

## The Tomo Dogon of Mali and Burkina Faso



photo by Edwin Bolwidt cropped CC

Approximately 800,000 Dogons live in a dry remote savannah area in Mali, spilling over into Burkina Faso. About 20 different languages are spoken in different communities. Unless they learn the language spoken by a neighbor they would not understand each other even though they all identify themselves ethnically as Dogon. The Tomo are one of these.

Dogon territory includes a rocky plateau in the West and a sandy plain in the east separated by a 400-700 meter high sheer cliff. The Dogon built their first villages in caves in this cliff, safe from the slave raiders. Isolated and distrustful of outsiders, they grew into a scattering of micro-communities, eventually each with a different language.

For centuries, the Dogon have resisted Islam. But as society modernizes, they are increasingly deciding that animistic religion is no longer adequate and grudgingly accept Islam for lack of an alternative or become Christians. The Église Chrétienne Evangélique church as well as the Roman Catholic church have each roughly between 20,000 and 25,000 members (children included).

The Tomo live southwest of the Bandiagara Escarpment and should not be confused with the Tombo who live on the plateau. They are the largest of the Dogon peoples by population. Along with other West African peoples, they are expert weavers in beautiful colors and designs cotton, silk or fibers extracted from bombax fruits. Woven blankets have been found dating back to the 11th and 12th centuries AD.

**Primary Religion:**

Islam/Animism

**Disciples (Matt 28:19):**

0.9%

**Churches:**

22

**Scripture Status (Matt 28:20):**

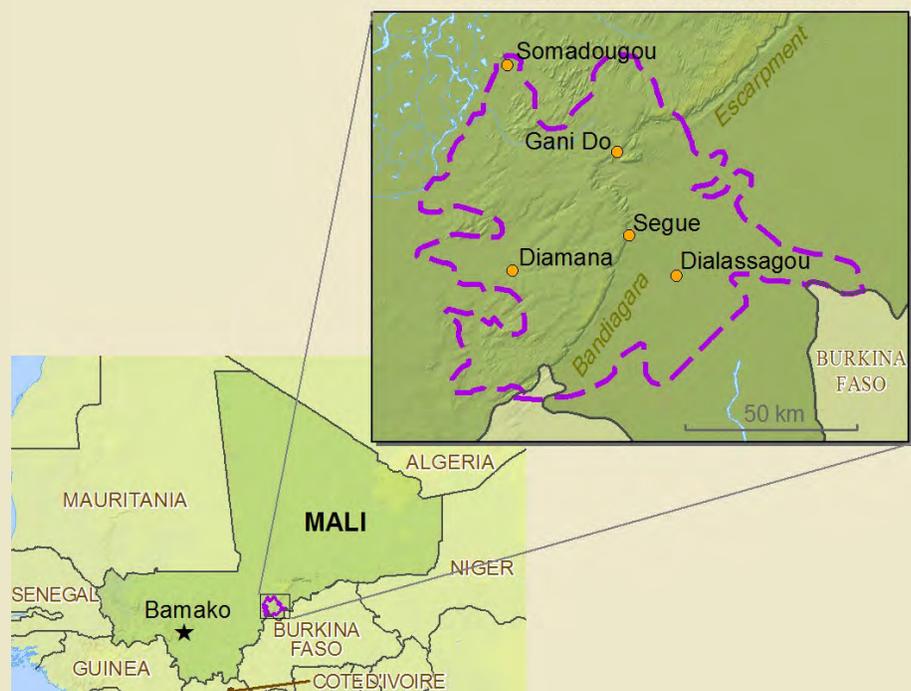
Portions

**Population (date):**

133,000 (1998)



### TOMO DOGON HOMELAND



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### Have They Heard The Gospel?

Is the Word of God Translated?	The Roman Catholics have a mission at Ségué. A Catholic translation team based in Ségué has translated the three-year lectionary into Tomokan and it is seemingly used successfully in the Catholic church in Bankass. In 1998, a team was working on translating the New Testament.
Other Forms of Presentation	
Audio recordings	Global Recordings
Video recordings	Jesus Film
Response to the Gospel	The translation of the Bible into Tomokan [dtm] would make a huge difference in the churches of the Tomo area. There would even be potential to wake up the interest of people in a related language (Teṅu So). Evangelical Christians are increasing in numbers in the area. Literature (spiritual as well as other domains) in Tomokan could stimulate young people to read. Nearly 4% of the people self-identify as Christians. 1,160 are Evangelicals and 3,800 are Roman Catholic.
Hindrances to Scripture Use	The Toro So language in which the entire Protestant Bible has existed since 2012 is not understood by the young Tomo pastors and layman of the Église Chrétienne Evangélique. Catholics have parts of OT and NT, however Protestants don't use the Catholic translation. There are mixed language congregations.
Bilingualism	Formal schooling of first 6 years is in French or Toro So [dts] and French. There is a small percentage of people who only speak Tomo Kan. 25% of the population grow up in a bilingual context. 55% speak their mother tongue and have some knowledge of a second and possibly third language. 15% of the population are bilingual (full speaking and understanding competence in two languages).
Number of congregations	Evangelicals—19, Catholics—3
Number that use the local language	Evangelicals—14, Catholics—3
Primary trade language	Bambara [bam]
Are cross-cultural missionaries needed?	Cross-cultural missionaries who would aim to encourage and strengthen the existing church in its challenges to reach the unreached with a holistic and sustainable ministry.