

The Turka of Burkina Faso

Tucked away among the hills, and among the many other ethnic groups of southwestern Burkina Faso, are the Turka, named by the Jula. They call their language Tyurama. The process of putting Tyurama into writing has just begun. The Turka people have taken initiative in organizing a language commission, and that body will have a lot to say about how their language should be written.

The Turka are quite well off compared to Burkina Faso standards. Their region has the highest amount of rain. They can easily grow their maize, millet, rice, peanuts, and sesame. A variety of fruit trees also grow. Their wealth does not only come from surplus sale of their crops, but also from some of the men who go to Cote d'Ivoire to find paying jobs. It does not necessarily lead to an easy life for the women, who still have to gather firewood, carry water, and do field and domestic work.

The traditional religion of the Turka is still widely practiced. They offer sacrifices to appease the spirits that inhabit and control their world. The infiltration by Islam came in the 19th century with pressure from groups coming from Cote d'Ivoire and Mali. Islam has been steadily spreading since then. The men who have spent some time working in a strongly Muslim area, return with an especially new zeal to spread this religion. Underneath is still the old tradition.

Primary Religion:

Islam, Muslim-Animism

Disciples (Matt 28.19):

2%

Churches:

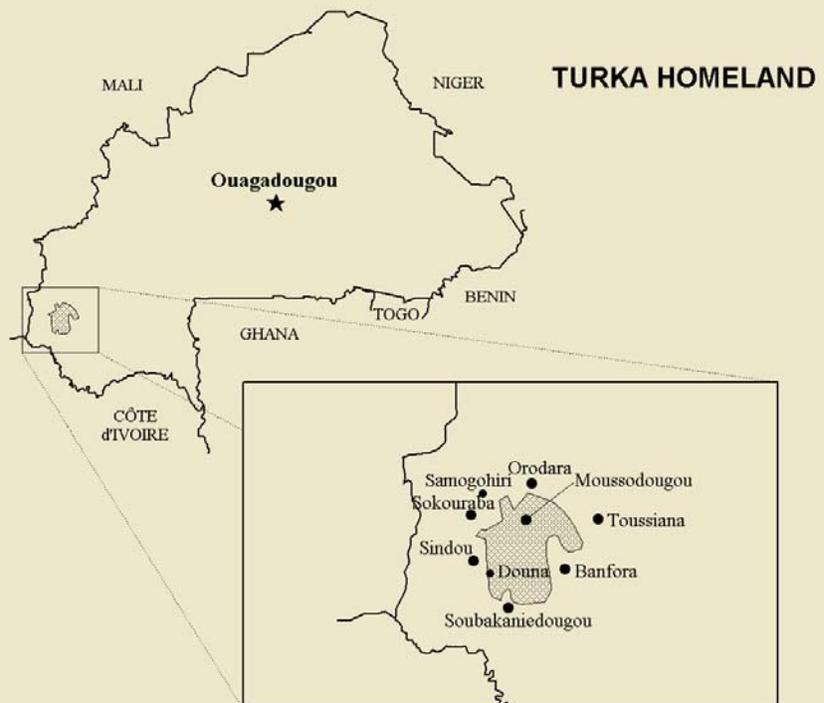
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Scripture Status (Matt 28.20):

Work is in progress

Population (date):

37,000 (1996)



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Item Name	Item Note	
Have They Heard The Gospel?		Profile Summary
Call Themselves Christian (%)	2%	
Believe In Jesus As God & Only Savior (%)	2%	
Prophet/Good Man, But Not God's Son (%)	70%	
Have Not Heard Who Jesus is (%)	20%	
Believe Jesus Is A Myth (%)	0%	
Number Of Pastors	5	
Number Of Missionaries Working	2	
Response To The Gospel	Alternate statistics: Pastor to pop: 1:4820 Missionary to pop: 1:7230 Believer to pop: 2% Church to pop: 1:4132	
Number Of Communities	18	
Number Of Churches	4	
Is The Word Of God Translated?	No, but translation is just beginning.	
Translation Medium	Drafts.	
Any Hinderance To Scripture Distribution?	They have started with language work and translation, but nothing is in print, (1998).	
Forms Of Gospel Presentation Available (Summary)	There are no other forms of Gospel presentations.	
What Kind Of Missionaries Are Needed?	The literacy rate is very low, but some people seem interested enough to have their own language written and literature produced in it. They also need help in church planting, literacy, Christian teaching, and Bible Translation.	
Population All Countries		Group Description
World Population For This People	37,000	
World Population (Date)	1996	
World Population (Urban Percent)	11	
Comment (World Population)	updated in July 1998	
Countries Where People Group Lives		Group Description
Country Name	Burkina Faso	
Geography & Environment		Group Description
Location	In the south west of Burkina Faso, Comoe province, north and west of Banfora.	
Country	Burkina Faso	
Ecosystem Type	Scrub Forest	
Geological Type	Plains	
Elevation	300 to 600 meters	
Longitude	5 W	
Latitude	11 N	
Climate	Hot year round , but with more rain than the Burkina Faso average.	
Comments (Geography & Environment)	Cooler and dry in December and January. Warm and dry in February. Hot and humid in March, April, and May. Warm and rainy June through September, getting hotter and slowly drier until November.	
Language & Linguistics		Group Description
Alternate Language Names	Tourka, Turuka, Curama, Tyurama	
Attitude Towards Mother Tongue	Very receptive	
Percent Monolingual (%)	0%	
Other Mother Tongues Of This Group	JULA	

The Turka of Burkina Faso

Item Name

Comment (On Other Mother Tongues)

Item Note

- Jula, the trade language of the area is the second language of the Turka.
- French is the official language of Burkina Faso and is the medium of almost all formal education and of government administration.
- The extent of the knowledge of French corresponds with the number of years spent in formal education.

Linguistically Related Languages

CERMA

Comments (Related Languages)

Cerma and Turka are not mutually intelligible. Cerma is spoken to the south of the Turka area.

Neighboring Languages

CERMA

Literacy

Group Description

Adult Literacy Percentage

0

Literacy Attitude

Very receptive

Active Literacy Program

No

Comment (Literacy)

The government promotes Jula, but the Turka would like to have materials and radio broadcasts in their own language. 19% is the rate of adult literacy in Burkina Faso as a whole, not necessarily for the Turka. There is not yet a literacy program in Turka (TYURAMA). The program is in its beginning stages.

Economics

Group Description

Subsistence Type

Agriculturalists

Average Annual Income

300 US\$

Occupation

Subsistence farming by almost everyone. There are small businesses of carpentry, tailoring and mechanics, and some trading in towns.

Income Sources

Sale of surplus crops, especially mangos. Young men often find paying jobs in Cote d'Ivoire or other towns for a few months or years.

Products / Crafts

Woven baskets, pottery, mats, palm wine

Trade Partners

Toussian, Karaboro and other groups near their area.

Modernization / Utilities

There are two man-made lakes in the area giving water supply all year round. Beregadougou, a Turka village, has a sugar factory that employs people from all over the country.

Comment (Economy)

The figure for the average income comes from UNICEF. It does not reflect what is earned by bartering, which is the most common form of trading in the area, nor does it reflect value of assets.

Community Development

Group Description

Health Care (Quality)

Poor

Comment (Health Care)

Pharmacies exist in Douna, Moussodougou and Banfora. Banfora has a small hospital, but the cost of transport and care is unreasonable for most Turka.

Diet (Quality)

Fair

Comment (Diet)

People eat maize, millet, rice, peanuts, leaves and fruit according to season, not much meat or fish.

Water (Quality)

Fair

Comment (Water)

Most villages have wells in addition to the two lakes. Often the water is contaminated, and water-borne illnesses are common.

Shelter Description

Most live in traditional sun-baked mud brick houses, arranged into family courtyards, or compounds. Each wife has a round cookhouse and a square living house.

Energy/Fuel (Quality)

Poor

Comment (Energy)

Wood is the main source of energy. Kerosene is used for lamps. There is electricity in Banfora and Beregadougou, but the Turka who live there are not necessarily connected to it.

Clothing

Women wear traditional African skirts with a top. The cloth is mainly manufactured in Burkina Faso and neighboring countries and fashioned by local tailors. There are large quantities of second hand western clothing available in the markets. Men usually wear western style clothing.

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Item Name	Item Note
Transportation	Walking and bicycling are the common mode of transport .Mopeds and small motorbikes are used by some villagers. In larger towns some bush taxis are available, making it possible to connect with other public transportation in the big towns for longer journeys.
Infant Mortality Rate	16%
Life Expectancy	47 years old
Leading Cause Of Death	Untrated illnesses
Comment (Community Development)	The figures are from UNICEF and are the statistics for the whole country of Burkina Faso.

Society & Culture

Group Description

Family Structures	The father seems to have a closer relationship with his sisters sons than with his own children. Uncle system.
Neighbor Relations	They respect each other.
Authority / Rule	Men of the family maintain authority in the home.
Social Habits/Groupings	Everyone gets together for weddings and funerals. Lots of visiting and eating.
Cultural Change Pace	Slow
Identification With National Culture	Integrated
Self Image	Prestigious
Judicial / Punishment System	The village chief maintains authority in the village.
Celebrations	Weddings and funerals are the most common celebration.
Recreations	Visiting with each other, talking, often at the market. Women often use such times to braid their hair or do other things together with their hands. Young men enjoy playing soccer.
Media	Turka is heard on the local radio station for two hours a week.
Local Language Broadcasting	> 1 hour daily
Attitude To Outsiders	Somewhat receptive
Attitude To Change	Somewhat resistant

Youth

Group Description

Labor and tasks (6-12 year olds)	The children help in all farming and domestic tasks as appropriate for their sex and as soon as they are able.
Youth Problems (Teens)	Many have problems staying in school. There are only primary schools out in the Turka villages. Those who are able to finish school have a difficult time finding jobs and are feeling disillusioned.
Youth Greatest Needs (teens)	Academic education, health education, and employment are needed. There is a big gap between hopes and reality. This needs to be reconciled.

Education

Group Description

Primary Schools	15
Primary School Enrollment	2,600
Percent Of Eligible Students Enrolled	42%
Teacher To Pupil Ratio	61
Language Of Textbooks Early Years	French
Language Of Instruction Later Years	French
Language Of Textbooks Later Years	French
Comment (Education)	About 90% of all boys have an education of some sort. The figures of eligible students enrolled are from the year 1994-95, the one from the teacher student ratio from 1992-93 school year. The figures are an average of the entire province, including the major towns, where the school participation is considerably higher than in the villages. It also represents only the villages where there are schools.

Church Growth

Status of Christianity

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Item Name

Reached Status

Item Note

Adopted

Comment (Church Growth)

One of the churches is in Beregadougou, where the sugar factory is. The town is ethnically mixed. Another church is in Douna - also a town with a mix of other ethnic groups. The other two churches are in villages with predominantly Turka speakers.

Religion & Response

Status of Christianity

Religious Practices & Ceremonies

Traditional Islamic celebrations.

Attitude To Christianity

Somewhat resistant

Attitude To Religious Change

Somewhat resistant

Resistance / Receptivity

The Turka are slow to respond.

Spiritual Climate And Openness

At their core the Turka are still very strongly animistic. Though many have adopted Islam, one can never be sure how deeply engrained the adopted religion is. The village elder would claim that the village is 100% Islam.

Comment (Religion)

Animism 98%
Islam 95%
Christianity 0.3%

History Of Christianity In Group

Status of Christianity

By Whom

Roman Catholic Church

Significant Events

Since 1993, a few Bible translators have been living among the Turkas, and they are establishing good contacts.

Comments (History of Christianity)

Roman Catholicism has been unable to take strong roots in the region despite being the first to contact them. There are two Christian and Missionary Alliance (from Burkina Faso) with two workers, who do church planting. Assemblies of God (from Burkina Faso) has two workers doing evangelization. There are two AOG churches in the area. There are two expatriate missionaries and five national missionaries and one local worker.

Scripture

Status of Christianity

Translation Status

Scripture

Available Scripture

None

Form Of Scripture Available

Printed

Comment (Scripture)

Word of God translated: There is not a translation of the Word of God in Turka.
Other forms of gospel: There are no other forms of the Gospel.

Missions and Churches

Status of Christianity

Organization Name

Assemblies of God

Main Ministry

Evangelism

Number Of National Workers

2

Christian Literature And Media Status

Status of Christianity

Literature Available

no

Audio Recordings Available

no

Films Available

no

Radio Programs Available

no

Videos Available

The Jesus film is available in Jula, the trade language, but as yet nothing is available in Turka.