



# GHANA



## **CHURCH PLANTER**

Sansah Bona-Imah Samson

## **PEOPLE GROUP**

Jula People of Ghana

## **TESTIMONY**

*"I was born in a Christian home, but I personally received Christ as my Lord and savior in the year 2000 when one of my elders taught me the scripture in the gospel of John 3: 1-3. It was that day I surrendered to the Lord and confessed him as my Lord and personal savior."*

## **EXPERIENCE**

Sansah Bona-Imah Samson was born May 12th 1983 in Danvaar. He has a big heart for rural ministry and takes it upon himself to build churches and start cell groups in the hinterlands. Sansah has been working in ministry for 12 years. His goal is to go preach, teach, disciple and plant churches among the people of Ghana. He is married and has two children.

# JULA IN GHANA

Most of the Dyula live along the trade routes of the Ivory Coast. Dyula clans have also settled in Ghana, Burkina Faso, Mali, and Guinea-Bissau. The Dyula of Ghana live along the trade routes of the central western border adjoining the Ivory Coast. The name dyula means “itinerant trader,” and the Dyula are respected for their trading abilities.

The Dyula are the descendants of the Malinke (Mandingo), inheritors of the ancient Mali empire. By the 1300s, Mande traders seeking gold reached the northern borders of Ghana, where they founded states to use as centers for gold trade. Later, the Maninka rulers of Mali began spreading Islam throughout the African plains, and the Dyula became strong converts.

Since Ghana’s independence from Great Britain in 1960, the country has experienced seven coups. The Dyula have contributed much to the rich mixtures of peoples and traditions that make up Ghanaian culture.

The Dyula live in clans, and the clan is the most important aspect of their lives. The people are fiercely loyal to their clans, defending them proudly. They express their history and devotion through the traditions of dance and storytelling. The father is the head of the family and inheritances are passed down from fathers to their sons. Older males possess the most power and influence.

The Dyula began settling in towns during the 1500s. Some founded their own independent villages; others chose to settle in larger towns for greater commercial opportunities. Among the Dyula, there is generally a division of labor according to gender. Weaving, fighting, and studying Islam were traditionally male activities; while, spinning, cooking, and tending to the children were the responsibilities of the women. However, both men and women engaged in trade.

The Dyula still practice polygamy, and young people are encouraged to marry within their own clans. Marriages between cousins are preferred. Girls usually marry at age 16. It is surprising that nearly half of the population is under the age of 15 and few live beyond age 45. Therefore, the Dyula have great respect for the elderly, especially if a man is an Islamic scholar.

The majority of Dyula are Sunni Muslim. Most of the others, whom the Muslims call pagans, hold traditional animistic beliefs (believe that non-living objects have spirits). These “pagans” represent a small percentage of the country’s population, while nearly two-thirds are Christians. West African Islam does, however, generally retain local traditions and is more tolerant of diversity than elsewhere. Muslim scholars are held in high esteem. They are responsible for educating the people in the teachings of the Koran.

Their religious ideals share several similarities with Christianity: the belief in one God who is eternal, creator, omniscient; the existence of protecting spirits (or angels); the concept of the sanctuary or the holy of holies; the Spirit of God who communicates; and analogies to explain complex concepts.

Ministry among Muslims is a difficult task. Only a tiny handful of the Dyula are Christians. Few Christian resources are available in the Dyula language. Christian laborers and additional evangelistic tools are needed to reach this Muslim tribe with the Gospel. Prayer is the first step toward seeing them reached with the Good News.

Population 32,000	Main Language Jula
Largest Religion Islam (99.00%)	Christian 1.00%
Evangelical 0.70%	Progress 

