

KAYES AND THE HASSANIYYA SPEAKERS OF MALI



CENTER FOR
THE STUDY
of Global
Christianity

GORDON  CONWELL
THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY



Kayes and the Hassaniyya Speakers of Mali

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Cover: Bafoulabé, Kayes Region, Mali | Wikimedia Commons: Jacques Taberlet (CC BY 3.0)

Unless otherwise noted, data is sourced from the *World Christian Database* and the following citation should be used: Todd M. Johnson and Gina A. Zurlo, eds., *World Christian Database* (Leiden/Boston: Brill, accessed December 2019).

ABOUT THE CSGC

The Center for the Study of Global Christianity is an academic research center that monitors worldwide demographic trends in Christianity, including outreach and mission. We provide a comprehensive collection of information on the past, present, and future of Christianity in every country of the world. Our data and publications help churches, mission agencies, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to be more strategic, thoughtful, and sensitive to local contexts. Please visit our website at www.globalchristianity.org.

DATA AND TERMS

This dossier includes many technical terms related to the presentation of statistics. A complete methodology document is found here: <https://www.gordonconwell.edu/center-for-global-christianity/research/dossiers>. We use a social scientific method for measuring religion around the world; namely, self-identification. If a person calls herself a Christian, then she is a Christian. We measure Christians primarily by denominational affiliation in every country of the world and these data are housed in the World Christian Database. Ethnolinguistic people groups are distinct homogeneous ethnic or racial groups within a single country, speaking its own language (one single mother tongue). These dossiers measure gospel access (also known as “evangelization”) by a number of variables, including but not limited to, evangelistic outreach, church planting, personal witnessing, sharing on social media, etc. These dossiers also utilize data from the United Nations related to socio-economic, development, and gender-justice related issues.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The French colonized Mali in the late 19th century and it gained independence in 1960. Catholics arrived in 1888 and Protestants in 1919. Mali is a Muslim-majority country (89%). There are many people groups in the region surrounding the city of Kayes in the Kayes region. Hassaniyya is a language of Mauritania similar to (but unintelligible with) Arabic. There are an estimated 1.3 Million Hassaniyya speakers in Mali, primarily in the west, including Maure/Moors, Saharan Arabs and two Bedouin peoples. Historically, the Hassaniyya people originate from Mauritania and other North African countries.

Mali is a very poor country and the Kayes region alone is home to numerous development projects, including fishing, forestry, agriculture, water/sanitation, and health. Poverty is highest in southern zones where households rely on rain-fed agriculture. Women in the region suffer from a double oppression related to both female genital mutilation, which is still common, and a severe lack of trained midwives, which results in high maternal and infant mortality. The region also has issues related to extremism, which overran northern Mali in 2012. Although removed from the area a year later, there are still accounts of disappearing missionaries and the region is even less hospitable to Christianity than it was previously. The Hassaniyya people are Tijaniya Muslims, a Sufi order established in the late 18th century by Ahmad al-Tijani. While points of congruence exist between this kind of Islam and Christianity, Christians workers should be cautious on the finer points of Muslim-Christian relations and dialogue in the region.



Young shepherd, Kayes region, Mali.

MALI QUICK FACTS

POPULATION (2020): 20,284,000
CHRISTIANS: 467,000 (2.3%)
RELIGION: 89% MUSLIM, 9% ETHNIC
GOSPEL ACCESS: LOW
PEOPLES: 62 LEAST-ACCESS: 54
DEVELOPMENT: 43 (AVG. 70)
GDP PER CAPITA: \$2,000 (AVG. \$15,300)
GENDER INEQUALITY: 68 (AVG. 37)

Many Muslims and Catholics in Mali continue traditional religious practices, and many see few contradictions between traditional religion and these monotheistic faiths. By contrast, Evangelical Protestant missionaries have traditionally asked converts to burn their fetishes. Evangelicals also had the tendency to reject all traditional culture; some Dogons today remember being reprimanded as young Christians

for dancing. There has been a reaction to this tendency in recent years, with new efforts to redeem elements of the culture, for example, through ethnomusicology. Traditional musical instruments are now widely accepted in churches.

In an oral society such as Mali, distribution of recordings of scriptures by SD cards and Bluetooth is a recent development, and groups meeting to listen to and discuss these recordings are increasingly popular. The 'Jesus' Film is the most popular form of evangelism in many churches. Millions have seen the film on television, in showings in homes, villages and towns, and more recently via DVD and online.

KAYES QUICK FACTS

POPULATION: 2,790,000
CHRISTIANS: 16,700
% CHRISTIAN: 0.6%
GOSPEL ACCESS: LOW

HASSANIYYA SPEAKING PEOPLE GROUPS IN MALI

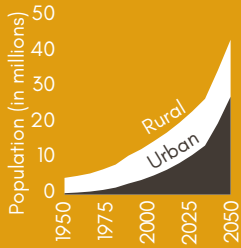
People	Population
1 Moor (Maure, Bidan)	588,000
2 Saharan Arab	284,000
3 Berabish Bedouin	203,000
4 Kunta Bedouin	60,900
5 Nimadi	410



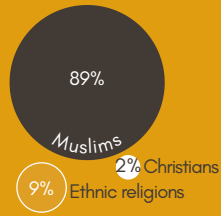
Recreation on the Senegal River.

MALI IN CONTEXT

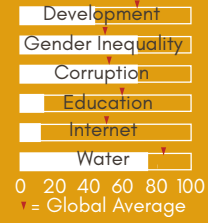
COUNTRY



population

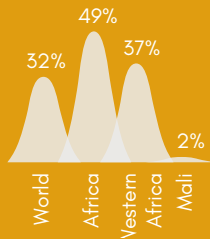


religion

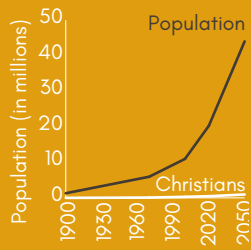


human need

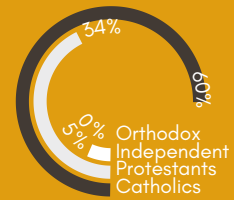
CHRISTIANITY



region

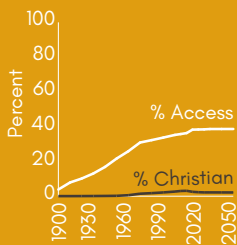


history

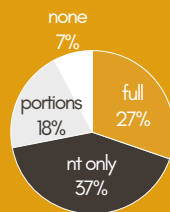


tradition

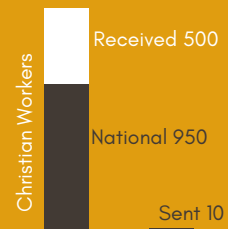
MISSION



evangelism



bible translation



personnel

LOCATION AND GEOGRAPHY

One critical characteristic of Mali is its low population density. The country belongs to the 20 least densely populated countries in the world with an average population of 13.3 people per km². Averages tend to hide large variations, however, and this certainly holds for a country with vast swaths of desert where few people live. Kayes (both the name of the region's capital and the region itself) and Kita are the two largest cities in the Kayes region. Kayes is the fifth largest city in Mali with a 2009 census population of 126,000. Meanwhile, the region of Kayes is the second greatest contributor to Mali's gross domestic product (GDP) at 18%, though a large gap exists between Kayes and Bamako, the capital, which accounts for 40% of Mali's GDP. Large families are preferred in Mali's agricultural areas in the absence of labor markets, but less so where commerce is dominant. As a result, average family size in Kayes is 12.8 people, but in Gao it is 8.0 and in Kidal 6.3.

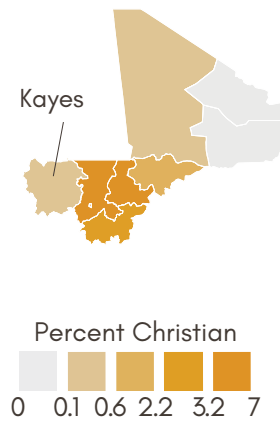
HISTORY

According to one 11th century Arab account, despite Islam's presence much earlier in the country, Islam became favorable to the king of Mali after traditional religionists failed to end a drought. In one account, a visiting Muslim cleric required the king to embrace Islam and pray through the night, which purportedly ended the drought and shamed the local clerics.

In 1325, famous Muslim Berber traveler and scholar Ibn Battuta visited the court of Mali. To his disdain, the court was filled with both Islamic officials and representatives of traditional practices such as Dugha, a local musician with four wives plus numerous concubines exhorted the king to uphold the work of his predecessors. Ibn Battuta described a Muslim king of Mali whose devotion was not unmatched by his and his people's sincere participation in traditional African practices.

At its peak, the Songhai Empire of West Africa, of which much of today's Mali was a part, was one of the largest in African history. Its first king, Sonni Ali, persecuted Muslim religious scholars and forbade the observance of Islamic law among members of his court while pronouncing the Muslim creed and salat. This apparent vacillation was not a wholesale rejection of either Islam or traditional

CHRISTIANITY IN MALI BY REGION



Bamako and Ségou are the most Christian regions in Mali at 7% and 6% Christian respectively. By contrast, Kayes is 0.6% Christian.

Large families are preferred in Mali's agricultural areas in the absence of labor markets and the average family size in this region is 12.8 people.

Hassaniyya is not intelligible with other Arabic varieties despite being a Semitic Arabic language. The language is nomadic between Mauritania, where the majority of Hassaniyya speakers are located, and Mali.

religion(s) but rather a struggle to maintain power by being perhaps inwardly traditional and outwardly, or nominally, Muslim. It may not be so much a preference for traditional religious doctrines or practices so much as the power of a particular leader, depended on a successful defense of traditional religious beliefs and practices.

KAYES TODAY

PEOPLES AND LANGUAGES

There are many people groups in the region surrounding the city of Kayes in the Kayes region. The lines are very blurred, as the groups in this area sometimes have multiple languages in common - for example, Soninke who speak Hassaniyya, and French in the greater Kayes city area. Hassaniyya is a language of Mauritania similar to (but unintelligible with) Arabic, alternatively referred to as Hassani, Hasanya, Hassaniya, Maure, Mauri, Moor, and others. There are an estimated 1,136,000 Hassaniyya speakers in Mali, primarily in the west, including Maure/Moors, Saharan Arabs and two Bedouin peoples. The Hassaniyya speaking Moors of Mali are referred to as Suraxxé by the Soninke speakers, and Suraka by the Bambara. Soninke has 1,280,000 speakers in Mali alone. It is widely spoken in the city of Kayes and in the region of Kayes particularly in the most northwestern area of Mali. There is also one dialect of Soninke, the Geriga/Giriga dialect, which is said to be heavily influenced by Hassaniyya.



Bamako Kayes paved road.

Hassaniyya is not intelligible with other Arabic varieties despite being a Semitic Arabic language. The language is nomadic between Mauritania, where the majority of Hassaniyya speakers are located, and Mali. Literacy is not encouraged by the government among Hassaniyya speakers, but it is unclear if this applies only to Mauritania Hassaniyya speakers or also those in Mali. Likewise, some Hassaniyyan speakers are said to also use French and Standard Arabic. There are no books of the Bible translated into Hassaniyya, however Chadian Arabic, which has a recent New Testament, is a near-language in that it shares 80% of a small set of the most common vocabulary. The Jesus film is available in Hassaniyya and audio recordings of Gospel stories/presentations exist in Hassaniyya from the Global Recordings Network. There are Bible portions in Soninke.

Western Maninkakan and Xaasongaxango are also spoken near the city of Kayes, but Hassaniyya and Soninke are the majority there and to the north of Kayes (city) in the Kayes region.

Historically, the Hassaniya people originate from Mauritania and other North African countries, as the Hassaniyyan language and its history reflect. "Hassaniyya" seems to refer to the linguistic marker and the ethnic identity of the people is far more complicated. Furthermore, the popular alternative designation for the Hassaniyan people is "Moor," which is archaic and imprecise even as it

The 'Jesus' Film, which is available in Hassaniyya, is the most popular form of evangelism in many churches. Millions have seen the film on television, in showings in homes, villages and towns, and more recently via DVD and online.



Riverside horticulture, Kayes, Mali.

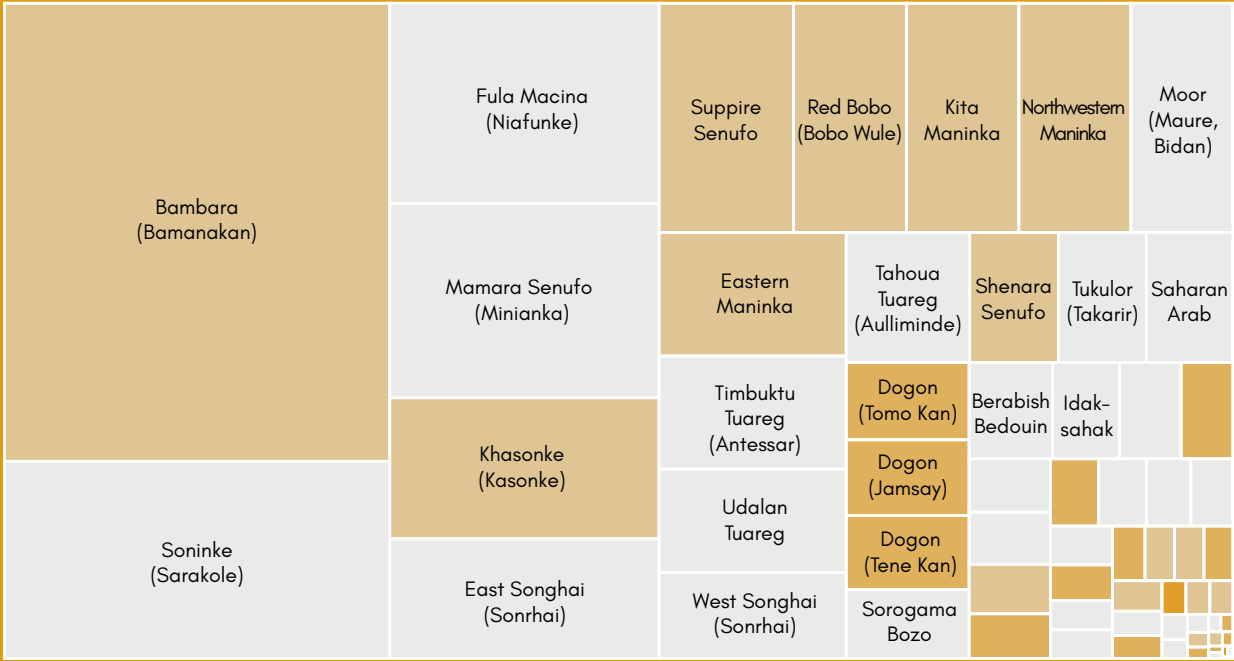
HASSANIYA PEOPLE IN CONTEXT

The Hassaniya people originate from Mauritania and other North African countries. “Hassaniyya” seems to refer to the linguistic marker while the ethnic identity of the people is far more complicated. Over thirty people groups in the region identify as Hassaniyya speakers and are found throughout Algeria, Gambia, Mali, Mauritania, Morocco, Niger, Senegal and Western Sahara. The table below shows the five distinct Hassaniyya speaking people groups of Mali as listed in the World Christian Database. These ethnolinguistic distinctions, however, appear to overlay a more complex reality of subdivisions characterized by economic roles within the larger population of Hassaniya people.

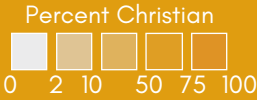
HASSANIYYA SPEAKING PEOPLE GROUPS OF MALI

People	Population	Christians
1 Moor (Maure, Bidan)	588,000	60
2 Saharan Arab	284,000	0
3 Berabish Bedouin	203,000	20
4 Kunta Bedouin	60,900	610
5 Nimadi	410	0

PEOPLES OF MALI



The treemap depicts all 62 people groups in Mali. The rectangles are proportional to the population of each people group, while the color intensity reflects the percent Christian within the people group.



is still used, since “Moors” can be used pejoratively to refer to “White” Arab peoples of North Africa in general. Hassaniyya speakers can be subdivided into many categories characterized by the economic roles in which they function within the larger population of Hassaniya people. If in Mali, there exist larger interconnected communities of Hassaniyya speakers, and especially if there remains a division of labor between White and Black Hassaniyya speakers then the dynamics traced above from Mauritania may be highly relevant to ministry conducted in Kayes, Mali among the Hassaniya people.

Within the White Hassaniya (Moors) (i.e., Bidan), women’s roles are dependent on various factors that relate to the wealth of the tribe from which they come or into which they married. Familial or tribally bequeathed land and herds in nomadic families lead to household structures not unlike that of Abraham in the Hebrew Bible: a large collection of tents that are constructed around a patriarchal tent in the center where slaves work while male leaders in the nomadic society lead their herds to water and feeding grounds. Whether there are Hassaniya in Kayes with this level of economic enterprise remains unclear, but if so, then a higher level of religious responsibility and education can be expected to be available to women. The level of economic opportunities afforded to women within Hassaniyya speaking peoples broadly, is dependent on the level of poverty of the family. In Mauritania, among land-owning, Hassaniyya speaking nomadic pastoralists



Sahel forest near Kayes, Mali.

and agriculturalists, the inactivity of a tent-dwelling wife may be a positive status marker. However, the dynamics change among Black Hassaniyya speakers, especially in a context where Black Hassaniyya speakers are still considered of a lower caste than White Hassaniyya speakers.

CHALLENGES FOR KAYES

DEVELOPMENT AND ECONOMY

The Kayes region is home to 32 different World Bank projects totaling over \$2 billion USD. Programs include fishing, forestry, agriculture, public administration, energy and extractive projects, and a few transportation, health, water/sanitation, and industry/trade/services related projects. Kayes ranks lowest on a number of different measures for global health and poverty, which results in a substantial amount of investment in development work. Livelihoods in Mali vary from nomadic trade and pastoralism, to sedentary farming and fishing to city dwelling; each comes with a clear spatial demarcation. Households rely on a mix of income derived from agriculture (millet/sorghum), livestock rearing, and remittances from migration. The further south in this area, the less the dependence on livestock and the greater the importance of cultivation. Poverty is highest in

Kayes ranks lowest on a number of different measures for global health and poverty, which results in a substantial amount of investment in development work in the region.



Water pump in Oualia, Mali.

COUNTRY RANK	LIFE EXPECTANCY	PHYSICIANS PER 1K	INFANT MORTALITY	MALARIA PER 1K	HIV PER 1K	GDP PC	NET WORTH PC	INTERNET USERS %	RELIGIOUS LIBERTY	GENDER INEQUALITY
MALI	61	1	56	460	10	\$2,000	\$1,800	11%	7	68
WORLD (OF 234)	222	207	13	1	46	209	226	216	142	4
AFRICA (OF 58)	46	33	12	1	35	37	51	44	34	2
REGION (OF 9)	13	8	5	1	10	10	14	13	14	1

The table above depicts the value of specific UN indicators for Mali as well as Mali's country ranking globally, continentally and regionally. For example, Mali ranks 46th out of 58 countries in Africa for life expectancy.

southern zones where households rely on rain-fed agriculture. Households depending on livestock, those depending on irrigated agriculture, and those in north-west Kayes are comparatively more stable with poverty levels below 30%. With a 74.3% poverty rate, poverty is highest in the area south of Ségou where sorghum, millet, and cotton are grown. Poverty is lowest in Bamako (7.6%) and in north-west Kayes (19.6%). The relative decrease in poverty within the Kayes region from 1994 to 2007 is best attributed to improvements in infrastructure in Kayes and contiguous regions in Mali. Increasing remittances and increases in the production of cereals, maize and rice in particular,



Baffle distributor, Bafoulabé, Kayes, Mali.

drove rapid poverty reduction between 2001 and 2010. The poorest households have benefited most. Improvements in welfare are strongly associated with livelihood zones relying on remittances.

The Kayes region as a whole represents only a slightly improved socio-economic situation to some of the other regions in Mali. Food insecurity is still very common and the quality of land in the region makes agricultural endeavors challenging like much of the Nilo-Saharan region to the east, which shares an approximate latitude with Kayes, Mali.

GENDER

Gender issues in the Kayes region are best described as a two-pronged reproductive/sexual health and rights issue for women. The major issue is female genital mutilation (FGM). There is widespread prevalence of FGM, even with awareness of its detrimental health effects in childhood and adulthood, because not being cut leads to social or sexual/marital ostracization. The socio-cultural factors typically outweigh any knowledge (where sexual education is present) of the negative effects of FGM. The effect of migration on FGM attitudes and practices is important. Witnessing or experiencing punitive measures and restrictions on FGM in Western contexts has an influence on reducing the practice of FGM. A Malian's visit to another African country such as Côte d'Ivoire may have more influence because they witness an African context in which FGM is less prevalent and yet where women do not have the assumed negative social effects of not being cut. This feeds back into the Malian communities in the long-term reduction in



Bafoulabé, Kayes, Mali.

GENDER IN MALI

	% FEMALE	GENDER GAP	GENDER INEQUALITY
MALI	50	19	68
WORLD	50	8	37
AFRICA	50	12	55
W. AFRICA	50	14	61

The table above compares key measures of gender equality against global, continental and regional averages.

Gender issues in the Kayes region are best described as a two-pronged reproductive/sexual health and rights issue for women. The major issues are female genital mutilation (FGM) and untrained healthcare workers that lead to high infant and maternal mortality.

The government lacks the people-power to cover the territory, leaving it vulnerable to further violent attacks by Islamic extremists.

the prevalence of FGM, with an increased reductive effect on FGM practice in communities with larger return-migrant populations. Consequently, girls living in localities with return migrants are less likely to be circumcised than others.

Another major area of concern is high maternal mortality rates and maternity related health issues. Most rural women faced three chronic shortages: a lack of access to prenatal and postnatal care, a lack of skilled personnel, and a lack of equipment. These chronic shortages are comorbid with low levels of maternal education and early pregnancy. Many young, pregnant women avoid visiting the rural health centers that could provide them with needed help. Given the decentralization of health care facilities and their administration in Mali, rural health care varies depending on the level of education and experience of the nurse or physician – that is, if they are fortunate enough to have a healthcare worker who can be qualified as a physician. There are structures in place to cover some of the expenses of a referral in the case of risky and life-threatening delivery, but the level of experience and education of the healthcare provider at the rural level is one of the strongest factors determining whether or not a delivering mother is given the referral early enough in her complications to get her to the right place at the right time. The greatest short-term solution to increasing the survival rates of infants and mothers in rural Mali is not necessarily an increase in the number of physicians at the rural level but rather the equipping of midwives who, with sufficient training and education are said to have a better rate of positive identification of delivery complications than trained physicians. The philosophy behind this, is that once the first line of defense is sufficiently trained at the rural level, then, perhaps, some of the economic, infrastructural, and administrative complexities that lead to high mother-infant mortality rates in Mali can be addressed.

CONFLICT

Islamic extremists overran northern Mali in 2012, effectively taking control of the region. They were driven out by Malian forces with assistance from the French a year later yet have been active in other parts of the country and in neighboring countries. The government lacks the personnel to cover the territory, leaving it vulnerable to further violent attacks. One tactic has been to flame the old ethnic rivalry

between the Fulani and Dogon. The legacy of the 2012 takeover has been a more radicalized society that is even less hospitable to Christianity than it was before, especially for Christian converts from Islam. Islamists continue to pose a threat to the region as a whole and to Christians specifically.

On February 7, 2017, a Colombian Catholic nun named Gloria Cecelia Narvaez (or surname Argoti) was kidnapped by an militant Islamic group known as the Macina Liberation Front from her convent in Karangasso in southern Mali. Joint international efforts from Colombia and France were quickly launched to investigate her disappearance and four persons were charged. Later developments in her kidnapping reveal the complexity of the Islamic militancy active in the region. On July 1 of the same year, a video was released that featured Sister Narvaez (Argoti) and five other foreign hostages (two more missionaries) held captive by the Nusrat al-Islam wal Muslimeen (also known as the Group to Support Islam and Muslims), an extremist coalition that formed in Mali when leaders from Ansar Dine, the Macina Liberation Front, Al-Mourabitoun and Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) announced their commitment to form a common platform and pledged allegiance to Al-Qaeda. Another video was released approximately six months later but there have been no developments since and Sr. Gloria has not been found. In December 2018, the government claimed the arrest of four jihadists suspected in her kidnapping. According to the Colombian foreign minister, the Nusrat al-Islam is seeking ransom.

In Tijaniya Islam, Muslims are not only expected to submit to Allah and Allah's law, but is also expected to follow a religious leader as a spiritual guide.



Koundian, Mali.



Evangelical Lutheran pastor and musician from Mali.

The UN Security Council began a “sanctions regime” in Mali in 2015. The UN resolution supplies international military aid to stifle any efforts to de-stabilize the country politically and militaristically. The dynamics of this instability are very difficult to describe given their entanglement with the history of colonization and the efforts for independence in the country over the past two centuries. Yet, the UN has had little success in stabilization, leading to an extension of the regime tentatively until August 2020. This French-sponsored resolution was met with agreement by the UN council, representing a genuine commitment to peace in Mali.

RELIGION AND MISSION

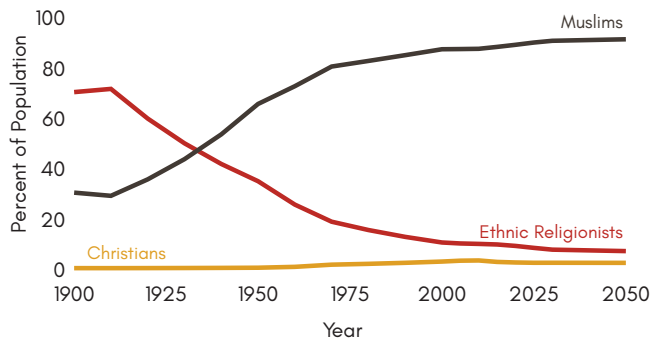
MALI: RELIGION AND CHRISTIANITY

Mali, like many of the countries in North and Western Africa, is predominantly Muslim. It is difficult to comprehend how disparate the composition of Mali is compared to other predominantly Christian African countries. From 1900 to 2020 Christianity in Mali grew from less than 1% of the population to 2.3% (still under 500k) and grew at a faster rate than the population as a whole. However, in the decade between 2000 and 2020 this growth rate had declined to less than that of overall population growth. Furthermore, this growth was almost exclusively due to Christian births and not conversions.

HASSANIYA: RELIGION

The Hassaniya people are Tijaniya Muslims, a Sufi order established in the 18th century, though some Hassaniya may

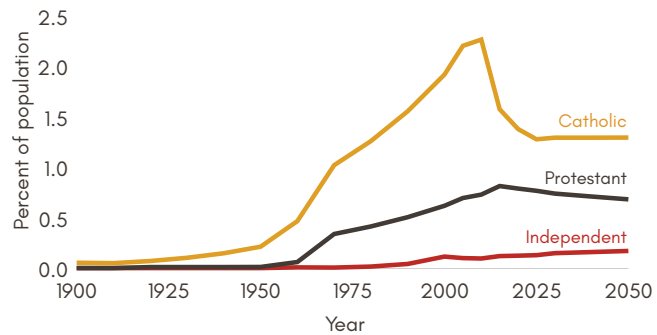
MAJOR RELIGIONS IN MALI, 1900–2050



Islam has replaced traditional African religions over the course of the 20th century. There is no evidence to suggest Christianity will grow in the country.

adhere to a 20th century schismatic, Tijaniya brotherhood known as Hammalism. Referring to the Western Sahel in general and Western Mali (regions adjacent to Kayes) in particular, the primary institutional forms of Islamic religious practice are the Sufi brotherhoods characterized by a hierarchical authority structure. In this context, Muslims are not only expected to submit to Allah and Allah's law, but is also expected to follow a religious leader as a spiritual guide. Sufism (literally "being a Sufi") can refer to a variety of reform movements beginning ca. 1100 within Islam that have nothing to do with jurisprudence debates or the Sunni-Shi'a division in Islam. Thus, Sufism is not necessarily a separate branch of historic Islam but rather an internal movement that cuts across various segments, regions, and schools of thought. It is unified by certain characteristics and beliefs of its adherents. Sufis generally stress contemplation over action and spiritual development over legalism, as well as the inner life over the outer. They speak of God's mercy, gentleness, and beauty more than of wrath, severity, and majesty. Nearness to Allah is the highest goal of humans and as such, the movements and schisms within Sufism have tended to be over the particular teachings of Sufis who were thought to be closest to God and to have witnessed Mohammad in visions. Despite being regarded both from within and without as a deviant or heterodox form of Islam, many Sufi orders over the history of the movement have emphasized how the principles of Sufis lead to increased awareness and understanding of Islam and Allah's presence in the world.

CHRISTIAN TRADITIONS IN MALI, 1900-2050



Catholics are the largest Christian tradition in Mali today. Independents are expected to see a small but steady increase in the coming years.

Because Tijaniyya and Hammali Sufis in Mali have vested authority in living saints, their levels of commitment to a Sufi brotherhood varies and is not always dependent on strict initiation rites. Especially for those in the Kayes region, who are distant from the incumbent Sufi saint, identifying whether or not village residents consider themselves as members of one of the major Sufi brotherhoods or distantly connected through gifts and pilgrimages to the local saint and/or his followers may be an important distinction.

ANALYSIS

A team of Christian workers equipped with highly trained physicians is helpful in this region, but equally helpful would be their ability to engage with local midwives who, with more training and experience in identifying life-threatening delivery complications, can join the good work of saving women's lives in places like Kayes that no attainable amount of physicians could ever hope to change.

Sufi orders are transmitted from their sheikhs (leaders) to their disciples through passing down blessings. It seems that the idea of discipleship central to Christianity is both an area of substantial mutual understanding, though fraught with potential for great misunderstanding if not communicated correctly in a Sufi context. Brotherhoods have a leadership structure centered around a saint not entirely dissimilar to that of Christian discipleship. Leaders of Sufi orders are expected to be able, through ecstatic experience or direct "discipleship" transmission, to trace their relationship to the prophet Mohammad himself. It is



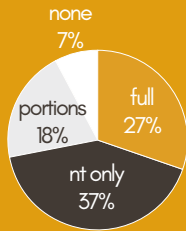
Sunday service at an Evangelical Protestant church in Zamblala.

possible that if invited into pre-Christian discipleship relationships, Malian Sufis could regard the lifestyle of Christians who follow after a transmitted history of discipleship and obedience back to the original disciples could mistake Christianity as a new Sufi order back to Jesus as a prophet, for better or for worse. Though there may be great benefit in building bridges utilizing this existing framework and structures of transmission, being aware of this dynamic within Sufi orders and the extent to which this could be helpful or unhelpful must be discerned in context.

Despite the differences between the earlier form of Tijaniya Sufism and Hammalism, much can be generalized about West African Sufism. Belief in the necessity of paying homage to, revering, and honoring local Sufi saints and their followers is essential to understanding the spiritual dynamics one is likely to encounter in engaging the Hassaniya people in Kayes. Receiving gifts, for example, while certainly not to be rejected en total among Hasasniyya speaking Tijaniya Sufis, should be examined through the lens of gift giving within Sufism. It more likely connotes the giving of alms – gifts given in exchange for invisible spiritual favor in the afterlife or in the present. The giving of a gift from Sufi to a Christian worker could simply connote hospitality or friendship, however, it could also connote a deference ascribing to a Christian worker a level of authority and spiritual power that is incompatible with Christianity. In short, in successful contextualization efforts, gift-giving must be examined in the lens of Sufism and not simply “hospitality” culture. If Christian workers in the area are viewed favorably and are respected as religious leaders by Sufis, Muslims may give gifts out of a sense of obligation or desire for mediation or

BIBLE TRANSLATION AND ACCESS IN MALI

TRANSLATION AVAILABILITY



Availability of translation in mother tongue

When the book of Luke was published in 1923 the largest single language in Mali, Bambara, became the first to receive a translation. The full Bible followed in 1961 with its status as a trade language enabling wider use. Twelve other languages with Portions published between 1928 and 2004 mean that today over 80% of mother tongue speakers in Mali have at least a book of the Bible and most with a New Testament, but no additional languages have been published since 2004.

TRANSLATION NEED

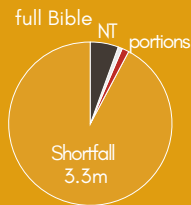
The two largest languages that are waiting their first published books need a translation despite scriptures being available in a “near” language (sharing 80% of a small set of the most common words): Hassaniyya is near Chadian Arabic and Kita Maninkakan is near Eastern Maninkakan. Most of the people in Mali without scriptures though are from mid-sized languages, which may need 20 different translation teams to provide for the 1.9 million people in languages with over 5,000 people each.

Mother tongue speakers (mts) with no bible translation by mts size

language size (mts count)	Speakers
> 500K	1.8 m in 2 Languages
5K-500K	1.9m in 20 Languages
<5K	6.5K in 2 Languages

BIBLE DISTRIBUTION AND ACCESS

Progress toward distribution goals in Mali



Adult Literacy: 33% Internet Users: 11%

Assuming that every literate adult should have access to at least one book of scripture, 3.6 million books would be required to be in place in Mali. Over the last 20 years (the assumed life of a hard copy Bible), 277,000 Bibles, New Testaments and individual books of the Bible were actually distributed. While that should have been enough for the small Christian population, very few non-Christians could have their own book of scripture. How much the shortfall of 3.3 million can be made up may depend more on demand than the supply which is already enhanced by online availability.

MISSION RANK	% CHRISTIAN	CHRISTIAN GAIN P.A.	CHRISTIAN GROWTH %	GOSPEL ACCESS	BAPTISMS PER ANNUM	MISSIONARIES RECEIVED	CHRISTIAN BROADCAST %	PERSONAL EV (ALL)	PRIORITY PEOPLES
MALI	2.30%	17,500	6.23%	38%	16,730	500	7.50%	2M	15
WORLD (OF 234)	216	129	30	219	121	116	188	69	21
ASIA (OF 58)	44	38	21	50	39	34	42	24	5
REGION (OF 9)	13	10	7	15	11	10	11	6	2

The table above depicts the value of specific indicators of mission and Christian presence for Thailand and ranks them globally, continentally and regionally against other countries. For example, Mali ranks 21st out of 51 countries in Asia for Christian Growth.

spiritual favor in the eyes of God. Rather than structuring their practice and their allegiance through invisible spiritual submission (the meaning and objective of Islam) Sufism extends submission and practice to the interrelationships between Sufi brothers and their allegiance to higher ranking Sufis (and ultimately an incumbent saint) within that brotherhood all the way up to the founding saint or their successors who trace their lineage genealogically or hegemonically to Muhammad. Though the means of attaining and lifestyles that cultivate closeness to God are different in Sufism versus Christianity, they share a common spiritual objective and a relatable structure of dissemination that could make Christianity understandable as the first and greatest Sufism whose brothers trace their “order” back to the friends of God incarnate and not simply a prophet or saint.

Christianity’s introduction to this region is likely dependent on the extent to which Christian workers are able to understand the nuanced relationship between indigenous cultural values, how these values and rituals have shaped the local practice of Islam, and which elements of Malian culture and religion get incorporated into the life of the indigenous church.

Modern conflicts in the region, most of which are religiously motivated, appear to operate in the religious-political subtext of Islam where threats to religious power political authority are not so easily disentangled. In attempting to traverse the interior political and religious landscape of Kayes, one should try to understand how the particular form of Islam practiced today reflects or does not reflect the vibrant expressions of indigenous religions and worldviews of the people there.

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Sunday service at an Evangelical Protestant church in Zamblala | Flickr: ecoDoug

APPENDIX

RELIGIONS OF MALI

Religion	1900		1970		2000		2020		Avg. Annual Growth Rate 2000-2020	2050	
	Population	%	Population	%	Population	%	Population	%		Population	%
Religious	1,300,000	100.0	5,949,000	100.0	10,951,000	99.8	20,261,000	99.9	3.12	43,963,000	99.9
Muslims	390,000	30.0	4,763,000	80.1	9,535,000	86.9	17,992,000	88.7	3.23	40,012,000	90.9
Ethnic religionists	909,000	69.9	1,100,000	18.5	1,122,000	10.2	1,800,000	8.9	2.39	3,000,000	6.8
Christians	690	0.1	85,200	1.4	292,000	2.7	467,000	2.3	2.37	947,000	2.2
Catholics	690	0.1	60,700	1.0	211,000	1.9	280,000	1.4	1.43	570,000	1.3
Protestants	0	0.0	20,100	0.3	67,700	0.6	160,000	0.8	4.39	300,000	0.7
Independents	0	0.0	320	0.0	12,500	0.1	25,000	0.1	3.55	75,000	0.2
unaffiliated Christians	0	0.0	4,000	0.1	1,300	0.0	1,700	0.0	1.16	2,000	0.0
*Evangelicals	0	0.0	20,200	0.3	67,700	0.6	166,000	0.8	4.58	400,000	0.9
*Pentecostals/Charismatics	0	0.0	120	0.0	23,600	0.2	50,000	0.2	3.82	140,000	0.3
Baha'is	0	0.0	440	0.0	720	0.0	1,200	0.0	2.57	2,000	0.0
New religionists	0	0.0	100	0.0	480	0.0	800	0.0	2.58	2,000	0.0
Nonreligious	0	0.0	0	0.0	17,000	0.2	23,200	0.1	1.57	57,600	0.1
Agnostics	0	0.0	0	0.0	16,400	0.1	22,000	0.1	1.47	55,000	0.1
Atheists	0	0.0	0	0.0	560	0.0	1,200	0.0	3.85	2,600	0.0
Total population	1,300,000	100.0	5,949,000	100.0	10,968,000	100.0	20,284,000	100.0	3.12	44,020,000	100.0

Source: World Christian Database

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