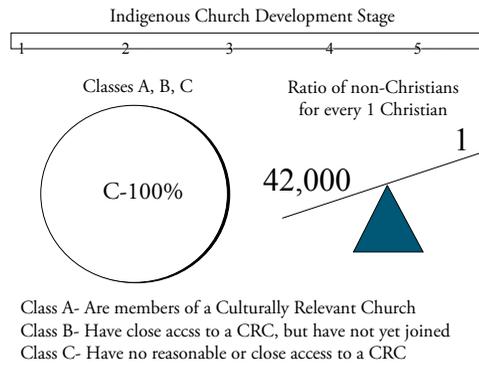




Quick Facts

Population: 1,700,000
 Mali: 1,000,000
 Senegal: 200,000
 Ivory Coast: 140,000
 Burkina Faso: 130,000

Religion: Islam
Believers: 0.002%
Scriptures: Portions
Ministry Tools: JT
Church Status: 0
Mission Status: 1
MS Subgroups: 20+



Identity: The Soninke are a widely dispersed group throughout West Africa. They claim their ancestors are Berbers, though their language is Northern Mande, which suggests they may be the offspring of intermarriage between the two groups. Only half of the ethnic group speak their original mother-tongue; the rest speak the language of the majority people where they live (Bambara, Songhai, Dyula, etc.).

Lifestyle: Traditionally, Soninke men have been farmers and traders. Today, due to a high rate of labor-migration, as much as 70% of the male population may be absent from villages doing migrant work throughout West Africa. Farming has been largely left to women, who cultivate their staple crops of millet, rice, sorghum and peanuts. They also raise large herds of cattle, horses, sheep and goats.

Customs: After a baby is born, the mother remains indoors for seven days

with the child. At the end of this time, the village imam is called to officiate the naming ceremony, in which he will whisper both Islamic and ethnic names into the child's ear. During this time the particular Muslim saint assigned to this day is believed to become the child's spiritual guardian throughout life.

Religion: The Soninke were forcibly converted to Islam beginning in the 11th century. Today their clergy, which are drawn from a special segment of society, are highly educated, and have been influential in spreading the faith as missionaries throughout West Africa. Most Soninke are members of the Tijaniyya Sufi brotherhood, though a large minority follow a syncretistic sect called Hamalism. This sect is noted for their ritualistic orgies. Any children that are produced from these rites are given special status in the community.

Christian Outreach: Progress has been slow among the Soninke, though several

mission organizations have labored among them for decades. There are a handful of isolated believers, but still no indigenous church. Portions of the New Testament have been translated enabling the production of the Jesus Film in Soninke, which has been viewed by at least 10% of the population.

How to Pray:

☞ The Soninke live in an incredibly inhospitable environment with temperatures ranging up to 125 degrees. Pray for the missionaries God has called to work among them, that he would give them special grace to adapt to this equatorial climate and to work effectively despite the obstacles.

☞ Due to the widespread distribution among the Soninke there is a need for several traveling evangelistic teams to be raised up. Pray for God to thrust out laborers who will faithfully carry out this difficult task.

☞ The Soninke practice black magic, and curse those they oppose. Pray for God's spiritual and physical protection over His ambassadors.

☞ Pray for continued favorable response to the Jesus Film, and that every Soninke might be able to view it.

**Every year 15,000
 Soninke die
 without Christ.**