

**West-Central Africa Division
Fast Facts and Mission Posts
Third quarter 2020**

Liberia

1. Liberia is part of the West African Union Mission and is made up of the Central Liberia Mission, the South-East Liberia Mission, and the South-West Liberia Conference. There are 75 churches and 21,851 members in Liberia. With a population of 4,854,000, that's 222 people for each church member.
2. The GC Daily Bulletin of Oct. 24, 1889, referred to "Bro. Gaston from Liberia, who recently embraced the truth, and has gone back to his country to sow the seeds of precious truth among his kindred." In reporting his 1892 visit to West Africa at the January 1893 General Conference Session, Lawrence C. Chadwick appealed for a missionary to be sent to open a mission "at or near the home of Brother Gaston" (GC Daily Bulletin 5:2, Jan. 29, 1893). However, Liberia had to wait another 33 years for the first official Seventh-day Adventist missionaries.
3. On April 30, 1930, the first four Adventist converts were baptized at Seahn. Among them was Willie Helbig, who later became the first Liberian ordained minister.
4. The headquarters of the South-East Liberia Mission are located on Tubman Street in the city of Buchanan. Harriet Tubman (1822-1913) was an American abolitionist and political activist. Born into slavery, Tubman escaped and subsequently made thirteen missions to rescue approximately seventy enslaved people, family and friends, using the network of antislavery activists and safe houses known as the Underground Railroad.
5. About 85.5 percent of Liberia's population practices Christianity, and Muslims comprise 12.2 percent of the population, mostly Malikite Sunni, with sizeable Shia and Ahmadiyya minorities.
6. Officially, traditional indigenous religions are practiced by 0.5 percent of the population, while 0.4 percent subscribe to no religion, but a "vast majority" of Liberians believe in a supernatural world of ancestral and bush spirits that impact daily life.
7. The Society for the Colonization of Free People of Color of America, commonly known as the American Colonization Society, was a group established in the United States in 1816 which supported the migration of free African Americans to the continent of Africa. The society's supporters included both religious and political groups who opposed slavery, and slave-owners who considered free blacks to be a threat to the stability of the slave-holding system.
8. In 1821-22, the society helped to establish a colony on the Pepper Coast of West Africa, as a place for free American blacks. Over the next 25 years, the colony continued to grow and establish economic stability. In 1847, the legislature of Liberia declared the nation an independent state. By 1867, more than 13,000 Americans had immigrated to Liberia.
9. The official language of Liberia is English, but there are also more than 16 indigenous languages.
10. While polygamous unions are illegal under Liberian civil law, such marriages are permissible under Liberia's customary law. According to reports, polygamous marriages make up about one-third of all Liberian marriages, and one-third of married women in the age group 15-49 are in polygamous marriages. Customary law allows men to have up to four wives.

11. The world's 20 most ethnically diverse countries are all African. Liberia is the second-most ethnically diverse country in the world, after Uganda. There are many factors to account for this, including Africa's colonial legacy. European powers divided Africa up into territories and possessions with little respect for the actual people who lived there. When Europeans left, the borders stayed, forcing different groups into the same national boxes.
12. Liberia is known for its detailed decorative masks, wood carvings of realistic human faces, and carved accessories, particularly combs, spoons and forks. Liberian wood sculptures are heavily influenced by ancient history, folklore, proverbs, spirituality, and rural life and show the artist's attention to detail and their connection to the people and objects sculpted.
13. Due to its strong relationship with the United States, Liberia has produced its own American-influenced quilts. The free and former U.S. slaves who emigrated to Liberia brought with them their sewing and quilting skills and Liberians from all ethnic groups make quilts, although it is not as popular as it once was in the 19th century.
14. The food of Liberia has been influenced by contact, trade, and colonization from the United States, especially foods from the American South, interwoven with traditional West African foods. The diet consists largely of rice and other starches, tropical fruits, vegetables, and local fish and meat. Liberia also has a baking tradition the settlers brought from the United States that is unique in West Africa.
15. Monrovia is the capital and largest city of Liberia. The city is named in honor of U.S. President James Monroe, a prominent supporter of the colonization of Liberia and the American Colonization Society. Along with Washington, it is one of two national capitals to be named after a U.S. president.
16. Liberia has 360 miles (580 km) of coastline. Among Liberia's attractions are its sandy beaches, like Silver Beach, one of the most popular beaches in Monrovia.
17. The pygmy hippopotamus is native to the forests and swamps of Liberia. The pygmy hippo is only half as tall as and weighs less than a quarter of the hippopotamus. Adult pygmy hippos stand about 2½ to 3¼ feet (75-100 cm) high at the shoulder, are 5 to 6 feet (150-175 cm) in length and weigh 400-600 lbs (180-275 kg). They are nocturnal and difficult to study in the wild and are endangered partly due to their popularity as bushmeat in Liberia.
18. The most popular sport in Liberia is soccer. The second-most popular sport in Liberia is basketball.
19. Liberia is one of the world's youngest countries. According to the CIA World Factbook, the average age of its citizens is 17.9 years. By way of comparison, a typical resident of Monaco, the world's most elderly country, is 51.1.

Gabon

1. The Gabon Mission was established in 1975 and organized in 1978. Its headquarters is in the capital, Libreville.
2. The Gabon Mission is part of the Central African Union Mission. There are 19 churches and 2,287 members in Gabon. With a population of 2,054,000, there are 898 people for each Adventist.
3. The Adventist Church was officially recognized by the government of Gabon in 1981.
4. About 73 percent of the population practice at least some elements of Christianity; 12 percent practice Islam; 10 percent practice traditional indigenous religious beliefs exclusively; and 5 percent practice no religion or are atheists.
5. The official name of the country is the Gabonese Republic.
6. It is bordered by Equatorial Guinea to the northwest, Cameroon to the north, the Republic of the Congo on the east and south, and the Atlantic Ocean to the west.
7. The official language is French.
8. The population of Gabon is estimated at 1,783,929 people.
9. It is the 76th largest country in the world in terms of land area, with 103,347 square miles (267,667 square kilometers).
10. Libreville is the capital and largest city of Gabon. The city is a port on the Komo River, near the Gulf of Guinea, and a trade center for a timber region.
11. Low population density, abundant petroleum, and foreign private investment have helped make Gabon one of the most prosperous countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, with the third highest GDP per capita (after Equatorial Guinea and Botswana) in the region.
12. Most Gabonese have Bantu origin, including four major tribal groupings (Fang, Bapounou, Nzebi, and Obamba).
13. The region was initially inhabited by the Pygmy peoples; later the people of the Bantu tribes immigrated to the area.
14. Gabon has rich reserves of manganese, iron, petroleum, and timber.
15. About 85 percent of Gabon is covered by rainforests, 11 percent of which has been dedicated for national parks, making these some of the largest nature parks in the world.
16. The rainforests of Gabon are home to more than 700 species of birds.
17. Ogooué is the largest lake in Gabon and stretches over a distance of 745 miles (1,200 kilometers).
18. The highest point in Gabon is Mont Iboundji, which stands at a total height of 5,166 feet (1,575 m).
19. Ivindo National Park is located within 225 miles (362 km) from Libreville in east-central Gabon. It is bisected by the equator and it contains the famous Kongou Falls and Langoué Bai, one of the five most-important forest clearings in Africa. A variety of wildlife, such as forest elephants, gorillas, chimpanzee and birds can be found there.
20. Gabon is home to 80 percent of Africa's baboon population.
21. Gabon comprises a largely young population with 40 percent of the total population being below 15 years of age. About 56 percent of the total population is within the 15-64 age bracket. Less than 4 percent of the population is above 65 years.
22. The entire country of Gabon is just slightly smaller than the state of Colorado in the United States.
23. Gabon is a presidential republic and the first president of Gabon was Léon M'ba, who was elected in 1961. His vice president, Omar Bongo Ondimba, later became president and is

considered the longest-serving head of state ever, governing Gabon from 1967 until his death in 2009.

24. Local Gabonese cuisine is based on staples of cassava, rice or manioc paste, fish that is found in plenty along the rivers and coastal belt, game meat from antelopes, porcupine, wild boar and snake, as well as tropical fruits like bananas, pineapples and sugarcane.
25. Musee des Arts et Traditions du Gabon (Museum of Art and Culture) is located in Libreville and features an unrivalled collection of masks.
26. Mask making and ritual face paint are important parts of Gabonese culture, and styles vary dramatically between groups. The Gabonese people use masks to praise the ancestors and to mark important life events by signifying transformation. They are part of funeral and agrarian rites, and Gabonese people use them to promote fertility, provide spiritual protection and express cultural identity. Masks vary in style and include geometric shapes, stylized and exaggerated features and realistically detailed faces.
27. Gabon is home to hundreds of dolomite and limestone caves. With a large part of Gabon hidden under natural forest cover, many of these caves remain unexplored. These caves, especially the Abanda caves, are home to the rare Orange cave-inhabiting Crocodiles, a cave crocodile only found in Gabon. The caves also hold hundreds of thousands of bats. Gabon caves have a very rich underground biodiversity not found anywhere else in the world.

Guinea

1. The Guinea Region is part of the West African Union Mission and has six churches and 1,955 members. In an area of 11,884,000 people, that's only one church member for every 6,058 people!
2. The Guinea Region (formerly Guinea Mission Station) was organized in 2002, reorganized in 2013, and renamed in 2017. Its headquarters are located in the capital city, Conakry.
3. The work in Guinea began in 1987, when a lay couple from Europe quietly witnessed to their faith. In April 1992, the first war refugees from Liberia arrived in Guinea, including a number of Seventh-day Adventists and a licensed pastor, W. Oloysius, who soon began witnessing for their faith.
4. The population of Guinea is about 85 percent Muslim, 8 percent Christian, and 7 percent who adhere to indigenous religious beliefs. Much of the population, both Muslim and Christian, also incorporate indigenous African beliefs into their outlook.
5. The official name of the country is the Republic of Guinea. The country is sometimes referred to as Guinea-Conakry to distinguish it from other parts of the wider region of the same name, such as Guinea-Bissau and Equatorial Guinea.
6. Guinea is bordered by Guinea-Bissau to the northwest, Senegal to the north, Mali to the northeast, Ivory Coast to the southeast, Liberia and Sierra Leone to the south and the Atlantic Ocean to the west.
7. The climate is predominantly humid and hot. The monsoonal rains are from June to November and the dry season is from December to May, when they experience north easterly harmattan winds.
8. In 2000, half a million refugees arrived in Guinea to escape fighting in Liberia and Sierra Leone.
9. At 94,926 square miles (245,857 sq km), Guinea is roughly the size of the United Kingdom. There are 200 miles (320 km) of coastline and a total land border of 2,100 miles (3,400 km). It lies mostly between latitudes 7° and 13°N, and longitudes 7° and 15°W.
10. Guinea is divided into four main regions: Maritime Guinea, also known as Lower Guinea or the Basse-Coté lowlands, populated mainly by the Susu ethnic group; the cooler, mountainous Fouta Djallon that run roughly north-south through the middle of the country, populated by Fulas; the Sahelian Haute-Guinea to the northeast, populated by Malinké; and the forested jungle regions in the southeast, with several ethnic groups.
11. Guinea's mountains are the source for the Niger, the Gambia, and Senegal Rivers, as well as the numerous rivers flowing to the sea on the west side of the range in Sierra Leone and Ivory Coast.
12. The highest point in Guinea is Mount Nimba at 5,748 feet (1,752 meters).
13. The agriculture sector of Guinea cultivates coffee beans, pineapples, peaches, nectarines, mangoes, oranges, bananas, potatoes, tomatoes, cucumbers, pepper, and many other types of produce. Guinea is one of the emerging regional producers of apples and pears. There are many plantations of grapes, pomegranates, and recent years have seen the development of strawberry plantations based on the vertical hydroponic system.
14. Conakry is the capital and largest city of Guinea. Conakry is a port city on the Atlantic Ocean and serves as the economic, financial and cultural center of Guinea.
15. Guinea declared its independence from France on Oct. 2, 1958.
16. The English term Guinea comes from the Portuguese word Guiné, which emerged in the mid-15th century to refer to the lands inhabited by the Guineus, a generic term for the African peoples south of the Senegal River.

17. Guinea is richly endowed with minerals, possessing an estimated quarter of the world's reserves of bauxite (an ore containing aluminum), more than 1.8 billion metric tons of high-grade iron ore, significant diamond and gold deposits, and undetermined quantities of uranium.
18. Guinea's mineral wealth makes it potentially one of Africa's richest countries, but its people are among the poorest in West Africa.
19. The majority of Guineans work in the agriculture sector, which employs about 75 percent of the country.
20. Only 27 percent of adults in Guinea can read.
21. The population of Guinea comprises about 24 ethnic groups.
22. Rice is the staple food of Guinea. However, other traditional West African dishes are commonly eaten in Guinea. These include jollof rice, fufu, tapalapa bread, and maafe. Fried plantain, Boille (made of rice and corn), boiled mango, and konkoe (smoked fish) are other popular dishes. Boiled cassava leaf sauce is normally served as an accompaniment.
23. Soccer is the most popular sport in Guinea. Their national soccer team is called Syli Nationale which literally means "National Elephants."
24. The official language of Guinea is French. Other languages used in Guinea are Fula, Maninka, and Susu.
25. The life expectancy in Guinea is 56 years.

Flag Coloring Instructions

Liberia

Color every other stripe red, starting at the top and ending at the bottom with red stripes. Leave the other stripes white. Color the square in the top left corner blue, leaving the star white.

Gabon

Color the top third green, the middle third yellow, and the bottom third blue.

Guinea

Color the left third red, the middle third yellow, and the right third green.

Recipes

Gabon

Baked Bananas

Ingredients:

8 bananas cut into three equal diagonal pieces
1 egg
2 tbsp (30 ml) orange juice
3.5 oz (100 g) breadcrumbs
½ cup (120 ml) vegetable oil
1½ cup (350 ml) sour cream
8 tbsp (100g) brown sugar

Cooking Instructions:

Beat the egg and the orange juice together. Dip the bananas in the egg mixture and then in the breadcrumbs. Heat the vegetable oil in a frying pan and fry the bananas until they begin to brown lightly. Transfer to a baking sheet and place in an oven pre-heated to 350F (170C) for 5 minutes. Serve 1 banana per person, topped with sour cream and sprinkled with brown sugar.

Guinea

Ginger Drink

6 cups (1.4 liters) boiling water
1 cup (115 g) fresh ginger root, peeled and grated
1 cup (200 g) sugar
10–12 whole cloves
2 whole cinnamon sticks
1/2 cup (120 ml) fresh lemon or lime juice
1 cup (240 ml) orange juice
8 cups (1.9 liters) cool water

Pour the boiling water over the grated ginger root, sugar, cloves and cinnamon in a large enamel, glass or stainless-steel bowl. Cover and set aside in a warm place for at least an hour. Strain the liquid through a fine sieve or cloth, add the juices and water and set aside in a warm place for another hour. Gently strain the liquid again, taking care not to disturb the sediment at the bottom. Store in the refrigerator or a cool place in a large glass container. It can be served warm, cold, or on ice, either as it is or diluted with water or sparkling water. A squeeze of fresh lime juice in each glass of ginger drink is good.

Game/Song

Gabon

French

Le petit lapin

Mon petit lapin a bien du chagrin
Il ne saute plus, ne danse plus dans mon jardin.

Saute, saute, saute, mon petit lapin
Et va-vite embrasser quelqu'un.

English

The Little Rabbit

My little rabbit is very sad,
He no longer hops or dances in my garden.

Hop, hop, hop, my little rabbit
And quickly go kiss someone.

Game Instructions

One child plays the role of the rabbit. The children form a circle, with the little “rabbit” in the center. The children go around him singing the first two lines of the song and then they stop moving but continue to sing and clap their hands and the little rabbit in the middle starts hopping. On the last line, the little “rabbit” chooses one of the other children and tags him or her and that child takes the role of the rabbit in the center.

A link to an audio clip of the song can be found at bit.ly/LePetitLapin.

Liberia

Train, Train Party Drop the Handkerchief Game

Leader: Train, train party!

Group: Aaaaa, party!

Leader: Train, train party!

Group: Aaaaa, party!

Leader: I wrote my letter to my Dad

And on the way I dropped it,

Little boy picked it up

And put it in his pocket.

Game Instructions

The children squat in a circle looking forward. One child (the leader) walks around outside the circle holding an object like a handkerchief or a shoe. The leader sings her part of the lyrics and the group responds with their part.

At some point the leader drops the object behind one of the children in the circle and runs around the ring. The second child then has to chase the leader. If he catches the leader before she reaches his empty space in the circle, the leader must go around again with the handkerchief. Otherwise, the second child becomes the new leader and the game starts over again.

The game and song can be seen on YouTube at bit.ly/TrainTrain (the game starts in the video at 1:57).