



The Balsa of Ghana

The Balsa live in the north-central part of Ghana in a 2,000 square kilometer area. Most are farmers, with fields located up to five kilometers from the compounds. They raise crops like millet, beans, and groundnuts. Extra income is earned by making crafts, such as pottery, wooden stools, decorative hoe and axe handles, and woven grass baskets and hats.

The Balsa are a group quite distinct from all their neighbors. They speak a language called Buli and have a proud heritage. When the slave-raider Babatu attacked them in the 19th century, they were able to stand against him and turn him back! That event is celebrated to this day with an elaborate festival just before Christmas.

The traditional Balsa shelter is a compound of round and rectangular rooms, with courtyards and animal enclosures in between. The rooms are made of a mixture of mud, clay and sand. The roof is either flat, of the same mixture as the walls, or conical made of grass. These rooms last only a few years, and often collapse in heavy rains.

Each compound usually contains men who have a common father or grandfather. There are usually at least three smaller family units in a compound, each made up of about seven to ten people. Some compounds are very large, with over 40 people living there, while others may be very small. Compounds are normally three quarters of a mile apart.

The Balsa have an open-side grass-roofed shelter outside the compound walls which is used for social activities. It is used as a gathering place for the family as a whole. Certain subsections of the family such as young mothers, children, older women, or men also make use of the shelter throughout the day. This is also the traditional place to receive visitors.

The Roman Catholic Church founded the parish of Wiaga in 1926, and also instituted a clinic which continues to serve the people there. A Presbyterian mission opened in 1957. Other Protestant churches have also started work in the area since.

Primary Religion:

Tribal Religion

Disciples (Matt 28.19):

7%

Churches:

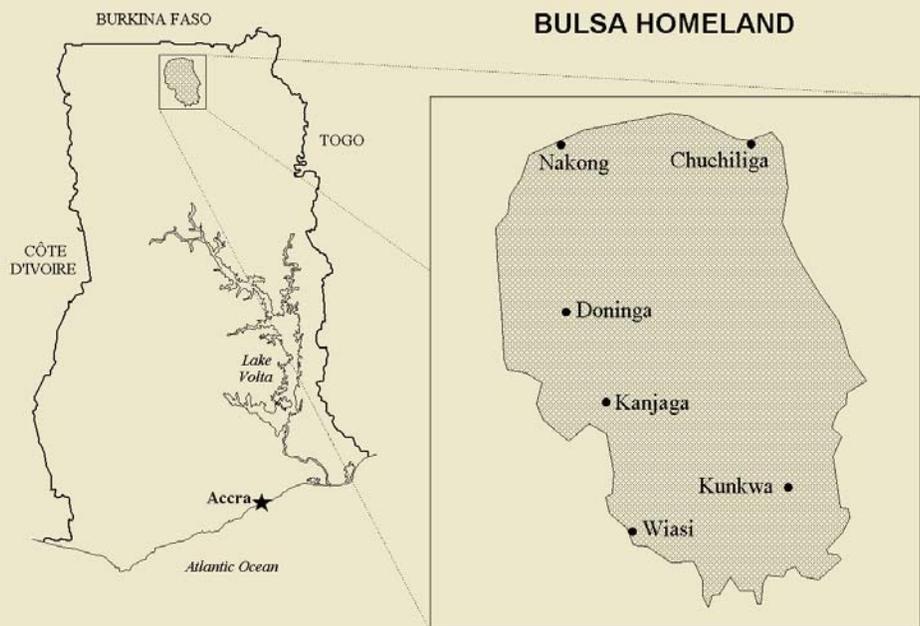
40

Scripture Status (Matt 28.20):

New Testament

Population (date):

131,000 (1994)



The Balsa of Ghana

Item Name	Item Note	Profile Summary
Have They Heard The Gospel?		
Call Themselves Christian (%)	10%	
Believe In Jesus As God & Only Savior (%)	7%	
Prophet/Good Man, But Not God's Son (%)	3%	
Believe In The Local Traditional Religion (%)	90%	
Have Not Heard Who Jesus is (%)	60%	
Number Of Pastors	7	
Number Of Missionaries Working	2	
Number Of Communities	Over 200.	
Number Of Churches	40	
Comment (Churches)	(There were a total of 48 churches in 1993.)	
Is The Word Of God Translated?	Yes, the New Testament was dedicated in 1996. There are also some scripture cassettes, and Old Testament translation is ongoing.	
Translation Medium	Some Gospels printed, also some cassettes	
Any Hinderance To Scripture Distribution?	<p>The Balsa churches need to consider the implications of the Gospel within their own cultural setting. Right now an artificial "church culture" is dominant in many of the churches. Some have been strongly influenced by various mission cultures, others by the very different southern Ghanaian culture. Neither deal very well with the deeper issues and concerns that the Bulsas face. The church has a history of very strong mission influence which continues today in the Catholic, Presbyterian and SIM missions. Very little of Balsa culture is investigated or considered in the worship and teaching of the missions. At the same time the Church of Pentecost, Methodist and Restoration Power churches are heavily influenced by Southern Ghana. The Assemblies of God churches have the best record.</p> <p>With the scriptures in their own language, the Bulsas will be able to see how God can help them where they are. However, strong outside influences may hinder this. There had been a general acceptance of the New Testament, but old attitudes die-hard. If the message is allowed to meet the people where they are and show them that God can help them in their everyday life, they will respond positively and the scriptures will be widely used. If they are only presented in the context of some other dominant culture, they will be used much less.</p> <p>The Buli New Testament will have an effect, but it will be hard and there may be some resistance from the mission influenced churches.</p>	
Forms Of Gospel Presentation Available (Summary)	Tapes Preaching at churches. A Bible day is held in October.	
What Kind Of Missionaries Are Needed?	The Balsa pastor who is continuing the translation of the Old Testament receives regular assistance from WBT translation consultants. This need has been met in the past. Pray that it will continue to be met in the future. Other local pastors need further Bible training. Continuing assistance needs to be provided by those who are already working in health care (Presbyterians), non-print media—helping Balsa people produce and record scripture-song tapes (WBT), ethnomusicology—affirming the use of Balsa music and dance in worship (WBT), and church planting (SIM).	
Population All Countries		Group Description
World Population For This People	131000	
World Population (Date)	1994	
World Population (Urban Percent)	30000	
Comment (World Population)	Urban population figure given by Peter Wangara.	
Countries Where People Group Lives		Group Description
Country Name	Ghana	
Country Name	Burkina Faso	
Country Name	Burkina Faso	
Geography & Environment		Group Description

The Balsa of Ghana

Item Name	Item Note
Location	The Balsa District, home of most of the Balsa people, is in the western part of the Upper East Region. The nearest city is the regional capital, Bolgatanga, 48 miles from Sandema, the Balsa District capital. Tono Dam, an artificially constructed lake is about 15 miles from Sandema. The nearest "mountains" would be a ridge of mountains across the Tono Dam in Burkina Faso and the Tongo Hills south of Bolgatanga (Nancy Schaefer). Balsa (Sandema) District, Upper East Region, 35 miles N-S, 27 miles E-W
Country	Ghana
Ecosystem Type	Savannahs
Geological Type	Plains
Elevation	200-500m
Longitude	W1
Latitude	N10
Climate	The climate is typical of northern Ghana--rainy season May through November and dry season December through April. The hottest month of the year tends to be March when temperatures of 104F day after day are typical. The weather is cooler during the harmattan months of November, December, and January. During the rainy season it is cooler during rains, but hot in between them. hot and dry with seasonal rain

Language & Linguistics

Group Description

Primary Language	BULI
Comment (Language)	Monolingual % from P. Wangara. Buli is used in most oral situations. It is rarely used for reading and writing as few materials are available and few people have these skills.
Alternate Language Names	Balsa, Kanjarga, Builsa, Buile and Guresha.
Attitude Towards Mother Tongue	Very receptive
Percent Monolingual (%)	90
Other Mother Tongues Of This Group	AKAN
Other Mother Tongues Of This Group	ENGLISH
Other Mother Tongues Of This Group	HAUSA
Comment (On Other Mother Tongues)	Some people, especially women, speak Akan because they like to travel there if they have family trouble and want to get away, sometimes to earn money. Balsa people do not tend to speak the neighboring languages; it is, in fact, quite rare unless they have married a person from one of the neighboring groups or are the child of such a marriage.
Linguistically Related Languages	KONNI
Linguistically Related Languages	MAMPRULI
Comments (Related Languages)	Konni is the apparently the closest but little research has been done on Konni. Buli shares some roots with Frafra, but also has vocabulary that is no even remotely related. There are also some similarities of grammar, but again some very different feature as well.
Neighboring Languages	MAMPRULI
Neighboring Languages	KASEM
Neighboring Languages	SISSALA
Neighboring Languages	GURENNE

Literacy

Group Description

Adult Literacy Percentage	15%
Literacy Attitude	Somewhat receptive
Active Literacy Program	Yes
Publications In Vernacular	21

The Balsa of Ghana

Item Name

Comment (Literacy)

Item Note

Ghana Institute of Linguistics, Literacy and Bible Translation (GILLBT) began a literacy program in Buli in 1978 when Claire Gray developed a series of 3 primers and a bridge to English book for Balsa speakers. These were replaced by 8 primers by Jean Dancy. Both these series are still in use along with others. Until 1990, most classes in the program were in the Sandema area, averaging 10-15 classes at any one time. In 1990, Peter Wangara assisted by Bob and Nancy Schaefer trained 90 teachers throughout the district. Most of the classes formed from this effort are now under the care of the NFED program. Peter Wangara remains GILLBT project manager and relates to these classes in cooperation with NFED.

Economics

Group Description

Subsistence Type

Agriculturalists

Average Annual Income

\$100/year

Occupation

All Balsa are farmers, using farms as the main source of food. The main farming season extends from May through November. During the rest of the year other tasks which support the farmer take place. These include house building, funerals, hunting, and other work.

Income Sources

Rearing domestic animals and cash crops. Other people may work at government jobs or engage in trade (summary from Nancy Schaefer)
Crafts, shea butter.

Products / Crafts

Two of the most common crafts are hat weaving (men) and pottery (women). Varying degrees of skills are acceptable and both are bought by other Balsa people in village markets. There is not much income made from these or other local crafts. They merely enable the peros making the item to recoup what he has put into it and give a little extra cash for soup ingredients or tobacco. Other locally made item include carced wooden stools used by the market traders, hoe and ax handles, calabashes made from cleaned and smoothed gourds, quivers made from the skins of small bush animals, and two kinds of baskets. All of these crafts can be made by anyone who has the inclination and the desire for snall supplementary (and often temporary) income. There are blacksmiths and there were brass casters in the long-ago past, but both of these activities are more in the line of professions or in these days small-scale industries (summary from Nancy Schaefer).

Trade Partners

Trade is done through markets the majority are local, but some Balsa travel as far as Kumasi to trade for rare items. There are also traders (Balsa, Kantosi, and from other people groups) who go between major Balsa markets and Navrongo, the nearest large non-Balsa town (summary from Nancy Schaefer).
Trade partners: Frafra, Kasenas, Dagombas, Ashantis, Kantosis.

Modernization / Utilities

There are several farming co-operatives in the area and at least one blacksmith co-operative (Nancy Schaefer).
Ploughs, tractors and mills are all being used.

Comment (Economy)

Teachers, who are supposed to have a well paid job, earn about \$50 a month.

Community Development

Group Description

Health Care (Quality)

Poor

Comment (Health Care)

Few people use medical facilities, mainly due to lack of access. Few people in outlying areas consider going to the clinic door sending their children when they are sick. Even in areas near a clinic only babies are sent to clinic because they are encouraged to do so by the free food that is given out. Most school-aged children do not remember ever seeing a doctor or rarely go to clinic. If medicine is taken, it is procured from a pharmacy directly on the advice of the pharmacist or any other person. Most school aged children suffer from worms, malaria, amoebae and bilharzia. Both Catholics and Presbyterians run mobile clinics in the outlying areas which give primary health care and work toward educating the population, especially women, about health care. The government is especially active in immunization programs and is attempting to upgrade health-care for the district. Sandema Hospital has been recently upgraded from a clinic to a hospital. A doctor was assigned to the district in 1989. Simpler surgeries are now performed there, but only a few months ago even the maternity ward was full of patients suffering from cerebral-spinal meningitis! There is now a clinic in Fumbisi. The Catholics have a clinic in Wiaga which has lab facilities and draws patients from as far away as Navrongo. (summary from Nancy Schaefer).

The Presbyterians run a primary health care training program. There is a government clinic with a doctor at Sandema.

Diet (Quality)

Fair

The Balsa of Ghana

Item Name

Item Note

Comment (Diet)	Good for adults, but poor for young children. It varies between these two levels for the children and young people in between. A variety of foods are available so this is an unnecessary situation due to a lack of knowledge about good diets (summary from Nancy Schaefer). The diet is mainly millet porridge with a variety of sauces including okra and bean leaf. A drink called flour water , bean cakes, fried millet cakes yams, groundnuts, and plantains are also eaten. Generally the diet is more on the side of starches than vegetables and meat.
Water (Quality)	Fair
Comment (Water)	Ghana Water and Sewerage Corporation drilled wells in the district in the 1980s, but water remains a problem. The number of wells is insufficient and the ones that they have are not well maintained. A hand-dug well project went on for a while resulting in a few more wells, but this has also stopped. Water from rivers and other surface water is a source of parasitic infections, bilharzia and guinea worm.
Shelter Description	The traditional shelter for the Balsa people is a compound of round and rectangular rooms, courtyards, and animal kraals for an extended family averaging about 30 people. The rooms are made from a mixture of mud, clay, and sand in the form of either damp balls or semi-dry blocks. These are built up in layers of -2 feet with a day or two of drying between each layer depending on weather conditions. These rooms are roofed with poles and thatch or with more of the clay mixture plastered on beams and poles. They are typical for northern Ghana and are quite adequate for the climate in terms of protecting people from the elements. In Sandema, however, these rooms tend to disintegrate faster than in other parts of the Upper East, lasting only about 3 years and sometimes collapsing during the heavy rains. This last is a serious concern because sometimes people are hurt or killed whenever this happens. We have been helping the people who work with us to buy cement and build concrete block structures for the safety of their families.
Energy/Fuel (Quality)	Poor
Comment (Energy)	Sandema has electricity but it is limited to the center of town and government buildings. People do have access to a good supply of firewood (summary from Nancy Schaefer).
Clothing	A wrap cloth for women with scarves and rubber slippers. Men wear smocks or locally purchased trousers, hats and sandals. The preferred colors for locally woven hats and smocks are black and white. Western style second hand clothing is worn for farm work.
Transportation	Usually travel is by foot. However bicycles, private lorries and trotros are used by some people. The government provides transport 2 days a week (summary from Nancy Schaefer).
Infant Mortality Rate	10%
Life Expectancy	60
Leading Cause Of Death	malaria, diarrhea, etc.
Comment (Community Development)	In 1991, under-fives mortality was 60 percent in the Builsa district. Since immunization programs have become more extensive, I am sure this has improved. I believe life expectancy is about 42 years old (Nancy Schaefer). Figures are estimates from Peter Wangara.

Society & Culture

Group Description

Family Structures	Family structure is basically the same as in other groups in northern Ghana. It is patrilineal but weakened by a greater amount of independence for women in the household. Because the bride price is low initially (a few gifts) men marry easily, but it is harder to keep a wife than it is to marry one. If a couple remains together, the husband is required to pay more animals to the wife's family and organize work parties to help them in the farming season. If a wife returns to her father's compound it is not her family's responsibility to urge her to return, but the husband's responsibility to go to them and inquire why she has not come home. When he does this, he will be required to pay for any family funerals he has missed. When he fails to do this, the marriage is dissolved. Any children belong to the husband, but this means that it is not unusual for a woman to have children in several compounds and for a husband to have children of several women living with him. There is a tendency then for Balsa women to keep whatever personal health they may accrue in their own father's house. Men live in their own family house with elders from their father's generation and "brothers" of their own generation and any sons and their families.
-------------------	--

The Balsa of Ghana

Item Name	Item Note
Neighbor Relations	<p>They get along well with their neighbors. Because it has a Paramount chief of its own, the Balsa people group is not subject to any other group.</p> <p>Several Balsa villages seem to have a special relationship to the Tongo shrine (in the area of the Talni dialect of Frafra) but seem to be connected only to that shrine which is general and not specifically Frafra.</p>
Authority / Rule	<p>Authority in the household is with the presiding elder. A group of related households make up a clan which also has a clan elder. Several clans may be grouped in a section with its elder who sits among the chief's advisors. The sections make up a village, which has a chief as its authority. The Paramount chief of the Balsa people is the Sandema naab.</p> <p>Village chiefs (appointed by the paramount chief in Sandema, handle external matters (taxes, dealing with the government), elders handle internal matters.</p>
Social Habits/Groupings	<p>Visiting, especially between an individual and his mother's family is a common pastime. Attending the market is another social activity. Within a compound, the open-sided, grass-roofed shelter outside the compound walls is a center for social activity. It is a gathering place for the family as a whole or groups with a common interest (young mothers, children, older women, men) at different times of the day. It is also the traditional place to receive visitors. The courtyards of nuclear families within the compounds are reserved for the activities of that small group or for private matters with visitors.</p> <p>Female incision is practiced, not male circumcision though. Up to 70% of marriages are polygamous.</p>
Cultural Change Pace	Slow
Identification With National Culture	Integrated
Self Image	Prestigious
Judicial / Punishment System	<p>Cases are sent upward through the authority structure mentioned in the previous section. A case is expected to start at the lowest applicable authority and pass up only as necessary as far as the village chief. If it is still unresolved it may be reported to the police and enter the national justice system.</p>
Celebrations	<p>The Feok celebration is a harvest festival which is celebrated on a household and clan level. For about the last 20 years it has been celebrated in Sandema for all the Balsa people on a yearly basis.</p> <p>Other celebrations of the Balsa people would be their funerals and some national celebrations, particularly Independence Day on March 6. The funerals are celebrated twice: once at the time of burial and once (usually a year or more later) when the soul departs. At the time of burial the funeral lasts 3 days for a man and 4 days for a woman. Besides the actual burial, relatives and in-laws come for specific activities. Red clay is smeared on the principal mourners at the beginning of the funeral and is washed off on the first day of the funeral. Special foods are cooked and grief is alleviated by songs and dancing. The final funeral varies in length because a number of these final services may be joined together for family members who have died (Nancy Schaefer).</p> <p>Feok festival in November (commemorates a military victory in the 1890s, adapted from harvest festival)</p>
Recreations	<p>Visiting and going to market would be the main recreational activities. Within the house storytelling is an activity which is enjoyed by the entire family but especially the grandparents and the smaller children. Children have a variety of games which they enjoy, but they also like to visit with friends and relatives. Activities which might be regarded as recreational by other societies are not considered as such in the Balsa culture. These include hunting, gardening, pottery making and other crafts, singing and dancing (Nancy Schaefer).</p> <p>soccer, radio, dancing, drumming, talking</p>
Art Forms	<p>Balsa women produce very attractive pottery, but they do not regard it as an art form but rather as functional items for the home. Wood carvers produce stools which are also very attractive for use in the home and in the market. They also produce decorated axe handles which are seen frequently at the Feok festival and it seems that this decoration goes beyond function, to something that might be considered as art by the people.</p> <p>iron, brass, baskets, weaving, drumming, dancing</p>
Media	<p>At present few media activities are directed at the Balsa people. We did recently produce a scripture song tape based on the translation which is aimed at the group.</p>
Local Language Broadcasting	< 20 minutes daily
Attitude To Outsiders	Very receptive
Attitude To Change	Somewhat receptive

The Balsa of Ghana

Item Name

Comment (Culture)

Item Note

When we arrived in 1988, change of pace had been documented by several observers as almost static. Ghana Evangelism Committee had observed that the area had had no church growth for many years. Ghana Water and Sewerage personnel had installed hand pumps as a source for uncontaminated water, but noted that the people continued to choose the "white" water of the streams and shallow wells which they had been using prior to the installation of the pumps.

In more recent years, we have seen evidence that the Balsa people are becoming more open to change. There has been an increasing response to the literacy program, more people are using the hand pumps. In 1990 the vaccination coverage by the government reached 60 percent for the first time. Other changes include the first paved road in the district (through the middle of Sandema--still largely ignored by pedestrians); electricity in Sandema; more children attending school; and television.

With the election of assemblymen and other officials, the Balsa are more acculturated to the national society than before.

I would say that the Balsa people have a relatively good self-image. With the reputation as warriors, they have been in demand by the police force and military. Because they have had a paramount chief since the colonial days, they do not feel oppressed by any other group.

There is very little radio programming in Buli--only occasionally as material is available. We contributed one program through our literacy project which was aired for some time. The recent Scripture Song tape produced from the translation we have been working on will also be made available and will likely be aired often.

The Balsa people are receptive to outsiders. They are hospitable and helpful to us and as far as I have observed to others who come to live among them.

Youth

Group Description

Labor and tasks (6-12 year olds)

From childhood, Balsa people traditionally take part in all family activities including the work of the household. Even today as I answer these questions, a little group of 6-10 year old boys and girls are watching the cows and sheep outside our house. It is farming season and the crops are just beginning to come up. Balsa people do not tie their goats as other groups do, so someone must constantly watch the animals and the field. They are also expected to help mind small children in the house and also to care for very old people. As they become older boys will help with hoeing and weeding and girls will help with cooking and cleaning (Nancy Schaefer).
household, farming, watching animals, collecting termites for feeding the chickens

Youth Problems (Teens)

Drugs are a serious problem for young people especially in the towns and larger villages of the Balsa district. Another serious problem is sexual promiscuity resulting in the pregnancy of unmarried young girls. Those who go to school seem to have more problems of this sort than the ones who remain traditionally occupied. Recently a number of young people who had gone through the school system failed their exams (Nancy Schaefer).
no jobs, economic migration

Youth Greatest Needs (teens)

the greatest need of the youth is to have control and discipline in their lives. As society changes, primarily through formal education, the young people are experiencing freedom from traditional controls and thus are becoming out of control. Their education do not seem to equip them for meaningful living (Nancy Schaefer).

employment opportunities, health care facilities and personnel, agricultural development

Comment (Youth)

The literate mostly become teachers, teaching has become more attractive as a profession.

Education

Group Description

Primary Schools

20

Percent Of Eligible Students Enrolled

60

Teacher To Pupil Ratio

30

Language Of Instruction Early Years

Buli (Ghana)

Language Of Textbooks Early Years

English

Language Of Instruction Later Years

English

Language Of Textbooks Later Years

English

Number Of Schools > 90% Homogeneous

20

Comment (Education)

Adult education is handled by the department for Non-Formal education. Balsa district has "shepherd schools" staffed by volunteers. These schools enable shepherd boys to receive an education (summary from Nancy Schaefer).

Barker notes 18 schools

The Balsa of Ghana

Item Name	Item Note
<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> Church Growth Status of Christianity </div>	
Reached Status	Selected
Lay Leaders	5
Christian Clinics/Hospitals	1
Christian Literacy Centers	1
Comment (Church Growth)	<p>Figures by Peter Wangara.</p> <p>At present 8 churches/missions are working here (Catholic, Presbyterian, Assembly of God, SIM/Good News, Methodist, Restoration, Salvation Army, Church of Pentecost). The Baptists have also had a preaching point here. On the other hand, few would consider that all necessary resources had been pledged. Few churches have permanent buildings or even sufficient benches to seat their congregations in temporary buildings. Most have pastors, but many of these pastors are overseeing several congregations. Few have the money to buy the literature and other materials that would help them with teaching their members and doing outreach. So some are engaged without being supported. None would say that the group has been reached. There is a goal by several churches to evangelize half of the district by the year 2000. Most mission activity has been limited to Sandema and most of the outlying areas have not been reached with even the barest minimum of the gospel.</p> <p>SIM runs a dry season Bible school in a neighboring area which also serves the Balsa pastors working with SIM. Other pastors are trained at their national Bible schools and seminaries. Some are not trained.</p> <p>The Catholics have a clinic at Wiaga which has a good lab as well as trained nurses in charge.</p> <p>GILLBT has a Literacy Office and Manager in Sandema which serves over 40 classes for adults across the district. The Catholics oversee a number of "shepherds schools" which serve children who are not a part of the Ghana Education Service schools due to irregular attendance. The Ghana government department of Non-formal Education coordinates the activities of both these groups. (The NFED program involves both GILLBT and Catholic personnel.)</p>
<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> Religion & Response Status of Christianity </div>	
Religious Practices & Ceremonies	<p>Barker describes the standard or ideal according to Balsa tradition. His summary of Kroger is o.k. except for the Feok festival. Feok is the general name for the harvest rituals. Individual houses and clans have their own feok. About 20 years ago Balsa people decided to stage a yearly cultural festival which includes the warrior and dance troupes of different Balsa villages and contests in various skills. It comes at the time of Feok and has become nationally known for its pageantry.</p>
Attitude To Christianity	Indifferent
Attitude To Religious Change	Somewhat receptive
Resistance / Receptivity	<p>In the mid 1950's a good start was made by missionaries from Scotland. But Sandema, the chief town is isolated, so the area was neglected when the missionaries left. Ian and Claire Gray (WBT/SIL) arrived in the late 1970's, they encouraged existing Christians and SIM to start a work in the area. The church, which was small and immature, has known steady and gradual growth.</p> <p>In the past, receptivity has been limited especially by an understanding of Christianity. As more Christians are better informed and more mature in their faith, receptivity among the general population is increasing.</p>
Religious Analogies & Bridges	<p>The personal aspect of worship could be a bridge in reaching Balsa people. Family relationships are another key. The testimony of a close family member has been observed to be a very effective way of winning other Balsa people (Nancy Schaefer).</p> <p>The concept of ancestors as mediators can help understand the role of Jesus Christ.</p>

The Balsa of Ghana

Item Name

Spiritual Climate And Openness

Item Note

They are open to the Gospel within the cultural context: that is , in their language by other Balsa people. Generally they reject religion which is not offered in their cultural context (Nancy Schaefer).

The Balsa church needs to come to grips with the implications of the gospel in the Balsa cultural context. The church has a history of very strong mission influence which continues today in the Catholic, Presbyterian, and SIM missions. Very little of Balsa culture is investigated or considered in the worship and teaching of these missions. At the same time the Church of Pentecost, Methodist, and Restoration Power churches are heavily influenced by the cultural and religious practices of southern Ghana--also an outside cultural influence. The Assembly of God churches has the best record in this area. I think that a the Buli New Testament has an effect we will see a change coming, but it will be hard and possibly there will be some resistance from the missions-influenced churches. In the recent past, progress has been good in this area. All of the churches are active in promoting use of Buli in their services now and Paul Neeley (GILLBT ethnomusicologist) was instrumental in affirming the use of Balsa music and dance in their worship.

Despite their openness it is a spiritually dark area. The soothsayer has a lot of influence.

Comment (Religion)

Only 2 Balsa men have been able to remain in full time church work. No Balsa men have had a long term pastorate. Up until now every one after about 20 or 30 years has returned to paganism after being a pastor. This probably indicates deep underlying spiritual problems relating to Balsa religion have not been adequately dealt with. Balsa people who are relatively strong Christians still haven't dealt with the issue of ancestors. They tend to feel that they have chosen a better way, but not to realize the full implications of traditional Balsa religion (Nancy Schaefer).

In their culture it is very important to become an ancestor. You can only be venerated as an ancestor if you fulfil certain roles in the traditional religious context. This is why many older men return to paganism once they become eligible for the task of a family head and thus to become ancestors.

Recommended Approaches

Personal evangelism, discipling (Peter Wangara)

Current Needs

deliverance from bondage to sooth-sayers and ancestors, community development, evangelism (Peter Wangara).

Items For Prayer

- May God prepare the heart of the Balsa people for the NT, which will arrive in 1996.
- more enrolment in literacy classes.
- more voluntary teachers for literacy classes.
- funds for a literacy office (Peter Wangara).

History Of Christianity In Group

Year Began	1926
By Whom	Roman Catholic Church
Significant Events	Jesus Film has had major impact since the 1980s.

Status of Christianity

Scripture

Translation Status	In Progress
Available Scripture	New Testament
Form Of Scripture Available	Printed and Audio
Scripture Use	Majority of churches
Comment (Scripture)	NT dedication in 1996.
Other Forms Of Gospel Available: Literature	Yes
Other Forms Of Gospel Available: Recordings	Yes
Other Forms Of Gospel Available: Film/Videos	Yes
Other Forms Of Gospel Available: Radio	No

Status of Christianity

Missions and Churches

Organization Name	SIM International
Country Of Origin	United States
Main Ministry	Church Planting
Year Started	1978
Language Used By Workers	Buli (Ghana)

Status of Christianity

The Balsa of Ghana

Item Name	Item Note
Organization Name	Roman Catholic Church
Main Ministry	Other
Main Ministry	Other
Year Started	1926
Language Used By Workers	Buli (Ghana)
Organization Name	Presbyterian
Main Ministry	Medical
Main Ministry	Medical
Year Started	1957
Language Used By Workers	Buli (Ghana)

Christian Literature And Media Status

Status of Christianity

Literature Available	The only Christian literature is what we have produced in our translation and literacy program: the gospels of Mark and John and most recently Philipians and Colossians in a Bible study format.
Audio Recordings Available	We have just completed the first Buli Scripture Song tape with readings from Scripture and songs based on those readings (Nancy Schaefer). some tapes with Christian songs
Films Available	none (Nancy Schaefer) The Jesus Film has been a major influence. It is shown in English and translated into Buli.
Radio Programs Available	Only secular broadcasts.
Videos Available	none, but we are considering doing the Luke video.
Audio Visual Available	Gospel Recordings has recorded three tapes based on a series of picture books. These have not been generally available, but we recently purchased the set plus other picture books to have on hand when future recordings may be made. We are making these available for loan from our Translation Office.