

## The Arbore of Ethiopia



representative photo

The Arbore people in southwest Ethiopia are part of the BATH cluster group and have no written Scripture. Because this is an oral culture, TSC and its partners are launching an Oral Bible Storytelling project as the first phase of bringing God’s Word to them.

They are semi-nomadic and live in their traditional homeland 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.

The Arbore people support 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 one another, but during times of famine it is not unusual for violence to break out between the various BATH 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 Arbore 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

**Primary Religion:**

Traditional

**Disciples (Matt 28:19):**

Unknown

**Churches:**

No

**Scripture Status (Matt 28:20):**

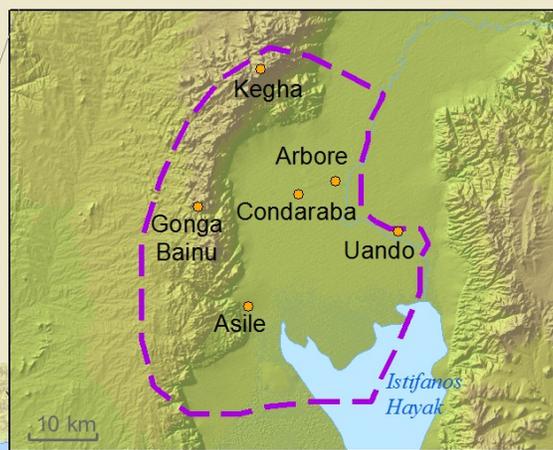
Storytelling

**Population (date):**

120,000



### ARBORE HOMELAND



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### **Have They Heard The Gospel?**

Is the Word of God Translated?

The Arbore people are Oral communicators with no written Scripture. The Oral Bible Storytelling project is the first phase of bringing God's Word to them. As facilitators bring Bible stories to the people and then cultivate storytelling guilds and eventually discipleship groups and churches, the team hopes that the Scriptures will not only transform believers but also the surrounding culture in which women and girls have virtually no status at all.

Hindrances to Scripture Use

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

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### **Status of Christianity**

#### **Scripture**

##### Scripture Use

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.

#### **Church Growth**

This project is the initial phase of a multi-phased project. After the storytelling phase is complete, the partners would like to move forward by producing the “JESUS” film and, eventually, the entire New Testament. This project will also serve as a model for a second Oral Bible Storytelling cluster project in Ethiopia, scheduled to begin in 2014.