



The Kenga of Chad

The Kenga are a farming people, living in some fifty villages scattered throughout a mountainous region of central Chad, not far from the southern edge of the Sahara desert. European missionaries first brought the Gospel to this region in the 1950's. Although missionary activity has all but ceased, believers have continued to meet for worship in twelve Kenga villages, and a small Bible school directed by a Kenga man is training people for ministry. But the church is weak. Only the few who can read French or Arabic have direct access to the Scriptures. The only spiritual nourishment that the others receive is the Sunday sermon (if they are fortunate enough to be within hiking distance of a church), and it is not always sound teaching. Lacking deep roots in their faith, many Kenga Christians are tempted to fall back on practices of their traditional religion in times of crisis.

The 1980's and 1990's brought a time of major religious change for the Kenga, creating a window of opportunity for the Gospel. Most of the younger generation are now (at least outwardly) leaving the spirit worship religion of their fathers. But in large measure, it is Islam - the dominant religion of this part of Africa - to which they are turning. The strong sociocultural attraction of Islam poses a very real threat to the struggling church. The window is perhaps already beginning to close.

The Kenga church is in desperate need of fortification - through sound biblical teaching and through the translation of the Word of God into the Kenga language. As the church begins to mature in its faith, it will become more competent, and it will be able to continue the evangelistic work that is so essential among the Kenga.

Primary Religion:

Islam

Disciples (Matt 28.19):

1.5%

Churches:

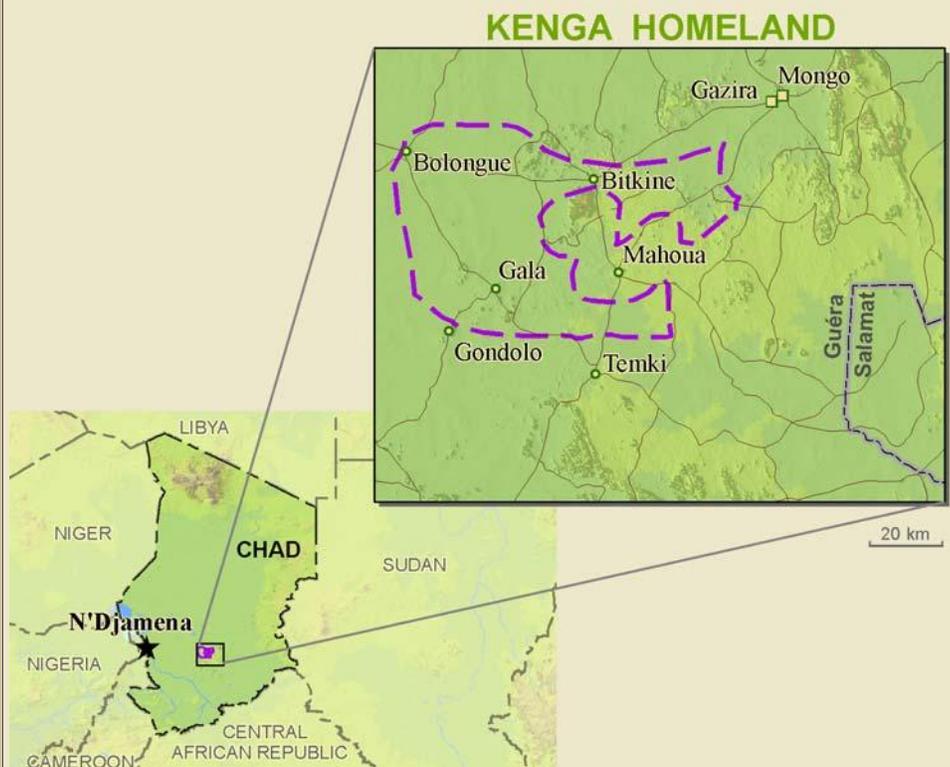
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Scripture Status (Matt 28.20):

None

Population (date):

40,000 (1994)



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Item Name	Item Note	
Have They Heard The Gospel?		Profile Summary
Call Themselves Christian (%)	4%	
Believe In Jesus As God & Only Savior (%)	1.5%	
Prophet/Good Man, But Not God's Son (%)	65%	
Have Not Heard Who Jesus is (%)	0%	
Believe Jesus Is A Myth (%)	0%	
Number Of Pastors	12	
Number Of Missionaries Working	7	
Number Of Communities	52	
Number Of Churches	20	
Is The Word Of God Translated?	No	
Forms Of Gospel Presentation Available (Summary)	They have some Short portions of scripture, song books, prayer books all from the Catholics. They also have two tapes from Gospel Recordings.	
What Kind Of Missionaries Are Needed?	Yes, they have a need for the Bible to be translated into Kenga. They need a literacy program as well. Bible training for Kenga leaders would be beneficial. They could also use community development in the areas of health and famine avoidance (grain storage, alternative crops, irrigation).	
Population All Countries		Group Description
World Population For This People	40000	
World Population (Date)	1994	
Comment (World Population)	The population from the Ethnologue is 30,000.	
Countries Where People Group Lives		Group Description
Country Name	Chad	
Country Name	Chad	
Geography & Environment		Group Description
Location	Central, Guéra prefecture, Bitkine subprefecture northwest and south of Bitkine, 52 villages	
Country	Chad	
Language & Linguistics		Group Description
Comment (Language)	Dialect names: Cenga (Tar Cenge), Banama (Tar Banama), Bidjir, Banala. Most are at least somewhat bilingual in Arabic, but it tends to be "market Arabic" - adequate for business, but inadequate for communication of spiritual things.	
Alternate Language Names	Kenge, Kenya, Cenge, Bokiyo	
Attitude Towards Mother Tongue	Very receptive	
Percent Monolingual (%)	80	
Second Languages	80	
Second Languages	20	
Comment (Second Language)	They speak at least a little bit of those languages. It tends to be mostly "market Arabic" adequate for business but not the communication of spiritual things.	
Other Mother Tongues Of This Group	ARABIC, SHUWA	
Other Mother Tongues Of This Group	ARABIC, SHUWA	
Other Mother Tongues Of This Group	FRENCH	
Other Mother Tongues Of This Group	FRENCH	
Linguistically Related Languages	KUKA	
Linguistically Related Languages	BILALA	
Linguistically Related Languages	BILALA	
Linguistically Related Languages	KUKA	

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Item Name	Item Note	Group Description
Linguistically Related Languages	MEDOGO	
Linguistically Related Languages	MEDOGO	
Neighboring Languages	MOKULU	
Neighboring Languages	ARABIC, SHUWA	
Neighboring Languages	DANGALEAT	
Literacy		Group Description
Adult Literacy Percentage	15%	
Percent Literate For Men	0%	
Percent Literate For Women	0%	
Literacy Attitude	Very receptive	
Active Literacy Program	No	
Comment (Literacy)	There is possibly 15% literacy in French and 1% in Arabic. Women's literacy rate is 1%. The Regional Literacy Center in Mongo wants to begin a Kenga Literacy program. They would use a translator-produced primer. A literacy program has been temporarily suspended.	
Economics		Group Description
Subsistence Type	Agriculturalists	
Occupation	Virtually all Kenga living in the villages are farmers (millet), with the exception of one or two dozen teachers (who teach in public schools in the villages). Kenga people living in n'Djamena hold various "city" occupations, from government jobs to construction work.	
Income Sources	The sale of surplus millet, some mangos, guavas, and lemons. A few own ox carts and receive income from transporting goods for others.	
Products / Crafts	Other than millet they are able to grow some cotton, mangos, guavas, lemons, and other vegetables. For crafts, they make a few woven mats from palm leaves, clay jars for carrying and storing water, and cotton thread and fabric (used for Burial); however, most of these are made for private use. Few are sold.	
Trade Partners	They trade with Arabs, who live in scattered villages and camps throughout the Kenga region. The Kenga give millet in exchange for milk or meat. They also pay the Arabs for blacksmith services.	
Modernization / Utilities	<p>Most compounds have kerosene lanterns that are used somewhat sparingly due to the high price of kerosene (approximately 80 cents a liter as of November 1996). Kerosene is virtually never used for cooking.</p> <p>Many own flashlights, also used sparingly. Short-wave radios and digital watches are not uncommon. There are also a few bicycles or mopeds. Other than this, there is very little evidence of modernization - no commercial utilities (electricity, water, telephone, etc.) Pit latrines are used by a small minority for sanitation.</p>	
Community Development		Group Description
Health Care (Quality)	Poor	
Comment (Health Care)	There are two or three places where the fifty-two villages may go for health care. They are staffed by government or missionary trained Chadian nurses (mostly men). Basic diagnoses, dispensing of pills, and injections are given. Many villages also have someone who dispenses the most basic medications for a small profit.	
Diet (Quality)	Fair	
Comment (Diet)	Their staple food is Millet "bread" (more like a heavy paste) which is dipped in a sauce of wild leaves, meat, or dried fish. Other foods include: peanuts, ochre, beans, tomatoes, hot peppers, corn, and milk (for children). Fruits are grown mainly for cash, include mangoes, guavas, and lemons.	
Water (Quality)	Fair	
Comment (Water)	The water is adequate for most villages. Drinking water comes from wells, some of these just being holes dug in the sandy bed of a wadi. In the rainy season (and a short time after), water for feeding animals, washing, and bathing is found in seasonal ponds/puddles. Water is not used to irrigate crops (except fruit trees).	
Shelter Description	In the villages shelter consists of round mud-brick huts with a thatched roof. In towns, rectangular mud-brick houses with flat roofs are more common.	
Energy/Fuel (Quality)	Poor	

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Item Name

Comment (Energy)

Item Note

All cooking is done on firewood, which is fairly scarce throughout much of the Kenga area. Kerosene is used in small lanterns for light but sparingly.

Clothing

Women wear colorful "African" print fabric, either wrapped around the body or tailored into a dress. Usually a matching head covering is worn when they are outside the compound and not working. Men wear second-hand western clothing or a Jalabiya - a long robe worn with or without pants underneath, typical of the Arabs. (Muslims wear them, but the clothes are not necessarily having religious connotation as some Christians wear them.)

Transportation

There is no available public transportation.

Society & Culture

Group Description

Family Structures

Patriarchal, with marriages generally being patrilocal (the wife moves to the compound of her husband), Those who practice Islam of the traditional religion may be polygamous. Intermarriage with neighboring ethnic groups is not very common, but it does occur and does not seem to be frowned upon.

Neighbor Relations

The Kenga live in a symbiotic relationship with the Arabs, who are their chief trading partners. At the same time, they are distrustful of the Arabs who are blamed for thefts of grain and animals and whose cattle sometimes destroy portions of the Kenga millet fields. Kenga are culturally related to Dangaleaf, Mokoulou, Migaana and other "Hadjerai" (mountain people) groups nearby, and enjoy peaceful relations with them.

Authority / Rule

Village chiefs are proposed by the villagers, but they are confirmed by representatives of the national government. They resolve small disputes. Larger ones are brought to the chief of the 'canton', who traditionally ruled the Kenga in a monarchical fashion. (Today he is a government appointee/employee.) Each village also has a "chief of the land" who holds the religious power (as a servant of the Margai spirits). He is the Traditional chief, but his political power has been drained off by the newer village chief described above. The "chief of the land" post tends to pass from father to son.

Social Habits/Groupings

Most villages comprise several clans that trace their ancestry to a common man. Each clan lives in its own neighborhood, and within the clans extended families live together.

Cultural Change Pace

Slow

Identification With National Culture

Integrated

Self Image

Prestigious

Judicial / Punishment System

Trials are heard first by the village chief. May be appealed to chief of the whole Kenga canton. The government-appointed sub-prefect has final authority. Punishments include fines and jail terms, also restitution of property and damages to the plaintiff.

Celebrations

Muslim feasts (Ramadan, Prophet's birthday, etc.) Christian feasts (esp. Christmas, New Years, Easter) All observe rest on the "sacrifice days" declared by the chief of the land about once or twice a week during rainy season (declared in hopes of improving the harvest).

Recreations

Soccer and traditional games

Art Forms

Almost no forms of art exist just for the sake of art. They do take time to add decorative flare when roofing a house, weaving mats, baskets, or platters, or making pottery. Traditional dances are done at non-Christian funerals.

Media

They receive news through short-wave radio in French or Arabic. They do not have television, newspapers, or films. Gospel recordings did a couple of tapes with Kenga preaching and singing a couple of decades ago.

Local Language Broadcasting

None

Attitude To Outsiders

Somewhat receptive

Attitude To Change

Somewhat receptive

Youth

Group Description

Labor and tasks (6-12 year olds)

They help their parents with farming and household tasks starting around the age of 6.

Youth Problems (Teens)

Pre-marital sex is a growing problem among the youth. Drunkenness seems to be on the rise.

Youth Greatest Needs (teens)

Better health care and education. The Chadian government did seem open to mother-tongue education (for the first years of school), which could well be the key to a more successful education system. An agency is also interested in helping establish this and hopes to work closely with the government.

Education

Group Description

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Item Name

Comment (Education)

Item Note

Most villages have a government primary school (usually only through 5th grade) that follows the French colonial education system. But frequent teacher strikes and absences combined with non-appropriate education techniques and materials make the system very ineffective. Many children never attend school, particularly girls. Many others drop out. Higher education is available in the town of N'Djamena. Koranic schools are gaining popularity as an alternative.

Church Growth

Status of Christianity

Reached Status

Engaged

Reached Classification

Unevangelized

Total Baptized

400

Bible Schools

1

Christian Clinics/Hospitals

1

Comment (Church Growth)

Lay leaders: there are a few Sunday School teachers and youth leaders. The average attendance is eighty people per congregation. There is one small Bible school in Bitkine. There are no literacy centers. There are three Protestant missionaries and four Catholic missionaries.

Religion & Response

Status of Christianity

Religious Practices & Ceremonies

Traditional religious beliefs seem to remain to some degree in the hearts of all but the most committed Christians, despite the great impact of Islam and, to a lesser extent, Christianity in recent years. Most Muslims and nominal Christians will, in times of personal or family crises or sickness, consult a "seer", and they will offer to the spirits the sacrifice prescribed.

During the rainy season, the work week is still punctuated by one or two weekly "sacrifice days." On these days, the "spirit chiefs" of the village will sacrifice a chicken or goat, or sometimes they will simply pour out a grain offering (millet) on the ground, in hopes of procuring a better harvest. No one is permitted to work in their grain fields on a sacrifice day, and everyone (including the Christian) complies.

Attitude To Christianity

Very receptive

Attitude To Religious Change

Very receptive

Resistance / Receptivity

Christian workers are welcomed with open arms. In the past Christians were persecuted severely by the Muslims, but now there is no open antagonism.

Spiritual Climate And Openness

Very open. The Kenga are leaving the traditional religion (at least outwardly) at an unprecedented rate, and they are choosing between Islam and Christianity. Islam has gained more converts in the past decade than in years previous, while the size of the Christian church has grown very slowly. But Christian workers are welcomed by all the Kenga with open arms. In the past Christians were persecuted severely by Muslims, but today there is no open antagonism against Christians.

Recommended Approaches

Fortify the existing church through Bible translation and training of leaders! Many Kenga Christians have evangelistic hearts, but lack the resources, knowledge, and boldness to do effective evangelism. Making God's word available in the Kenga language in an indispensable step in providing the spiritual nourishment the church needs to grow strong.

Current Needs

The Scriptures in Kenga!
More Bible training for leaders
Mother-tongue literacy program so that the church will be able to use the translated scriptures
More community development work, especially in the areas of health and famine avoidance (grain storage, alternative crops, irrigation)

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Item Name

Items For Prayer

Item Note

Pray that the pastors of the Kenga churches and other Christians leaders would be uncompromisingly devoted to Christ. Pray that they will live as an example to the church and a light to those in darkness.

Pray for the small Bible school (currently six students) in the town of Bitline, where future pastors (Kenga and others) are being trained in God's Word. Pray for Djibrine Banatine, the director of the school.

Pray that the Lord would reverse the strong tide of Islam that is currently sweeping through the Kenga area, and that He will make Kenga Christians bold to preach the good news even to Muslims. Pray that the Holy Spirit would move to bring genuine renewal and revival in the small struggling Kenga church where there is so much nominalism.

Pray for the resumption of the Bible translation project. It was begun in 1993, but in 1996, it was suspended when the translators had to return home.

Pray for sound teaching in the churches, that the teaching of God's Word would take root.

Pray for unity among church leaders.

Pray that God would prepare the hearts of all Kenga people to receive His Word.

History Of Christianity In Group

Status of Christianity

Year Began

1950

By Whom

Swiss Brethren

Significant Events

A Swiss/French group called "The Guera Mission" targeted specifically the Guera region of central Chad, bringing the Gospel to the Kenga, Mokoulou, and Dougaleat people.

Comments (History of Christianity)

See the group listed under initial contact. It should be a Swiss/French group called "The Gura Mission."

Scripture

Status of Christianity

Translation Status

In Progress

Available Scripture

Portions

Form Of Scripture Available

Printed

Scripture Use

Unknown

Scripture Use

1

Comment (Scripture)

There was a translation effort in progress from 1993-1996, but the program was suspended. No specific reason for suspension is given. The available portions are short ones that were translated by the Catholic Church.

Missions and Churches

Status of Christianity

Organization Name

Mennonite Central Committee

Country Of Origin

United States

Main Ministry

Community Development

Number Of Expatriate Workers

1

Organization Name

Roman Catholic Church

Number Of Expatriate Workers

4

Organization Name

Methodist

Main Ministry

Medical

Main Ministry

Medical

Number Of Expatriate Workers

2

Christian Literature And Media Status

Status of Christianity

Literature Available

Short Scripture portions, song books, and prayer books by the Catholics

Audio Recordings Available

Two tapes by Gospel Recordings.

Films Available

none

Radio Programs Available

none

Videos Available

none

Audio Visual Available

none