

The Kanuri

Living in Nigeria, Niger and Chad



Sept. 15, 2008

Day 15

Kanuri main tribes consist of the Yerwa Kanuri, Manga Kanuri, and Kanembu Kanuri. The majority of the Kanuri live in northeastern Nigeria, where they are the dominant people group. Smaller numbers are also located across the borders in the surrounding countries of Niger, Chad, and Cameroon. This entire region was once ruled by the ancestors of the Kanuri. Aspects of Kanuri culture, language, and religion have been adopted by many of the neighbouring tribes. The Kanuri are tall and very dark in appearance, with a stately, dignified look. Many Kanuri speak Hausa and Arabic.

What Are Their Lives Like? Most of the Kanuri are farmers; however, they usually practice some other occupation during the dry season. Those who farm raise millet as their staple crop, and supplement it with sorghum, corn, and peanuts. They raise sheep, goats, and some horses. Kanuri settlements vary in size, but most contain walled-in compounds surrounding several mud or grass houses with thatched, cone-shaped roofs. These houses are very cool during the hot months. Farmland surrounds each settlement. Kanuri men marry while they are in their early twenties. Polygamy is common, and a man may have as many as four wives. Young girls marry while they are in their teens. Ideally, a man wants his first wife to be a young virgin. However, the bride price for a virgin is quite expensive, so men often take divorced women as their first

wives. The divorce rate among the Kanuri is extremely high, with eight out of ten marriages ending in divorce.

What are their beliefs? The Kanuri have been Muslims since the eleventh century (about 1,000 years). Many superstitions and animistic beliefs are still practiced in conjunction with Islam. Charms and amulets are worn around the neck or in pockets for various reasons.

What are their needs? Some of the Kanuri tribes do not yet have a translation of the Bible in their native dialect; others tribes have only portions of the Bible. Among the nearly five million Kanuri, there are several hundred known believers.

Adapted from material at the Joshua Project online.

PRAYER POINTS

- ▶ Ask God to call more people to proclaim the love of Jesus among the Kanuri.
- ▶ Ask the Lord to raise up strong local churches among the Kanuri and increasingly use the small number of Kanuri believers to share the Gospel with others.
- ▶ Pray that God will raise up people to translate the Bible into each of the Kanuri dialects.

MUSLIM IDEAS ABOUT JESUS

Jesus was conceived miraculously by God in the womb of Mary.

Jesus is only a prophet.

Jesus was actually a good Muslim and he taught an earlier form of Islam.

Jesus did not die on the cross. He went directly to heaven.

Jesus will come again, marry, have children and die. He will be judged like all men at the Last Judgement.

