

# PRAY FOR THE YERWA KANURI OF NIGER



Have you ever heard of a little movie series called Star Wars? Luke Skywalker? Darth Vader? Storm troopers? Ring a bell? Did you know that Star Wars has been around for a while? In fact, my one and only big brother was born in the 70's and by the time I came along in 1980, Star Wars had already taken that generation by storm. So, thanks to my big brother, I grew up pretending that my teddy bears were Ewoks, and large cinnamon buns were Princess Leia's hair. One of my biggest disappointments in life then was when I first discovered that a light saber was not a light saver, as I had falsely believed for years. To me, the light saver was the coolest weapon of all time. And being called a light saver somehow gave me the impression that it wasn't really a weapon at all, but rather a tool meant for good and not evil.



In the west African country of Niger, there are over 170,000 Yerwa Kanuri, out of almost 8 million in the world. The Yerwa Kanuri are an unreached, unengaged people group, which means that there are very few, if any, true followers of Christ and very few, if any, known gospel witnesses among them. The Kanuri are traditionally sheep and cattle herders who carry sticks to help guide their grazing animals or chase them back home. The Kanuri are Muslims and wash their faces five times a day for ritualistic prayers. Because of this, their faces are said to look bright, and the name Kanuri was given to them as it combines two words meaning "stick" and "light."

If I were to explain why I was so deeply devastated when I found out that the light saber is indeed not a light saver, I think I would have to say that I honestly felt like the name light saver reminded me of Jesus. And as silly as it sounds to liken a made-up weapon to Jesus, I sensed that the concept of fighting back the darkness with light and saving rather than destroying was something I wanted to believe in. I wanted it to mean more than just any old weapon. The Kanuri bear in their name two words that might seem random, but I want to believe it means more than just "stick" and "light." The stick or staff that is such a common item in Kanuri culture, also reminds me of Jesus. It reminds me that He is the good shepherd, who lays down His life for the sheep. Let's pray that the Kanuri come to know this loving Shepherd. Also, the word "light" that refers to the Kanuri's commitment to wash and pray five times daily to a false god, reminds me that Jesus is light and cannot be overcome by darkness. Light will prevail. Pray now that the Kanuri will know this Light.



Don't forget to pray for the Kanuri children, too! Next time you watch Star Wars or play with a light saber, think of how the gospel is the ultimate weapon: a life saver! Pray that someone will take this "weapon" to the Kanuri, but not to destroy or even defend, but to bear witness about the One who came that they might have Life and have it abundantly.