

The Wāpha of Nigeria



The Wapha people can be found in three locations: Kumbur, Mavo and Wase-Tofa in Wase Local Government Area of Plateau State. The name “Wase” in Wapha may be the origin of their name. It means “drink the water and stay”. They report their population to be around 15,000-20,000.

They trace their origin from the Middle East. They believe their ancestors migrated through Maiduguri and Kano separately to their present locations. Those who live in Mavo and Wase-Tofa say they traveled through Kano, whereas those at Kumbur say their ancestors traveled through Maiduguri.

The Wapha are bordered by the Tarok, Ywom, Montol, Mbat and Boghom speaking people, with whom they intermarry. The Fulani nomads as well as the Berom also live among them.

The title of the traditional ruler of the Wapha is called Aku. The people are farmers. They grow maize millet groundnut, guinea corn, yam, rice and beans. They celebrate an annual festival called Shiwo. It is a dance festival which celebrates the arrival of new harvest before it is brought into the house. Shiwo is observed for seven days.

There are both government and private secondary and primary schools in their communities. There are also primary health centers in all their towns, though the health center in Kumbur is non-functional. Their primary means of transportation is motorbike and cars.

The people are approximately 50% Muslims, 20% Christians and 30% African traditional religionists.

Primary Religion:

Islam

Disciples (Matt 28:19):

10%

Churches:

10

Scripture Status (Matt 28:20):

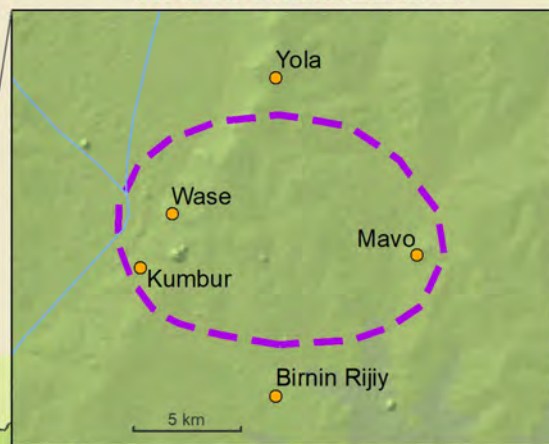
None

Population (date):

17,000 (2019)



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Have They Heard The Gospel?

Hindrances to Scripture Use	The New Testament is available in Wapan, and is reportedly comprehensible to the Wapha. Although they prefer to use the Hausa translation, which better serves the mixed language congregations in their own communities.
Response to the Gospel	Only a few people have responded to the gospel. Church growth is slow.
Bilingualism	Nearly all Adults and children are sufficiently bilingual in Hausa. Young people and adults who have had formal education, are bilingual in English. In addition, most adults have skills in at least one other neighboring language.
Cross-Cultural Missionary Need	Church planting, pastoral training, literacy and education.
Number of Christian Congregations	About 10 denominations: The Evangelical Church Winning All (ECWA), Church of Christ in Nations (COCIN), Christian Reform Church of Nigeria (CRCN) and Roman Catholic missions
Churches using primarily vernacular	None
Language of Wider Communication	Hausa [hau]