

**A PRAYER PORTRAIT OF THE...**

# **Lobi-Wala** of West Africa

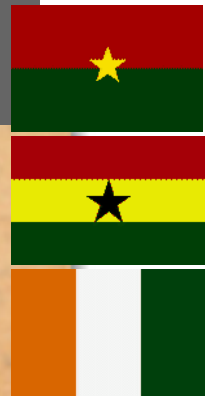
The **Lobi-Wala** occupy the Black Volta region where the countries of Ghana, Ivory Coast, and Burkina Faso meet. They actually form two separate groups: The *Lobi* (named for their language), and the *Wala* (named for the area, Wa, in which most of them live). Because the *Lobi* and *Wala* share many similarities in language, location, history, and culture, researchers often group them as one people: the Lobi-Wala. Both groups speak their own dialect of the Gur language, which belongs to the Niger-Congo language family.

The Lobi-Wala still migrate, but to a lesser extent than they did in the late 1700s, now either for better land or to find jobs in the cities. Because of continued invasions and raids from other groups, the Lobi-Wala developed their characteristic fortress-type houses and poison arrow weapons. They remain an aggressive people.

## **Needs**

Although the Lobi-Wala have portions of the Bible written in their language and some mission agencies working among them, very few have become Christians. Most of them have never yet heard a clear presentation of the Gospel message.

Increased missions efforts, additional laborers, Christian broadcasts, and evangelistic literature are greatly needed to effectively penetrate the Lobi-Wala with the Gospel. However, prayer is the first step toward seeing them reached.



## **Prayer Points**

- ◆ Ask the Holy Spirit to grant wisdom and favor to the missions agencies that are targeting the Lobi-Wala.
- ◆ Pray that the entire Bible and discipleship materials will be made available to each of the Lobi-Wala groups.
- ◆ Ask God to raise up additional long term missionaries to join the few who have already responded.
- ◆ Take authority over the spiritual principalities and power that are keeping the Lobi-Wala bound.
- ◆ Ask God to raise up prayer teams who will begin breaking up the spiritual soil of West Africa through intercession.



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# The **Lobi-Wala** of West Africa

## Their Countries



**Burkina Faso**, “land of the upright man” (formerly known as Upper Volta), is a landlocked plateau located in West Africa. Prone to drought and famine, many of Burkinabe’ (people of Burkina Faso) have had to migrate to other lands.

Defining itself as “revolutionary, democratic, anti-imperialist and secular”, the 1987 military coup halted many of the extremes of the former regime (which was far less sympathetic to Christian churches and missionaries). The present climate is favorable to Christian outreach and aid programs. Despite church growth, increased missionary exertions and greater responsiveness, there remain over 28% of peoples without an effective witness; 13% of these are Muslim.

The **Ivory Coast** (or the Republic of Côte d’Ivoire) lies on the West African coast between Liberia and Ghana. It consists of diminishing rainforest in the south and savannah in the north. After independence from France in 1960, a one party presidential government ruled until 1990, when other parties were legalized. Ivory Coast is one of the world’s largest producers of cocoa, coffee and palm oil. The large influx of foreign job-seekers to the Ivory Coast has presented many opportunities for evangelizing those who are separated from the strong ties of their tribal cultures. There are many peoples which are unreached and many which are either unoccupied or marginally occupied by Christianity.



The **Republic of Ghana**, is located in West Africa, bounded by Burkina Faso, Togo, the Gulf of Guinea, and the Ivory Coast. Mostly tropical lowland plains, it is bisected by the river Volta and the center of Ghana is dominated by Lake Volta.

Ghana has been independent from Britain since 1957. A series of economic, natural, and social calamities reached a climax in 1983/84. This created a spiritual hunger among the people which led to revival and church growth in many areas. Over 64% of the Ghanaians call themselves Christian, with only 40% having any link with a church and only 12% are regular church attenders.

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## Beliefs

A majority of the Lobi follow their traditional animistic beliefs (belief that non-human objects have spirits), while most of the Wala have partially adopted the dominant religion of the area; Islam. Their “conversion” resulted in the eighteenth century when Dyula Muslim traders were absorbed into the Wala state and began to speak Wali instead of their Mande language. The Muslim Dyula subsequently became part of the Wala group and brought Islam with them.



← Ancient Stone Mosque in Burkina Faso.

↓ Ghana Marketplace.

