

The Tombo Dogon of Mali



Dogon village elder by Erwin 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 Tombo are one of these.

Dogon territory includes a rocky plateau in the West where the Tombo live 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 raids of the Fulani nomads who roamed the area. 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. In the few villages where Christianity has been lived out by missionaries, or locals who have become Christians elsewhere, one can indeed see the growth of the Christian faith. For example, in the village of Kani-Gogouna, each week the church community is larger than the week before, and Christians are considering building a bigger church, whereas the mosque is emptying at the same rate.

Primary Religion:

Animism / Islam

Disciples (Matt 28:19):

0.3%

Churches:

8

Scripture Status (Matt 28:20):

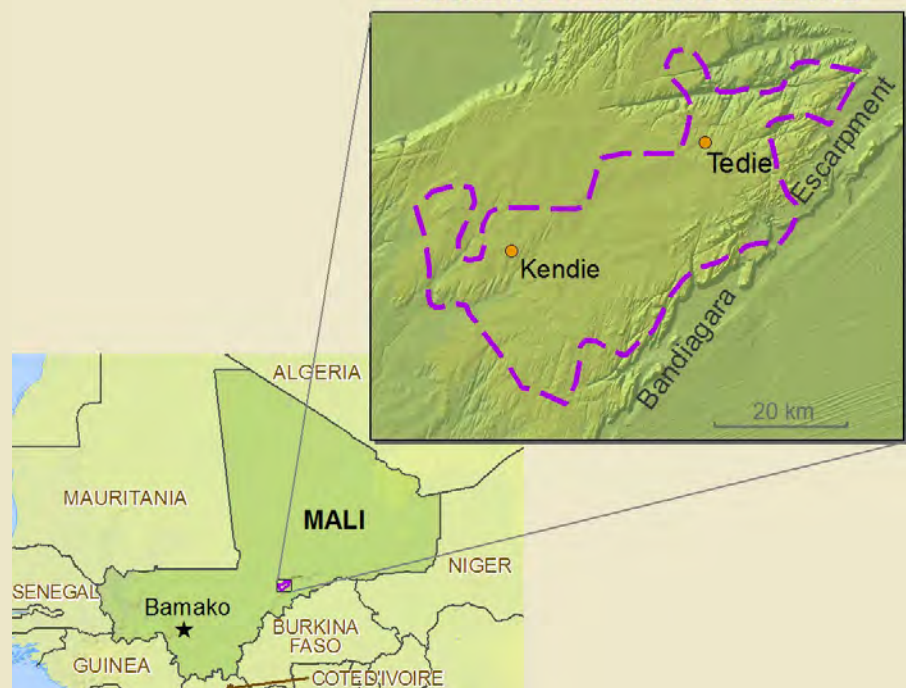
None

Population (date):

60,000 (2013)



TOMBO DOGON HOMELAND



The Tommo So Dogon of Mali

Have They Heard The Gospel?

Response to the Gospel	The church is not advancing much. A strategic move would be to translate Scripture into Tommo So Dogon [dto] to reach the people group, as a church leader put it a few years ago. Catholic believers are diminishing. Their young people starting to adhere to Islam. In some villages there are very strong believes in their traditional ethnic religion. 250 or 0.4% identify themselves as Christians.
Is the Word of God Translated?	No
Other Forms of Presentation	Tommo So people proud of their own language don't easily adhere to the Gospel in a different language. There are very few churches in the language area. In 6 out of 7 Tommo So villages where the (ECE) has a church it uses Toro So Dogon [dts] to conduct services and Tommo So only in one place. There is no Scripture in Tommo So however the entire Bible in Toro So is available. There are mixed language congregations.
Audio Recordings	None
Video Recordings	No Jesus Film
Estimated Number of Christian Congregations	8
Number that Use Primarily the Local Language in Their Services	2
Hindrances to Scripture Use	Tommo So people are proud of their own language and don't easily adhere to the Gospel in a different language. There are very few churches in the language area. In 6 out of 7 Tommo So villages where the (ECE) has a church it uses Toro So Dogon [dts] to conduct services and Tommo So only in one place. No Scripture in Tommo So however the entire Bible is available in Toro So. There are mixed language congregations.
Primary Language for Wider Communication	Fulfulde [ffm] or Bamanankan [bam]

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Bilingualism

Formal schooling of first 6 years in French or Toro So [dts] and French. There is a small percentage of people who only speak Tommo So. 25% of the population grow up in a bilingual context. 55% speak their mother tongue and have some knowledge of a second possibly third language. 15% of the people are bilingual (a full speaking competence in two languages).

Cross-Cultural missy's 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