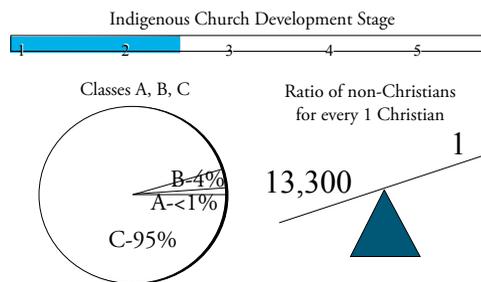


Afar



Quick Facts

Population: 2,000,000
 Ethiopia: 1,200,000
 Eritrea: 400,000
 Djibouti: 250,000
 Somalia: 150,000
Religion: Sunni Islam
Believers: 0.007%
Scriptures: NT
Ministry Tools: JGRT
Church Status: 2
Mission Status: 2
MS Subgroups: 5



Class A- Are members of a Culturally Relevant Church
 Class B- Have close access to a CRC, but have not yet joined
 Class C- Have no reasonable or close access to a CRC

Identity: The Afar are a Cushitic speaking nomadic tribe that claim descent from Yemeni Arabs. Their language is related with Oromo and Somali. Like the Somali, they are divided into numerous clans which are in constant conflict with one another.

Lifestyle: The Afar live in one of the most inhospitable regions in the world known as the Danakil Depression. This region has the hottest temperatures on earth and is filled with salt pans and active volcanos. Water is scarce and the main source of inter-tribal conflict. Despite these conditions, the Afar manage to raise herds of camels, goats, cattle, and sheep. Their diet is mostly meat, though they trade salt, butter and hides to obtain agricultural goods from neighboring sedentary peoples. Some Afar that live by the sea make their living primarily from fishing.

Customs: Marriage eligibility for girls can be as early as ten years of age,

though for boys, they are not eligible for marriage, or even considered to be a man, until they have killed an enemy in battle. This tradition has kept blood feuds running for centuries among the Afar. Lately, the Ethiopian government has attempted to mediate these conflicts and bring stability to the region, especially as it seeks to exploit its resources.

Religion: The Afar are Sufi Muslims who have retained a high degree of blending with their pre-Islamic Cushitic faith. Shrines on mountain tops continue to be used to sacrifice to Zar-Wak (Sky-god), who is the chief deity of the Afar. This pre-Islamic monotheism conditioned them to accept Islam, but may also have encouraged a kind of syncretism between Zar-Wak and Allah. Pre-Islamic oracle-dancing has also been retained, and has become an integral part of their Sufi ceremonies.

Christian Outreach: Work among the Afar is just beginning to show fruit,

though progress is slow. Around eight church planting agencies have engaged the Afar in Ethiopia, Eritrea, and Djibouti, though there is still no work in Somalia, due to that countries instability. The most significant progress has come in Ethiopia, and it is believed that an indigenous church-movement is in the process of formation.

How to Pray:

✞ Ask God to use the presence of missionaries as agents of his peace and reconciliation between families, clans and tribes. Pray for healing to come to this land of violence and bloodshed.

✞ Afar clans are grouped into four major “Sultanates,” each with their own ruler that functions in both a political and religious capacity. Pray for spiritual breakthrough in the lives of these influential leaders.

✞ The Afar have increasingly begun to trade with the surrounding majority “Christian” peoples. Pray that these business interactions would serve to build bridges into the Kingdom and not walls of mistrust through injustice and mistreatment. Pray for a burden to be given to indigenous believers to share the love of Christ with the Afar.

**Every year
 18,000 Afar die
 without Christ.**