



## The Saafi of Senegal

The Saafi are an agricultural people living in the west of Senegal, southwest of and near Thies and the coast. They cultivate millet, peanuts and beans as well as a variety of fruit trees. The Saafi live in square mud brick houses, clustered together in enclosed compounds.

The Saafi are part of the larger Cangin people groups, originally all speaking one language. For various reasons, over the centuries they split their different ways and now have distinct, separate languages. Christianity came to the Saafi in the early 1800's, but in the last 40 years the area has become largely Muslim.

Desertification is causing the water table to drop each year and water is becoming more and more scarce. Spiritually, most Saafi who practice Islam or Catholicism also retain many of their traditional animistic beliefs. It is these beliefs that need to be challenged with the Gospel.

**Primary Religion:**

Muslim

**Disciples (Matt 28.19):**

< 1%

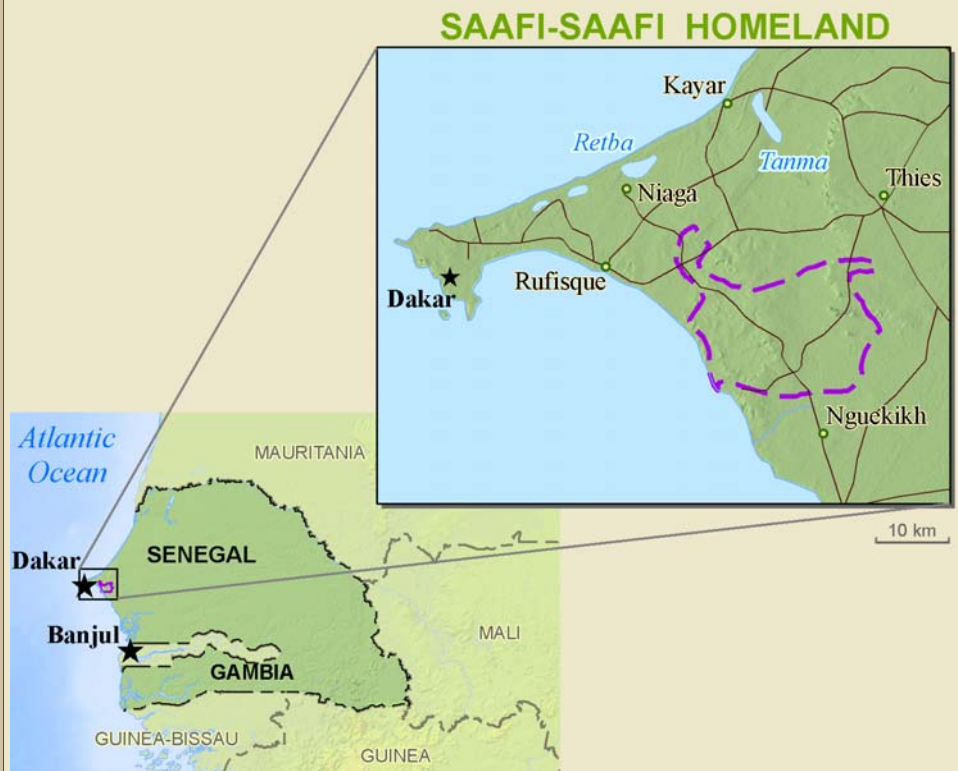
**Churches:**

**Scripture Status (Matt 28.20):**

Work is in progress

**Population (date):**

25,000 (1977)



# The Saafi of Senegal

## Item Name

## Item Note

### Have They Heard The Gospel?

## Profile Summary

Call Themselves Christian (%)	10%
Believe In Jesus As God & Only Savior (%)	< 1%
Comment (Jesus As God & Only Savior)	<1% evangelicals
Prophet/Good Man, But Not God's Son (%)	90%
Comment (Pastors)	A few Catholic catechists
Number Of Missionaries Working	2
Comment (Churches)	Total number of churches is unknown. There are a few Catholic chapels.
Is The Word Of God Translated?	No, but work has started.
Forms Of Gospel Presentation Available (Summary)	None
What Kind Of Missionaries Are Needed?	People need to have an encounter with the living Lord rather than another set of rules to follow. People strongly believe in the power of good and evil spirits; they will need to be convinced of something more powerful before they would change allegiance from these. Teaching literacy is a service that missionaries can give. They may also develop literature in the heart language of the Saafi.

### Population All Countries

## Group Description

World Population For This People	25,000
World Population (Date)	1977
World Population (Urban Percent)	5

### Countries Where People Group Lives

## Group Description

Country Name	Senegal
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### Geography & Environment

## Group Description

Location	West Senegal, southwest of and near Thies and the coast.
Country	Senegal
Ecosystem Type	Savannahs
Geological Type	Plains
Elevation	40 meters
Climate	Rainy season, July through October. The average minimum temperature is 15 degrees Celsius. The average maximum is 30 degrees Celsius.

### Language & Linguistics

## Group Description

Alternate Language Names	Safen, Serer-Safen, Serere-Safen, Safi, Safi-Safi, Saafi-Saafi
Percent Monolingual (%)	0%
Other Mother Tongues Of This Group	FRENCH
Other Mother Tongues Of This Group	SAAFI-SAAFI
Other Mother Tongues Of This Group	FRENCH
Other Mother Tongues Of This Group	SAAFI-SAAFI
Linguistically Related Languages	PALOR
Linguistically Related Languages	NOON
Linguistically Related Languages	WOLOF
Linguistically Related Languages	PALOR
Linguistically Related Languages	NDUT
Linguistically Related Languages	WOLOF
Linguistically Related Languages	NOON
Linguistically Related Languages	NDUT
Neighboring Languages	WOLOF

# The Saafi of Senegal

Item Name	Item Note
Neighboring Languages	NOON
Neighboring Languages	SERERE-SINE
Neighboring Languages	PALOR

## Literacy

Adult Literacy Percentage	2%
Percent Literate For Men	0%
Percent Literate For Women	0%
Active Literacy Program	No

## Group Description

## Economics

Occupation	Agriculturalists (millet, beans, peanuts, vegetables, mango, and citrus). Other professional titles include masons, carpenters, well-diggers, mechanics. Some work in Dakar as domestic helpers. Some are teachers.
Income Sources	Peanuts, mangos, beans, vegetables, fruit.
Products / Crafts	Some pottery, winnowing baskets, arrows
Trade Partners	General population. Wolof. Black market.
Modernization / Utilities	Millet grinding mills, windmills to pump water

## Group Description

## Community Development

Comment (Health Care)	Traditional healers, dispensaries run by the government, villages with nationally trained workers. Medicine is scarce and very expensive.
Diet (Quality)	Good
Comment (Diet)	Millet and/or rice with vegetables, fish, milk. Supplies are adequate and of good nutritional value.
Comment (Water)	Villages along the main road have one faucet. Others have uncovered wells. In the northeast, there are some windmills which pump water for gardens. Two large projects tap into water from the main pipelines.
Shelter Description	Square, mud brick house with thatched roof (3 x 3 meters). Some houses are larger, concrete block, with several rooms, cement roofs. Several houses may be grouped together in an enclosed compound.
Comment (Energy)	Cooking is done over firewood. Bottled gas is available. Kerosene is used for lighting. Some villages have electricity. Charcoal is used for specific purposes and for warmth in cold season.
Clothing	Men: western or traditional (large cloaks called boubou). Women: Wrap-around material for skirt, large blouse.
Transportation	Main roads are good, and other smaller roads are adequate.
Comment (Community Development)	Generally most Saafi have a reasonable existence. Hygiene is the poorest factor of their lifestyle.

## Group Description

## Society & Culture

Family Structures	Many changes are evident as traditional practices give way to modern Islamic ones. One man may have up to four wives (Muslim), but traditionally, they would have only one or two. Both wives and their children will live in the same house with their husband, each having separate rooms. Some men will also have concubines where they inherit a widow, but she will not join him at his home. The chief of the compound is in the matrilineal line, but it is always a man. There are ten matrilineal lines existing in this group. (The last two have only recently been introduced.) Rules brought in by Islam are displacing matrilineality.
Neighbor Relations	Neighbors are always related. Often neighboring compounds were originally one, but they split over some disagreement that is always remembered.
Authority / Rule	The traditional chief is in the matrilineal line, and he appoints his successor who is usually one of the older men. He traditionally is the owner of the land. There is also an elected chief in the village and the two rule alongside each other. If someone wants some land, he must first go to the traditional chief who may or not grant him land. He then goes to the President of the rural community (in charge of a number of villages) who has the official power to decide; however, he will usually not contradict the traditional chief's decision, in order to avoid tensions. The traditional chief is also responsible for leading prayers in the sacred wood.

## Group Description

## The Saafi of Senegal

Item Name	Item Note
Social Habits/Groupings	It is a classless society without castes, outsiders doing certain jobs. Griots who carry on the oral tradition of the ancestry are also outsiders.
Cultural Change Pace	Rapid
Identification With National Culture	Similar
Self Image	Prestigious
Judicial / Punishment System	If a serious crime has been committed and the offender is known, then the family of the victim goes to the elected chief. He calls together the traditional chief and wise people to represent both parties. They discuss how the crime must be punished, how restitution will be made. If they cannot agree, then the matter will be taken to the prefect government officer who will try to mediate. If it is still not resolved, then it will then go to the Genarmaie and the formal court system (French). If a person tries to bypass this procedure, going straight to the Gendarmerie, he will be sent back to the chief.
Celebrations	This is a time of transition from traditional practices to ones that are modern. Boys are circumcised some time between 7 and 13 years old, but this is usually done in the dispensary with none of the traditional initiation rites. Where animism is still strong, however, traditional initiation rites are continued. Babies have a naming ceremony at eight days old. Other celebrations include marriages, funerals, and official dance feasts (for fund raising).
Recreations	Dancing, checkers. Children play with marbles. They also make toy cars from used cans and boxes.
Art Forms	Women are tattooed around the mouth; otherwise, little is done within the Saafi. They buy crafts from other groups.
Media	Most Saafi have radios with cassette players. Some televisions are found in villages with electricity. No newspapers, films or videos are available.
Local Language Broadcasting	None
Comment (Culture)	The Saafi are prestigious, but aware that the Wolof threaten to take over their culture.

### Youth

### Group Description

Labor and tasks (6-12 year olds)	Boys: Quite free to play, some caring for sheep and goats, some gardening. Girls: Caring for younger siblings, cooking, fetching water, pounding millet.
Youth Problems (Teens)	When there is only one wife, she can be very difficult. When there is more than one, she becomes much more pleasant; therefore, it is best to have more than one, although this can lead to rivalry and jealousy. Immorality is more of a problem these days. It is considered unacceptable to have children outside marriage.
Youth Greatest Needs (teens)	Women have a very hard working life fetching water, pounding, grinding, cooking, gardening etc. Life would improve considerably if they had more grinding mills and easier ways of obtaining water.

### Education

### Group Description

Percent Of Eligible Students Enrolled	50%
Language Of Instruction Later Years	French
Comment (Education)	French schooling system, Qu'ranic schools.

### Church Growth

### Status of Christianity

Reached Status	Engaged
Comment (Church Growth)	Several Catholic chapels.

### Religion & Response

### Status of Christianity

Religious Practices & Ceremonies	Traditional initiation rites. On Friday afternoons, the older men, women and those who have been to the Qu'ranic schools meet for prayer in the mosque. Although Islam is embraced by so many, animism is still at the heart of their lives. All wear amulets and charms for protection, and many pray at their family shrine.
Attitude To Christianity	Indifferent
Attitude To Religious Change	Indifferent
Resistance / Receptivity	Tolerant, but not curious about Christianity. Many are disappointed with Islam, feeling that it has not given what it promised to give.
Religious Analogies & Bridges	The Tabaski Muslim festival carries some sacrificial analogies, but it will depend on how they themselves see the meaning of the festival.

## The Saafi of Senegal

### Item Name

Spiritual Climate And Openness

Recommended Approaches

Current Needs

Items For Prayer

### Item Note

Very tolerant.

Bible translation and literacy work. People need to have an encounter with the Living Lord rather than another set of rules. People strongly believe in the power of good and evil spirits; they will need to be convinced of something more powerful before they change allegiances.

To get a literacy project started. The people are very keen to become literate as soon as possible. It is hoped that this will have a positive effect on their neighbors (especially the Wolof, who are not interested in literacy at the moment) as they see the benefits of becoming literate.

For initial contacts with the Marabouts. For wisdom in proclaiming the Gospel and knowing when the time is right for such power encounters.

### History Of Christianity In Group

### Status of Christianity

By Whom

Roman Catholic Church

Significant Events

The first Saafi people became Catholic in Popenguine and were baptized in 1824. Each year people from all over Senegal make a pilgrimage to Popenguine, where it is believed that an apparition of Mary will appear.

Comments (History of Christianity)

Begun in 1800's

### Scripture

### Status of Christianity

Translation Status

In Progress

Available Scripture

None

Form Of Scripture Available

Audio

Scripture Use

Unknown

### Christian Literature And Media Status

### Status of Christianity

Audio Recordings Available

Possibly one exists.