

## The Sidamo of Ethiopia

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The Sidama live between Awasa town in the north and Dilla town in the south, spread out in a cone-shaped area of the middle of southern Ethiopia. A major asphalt road stretches from north to south in Sidama and the remaining roads are dirt/rock. Sidama is generally a fertile area, varying from flat land (warm to hot) to highland (warm to cold). Economically, most are subsistence farmers. Cattle especially, are a measure of wealth. Sidama is a major coffee growing area with its prized coffee found on the world market. The false banana or "enset", along with maize, as well as fermented cows' milk and butter, are the major staple foods of the Sidama and are found in most yards. Awasa, the people group's as well as region's main center, is the largest city, with a population of about 300,000 people. Since the end of the Communist regime in 1992, the population has grown tremendously and there is a resulting considerable strain on schools and job availability. There is also a pattern of urban migration, especially to Awasa and even abroad, in search of education and jobs.

The Sidama were evangelized in the early-mid 1900s by Kambata Christians and later, by Norwegian and Danish Lutheran and SIM missionaries. The first Kambata missionaries were martyred by the Sidama, but the Kambata persevered and finally, a small group of Sidama Christians resulted. Now, Sidama is estimated to be about 90% Christian including 15% Orthodox. Ten percent are Muslim, non-Christian cults, and traditional religionists. The main churches, in order of size are: Mekane Yesus (Scandinavian Lutheran roots), Kale Hiwot (SIM, Baptist roots), Orthodox, Hiwot Birhan (Swedish/Finnish Pentacostal roots), Mulu Wengel (Full Gospel roots), and Catholic.

Over the past 10-15 years, most Protestant churches have adopted a charismatic/pentecostal, style of worship. Youth choirs are influential in the church and keyboards are the choice of musical instruments of church worship.

**Primary Religion:**

Islam

**Disciples (Matt 28.19):**

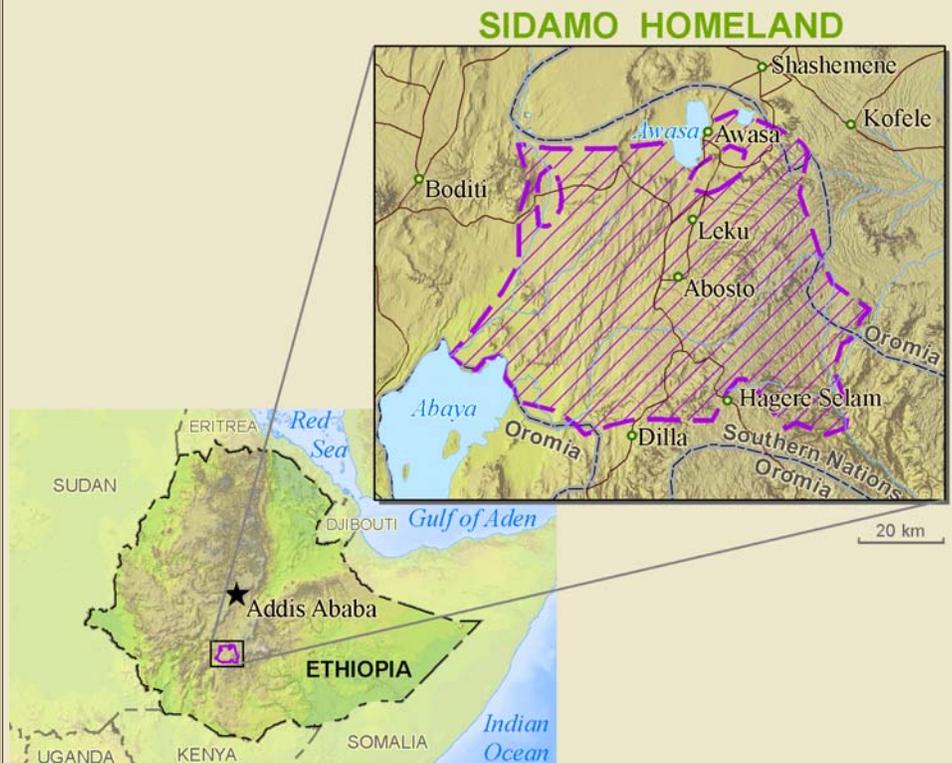
**Churches:**

**Scripture Status (Matt 28.20):**

Sidama New Testament only

**Population (date):**

3,000,000 (est. 2005)



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Item Name	Item Note	
<b>Have They Heard The Gospel?</b>		<b>Profile Summary</b>
Comment (Churches)	<p>The main churches, in relative order of approximate size, in the Sidama area are: Mekane Yesus: 55 pastors, 1,600+ churches, 400,000+ members (Scandinavian Lutheran roots); Kale Hiwot (SIM, Baptist roots); Orthodox; Hiwot Birhan (Swedish/Finnish Pentacostal roots); Mulu Wengel (Full Gospel roots); and Catholic. The Mekane Yesus, Kale Hiwot, Catholic churches and other denominations have Bible Schools in the Sidama area.</p> <p>Relations between the various religious groups has been fairly calm but some resentment arises when people change church denominations.</p>	
Is The Word Of God Translated?	The Sidama New Testament is available in 2 scripts, Sabean (or Ethiopic) and Roman (or Latin). Jonah and Ruth per Bible Society of Ethiopia "easy readers" series in 2001. Abraham, ibid, 2003. OT completion estimated date in 2009 or 2010.	
Any Hinderance To Scripture Distribution?	The physical distribution of books to all countryside areas is a big problem due to lack of adequate transportation and roads. There is also not a tradition of having or of buying books in the countryside so books are presently a low priority in the life of most Sidama people. Adult countryside women are often mono-lingual speakers of Sidama and illiterate in any language. Countryside girls generally have less access to school than boys. Though the Mekane Yesus church had 5 or 6 Bible schools in the Sidama area, only one remains. The Mekane Yesus synod Evangelism Department in the Sidama area, due to lack of finances and personnel shortages, is not able to adequately provide necessary spiritual teaching to its church members. Cassette distribution seems to be much easier to distribute and are more widely available even in remote countryside locations. There is a great demand for music cassettes. Tape cassette/radio players are seen even in remote countryside locations. Though the ""Jesus"" film is available in Sidama, and ""The Great Commission"" organization is present in Awasa town, I don't know how often and where the film is shown."	
Forms Of Gospel Presentation Available (Summary)	Other forms of gospel presentations: 3 Old Testament easy readers: Jonah, Ruth, Abraham; a ""Family Life"" booklet; an Easter tract; the ""Jesus"" film in the Sidama language; 2 Sidama language radio programs--one by Mekane Yesus (6:30 am daily for 15 minutes), and one by the Sidama zone government on Sunday at 7am for 15 minutes; many Christian music tapes by local Sidama singers.	
What Kind Of Missionaries Are Needed?	The national churches in Sidama say that they need cross-cultural missionaries from the West to work alongside of them. The national churches seem to be capable of leading themselves but are short of financial/material/technical supplies for their desired way of functioning.	
<b>Countries Where People Group Lives</b>		<b>Group Description</b>
Country Name	Ethiopia	
<b>Language &amp; Linguistics</b>		<b>Group Description</b>
Comments (Neighbor Languages)	They are bordered by the Arsi Oromo in the north and west, Gedeo, Burji, Guji Oromo people groups in the south, Guji Oromo in the west, and Wolayta and Kambata language groups to the east.	
<b>Literacy</b>		<b>Group Description</b>
Adult Literacy Percentage	20.3%	
<b>Religion &amp; Response</b>		<b>Status of Christianity</b>
Attitude To Christianity	Very positive.	
Comment (Attitude To Christianity)	Many young people especially, are coming to accept Jesus into their lives through the work of young evangelists working with a church. Churches are usually packed to overflowing on Sundays, for conferences, and for mid-week home/church prayer times.	
Attitude To Religious Change	Receptive	
Comment (Attitude Religious Change)	Young people and women make up a majority of the church congregations and especially value the emotional elements of Christianity. They expect miracles and have faith in God's goodness to them and their future. All the congregations enjoy singing original Christian songs, especially in their mother tongue of Sidama, and in Amharic. Singing makes up about half of the church services.	
<b>History Of Christianity In Group</b>		<b>Status of Christianity</b>

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### Item Name

Comments (History of Christianity)

### Item Note

The Sidama were evangelized in the early-mid 1900's by Kambata Christians and later, by Norwegian and Danish Lutheran and SIM missionaries. Initially, the two Western missionary groups did not evangelize in the same areas but later, local churches representing both sprang up throughout the area. The first Kambata missionaries were martyred by the Sidama, but the Kambata persevered and finally, a small group of Sidama Christians resulted.

### Scripture

### Status of Christianity

Other Forms Of Gospel Available: Literature	Yes
Other Forms Of Gospel Available: Recordings	Yes
Other Forms Of Gospel Available: Film/Videos	Yes
Other Forms Of Gospel Available: Radio	Yes