. The international community responded by placing sanctions against diamonds from Sierra Leone.

Today mining is still a major source of income but profits may still sometimes tend to be sidetracked unless careful monitoring occurs. International efforts and efforts by the Sierra Leone government have included a certification process for diamonds and other measures. A portion of the legitimate income earned from diamond mining is being returned to the communities where the mines are located in order to stimulate economic activities in the areas.

Bauxite and rutile mining are also contributing to the national economy since the cessation of the civil war has allowed the return of international companies. The GDP in 2006 was \$5.452 billion. Forty-nine percent of the GDP came from agricultural endeavors that primarily consist of small subsistence farms. Thirty-one percent of the GDP came from different industrial pursuits while remaining twenty-one percent came from services.

Overall, people generally make maybe nine hundred dollars a year. The labor force is 1.369 million people. Of that, sixty-eight percent live below the poverty line. Many ex-combatants and child soldiers still need to find their place economically and socially within a peaceful society. Many NGO's are working to rehabilitate children and combatants as well as attempting to relocate IDP's. Finding adequate employment opportunities for people remains a challenge to lasting peace.

Agricultural products include: rice, coffee, cocoa, palm kernels, palm oil, and peanuts. Export products include: diamonds, rutile, cocoa, coffee, and fish. Belgium, the Netherlands, and the United States all import commodities from Sierra Leone. The government of Sierra Leone has to import foodstuffs, machinery and equipment, fuels and lubricants, and chemicals. Imports come from Cote d'Ivoire, US, China, UK, Netherlands, South Africa, India, and France. Sierra Leone still receives approximately \$297.4 million in aid from international sources.

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

<http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/5475.htm>

Literacy:

In Sierra Leone, like many other parts of life, the educational system was extremely disrupted by the civil war. Schools were burned and teachers either were killed or dispersed to other areas. As the civil war began to end, humanitarian groups came to try to rebuild the education system and give hope to thousands of children and teens that had little if any formal education. UNICEF and different NGO's began working with former child soldiers and other IDP children to teach them job and coping skills.

Today the struggle continues. The current government does seem to place a priority on education. School fees are free, but other expenses can cause families to withdraw their children—especially girls from school. Girls have a high drop-out rate because as soon as they reach adolescence (12 or 13 years of age) families may decide to marry them off to save money. Ambitious families see the value of educating girls as well as boys but the number of girls to finish secondary school or attend university is vastly lower than that of boys.

Only 24.4% of women can read and write while 46.9% of men can read and write. Those that have attained literacy will be reading and writing in English, Mende, Temne, or Arabic. The Education and Youth Development programs of the current government are committed to the advancement of educational goals in Sierra Leone.

<http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/sierraleone.html>

Land/Geography:

Sierra Leone lies between Guinea and Liberia along the North Atlantic seaboard in West Africa. Its geographic coordinates are 8 30 N, 11 30 W. The temperature averages about 81 degrees in coastal and mountainous areas. The rainy season lasts from approximately May to October. The heaviest rains come between July and September. Humidity is fairly high.

Along the coast, the land is tropical with mangrove swamps intersecting the coastal areas. The coastal plain is criss-crossed with different river systems that provide a means of transportation. Above the coastal plain lies a plateau area that has forests that are being rapidly depleted due to deforestation as people seek fertile farmland where they can grow an adequate supply of food to feed their families. In the east, the land rises steadily into mountain ranges.

There are many environmental issues in Sierra Leone at this time. Mining and other industries have polluted the water supply. Also, the contamination from the bombing and killing of the civil war covers large areas. In 2000, there was a reported death of a child who had fallen into a cesspool of waste and drowned. The government and people of Sierra Leone are working to rectify some of these challenges, but rebuilding of infrastructure takes time. In the meantime, water pollution remains a severe ecological problem.

From WorldMark Encyclopedia of the Nations

History

The Bullom or Sherbro people along with the Krim and others were probably the first peoples to establish civilizations in the area now known as Sierra Leone. People of Mande descent began to migrate into the area sometime during the 1200's. Then, a wave of people sometimes called the Mani or Mane people began encroaching on others' territories during the early part of the 1500's. They were stopped by the Susu people at the Rokel River which became the division between northern and southern peoples.

The Manis were apparently extremely harsh overlords, and some ethnic groups may have reportedly preferred to surrender to the Europeans than to be captured by the Manis. Sometime during this period, the Fulani also began to wage holy war from the Fula Jalon area. They sought to convert people to Islam. The Mende eventually migrated to the area in the 1700's and became influential too.

The Portuguese were the first Europeans to claim influence over the land now known as Sierra Leone. They are also responsible for naming the country as they thought that one of the land formations looked like a lion. The term "Sierra" in Portuguese means mountain and "Leone" means lion.

The Portuguese and other Europeans that followed were primarily interested in the profits provided by the lucrative slave trade. People from the coasts would purchase slaves that had been kidnapped by interior peoples. The Europeans would offer items like manufactured cloth and different types of rum. The coastal peoples quickly learned that the European slavers were interested in profits and would cheat or trick them mercilessly. Some of the chiefs chose to send their sons and even some daughters to school in England or other places so that the sons or daughters could return to serve as translators or negotiators. Many coastal peoples also received a disdain for Christianity at this point because they saw a vast discrepancy between the Christian beliefs that Europeans espoused and the actions that they observed.

The British decided to start a colony for freed slaves in Sierra Leone in the 1770's. In England at that time, there were several freed slaves. Some were educated and had acclimated themselves to English society while others struggled to barely survive by begging on the streets. Granville Sharp sought to relieve the plight of these Africans who were known as the Black Poor by repatriating them to Africa. He and others wanted to allow the Black Poor to gain land on the coast of Sierra Leone so that they could build a new life for themselves.

From the start, the colony experienced several different problems. First of all, the repatriated slaves largely knew nothing about growing rice. Many had become accustomed to city life and were not used to the hard physical labor needed for agricultural pursuits. Additionally, the land rented from the Temne chief was unsuitable for planting crops. Many of the people died on the sea voyage or did not survive the first few months. Others ended up trading muskets and other valuable supplies for rice just in order to survive.

Sharp had planned an ideal community based on English customs and laws; however, the decimation and general discouragement of the people led to a failure to develop the proper infrastructure. Furthermore a Temne chief, who was angered at Europeans, burned the settlers' town which they had named Granville Town. During this time, African chiefs would sometimes become angry at different European representatives when the unscrupulous traders would cheat them. Because the European tricksters were often back at sea before the chief became aware of their deception, they were no longer in reach of his wrath. In retaliation, the chief would simply find other Europeans, whether they were even from the same ethnicity or not, and assuage his wrath through wreaking vengeance upon them. Thus, Granville Town was burned, and the settlers were in worse straits.

Eventually more funds were sent and new treaties were made. The new funds came under the aegis of the Sierra Leone Company who was given control of the land. The leaders of the company became the controllers of the colony instead of the original settlers from the Black Poor.

In 1792, slaves who had remained loyal to the British during the American Revolution were given special privileges to come and join the settlement of the Black Poor. These repatriated slaves became known as the Nova Scotians because they sailed from that area of Canada. Another group of ex-slaves from Jamaica, known as the Maroons, landed at the colony around 1800. They helped to quell strife between company officials and settlers while also providing much needed knowledge about how to pursue agricultural pursuits in the tropical climate.

Around 1808 the British government decided to exercise direct authority over the colony while also deciding to abolish the slave trade. With the firm aim to abolish the slave trade, the British government allowed the navy to waylay suspected slave traders' ships and deposit their human cargo at the colony in Sierra Leone. This caused the colony to increase exponentially in population. Some escaped slaves stayed to build new lives for themselves in the colony while others left to go home. There were social dilemmas caused by this population growth. Divisions developed between the different settlement groups and the released slave captives. These divisions caused internal turmoil but eventually they formed a new culture and considered themselves Creoles.

At different times in the next hundred years, the British would make Sierra Leone the political headquarters for their holdings in West Africa. In 1896, they proclaimed their authority over the interior of Sierra Leone but setting up a protectorate that would function separately from the original colony. Such a move blocked the French or the Liberian contingent from claiming the land.

The British did not necessarily ask the local chiefs their opinion about establishing such a protectorate but rather arranged matters with the French as they wished. The idea behind the protectorate was to allow local rule to continue through the hands of local chiefs but to proclaim British sovereignty so that trade and power would flow to British hands instead of the French or Liberians.

The cost of running the protectorate actually proved more expensive than originally thought and a tax was leveled to pay for administrative costs. Local military units called Frontiersmen went about insisting that the tax be paid while also enforcing their own brand of power.

Because of this provocation, two separate wars occurred around 1898. One called the Bai Bureh's War involved peoples from the Port Loko area while another one called the Mende War involved peoples like the Vai and Temne. Both wars came to be jointly known as the Hut Tax War. Many innocent Europeans were killed because of the great anger that the indigenous peoples had towards the Frontiers and the European commissioners. Anyone known to have an affiliation with Europeans or were of European descent themselves were in danger of losing their lives as a way of extracting revenge over what the indigenous peoples thought to be an unfair taxation as well as their fury over the abuses enacted by the Frontiersmen.

In 1901, the hated and feared Frontiersmen were replaced and in 1903 paramount chiefs were examined for charges of corruption and replaced if found guilty.

Like many West African colonies, after World War II, peoples of Sierra Leone desired freedom from their British overlords. Dr. Milton Margai, who formed the political party the SLPP, became the leader in the political realm. With his encouragement, a constitution advocating the combining of the colony and the protectorate was written and a new government was established. Margai was officially elected prime minister and Sierra Leone received independence in 1961.

Dr. Milton Margai held office until his death in 1964, and then his brother Sir Albert Margai assumed leadership of the fledgling government. With the advent of new leadership in 1967

with the election of Siaka Stevens as the new prime minister, a series of coups occurred that eventually led to the unstable political situation which caused the civil war of the 1990's. Stevens was the leader of a political party called the APC. A coup, led by a supporter of Margai called Lansana, took control but later lost power to the National Reformation Council (NRC). The NRC government was later upended, and Stevens was once again made prime minister.

Through the seventies, Stevens systematically sought to solidify power by establishing the APC as the only major political force. In 1986, Maj. Gen. Joseph Saidu Momoh succeeded Stevens as leader of Sierra Leone.

In 1991, the government of Sierra Leone attempted to reestablish a multiparty democracy but these attempts led to the total destabilization of the government. Momoh was overpowered by military discontents. A captain named Strasser temporarily became head of the government in 1996 only to later be ousted by Brig. Gen. Julius Maada Bio. Bio did return power to Ahmad Tejan Kabbah of the SLPP who had been elected in 1996. However, by this time the country was in a state of continual warfare in the north.

The Revolutionary United Front captured diamond interests in the northern part of the country and worked with malcontents from Liberia to terrorize people. Kabbah's government was toppled in 1997 by the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council who made a pact with the leaders of the RUF in order to form a new government. Due to international intervention, Kabbah's government regained power in 1998 and 1999 but was forced to share power with the RUF and its leader, Foday Sankoh.

During this time, the RUF continued to still commit atrocities in areas where they held power. When the peace deal was brokered in 1999-2000, UN peacekeepers came to enforce the terms of the agreement, but some were actually kidnapped by the RUF. Eventually the leader of the RUF, Sankoh, was captured and a program of disarmament began to be enforced by peacekeepers.

Elections were held in 2001 and Kabbah retained power. However, UN peacekeepers remained until sometime in 2005 to maintain the fragile state of peace. As has been mentioned above, successful elections occurred in 2007. There is hope that all parties will work together to establish a united Sierra Leone that will not topple again into the morass of violence and terror of the late 1990's.

http://encarta.msn.com/encyclopedia_761563681_6/Sierra_Leone.html

<http://www.infoplease.com/ce6/world/A0861084.html>

Area Handbook of Sierra Leone by Irving Kaplan

A History of Sierra Leone by Christopher Fyfe

Church Growth in Sierra Leone by Gilbert W. Olson

Christian History

The freed slaves that came from Nova Scotia were the first Christians to make an impact on Sierra Leone. They began to build churches in 1792 when they arrived. Most of these newcomers were either associated with the Methodist, Baptist or Countess of Huntingdon denominations. The Church of England began sending missionaries in 1804. Many of the missionaries came to educate the indigenous populations and so were sometimes welcomed by different chiefs.

Anglican missionaries established Fourah Bay College to educate Creoles so that they could serve as missionaries to the interior, but indigenous people were not fond of the Creoles and thus generally rejected their message.

The American Missionary Association and the Evangelical United Brethren both came in the mid 1800's to begin to work among the Mende and Sherbro. The Holy Ghost Fathers arrived to start Catholic work in 1859 in the southern part of Sierra Leone. Later other priests called the Xaverians began to work in the northern portion of the country.

The Sierra Leone United Christian Council became influential in 1924, and many different Christian groups are members.

Syncretism has long been a problem in the churches of Sierra Leone. Many people who join the church continue to participate in ancestor worship or secret societies too. The God of our Light Church and the Aladura Church became popular among many converts because of the emphasis maintaining indigenous cultural values.

Religions

Non-Christian

Indigenous Religions:

Each ethnic group has a different name for the creator god. They generally believe this god to be all-powerful but distant from the everyday lives of ordinary people. Ancestral spirits are the conduits through which living people believe they can reach the creator god. People offer sacrifices in order to appease the spirits so that they will bring good fortune to the living members of the family. Most people also believe that inanimate objects like trees, rivers, and rocks also have spirits that need sacrifices. People also attempt to avoid angering a third group of spirits that people believe are impish. Witches or sorcerers create fear in communities. People wear amulets and charms in the hope of warding off mischief caused by the witches. Witches are generally thought to be evil and manipulating.

Islam:

Traders and conquerors from the Fouta Djallon first influenced the northern sector of Sierra Leone. Recently Islam has gained popularity because of its long association with African affairs and because of the adaptability of belief systems. Converts to Islam are not required to give up all of their ancestral beliefs or the custom of polygamy. They also may still use magical charms that they believe will ward off evil. There are Sunnis, Shiites, and Ahmadiyyas in Sierra Leone. The Sunni branch is the most popular form of Islam. While devout Muslims may be strongly encouraged to refrain from taking part of the activities of secret societies, nominal Muslims may continue to participate in the secret societies. Women are generally freer to continue participation in such societies because of the emphasis that the societies place on learning important domestic skills.

Jehovah's Witnesses:

The first missionaries started work in 1923. They have a strong influence among the Temne people in Makeni. In 2001, there were twenty congregations and 806 members in all. There were 2,500 affiliates.

New Apostolic Church:

This church was established around 1960. Its headquarters are in Zurich, Switzerland. In 1995, there were four hundred churches and 43,000 members. There were 76,413 affiliates.

Catholic:

The first Catholic priests arrived in Sierra Leone in 1859. The diocese of Freetown was elevated to an archdiocese in November of 1970. Joseph Henry **Ganda** is currently the Archbishop Emeritus of the Freetown archdiocese. It covers 7,821 square miles.

In 2006, there were fifty-two priests serving twenty-six different parishes. The diocese of Kenema was elevated in November of 1970, too. It covers 6,067 square miles. Patrick Daniel Koroma is currently the presiding bishop.

In 2004, there were nineteen priests serving fifteen parishes. The Makeni diocese was elevated in February of 1962. It covers 13,933 square miles. George Biguzzi, is the current bishop. In 2004, there were forty-four priests serving nineteen parishes.

<http://www.catholic-hierarchy.org/country/dsl2.html>

Greek Orthodox:

This church's headquarters are in Yaounde, Cameroon. They are under the authority of the leadership in Alexandria, Egypt. Most of the members are Lebanese or Greek traders who are living in Sierra Leone. In 1995, there was one church with 390 members and 600 affiliates.

Christian or Evangelical

African Methodist Episcopal Church:

This church was started in 1886. Many of the original members were from the Creole peoples. It supports two elementary schools. In 1995, there were nine congregations and 1,355 congregants. There were an additional three thousand affiliates.

African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church:

This church was founded around 1955. It was a mission of the AMEZC of the United States. In 1995, there were two congregations. Approximately three hundred people were members of the denomination with six hundred people claiming to be affiliates of the church.

Apostolic Church:

This church was established around 1970 by British missionaries. It is Pentecostal. In 2001, there were ten congregations. There were approximately three thousand members and four thousand affiliates.

Assemblies of God:

Missionaries from Great Britain and the United States began work in 1916. In 2001, thirty congregations were meeting regularly. There were 1,200 members and 6,500 affiliates.

Approximately fifty-six percent of the members came from the Limba people group while nine percent came from the Kru group. Another nineteen percent came from the Kissi people group, and nine percent also came from the Loko people.

Southern Baptist:

Missionaries from the United States founded the Baptist Convention of Sierra Leone in 1984. In 2001, there were sixty-seven congregations. There were 6,278 members and 9,000 affiliates.

Christ Apostolic Church:

Missionaries from Nigeria founded this church around 1970. In 1995, there were six congregations. There were 900 members and 1,500 affiliates.

Christian Extension Services:

This is a non-denominational group. In 1995, there were fifty-five churches. There were 1,300 members and 2,890 affiliates.

Christian Reformed Church:

U.S. missionaries established this church in 1980. In 1995, there were three congregations. There were 700 members and 1,250 affiliates.

Church of God of Prophecy:

CPG missionaries started this church around 1934. Members often come from the Temne people group. The denominational headquarters are located in Freetown. In 2001, there were twelve churches. There were 1,342 members and 4,000 affiliates.

Church of the Lord (Aladura):

This church began in 1947. Nigerian and Ghanaian missionaries came to start this church. Members come from the Mende, Kono, and Creole peoples. In 1995, there were forty congregations. There were 600 members and 2,000 affiliates.

Churches of Christ:

This denomination was started by U.S. missionaries in 1961. The headquarters are located in Freetown, and many of the members are from the Creole ethnic group. This denomination supports one school. In 1995, there were thirty-one churches. There were 1,200 members and 2,000 affiliates.

Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion:

This church was started in 1792. Nova Scotia settlers were the first members of this church. Members today often come from the Creole ethnic group. In 1995, there were ten congregations. There were 1,380 members and 2,300 affiliates.

Evangelical Lutheran Church:

Missionaries from the Missouri Synod started this denomination in 1983. In 1995, there were four congregations and a total of 200 members. There were 360 affiliates.

Free Gospel Church:

This church was established in 1920. It is Pentecostal. In 1995, there were seven congregations. There were 360 members and 1,030 affiliates.

God is Our Light:

Ex-members of the EUB founded this church in 1945. Most of the members come from the Kono or Mende people groups. In 1995, there were forty churches and 900 members in all. There were 2,100 affiliates. This church does not believe in using medicine.

Maranatha Churches:

These independent charismatic churches were founded around 1970. In 1995, there were ten churches and a total of 590 members. There were 1,180 affiliates.

Methodist Church, Sierra Leone:

Missionaries started work in 1792. Approximately seventy percent of the church members come from the Creole people while twenty-seven percent come from the Mende people group. Another three percent come from the Kissi people. In 1995, there were 235 churches and 14,900 members. There were 25,729 affiliates.

National Pentecostal Church:

This church was started by people who had left the Assembly of God churches. They started the church around 1970. In 2001, there were twenty-five churches and 6,587 members. There were 11,000 affiliates.

Nigerian Baptist Convention:

This denomination was established by Nigerian missionaries in 1960. They did a lot of evangelizing among the Limba people in Magburaka. In 1995, there were sixteen churches and 1,467 members. There were 2,450 affiliates.

Open Bible Standard Churches:

These churches were started in 1967 by OBSC missionaries from the U.S. They are Pentecostal. In 1995, there were two churches and 180 members. There were 450 affiliates.

Pentecostal Assemblies of the World:

Missionaries from the U.S started this church. It is very influential in neighboring Liberia. In 1995, there were five churches and 1,200 members in all. There were 2,400 affiliates.

Seventh-Day Adventist Church

This church was founded in 1905. About seventy-five percent of the church members come from the Mende people while twenty-five percent come from the Temne people. In 2001, there were fifty-one churches and 11,597 members in all. There were 17,000 affiliates.

Sierra Leone Baptist Union:

This church was established by people from Nova Scotia in 1785. About seventy-five percent of the church members come from the Bassa people group. Others are Creole. In 1995, there were six churches and 400 members. There were 1,300 affiliates.

Sierra Leone Church:

This church was started in 1804. About eighty-two percent of the church members are from the Creole group while ten percent come from the Mende people. Another five percent come from the Limba people. In 1995, there were forty-nine churches and 13,000 members in all. There were 25,040 affiliates.

Sierra Leone Missionary Church:

This church is a mission of the Missionary Church Association. Work began around 1945. Many of the members come from the Koranko or Yalunka people groups. In 1995, there were thirty-four churches and 1,000 members. There were 2,500 affiliates.

Wesleyan Church of Sierra Leone:

Missionaries started this denomination in 1889. Church members often come from the Temne and Loko peoples. They support about twenty different schools. In 2001, there were 180 churches and 11,000 members. There were 28,000 affiliates.

United Brethren in Christ:

This church was started in 1850. It is a mission of the UBC of the United States. It is a holiness body. Most of the members come from the Mende people. They support approximately thirty-two schools. In 2001, there were fifty-four churches and 6,200 members. There were 20,000 affiliates.

United Methodist Church:

This church was founded in 1850. Many of the members come from the Mende and Temne peoples. In 2001, there were 230 churches and 90,000 members. There were 110,000 affiliates.

United Pentecostal Church:

This church was established around 1960. The headquarters for this denomination are in Magburaka. In 1995, there were thirty-six churches and 1,800 members. There were 2,770 affiliates. Ninety-five percent of the people come from the Temne people while five percent come from the Limba people.

West African Methodist Church:

This church was once part of the Methodist Church started by the Nova Scotians. It was started around 1844. About eighty-three percent of the members come from the Creole people while eleven percent come from the Kru people. Another five percent come from the Mende people. In 2001, there were seventeen churches and 2,116 members. There were 4,000 affiliates.

People Groups

33358

Aku (6,000)

The Aku people are a sub group of the major Creole or Krio people group that are descendents of freed slaves who were repatriated to Sierra Leone by the British after the end of the slave trade.

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

33356

Banta Mende (15,000)

The Banta Mende people are a subgroup of the Mende people. They speak Mende. Their predominant religion is Islam. The Bible has been translated into their language, and the Jesus film is accessible. Gospel recordings exist.

14270

Banta Temne (29,291)

The Banta Temne people live in the Northern Province. They speak a language called Themne and are part of the Atlantic people cluster. This is a major trade language in the central part of Sierra Leone. About twenty-five percent of the Banta Temne may also use Krio while five percent may use English. About six percent of the people can read and write in their own language. Some alternate names for this people group include: Temne, Timne, Timene, Timmanee, or Temen.

The people originally came from Guinea and established their base of power in the Buya-Romende area. They inhabit about 159 villages. The people are primarily farmers. Rice is an important crop. There are village chiefs and a paramount chief that lives in Kamasundu. The civil war caused the displacement of many of the people, but since the de-escalation of violence, people have begun to return to their villages.

They are one of the least reached people groups. The predominant religion is Islam. The number of evangelical Christians is unknown. There have been reports that some of the Banta Themne people have come to Christ. Indigenous workers ask for prayer for their continued efforts among this people group. The New Testament has been translated into their language, and tracts are available. The Jesus film and other Christian videos are also accessible. Gospel recordings exist.

14272

Bassa (6,713)

The Bassa people live primarily in Freetown. They speak a language called Bassa and are part of the Kru people cluster. The Bassa people groups are arranged under chiefdoms with clear ethnic distinctions.

The people predominantly practice ethnic religions. The number of evangelical Christians is unknown. The New Testament has been translated into their language. The Jesus film and other Christian videos are also accessible. Gospel recordings can be heard.

14273

Bom (6,656)

The Bom people live along the Bome River. They speak a language called Bom and are part of the Altantic people cluster. More people are beginning to use Mende. Some alternate names for this people group include: Bome, Bum, or Bomo.

The people primarily practice ethnic religions. The number of evangelical Christians is unknown. There is a questionable translation need. The Jesus film and gospel recordings are unavailable.

14274

Bullom (9,591)

The Bullom people live along the coast from the Guinea border to the Sierra Leone River. They speak a language called Bullom So and are part of the Atlantic people cluster. Many people can speak Temne. This shift is partially caused by intermarriage with the Temne and the Susu people. Some alternate names for this people group include: Northern Bullom, Bolom, Bulem, Bullun, Bullin, Mmani, Mandingi, or Mandenyi.

The people are predominantly Muslims. Only .07% of the people are evangelical Christians. There is a questionable translation need. The Jesus film is inaccessible and gospel recordings do not exist.

14276

East Limba (716)

The East Limba people live in the North central part of Sierra Leone. They speak a language called East Limba and are part of the Atlantic people cluster. Some alternate names for this people group include: Yimba or Yumba. The people are predominantly Muslims. They are one of the least reached people groups.

There are no known evangelical Christians. Some people also practice ethnic religions. The Bible has not been translated into their language, and the Jesus film is inaccessible. Gospel recordings can be found.

14278

Fula Jalon (209,022)

The Fula Jalon are a sub-group of the larger Fulani people group which can be found in several countries throughout West Africa (Guinea, Sierra Leone, and Mali). They speak a language called Pular. Pular is used as a trade language. Some speakers may also be familiar with Eastern Maninkakan and Susu. Some alternate names for this group include: Fulbe Futa Jalon, Futa Fula, Futa Dyalon, Futa Jallon, Futa Jalon Fulani, Kebu Fula, Fuuta Jalon, and Peul. In Sierra Leone, they live close to the Guinean border.

Like many other Fulani people, the Fula Jalon 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 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 work well in their tropical climate. The Ndama cattle have been especially bred to withstand the bite of the tsetse fly.

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 grows to a man (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.

The Fula Jalon people are considered to be one of the least reached people groups. The people are predominantly Muslim. There are no known evangelical Christians. Because their culture 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 being fully used by the people. The Jesus film and gospel recordings are also accessible.

14279

Gola (9,373)

The Gola people live along the Liberian border. The Gola primarily speak a language called Gola which is linguistically related to the Kissi language. The Gola came from Cote D'Ivoire to their current villages sometime during the 1300's. The Gola are now predominantly farmers. They raise yams, groundnuts, and rice. Women and kids will plant and harvest the crops while men will clear the land since most of the villages are found in forested areas.

During the days of the Atlantic slave trade, the Gola acted as middle men between inland people groups and the coastal Vais.

The Gola are predominantly Muslim although most still practice elements of their ancestral religion. Adherents of ancestor worship believe that the spirits of dead relatives must be cared for and appeased so that the dead spirits will not turn to evil. Religious festivals include the offering of firstfruits to the gods as well as a ceremony where the village leader will pray for rain by holding the skull of a dead ancestor and pouring animal blood over it.

Many of the Gola believe in reincarnation. The Golas' belief in reincarnation may account for the importance of the circumcision ceremony in the life of young boys. Boys who participate in the circumcision ceremony are believed to be shedding the pollution from their old lives and becoming affiliated with the gods. After this rite of passage, boys are considered to be adults.

Less than one percent of the people are evangelical Christians. This makes the Gola one of the least reached people groups. For those who have accepted Christ, discipleship classes are needed. New believers need to be taught the truths of the Bible and also need to understand sound theology so that they will not be tempted to return to their ancestral beliefs or to Islam. The Bible

has been translated into their language, and the Jesus film is accessible. Gospel recordings are available.

14281

Kono (240,362)

The Kono people live in Northeastern part of Sierra Leone. The Kono District is well-known for the diamond mining industries found there. Because of this lucrative industry, the RUF took control of the region during the civil war. This area experienced much of the horrors associated with the civil war. (Please see the history/ society section for more information.) The Kono people are predominantly subsistence farmers or diamond miners. The people are slowly returning from where they scattered during the harrowing years of war.

The people predominantly practice ethnic religions. Some have also converted to Islam. About 1.5% of the people are evangelical Christians. Portions of the Bible have been translated into their language. The Jesus Film and other Christian videos are also accessible. Gospel recordings can be found.

14282

Krim (13,706)

The Krim people live along the Krim River. Their villages lie between the lands of the Sherbro and Vai peoples. This people group are being integrated into the Sherbro and the Mende peoples. They speak a language called Krim and are part of the Atlantic peoples group. Some alternate names for this people group include: Kim, Kittim, Kirim, or Kimi.

The people predominantly practice ethnic religions. Only .10% of the people are evangelical Christians. There are no ministry tools available in their language.

14283

Krio (553,727)

The Krio people live in Freetown in specific areas, but they also live on the peninsula and other islands. The Krio people are descendants of freed or escaped slaves that were re-settled to Sierra Leone after the abolishment of the slave trade in Great Britain. Because of their education through their association with the British, they are sometimes more advanced economically than other people groups.

Most people in urban areas use the Krio language as a second language. While people will still use their own ethnic language at home, they will use Krio in the workplace or in social settings where people of different ethnic groups are present. Some alternate names for this people group include: Creole or Patois.

The Krio people predominantly practice ethnic religions. The number of evangelical Christians is unknown. The New Testament has been translated into their language, and the Jesus film is accessible. Gospel recordings can be found.

14284

Krio Fula (56,240)

The Krio Fula live in small communities on the peninsula around Freetown. They are the descendents of Krios who intermarried with Fulani people. Like other Fulani peoples they are herders and primarily practice Islam. The mosque stands as the focus point of the village. Headman usually run the village, but they will answer to a paramount chief. Boys will help herd the cattle while girls will help their mothers with chores until they marry.

The Fulani people of Sierra Leone are sometimes looked upon with disfavor by neighboring people groups. Some neighboring people groups dislike the cattle because the livestock may eat or destroy needed crops. Also, the Fulani are sometimes accused of being dishonest. These regional prejudices can cause tensions for both the Krio Fula and other Fulani groups.

They are one of the least reached people groups. Less than one percent of the people are evangelical Christians. Portions of the Bible have been translated into their language, and the Jesus film is accessible. Gospel recordings can also be found.

14285

Kru (11,261)

The Kru people live around Freetown. Most of the Kru people are originally from Liberia. They speak a language called Klao and are part of the Kru people cluster. Some alternate names for this people group include: Kroo, Klaoh, or Klau.

The people predominantly practice a mixture of ethnic beliefs with some Christian cultural beliefs as well. Only .75% of the people are evangelical Christians. The New Testament has been translated into their language, and the Jesus film is accessible. Gospel recordings can be found.

14286

Kuranko (341,072)

The Kuranko people live in the Northern Province around Kabala. They speak a language called Kuranko and are part of the Malinke people cluster. About five percent can read and write in a second language. An alternate name for this people group is Koranko.

The Kuranko people are predominantly agriculturalists who live in fairly isolated regions. They have tenaciously clung to their own individual culture despite some intermingling of other people groups. The men normally clear the land for planting while the women are responsible for home tasks and caring for the children. Children must undergo a purification rite before they can enter adulthood. Secret societies play an important role in the culture. The Gbansogoron

society is used to prove a man's bravery while the Segere society tries to provide protection for women.

The Kuranko believe in a group of spirits that they call the Nyenne. These spirits are thought to live in the bush and can either bring good or evil to the Kuranko people. Thought to cause women to become barren or insane, the Nyenne are greatly feared, and sacrifices are offered when their habitat is disturbed for planting.

The Kuranko also use animal names to describe human behavior. For example, someone who betrays someone else is called a snake. The Kuranko believe that people can actually use witchcraft to become different animals to harm their enemies.

The people predominantly practice ethnic religions. There are some followers of Islam. Less than one percent are evangelical Christians. The New Testament had been translated by 1972, and the Jesus film is available. Gospel recordings exist, and tracts are available too.

14287

Limba (392,505)

The Limba people live north of Makeni. They speak a language called West-Central Limba and are part of the Atlantic people cluster. Some alternate names for this people group include: Yimba or Yumba.

The people predominantly practice ethnic religions. Some have converted to Islam. Only .18% of the people are evangelical Christians. The New Testament has been translated into their language, and the Jesus film is accessible. Gospel recordings exist.

14288

Loko (200,984)

The Loko people live in two different areas. Some villages can be found in the Koya, Ribbi, and Bumpe chiefdoms while others live in the Sanda Loko chiefdom. An alternate name for this people group is Landogo.

The Loko people are primarily rice farmers. They cultivate other crops, too. Each village is led by a single leader who is under the leadership of a paramount chief. Polygamy is acceptable.

The people predominantly practice ethnic religions. People fear the power of witches. Some are also Muslim. Less than one percent are evangelical Christians. The New Testament has been translated into their own language, and the Jesus film is accessible. Gospel recordings can be found.

14290

Maninka (93,636)

The Maninka people live around Kabala but may also be found in other areas throughout Sierra Leone. They speak a language called Eastern Maninkakan and are part of the Malinke people group. Some alternate names for this people group include: Mandingo, Madingo, Mande, Maninka-Mori, Southern Maninka, Kankan Maninka, or Eastern Malinke.

The Maninka people group is a patrilineal society. Parents usually arrange girls' marriages. Men, as Muslims, may marry more than one wife. Women will do household work and take care of the children while men take care of the animals and the fields.

There is a strict social strata in the Maninka culture. Descendants of the first settlers of a Maninka village are generally the leaders of that village. Musicians called griots are held in high esteem because they will pass on the oral traditions of the people. Blacksmiths are also very important to the Maninka people.

The Maninka people are predominantly Sunni Muslim. They were evangelized by Muslim traders that encouraged them to accept the basic tenets of the Muslim faith while still allowing them to keep their beliefs in the interference of magic and the spirit realm in their daily lives. Also, people practice indigenous religions.

The Maninka people see God as someone to fear. They believe that they must appease the angry, vengeful spirits that would bring misfortune into their lives. To that end, they consult with diviners who might be able to help them in times of sickness. There are no known evangelical Christians. The New Testament has been translated, and the Jesus film is accessible. Gospel recordings can also be found.

14291

Mende (2,212,874)

The Mende people are a dominant ethnic group in Sierra Leone. They generally live along the coast and to the south and east. They speak a language called Mende and are part of the Mande people cluster. Some alternate names for this people group include: Boumpe, Hulo, Kossa, or Kosso. Because of their linguistic and cultural similarities with the Mande people, the Mende may have migrated from Sudan between the second and sixteenth centuries.

Most of the Mende are subsistence farmers who grow rice, cassava, coffee, cocoa, and ginger. Rice and cassava are mainly used as sustenance for the family while the other crops are sold for profit. A large number of younger men are migrating to the cities to look for work, and thus leave a labor shortage on the farms.

The Mende people have a very interesting historical past. During the height of the slave trade, several Mende people groups were sold first to a Portuguese trader and later to the joint owners of a Cuban plantation. The Cuban slave owners tried to transport the Mende people to another part of Cuba aboard a slave ship called the *Amistad*. En route the Mende and other slaves mutinied and took control of the ship in hopes of being able to sail her back to Africa and freedom. Hampered by the remaining sailors, the Mende were captured by a U.S. Coast Guard

vessel off of Long Island, New York. While the Cuban slave owners asserted that the Mende men were slaves and thus property, a Connecticut court pronounced them free and helped assist the Mende in getting back to their homeland.

The Mende people predominantly practice Islam, yet they also practice indigenous animistic religion which revolves around a supreme being called Ngewo. The followers of this traditional religion believe that Ngewo must be approached by using an intermediary like the spirit of a dead ancestor. Thus, witchcraft is practiced extensively.

Tied to this religious practice is an educational system divided by gender. Men join the Poro society and women join the Sande society. These have been called secret societies because the members are not allowed to disclose the activities of the society to uninitiated children. Masks are used to cover the teacher of the society, and the spirit is said to inhabit the teacher while the mask is worn. This mask, called the Bondu helmet, is the only religious mask of its kind that is known to be used exclusively by women.

The number of evangelical Christians is unknown. Bible translations are available. The Jesus film and audio recordings are also accessible.

<http://www.uiowa.edu/~africart/toc/people/Mende.html>
<http://www.chrysler.org/wom/wom0200.asp>
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mende_people
<http://www.joshuaproject.net/peopctry.php?rop3=111215&rog3=LI>

14292

Northern Kissi (40,000)

The Northern Kissi people speak a language called Northern Kissi and are part of the Atlantic people cluster. Some alternate names for this people group include: Gizi, Kisi, Kissien, or Kisie. As the Kissi moved into Liberia, Guinea, and Sierra Leone, they practiced deforestation in order to plant millet. Later, they switched to growing rice; however, the environmental problems caused by the deforestation practices of earlier centuries affected their farming ability. Today the Kissi work in urban areas as laborers or in rural areas as subsistence farmers.

Most Kissi follow traditional ethnic religions. The number of evangelical Christians is unknown. Many Kissi try to use charms, sacrifices, or fetishes to ward off the distressed spirits of ancestors. Female circumcision is also practiced. Audio recordings and a translation of the New Testament are available to the Kissi.

<http://www.joshuaproject.net/peopctry.php?rop3=109485&rog3=LI>
The People of Africa by Olson

14294

Sherbro (135,000)

The Sherbro people live in the Southern Province adjoining the Western Area. They speak a language called Sherbro and are part of the Atlantic people cluster. They have lived in their current location for centuries. They have their own chiefdoms with a notable difference being

that women can sometimes act as paramount chief. Secret societies also play an important role in their culture.

They predominantly practice ethnic religions. Only .12% of the people are evangelical Christians. The Bible has not been translated into their language, and the Jesus film is inaccessible. Gospel recordings exist.

14295

Southern Kissi (85,000)

The Southern Kissi people speak a language called Kissi. Only about three percent of the people have learned to read and write in a second language. They live where the corners of Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Guinea meet. They used to live in the Upper Niger region until they were driven out by other people groups in the seventeenth century. Some alternate names for this people group include: Kisi, Gissi, or Kissien.

As the Kissi moved into Liberia, Guinea, and Sierra Leone, they practiced deforestation in order to plant millet. Later, they switched to growing rice; however, the environmental problems caused by the deforestation practices of earlier centuries affected their farming ability. Today the Kissi work in urban areas as laborers or in rural areas as subsistence farmers. The Kissi greatly respect the elderly and listen to them. Most of the villages in rural areas only consist of about 150 people.

Most Kissi people follow traditional ethnic religions. Many Kissi try to use charms, sacrifices, or fetishes to ward off the distressed spirits of ancestors. Female circumcision is also practiced. Some of the Kissi have converted to Islam. The number of evangelical Christians is unknown. Audio recordings and a translation of the New Testament are available to the Kissi.

http://www.global12project.com/2004/profiles/p_code6/215.html

14296

Susu (160,000)

The Susu people primarily live in the northern section, but some villages can also be found in the western sectors of the country. They speak a language called Susu. Their language is so similar to the Yalunka language that often people can't tell them apart. 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 also known as the Soso people.

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 people believe that polygamy is acceptable. Most marriages are made for the advantage of the family. Boys are often encouraged to marry a cousin from his mother's family. Grooms will bring kola nuts to his bride's family and will 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 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.

The Susa people are predominantly Sunni Muslim. They are 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 number of evangelical Christians is unknown. The New Testament has been translated, and the Jesus film is available. Gospel recordings exist.

<http://www.gowestafrika.org/peoplegroups/susu/>
http://www.global12project.com/2004/profiles/c_code/sierra.html

14297

Temne (1,200,000)

The Temne people live west of Sewa River to Little Scarcie in the Northern Province. They speak a language called Themne and are part of the Atlantic people cluster. The Themne language is somewhat similar to the Sherbro and Baga languages.

The Temne people became heavily involved in the kola nut trade during the Malian Empire and later they worked with the Europeans too. Most Temne today continue to work in trading but also may work as agriculturalists or fishermen.

Usually each village is led by a single man, but secret societies also play an important role in the political and cultural life of the village. Working hard is highly valued. During the late civil war, many of the Themne supported the RUF. Because of the animosity towards the RUF today in

Sierra Leone, those that were supportive of their cause could possibly be vulnerable to economic and social difficulties.

The Temne are predominantly Muslim. Others practice indigenous religions. They are one of the least reached people groups. Less than one percent of the people are evangelical Christians. The New Testament and Christian tracts have been translated into their language. Also, the Jesus film and other Christian videos are accessible. Gospel recordings exist.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Temne_people

14298

Vai (17,670)

The Vai in Sierra Leone usually speak Mende, but their traditional language is called Vai. They belong to the Mande people cluster. They mostly live in northwestern Liberia and eastern Sierra Leone. Alternate names for the Vai include Vey and Vy.

Most of the Vai people are farmers who grow rice as their staple vegetable on a plot of land until the soil becomes poor. Then, the farmers will move to a new area and burn it to clear the brush. Women and children actively participate in farm work by keeping birds and other varmints away from the growing crops and by clearing out the weeds from the crop area. Some of the Vai also are talented artisans. They create intricate weavings, wood items, and clothes.

The Vai have three methods of schooling. Children will learn the traditional customs of the people group as well as attending an English school. Classes are also held by the local iman so that children can learn Muslim beliefs and culture.

The Vai are mostly Sunni Muslim. Muslim traders arrived in the area in the eighteenth century and began to convert people. There are no known evangelical Christians. The Vai have access to New Testament translations as well as the Jesus film. Audio recordings are also available. Traditional ethnic religious beliefs also influence the religious life of the Vai. For example, the Vai do believe in a supreme creator called Konga; however, they believe Konga is too distant for them to talk to directly. Rather, the Vai use a spirit medium to worship and communicate with this Supreme Being who controls every aspect of the physical and spiritual world. Alligators are hated and feared because people believe that malevolent spirits inhabit them.

14299

Yalunka (33,592)

The Yalunka people live in the villages of Balaki, Kungsi, Bouria, Solia, Foulaya, and Jouloubaya in the Northern Province. They speak a language called Yalunka and are part of the Malinke people cluster. Their language is very similar to the Soso language. Some also speak Eastern Maninkakan or Krio. Only about two percent of the people can read and write in a second language. Most would like literature in their own language. In fact people from both of the groups can understand each other when they speak their own languages. Some alternate people names for the Yalunka include: Yalunke, Djallonke, Kjalonke, Dialonke, and Jalonke.

The Yalunka people are mainly farmers and herders. They grow crops like millet, maize, and peanuts and keep several different types of livestock such as cattle and goats. Honey is a very important product for the Yalunkas because they will offer it for sale in the market. Children usually watch over the livestock while women work about the house, milk cows, and manufacture butter. The men work in the fields. Many of the Yalunkas, however, have recently begun moving to larger cities to find jobs there that offer better economic stability.

The Yalunkas like to live in larger groups. They have a patrilineal, polygamous society. Men may take up to four wives but will have to have a sufficient number of cattle or goats to do so since the prospective groom must pay the bride's family a bride price. After the marriage occurs, the husband and wife will live with the extended family group. The man must also be able to provide for all of his wives and even their parents if necessary.

The Yalunkas are one of the least reached people groups. They are predominantly Sunni Muslim. People find it very hard to become Christians because of the fear of severe persecution. While the people are Islamic, they still believe in some traditional religious ideals. For example, they are constantly using diviners to keep witches from putting curses on their crops. They also try to appease the nature spirits that live around them. They believe that the nature spirits can cause harm or give help.

Less than one percent of the Yalunkas are evangelical Christians. The New Testament has been translated and gospel recordings are available. However, the Jesus film has not been shown to the Yalunka.

14300

Yoruba (3,800)

Yoruba people speak a language called Yoruba and are part of the Yoruba people cluster. About one to thirty percent of the people can read and write in their own language. The Yoruba people were probably originally a Sudanic people who migrated into Nigeria. Their first major city was called Ife-Ife. From the outset, the Yoruba people were more comfortable as city dwellers. While many farmed for a living, they still lived in larger towns. Trading was also important for the Yoruba. They fought with the Fulani and certain areas came under Fulani control. At this time, many Yoruba began to convert to Islam.

The Yoruba may practice ethnic religions, be Muslim, or profess Christianity. Approximately 5.6% of the people are evangelical Christians. Converting to Islam or Christianity is often seen as a way of advancing economically. Islam is often more popular with some Yoruba because men may practice polygamy. While Islamic converts follow Muslim beliefs, the restrictions for Yoruba women are less enforced than other places in West Africa. The complete Bible has been translated into their language, and tracts are available. The Jesus film is also accessible. Gospel recordings and radio broadcasts can be heard.

From *Muslim Peoples* by Weekes

Missiological Implications

1. Evangelical Christians and churches should emphasize evangelism and church planting among the peoples who follow the traditional religions. Many people who call themselves Christians have simply adopted certain aspects of the Christian belief system while still practicing traditional religions as well. Witchcraft, divination, and sorcery are still major negative influences in society. What Sierra Leonians truly need to find lasting peace in their country is a real encounter with Jesus Christ. The evangelicals need to develop a plan for witnessing to and establishing churches among followers of traditional religions and train local believers in these methods. Groups such as the Sherbo, The Krio, the Mende, the Kru, the Kim, the Loko, and the Kuranko follow either traditional religion or syncretism of Christianity with traditional religious beliefs and practices and need evangelization (see People Groups Section).
2. Evangelical Christians and churches should recognize the poor economic conditions and medical needs of Sierra Leone. Most people still live a desperate day-to-day survival existence. Those in the north are especially in danger from people who still try to exploitatively use the diamond mining industry. Also, water pollution from the mining process is a constant health issue. Evangelicals should seek ways to meet these physical needs in the name of Christ.
3. Evangelical Christians and churches should seek ways of aiding the churches and Christians in Sierra Leone in leadership training. Evangelicals should not restrict this training to developing full-time leaders but should place even more emphasis on training lay leadership in Christian living, discipleship, and witnessing.
4. Evangelical Christians and churches should train the believers in Sierra Leone in the methods of small group evangelism and worship.
5. Evangelical Christians and churches should provide the evangelistic and church planting tools the local believers can use to evangelize their own peoples and start growing, reproducing congregations.
6. Evangelical Christians and churches should develop and provide materials to help the peoples in Sierra Leone overcome the power of demonic forces that have a strong hold over the people.

Pictures –

