

The Western Maninka of Mali



representative photo

Dust swirls as plows cut through the fertile soil of the northern African plains. Western Maninkakan speakers work hard and eat what their land produces. However, insufficient rainfall and an increased population put strains on crop production.

If the harvest proves insufficient, men trek to a regional goldmine, working with traditional pick axes and bowls, to supplement family incomes. The Western Maninka intermarry with the Fulani, a neighboring people group, and co-exist with their closer ancestral cousins, the Soninke.

A makeshift fence of branches guard a modest village. Western Maninka homes are mud huts with grass roofs. Each morning, many hike to fertile farmlands, though a lack of rain minimizes the harvest of millet, corn, peanuts and beans. Daily family activities include caring for livestock such as cattle, sheep and goats

In this economically challenged area, there is very little education available, and living conditions are difficult. Animistic worship and traditional folk religion influence life. On celebratory nights, they perform ancient rituals. People who do not want to participate stay indoors, protected from the ceremony dangers. Sacrifices of cola nuts and animals are common, along with an observance of a weekly high holy day.

Primary Religion:

Animistic/Traditional

Disciples (Matt 28:19):

1%

Churches:

Yes

Scripture Status (Matt 28:20):

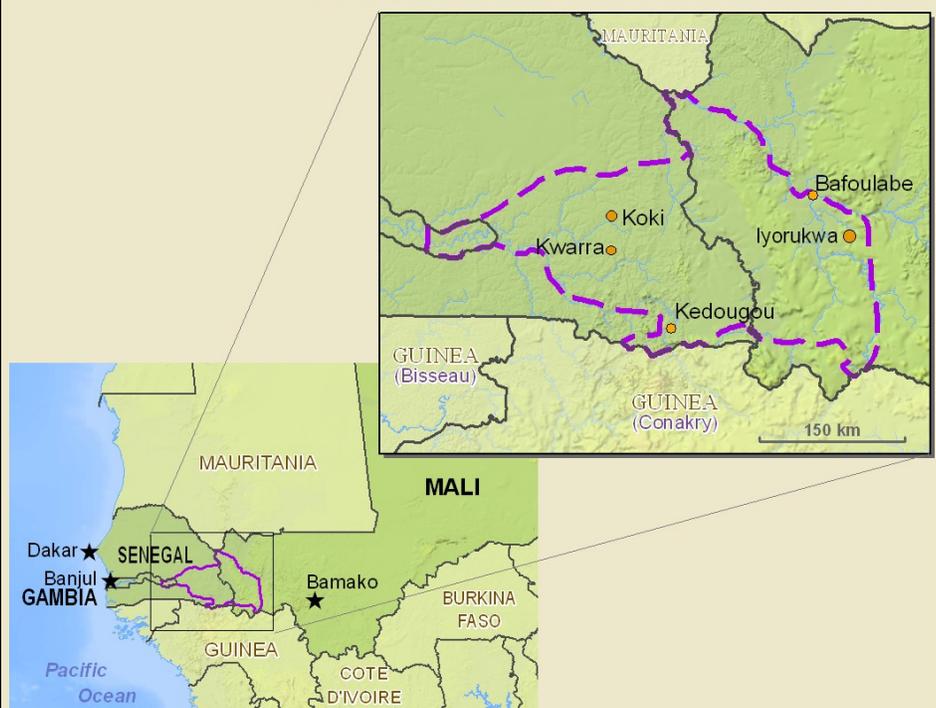
Genesis and Luke

Population (date):

194,000



WESTERN MANINKAKAN HOMELAND



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Have They Heard The Gospel?

Is the Word of God Translated?

The Christian minority is 1 percent of the community. Because they have no heart language Scripture, pastors train in a regional language. They do discover nuggets of truth in God's Word, but many find explaining Scripture in their Western Maninkakan mother tongue difficult. Because parishioners have no common reference points, it affects their ability to understand the simple Gospel. In spite of these challenges, believers are passionate about Jesus, and their faith is contagious.

Other Forms of Gospel Presentations

Churches and believers eagerly await God's Word in booklets, MP3 recordings and cassette tapes in their mother tongue, which they can understand. Plans are also underway for Scripture-based songs and radio broadcasts. Local churches plan to begin literacy training and future translation projects. They want a complete New Testament.

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Status of Christianity

Responsiveness

Comment on Responsiveness

In addition to praying for a heart language Bible, pastors are discussing the possibilities of opening a Christian school in order to provide a godly worldview education for future generations. Adult literacy classes will allow villagers to read God's Word, which will give Christians a clear understanding of God's gift of Jesus, daily guidance and a future hope. Believers will no longer be swayed by other religions or customs. Instead, God's Word will strengthen their faith so they can share it with family and friends.