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The Saho of Ethiopia and Eritrea

The Saho people live in northern Ethiopia, as well as in Eritrea and even some in Djibouti. They live in their traditional homeland, but when Eritrea achieved independence from Ethiopia in 1991, many found themselves living on the Eritrean side of the border. The recent war between Ethiopia and Eritrea has affected many in the Saho community, even dividing families.

The Saho people of Ethiopia live in a dry valley that was once a reservoir. With no cash crop, the people depend on subsistence farming to meet their daily needs. They are not able to produce cash crops, largely because the land they farm is not very fertile. Seasonal rains, which they depend on for their crops, also impact their ability to support themselves.

Christianity was introduced to the region as far back as the fourth century. In the 18th century, a major Christian denomination began missionary efforts; other churches and denominations followed suit in the 20th century. While nearly 100 percent of the Ethiopian Saho identify themselves as Christians, many are Christian in name only. Most of the Saho speakers in Eritrea and Djibouti practice a major world religion that is dominant in the region.

Primary Religion:

Christianity

Disciples (Matt 28:19):

unknown

Churches:

Yes

Scripture Status (Matt 28:20):

NT in progress & Jesus Film

Population (date):

230,000



SAHO HOMELAND



The Saho of Ethiopia

Have They Heard The Gospel?

Is the Word of God Translated?

The entire New Testament is to be translated. They will start with the Gospel of Luke, which will pave the way for the "JESUS" film in Saho. They will also publish a dictionary. After the New Testament is published, they would like to record it in audio format to take into areas where a printed Bible is not usable.

How Have They Responded to the Gospel?

Church and denominational leaders believe that if the people have God's Word in their mother tongue, they will grow in their faith. This has spurred them to ask for translated Scripture in Saho. They hope that the Scriptures will be a source of inspiration and discipleship, as well as a resource for evangelism.

Other Forms of Gospel Presentations

Audio recordings available.

The Saho of Ethiopia

Status of Christianity

Scripture

Urgent Need for Translation

Because they do not have a Bible in their own language, the Saho churches have had to use a Bible in a language that the vast majority of the people cannot understand. The Saho New Testament will change this; Christians will understand and become grounded in their faith. Along with the “JESUS” film, these Scriptures will provide the churches with powerful tools to reach the many Saho who are not yet believers in Jesus.