

## The Manta of Cameroon



representative photo by Carsten Ten Brinck CC

The Manta people can be roughly divided into two broad groups, a Northern constituency and Southern constituency. Northern Manta refer to themselves as Banta and their language as Kisam. The Southern Manta use the name Manta for themselves and Tinta for the language they speak. Culturally, historically, and linguistically they are essentially homogeneous. As a whole they are geographically isolated. The nearest road is at least a day's hike to the nearest Manta village.

Manta people live in approximately fifteen major villages stretching over a twenty-mile range. The terrain is mountainous and thickly forested for the most part. Some villages have no church, no clinic, and no school.

Local traditional religion plays an active role in the lives of most Manta people, even professing Christians. Syncretism is high, but church leaders have expressed a felt need for Scriptures in Manta. Church members themselves have indicated an interest in mother-tongue literature and literacy. Overall attitudes towards Bible translation and literacy are positive, though they believe English (and French for some) is more important than Manta. One difficulty may be getting people from different denominations to work together.

Teachers are somewhat favorable toward the introduction of Manta into the school curriculum. Despite their desire to learn English, comprehension of it remains low. Pidgin is much more widely understood and used, occasionally even in the classroom.

Manta and Pidgin are used throughout church services. They would be better served by the Pidgin New Testament. But any spiritual depth in the faith and a grasp of many fundamental Christian truths can only be achieved by having the Word of God in translated into Manta.

**Primary Religion:**

Ethnic Religion

**Disciples (Matt 28:19):**

Perhaps 10%

**Churches:**

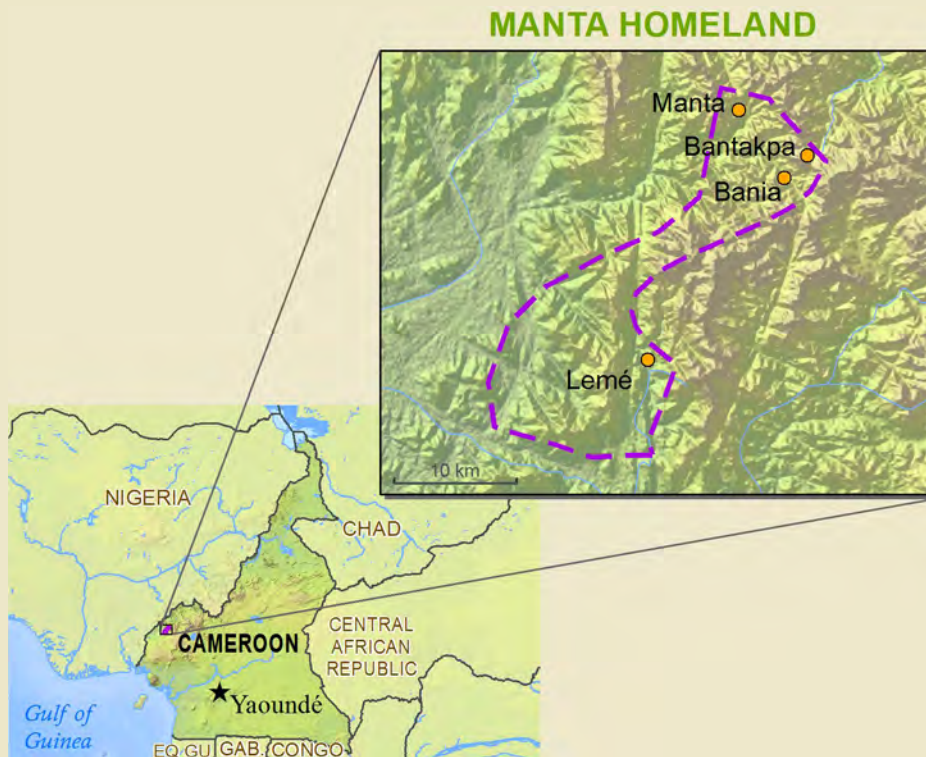
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**Scripture Status (Matt 28:20):**

None in their language

**Population (date):**

5,300 (2001, SIL)



## The Manta of Cameroon

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### Have They Heard The Gospel?

Call Themselves Christian (%)	Most
Believe Jesus is a prophet, but not God's Son (%)	None known
Believe in their traditional religion (%)	Many
Have not heard who Jesus is (%)	5%
Number of Pastors	Unknown
Number of Missionaries Working	0
Response to the Gospel	Indifference. It is unknown what the rate of growth has been, but by now has stabilized and remains nominal and syncretistic
Number of Communities	18 villages
Number of Churches	About one or perhaps two per village
Is The Word Of God Translated?	No scripture is available in their mother tongue.
Hindrances To Scripture Distribution?	Low literacy rate, and little means to purchase books
Forms Of Gospel Presentation Available (Summary)	Recordings: none in Manta Literature: none in Manta Films/video: none in Manta Radio: none in Manta

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### Group Description

#### Population

World Population For This People	5,300
World Population (Date)	2001 (SIL)
World Population (Urban Percent)	

#### Countries Where People Group Live

Country Names	Cameroon
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#### Geography & Environment

Location	Cameroon, South West Province, Manyu Division northeast of Mamfe, from Mom border, Akwaya subdivision, to Manta, Mamfe subdivision
Ecosystem Type	Tropical Forest
Geological Type	Mountain Valley
Elevation	600 to 1,700 m
Longitude	9 E
Latitude	6 N
Climate	Very warm and humid most of the year; high rainfall
Comment (Geo & Env)	This is an isolated, hardship location, with difficult access and uncomfortable climate.

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### Language & Linguistics

Primary Language (Comment)	MANTA Language will be maintained. Should be translated as no other language is well understood by a large proportion of the community.
Alternate Language Names	Anta, Banta, Bantakpa, Kisam, Menta, Tinta
Attitude Towards Mother Tongue	Very receptive
Second Languages	Most people speak some Pidgin, except for some of the older women.
Comment (Second Languages)	Some people speak one of the neighboring languages, but the majority use Pidgin to communicate with those from another language.
Other Mother Tongues of this Group	Denya [anv], Ambele [ael], and Atong [ato]. Reportedly most similar to Atong [ato].
Linguistically Related Languages	
Neighboring Languages	Denya [anv], Osatu [ost], Balo [bqo], Mbororo Fulfulde [fuv], Atong [ato], Ambele [ael]
Active Language Programs	No
Language Stability	Stable and viable

### Literacy

Literacy Attitude Comment	Very receptive The literacy rate is not known but presumably very low. The people value literacy in English first. They are interested in French literacy to the same extent as Manta.
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### Economics

Subsistence Type	Hunter-gathers
Occupation	Hunting-gathering, small-scale farming, fishing, some trade.
Income Sources	Sale of produce and wild meat, trade
Trade Partners	Surrounding groups
Modernization / Utilities	Tin roofs, books, western clothing, some radios
Comment (Economy)	This is primarily a subsistence economy. People have very little monetary means.

### Community Development

Health Care (Quality)	Poor. Many villages are quite distant from the nearest clinic or health center
Diet (Quality)	Fair. They eat a variety of wild fruits, farm produce, and occasionally wild meats and fish.
Water (Quality)	Good. There are numerous streams running right from the mountains to these villages.
Shelter Description	Mud brick with tin roofs or some thatch roofs
Electricity	None
Energy/Fuel (Quality)	Fair. Wood-burning fires
Clothing	Pants, t-shirts, African-print dresses, shoes. Much clothing is in fair condition. Not everyone has shoes.
Transportation	By foot only. A few villages are involved in maintaining footpaths, building/repairing schools, constructing church or health post, farming, selling produce, and other school projects.

### Society & Culture

Neighbor Relations	Fairly good relations with most neighbors, although some people in a few villages have marriage restrictions against the Denya because of the sorcery/witchcraft that they practice; some also discourage marriage to the people of Ngwo and Busam because of geographic distance.
Authority / Rule	There seems to be very little leadership in place in most villages. Two of the six visited had any recognizable political structure.
Cultural Change Pace	Slow

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Identification With Nat'l Culture	Similar
Self Image	Neutral
Attitude to Change	Very receptive
History Of People Group	In most recent history, the Manta people migrated from the areas to the east and southeast of their present location, where the Menka and Moghamo are to be found in Momo Division, North West Province.
Comment (Culture)	Traditional culture prevails in spite of the introduction of churches and schools. The lack of development and contact with the "outside world" helps to maintain their former way of life in many respects.

### Youth

Labor and tasks (6-12 years)	Farming, water collection, gathering, and caring for younger children
Youth Greatest Needs (teens)	Good education, opportunity for advancement, and jobs
Comment (Youth)	Young people have very little chance to get a decent education and improve their social and economic situation. Those who do succeed in school must leave the community. And those who do seldom, if ever, return to their home.

### Education

Primary Schools	One for every two or three villages
Primary School Enrollment	90%
Secondary Schools	None except for Akanunku (Atong area)
Teacher to Pupil Ratio	1:40
Language of Instruction Early Yrs	English
Language of Textbooks Early Yrs	English
Language of Instruction Later Yrs	English
Language of Textbooks Later Yrs	English
Number of Schools > 90%	80%
Homogeneous	
Comment (Education)	Education is poor as most students begin learning in English, which they do not know prior to attending school. Some teachers may explain some things in Manta and Pidgin for the younger students.

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### Status of Christianity

#### Church Growth

Reached Status	Reached
Reached Classification	Unevangelized
Lay Leaders	15
Comment (Church Growth)	Church growth is stabilized. Half the churches are syncretized or nominal.

#### Religion and Response

Attitude To Christianity	Very receptive
Attitude to Religious Change	Somewhat receptive
Resistance / Receptivity	There is no antagonism to the gospel, but there is no great hunger. Most people are oblivious to their spiritual need, including many religious leaders. Half of them believe that most Manta people are Christian, while the other half of the religious leaders think that the majority of Manta follow traditional religion.
Spiritual Climate and Openness	Open because it represents the West: a symbol of power, wealth, education, and social advancement.
Comment (Religion)	Syncretism is high. There are probably few conversions even among religious leaders.
Recommended Approaches	Intensive Bible-studies in Pidgin, but preferably in Manta; evangelism.
Current Needs	Evangelism, translation of the Scriptures into Manta. Could begin literacy in Pidgin and provide New Testament in Cameroonian Pidgin English to church members and others in order to build a solid foundation in the Word of God.
Items For Prayer	Revival among nominal church goers Pray for God to strengthen churches, send evangelist, and language workers.

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### **History of Christianity in Group**

Comments

There are several denominations among the Manta: Presbyterian, Catholic, and New Apostolic; however, it is not known how long the church has been here.

### **Scripture**

Translation Status

Definite

Available Scripture

None

Form of Scripture Available

None

Reason for Urgent Need  
of Translation

Very few people really understand the Scriptures. Only a few people own a Bible, usually in English. Almost no one essentially has access to the Scriptures in a language they understand. These people are perishing without a knowledge of the truth.

Comment (Scripture)

Consider cross-testing language comprehension with Menka and Atong to see whether any of them could benefit from a single language project.

### **Missions and Churches**

Organization Name

Presbyterian Church

Organization Name

Roman Catholic Church

Organization Name

New Apostolic Church

### **Christian Literature and Media Status**

Literature Available

unknown

Audio Recordings Available

None