



The Argobba of Ethiopia

The Argobba are a Muslim people group that is spread out through isolated village networks and towns in the northeast and east of Ethiopia. Historically, they have been an oppressed people group, suffering from land incursions and economic pressures from neighboring people groups on one hand, and natural famine pressures on the other. The Argobba have typically been astute traders and merchants, and have adjusted to the economic trends in their area. These factors have led to the overall suppression of the Argobba language. In some places it has homogenized with Amharic. In other places the people have shifted to neighboring languages for economic reasons. At this time there are only a few areas left where the Argobba are not at least bilingual in Amharic, Oromo or Afar. All of these languages have literature that can be used to serve the Argobba, even though the current literacy rate in any language is low for the Argobba. The number of Argobba that cannot be served by another language is uncertain.

Primary Religion:

Islam

Disciples (Matt 28.19):

0

Churches:

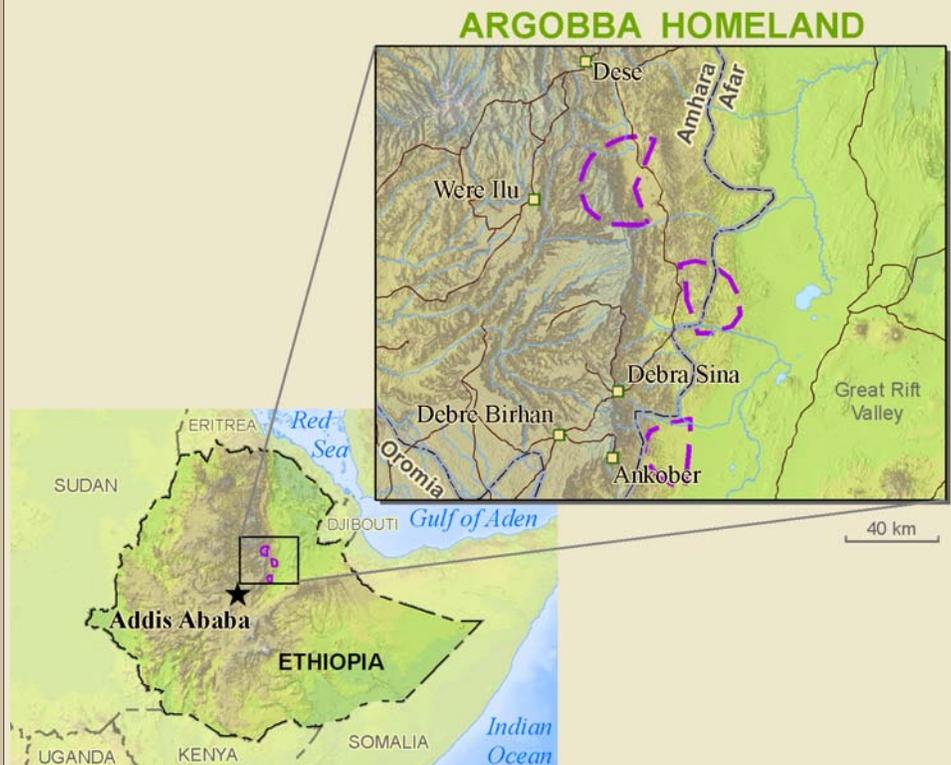
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Scripture Status (Matt 28.20):

None available

Population (date):

62,800 (1989)



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Item Name	Item Note	
Have They Heard The Gospel?		Profile Summary
Call Themselves Christian (%)	0	
Believe In Jesus As God & Only Savior (%)	0	
Prophet/Good Man, But Not God's Son (%)	100	
Have Not Heard Who Jesus is (%)	>50	
Comment (Pastors)	It is probable that there are no pastors or evangelists among the Argobba.	
Comment (Number Of Missionaries)	There are no missionaries that work specifically with the Argobba.	
Response To The Gospel	They have responded with some antagonism toward Christianity in general as they have primarily been exposed to Christianity through a large, Orthodox Christian people group, the Amhara, with whom they have also had considerable disagreements concerning land, business and religion. The understanding of evangelical Christianity is probably very low among the Argobba.	
Comment (Number Communities)	Perhaps 30 different "heartlands," each made up of a number of towns and villages more or less populated by Argobba people.	
Number Of Churches	0	
Is The Word Of God Translated?	None in their language	
Any Hinderance To Scripture Distribution?	There is no literature or literacy in the Argobba language. Also, the Argobba may be resistant to receiving Christian literature.	
Forms Of Gospel Presentation Available (Summary)	Recordings: yes Literature: yes Films/videos: yes Radio: yes The Argobba, where they are bilingual in Oromo, Afar or Amharic, could have all the above provided to them in one of these languages. The areas where Argobba people are bilingual in one or more of these languages may be defined geographically.	
What Kind Of Missionaries Are Needed?	Medical and veterinary assistance would likely be appreciated, though it would probably not be accepted if it were provided by a Christian organization.	
Population All Countries		Group Description
World Population For This People	62,800	
World Population (Date)	1989	
World Population (Urban Percent)	17.5%	
Countries Where People Group Lives		Group Description
Country Name	Ethiopia	
Geography & Environment		Group Description
Location	Along the eastern escarpment of the Rift Valley in Ethiopia, from Garfa and Ch'allaqqa rivers in the north to the Kasam river in the south. There is also a large Argobba settlement below the city of Harer.	
Ecosystem Type	Tropical	
Geological Type	Mountain, Slope	
Climate	warm	
Language & Linguistics		Group Description
Comment (Language)	The primary language for Argobba people switches in different areas. The first language of Argobba people can be Argobba, Oromo, Afar or Amharic The attitude toward Argobba is more receptive in some areas than others.	
Comments (Dialect)	There are some dialect variations, but they have not been pinpointed. It is said that the "purest" Argobba is spoken in the northern most Argobba heartlands, near Shonke and T'olaha.	
Percent Monolingual (%)	70	
Comment (Second Language)	The 70% who are monolingual are monolingual in Argobba, Oromo, Afar or Amharic.	
Comments (Related Languages)	Argobba is very similar to Amharic.	
Literacy		Group Description
Adult Literacy Percentage	16.4%	
Comment (Attitude to literacy)	Would like to learn how to read one or more of the languages they speak.	

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Item Name	Item Note	
Economics		Group Description
Comment (Subsistence Type)	craftsmen (weavers), farmers, merchants, traders	
Average Annual Income	Varies widely between different occupations, from relatively wealthy businessmen to subsistence farmers.	
Occupation	Lenders, store/cafe owners, traders, weavers, and farmers.	
Products / Crafts	weaving (cotton cloth)	
Trade Partners	Neighboring peoples – Afar, Oromo, and Amhara	
Modernization / Utilities	: Some Argobba people have recently undergone an economic change, from mainly weavers and farmers to trading and owning businesses	
Community Development		Group Description
Health Care (Quality)	Poor	
Diet (Quality)	Fair	
Water (Quality)	Fair	
Shelter Description	poor-good	
Electricity	available for some	
Clothing	poor-good	
Infant Mortality Rate	18%	
Life Expectancy	about 50	
Society & Culture		Group Description
Family Structures	Family members who move from the country to do business in towns are often linked with their home village by maintaining a support network with family members there. In many places it is expected that an Argobba marry another Argobba in order for them and their children to remain Argobba. It is more important in some places for the mother to be Argobba, as she dictates the culture of the children.	
Neighbor Relations	The Argobba relate very well with their neighbors, practically assimilating. They learn their languages and cultures, and act accordingly where it is beneficial.	
Authority / Rule	Consistent with Muslim cultures.	
Social Habits/Groupings	Where it is beneficial for the Argobba, they associate with other Argobba, but where there are not many Argobba or where their business depends on interaction with other cultures, they associate freely with those other cultures.	
Cultural Change Pace	Medium	
Identification With National Culture	Distinct	
Self Image	Threatened	
Judicial / Punishment System	Sharia law	
Celebrations	Muslim celebrations and holidays	
Comment (Attitude To Outsiders)	somewhat receptive in certain contexts like business, but very resistant to certain aspects of outsiders' cultures (particularly religion)	
Comment (Attitude To Change)	Again, some changes are seen as necessary, while others, like in religion, are not tolerated.	
Education		Group Description
Comment (Primary Schools)	Some Argobba people attend Koranic schools.	
Church Growth		Status of Christianity
Reached Status	Evaluated	
Reached Classification	Unreached	
Total Baptized	0	
Lay Leaders	0	
Bible Schools	0	
Christian Clinics/Hospitals	0	

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Item Name	Item Note	
Christian Literacy Centers	0	
Religion & Response		Status of Christianity
Attitude To Christianity	Very resistant	
Attitude To Religious Change	Very resistant	
Religious Analogies & Bridges	: They may consider Jesus to be a prophet, and may give some credit to the Christian scriptures.	
Spiritual Climate And Openness	The Argobba are extremely Muslim and would consider becoming anything other than Muslim a disowning of themselves from their ethnicity, culture and family.	
Comment (Religion)	The Mekane Yesus denomination plans to begin working with the Argobba.	
Recommended Approaches	It is likely that the radio programs that are broadcast in Oromo, Amharic and Afar are reaching the Argobba.	
Items For Prayer	Pray that God would deal with the stronghold the Argobba cultural identity has over the Argobba people. Pray that where Argobba people are not bilingual in one of the languages that has the Bible, they would be reached with God's Word through language shift or translation.	
History Of Christianity In Group		Status of Christianity
Comments (History of Christianity)	The Argobba culture basically identifies the ethnicity of Argobba with being Muslim. The two terms are synonymous for the Argobba.	
Scripture		Status of Christianity
Available Scripture	None	
Comment (Form of Scripture Available)	None, except for where they are literate in Amharic, Oromo or Afar.	