

The Banna and the Hamer of Ethiopia



Ethiopia Tribes – Hamer by Marc Veraart crop/revert CC

The Banna and the Hamer people are separate ethnic groups that speak virtually the same language. They are seminomadic and live in their traditional homeland in southwest Ethiopia. Also known as the South Omo Zone, this region is sparsely populated and very dry. Even in the so-called “rainy season” there is very little rain. Thus, the people must move from place to place to find grass and water for their cattle.

This group supports themselves by farming and raising cattle. However, because of the arid climate in which they live, they frequently face famine. At times they live peacefully with other groups, but during times of famine it is not unusual for violence to break out between the groups, particularly when cattle are stolen.

Men and older people are highly respected in these people groups; however, women and girls have virtually no status at all. For the most part, women and girls are viewed as an income source. Once a man has acquired a wife by paying a dowry of cows and oxen, he can treat her in whatever way he wishes. A husband can beat and even kill his wife if he so chooses.

The people practice African traditional religion. They acknowledge the existence of a Supreme Being, but believe they cannot reach this God directly. Some of the people regard cows and oxen as their mediators, and others look to ancestral spirits. Missionaries introduced Christianity to these people groups about 30 years ago, but less than 5 percent of the people identify themselves as Christians.

Primary Religion:

Ethnic Religion

Disciples (Matt 28:19):

Unknown

Churches:

No

Scripture Status (Matt 28:20):

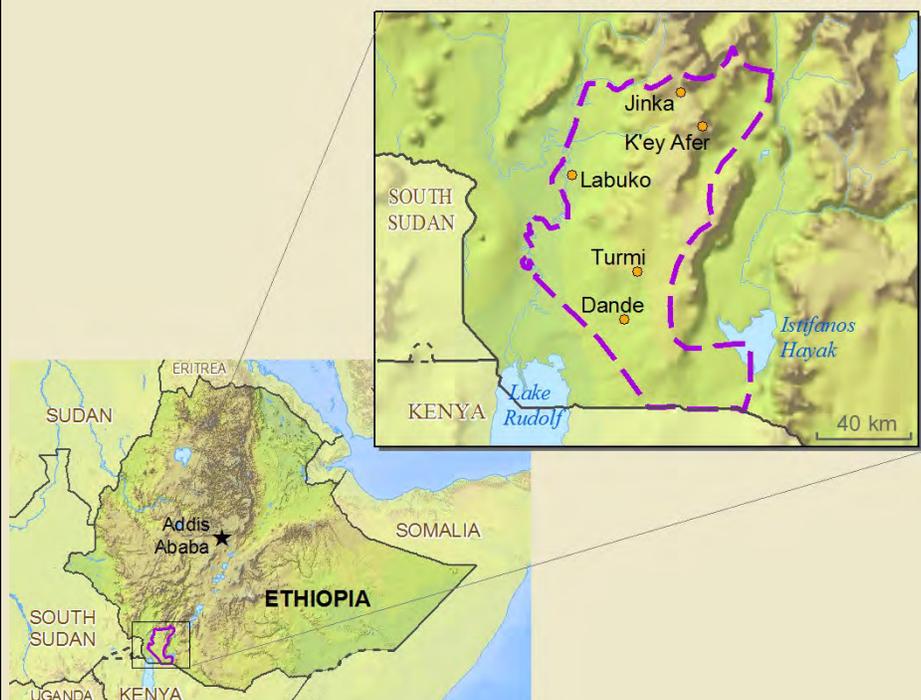
NT in progress

Population (date):

73,500 (2007)



HAMER-BANNA HOMELAND



The Banna-Hamer of Ethiopia

Have They Heard The Gospel?

Response to the Gospel

There are believers who have responded to the gospel but generally resist the gospel. SIM built a clinic in 1988, which helped open people's hearts to the Gospel. They also built an elementary school for the Banna people at Alduba in the 1990s, and most of the students are children of believers.

Is the Word of God Translated?

The Banna/Hamer New Testament will be printed soon
The Seed Company is partnering with the Ethiopian Kale Heywet Church, the Ethiopia Comprehensive Plan, and others to develop 30 to 40 stories, along with 16 storytelling guilds, over the life of this initial goal project. The goal will be to train storytellers who will start storytelling groups. Over time, the storytelling groups will grow into discipleship groups and, eventually, churches.

Hindrances to Scripture Use

Although Ethiopia is a stable country, local ethnic violence could hinder the development of the project.

Other Forms of Gospel Presentations

Audio recordings of Bible stories are available through Global Recordings Network and Banna and Hamer will soon have the "JESUS" film.

The Banna-Hamer of Ethiopia

Group Description

Population all countries

Hamer	46,500
Bana	27,000
Combined population (Date)	2007 census
Monolinguals	38,400 (1994 census)

Geography & Environment

Location:	YeDebub Biheroch Bihereseboch na Hizboch State, Omo area, lowlands west of Lake Chamo in southwest Ethiopia
Climate:	Dry
Ecosystem Type:	Savannah

Society

Marriage:	Girls are married as older teenagers but men are older. Their parents determine when they can marry and have enough wealth to pay a dowry. The dowry of goats and cows is paid in installments over a lifetime. Celebrations There are large celebrations when a man's daughter is ready to be married. When boys come of age they must prove it by jumping on the back of several bulls lined up together and then jump from one to another without falling off.
Art Forms:	Bodies are painted with white chalk in fantastic patterns. They weave colorful glass beads in earrings, necklaces and other body ornaments. Men may wear painted clay caps with beadwork and a feather. Men and women show great creativity with color and design.

Economics

Subsistence type:	Pastoralists
Occupation:	Raising cattle is the primary occupation. They also raise sorghum and maize. They are expert at bee keeping as well.
Income Sources:	Sale of honey

For Further Information

<http://www.carolynford.org/banna/>
<http://www.carolynford.org/hamer/>
<http://www.sim.org/index.php/content/banna>
<http://www.hornofafrica.org/pdf/Hamer-Banna.pdf>