

The Dirasha of Ethiopia

The Dirasha live on the mountains south of Chamo lake in South Ethiopia (5°30' north latitude, 37°30' East longitude). The town of Gardulla is at the area's highest elevation, 2,561 meters, and used to be the area's administrative center. The present administrative town, Gidole, is at an elevation of 2,100 meters. The area has many springs, but forests are becoming scarce.

Most of the people are farmers, using hillside terraces for soil and water conservation. The Dirasha also cultivate the lowlands to the south and east of the mountains. The main staple food is sorghum, which is stored in underground chambers for as many as ten years. Also teff, maize, barley, oats, ensete, beans and peas, along with vegetables and fruit (banana, lime) are grown in the area. Cattle, goats and sheep are kept for meat; beehives for honey. Donkeys are used to transport goods.

The people call themselves Dirasha, live in Dirashe and speak Diraytta. For outsiders, they are known as Gidole people. The language belongs to the Lowland East Cushitic group with Konso and Oromo. Oromo and Amharic are also spoken in the administrative center for historical reasons. Amharic is the language of instruction. There is only one small Christian booklet that was printed in the late 1960s. Bible translation began in 2003. A trial primer has been developed.

The Orthodox church came into the area with the Amhara administration around 1920 and evangelical missionaries came thirty years later. The Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus is the main protestant church in the area and its official membership is 37,000 (2005). Today the traditional religion, its spirit worship and fertility rites, have been marginalized.

Image
 Unavailable

Primary Religion:

Christian

Disciples (Matt 28.19):

50%

Churches:

Scripture Status (Matt 28.20):

None

Population (date):

100,000 (2005)



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Item Name	Item Note
Have They Heard The Gospel?	
Call Themselves Christian (%)	>90%
Believe In Jesus As God & Only Savior (%)	50%
Believe In The Local Traditional Religion (%)	10%
Number Of Missionaries Working	1
Is The Word Of God Translated?	Translation in progress.
What Kind Of Missionaries Are Needed?	None

Profile Summary

Population All Countries	
World Population For This People	100,000
World Population (Date)	2005

Group Description

Countries Where People Group Lives	
Country Name	Ethiopia

Group Description

Geography & Environment	
Location	The Dirasha live in the mountainous area of southwestern Ethiopia.
Geological Type	Mountain, Slope
Elevation	2,100 meters
Longitude	37.5E
Latitude	5.5N

Group Description

Language & Linguistics	
Primary Language	DIRASHA

Group Description

Literacy	
Adult Literacy Percentage	20%

Group Description

Economics	
Subsistence Type	Agriculturalists

Group Description

History Of Christianity In Group	
Year Began	1920
By Whom	Orthodox
Significant Events	Evangelical missionaries arrived in 1950

Status of Christianity

Scripture	
Translation Status	In Progress
Available Scripture	None
Other Forms Of Gospel Available: Literature	Yes
Other Forms Of Gospel Available: Recordings	Yes
Other Forms Of Gospel Available: Film/Videos	No
Other Forms Of Gospel Available: Radio	No

Status of Christianity