



# Ethiopia

## Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia

### Africa

#### Geography

**Area** 1,106,000 sq km. Fertile, mountain plateau surrounded by the drought-prone lowlands and deserts of the Red Sea coast; borders on Eritrea, Somalia, Kenya and Sudan. Landlocked since the secession of Eritrea.

Population	Ann Gr	Density
2010	84,975,606	2.62%
2020	107,964,331	2.33%
2030	131,560,907	1.89%

**Capital** Addis Ababa 2,929,626. **Urbanites** 17.6%. **Pop under 15 yrs** 44%. **Life expectancy** 54.7 yrs.

#### Peoples

The first three major categories consist of the Horn of Africa peoples – 97.8% of Ethiopia's population.

**Semitic/Ethiopian** 41.5%. 18 peoples including: Amhara 31.3%; Tigrinya 5.6%; Gurage(3) 1.7%; Silti 1.5%.

**Cushitic** 41.6%. Three main sub-groups:

**Oromo** 34.6%. 12 peoples. Hararghe 7.5%; Tulama 7.5%; Wallega 5.6%; Macha 5.4%; Selale 4.2%; Arsi 2.8%.

**Somali** 5.3%. 3 groups, large numbers shifting across border due to civil strife in Somalia.

**Afar** 1.7%. 3 groups.

**Omotic** 14.7%. 49 peoples in south and southwest; Sadama 3.1%; Wolaita 2.1%; Hadiyya 1.6%; Gamo 1.2%; Gedeo 1.1%; Kafa 1.0%; Kambata 1.0%.

**Nilotic** 1.0%. 19 peoples.

**Other** 1.2%. Other sub-Saharan African, Arab, Western, Asian.

**Literacy** 35.9%. **Official language** Amharic; majority of the population are able to speak it; English widely taught. Regional languages are very important. **All languages** 88. **Indigenous languages** 85. **Languages with Scriptures** 7Bi 17NT 19por 34w.i.p.

#### Economy

Heavily based on agriculture (50% of GNP), which in turn depends on unreliable weather and on exhausted land from 3,000 years of cultivation. The main export is coffee, which is believed to have originated in Ethiopia. Decades of underdevelopment due to war, famine and changing political systems. Increasingly frequent droughts and tensions with Eritrea and Somalia slow economic development. Chronic malnutrition of millions, but systemic dependence on foreign aid and food undermines the work ethic and local agriculture.

**HDI Rank** 171<sup>st</sup>/182. **Public debt** 32% of GDP. **Income/person** \$333 (1% of USA).

#### Politics

One of the oldest nations known, with a long written history. Africa's oldest independent nation. Amhara-dominated Empire 1896–1974, with Italian occupation 1936–41. The revolution of 1974 overthrew the Emperor Haile Selassie and imposed Marxism on the country. Regional uprisings together with severe droughts and

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man-aided famines ultimately led to the collapse of Mengistu's Marxist regime in 1991. The Tigray-led democratic government federalized the country with a devolution of power to 10 regions, largely ethnically defined. The costly 1998-2000 war with Eritrea drained but unified the nation. The third successive election success in 2005 of Prime Minister Meles was bitterly contested and alleged to be fraudulent. Somalia's civil strife sees Ethiopia embroiled against the Islamist forces there.

## Religion

North Ethiopia was one of the first Christian nations – from the 4th Century. The Ethiopian Orthodox Church was the state church from 1270 until the 1974 revolution. The Marxist regime persecuted Christians, especially evangelicals, with many churches destroyed and congregations scattered. Since 1991, there has been freedom for worship and witness. Increasingly active and ambitious Islamist groups threaten the delicate balance of religious powers, even as Orthodox, Catholic and evangelical groups make overtures to one another and begin to work together.

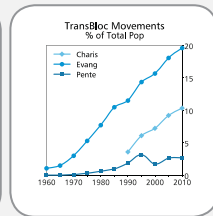
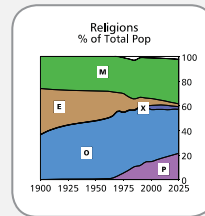
Religions	Pop %	Population	Ann Gr
Christian	60.68	51,563,198	2.7%
Muslim	34.10	28,976,682	2.9%
Ethnoreligionist	3.70	3,144,097	-1.8%
Non-religious	1.50	1,274,634	6.4%
Baha'i	0.02	16,995	2.6%

Christians	Denoms	Pop %	Affiliates	Ann Gr
Protestant	33	17.54	14,904,000	4.4%
Independent	24	1.66	1,412,000	2.6%
Anglican	1	<0.01	1,000	0.0%

Catholic	3	0.72	610,000	2.7%
Orthodox	3	39.52	33,584,000	1.9%
Marginal	2	0.03	28,000	4.6%
Unaffiliated		1.21	1,028,000	0.8%

Churches	MegaBloc	Congs	Members	Affiliates
Ethiopian Orthodox	O	20,620	19,869,822	33,580,000
Kale Heywet, KHC	P	7,714	3,250,000	6,500,000
Mekane Yesus, EECMY	P	10,158	1,371,382	5,279,822
Apostolic Church	I	1,293	388,000	970,000
Full Gospel, Mulu Wengel	P	1,317	329,200	823,000
Cath (Coptic & Roman)	C	555	360,947	610,000
Pentecostal Holiness	P	289	285,643	571,286
Heywet Birhane (AoG)	P	1,060	265,000	530,000
Meserete Kristos Ch	P	390	190,419	318,000
Seventh-day Adventist	P	451	158,000	237,000
Birhane Wengel Ch	P	290	58,086	176,000
Misgana Church	I	337	62,083	149,000
Sefer Genet (FFM)	P	436	65,455	144,000
Chs of Christ	P	618	61,800	93,936
Other denominations[51]		2,378	227,731	556,198
<b>Total Christians[67]</b>		<b>46,800</b>	<b>26,943,568</b>	<b>50,538,242</b>

TransBloc	Pop %	Population	Ann Gr
<b>Evangelicals</b>			
Evangelicals	19.6	16,657,376	4.3%
<b>Renewalists</b>			
Charismatics	10.3	8,787,079	5.0%
Pentecostals	2.7	2,286,612	3.0%



## Answers to Prayer

- 1 Sustained and remarkable growth of evangelical numbers** over the years is praiseworthy. Since the deposition of Haile Selassie in 1974, evangelicals have grown from 5% to 20%, a near-tenfold increase. The greatest growth has been in the last 20 years, and there are many signs that growth will continue, since outward vision and courageous evangelism continue.
- 2 Unity among believers, forged through suffering, continues.** The Italian occupation (1936-1941) and Marxist period (1974-1990) saw harsh persecution. Many were martyred, but millions were won to Christ. Evangelical churches in Ethiopia suffered together then and are working together now. Bold and dynamic plans for church planting and evangelism among the less evangelized are being implemented.
- 3 The Bible is increasingly distributed and read;** demand far outstrips supply. New translation projects are springing up amid several of the many languages. Access to the Bible in the Orthodox Church has brought tens of thousands into living faith in Christ. Increasingly, Orthodox churches are seeing the Spirit move, and they are relating more amicably with other Christian groups, including Catholics and evangelicals.

- 4** There has been increased political stability, economic growth and job opportunities in the past few years on a scale not seen for decades.

## Challenges for Prayer

- 1** The nation continues to be torn with social, political and economic crises:

- a) *Hostilities with neighbours Eritrea and Somalia* cripple efforts to revive and modernize the country. The Eritrean war was immensely costly in money and lives for no real gain. Embroilment in the civil conflict in Somalia could become a huge expense.
- b) *Ethnic fragmentation remains a possibility*. Regionalization brings greater autonomy to the major ethnic groups – Amhara, Tigrinya, Oromo, Somali and Afar. Some scenarios could see federal power break down and tribalism increase.
- c) *Corruption has increased with economic growth*. The country's resources are accumulating in the hands of a few. This is creating a widening gap between the multitudinous poor and the rich elite and is generating increasing resentment. Crime and corruption are becoming significant concerns for the nation.

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- 2** Poverty defines the lasting images of Ethiopia, from the famines of the 1980s until now. Marxist mismanagement and droughts made Ethiopia dependent on hundreds of thousands of tonnes of food aid every year. This dependency continues, unbalancing the domestic economy and undermining local agriculture, and yet tens of thousands die annually of malnutrition. The careless application of aid can do more harm than good. Pray for better harvests, wise economic governance and outside assistance rightly applied.

- 3** The Ethiopian Orthodox Church is enduring a time of immense change. Centuries of isolation from the rest of the Christian world – as a Christian island in a sea of Islam – helped form its unique culture, theology and traditions.

- a) *It had to adjust to losing political privilege under Communism*, which has only been partially restored since 1990. Syncretism and superstitions are widespread among millions of the more nominal Orthodox.
- b) *The rapid spread of the use of Scriptures* and the growth of Protestant denominations led to millions of defections and the emergence of strong evangelical and charismatic networks within the Orthodox Church. Orthodoxy is learning to find common ground with evangelicals while retaining its own unique character.
- c) *Pray for a deep work of the Holy Spirit* to revitalize this ancient Church, its biblical heritage and its spiritual legacy.

- 4** Massive growth in Protestant and Independent churches creates a great expectation for further harvest. Pray for:

- a) *Revival and growth to be sustained* and for divisions and carnality to be avoided.
- b) *Effective means for generating income to support Kingdom workers*, to develop the needed structures and facilities and to fund social programmes that are essential in the prevailing conditions of deep poverty. The Church must minister as the poor to the poor; pray for creative solutions to the challenges this brings.
- c) *Continued unity and cooperation among leaders*, qualities forged through past suffering. Relationships among denominations seem stronger than the divisions that occur within denominations; pray against the dividing influences of the enemy and human pride. Pray especially for the Evangelical Churches Fellowship (ECFE), which represents the majority of evangelicals in the country.
- d) *Missions vision* was birthed out of suffering during the Marxist regime and the withdrawal of Western agencies during that time. Through ECFE, a long-term strategy for evangelizing Ethiopia has emerged, one that includes intercession, focus on unevangelized peoples and church mobilization – only 3% of evangelical churches are regarded as being “mission-mobilized”. The vision entails planting, cross-culturally, thousands more churches in all regions of Ethiopia and even sending to the Horn of Africa and South Asia.

**5 Leadership training** is identified as a major reason that the churches' potential is unfulfilled. The majority of church leaders have one year or less of training. Leadership is not meeting the demands (neither in numbers nor in quality) placed on it by such rapid church growth. Pray for the following:

- a) **Post-graduate training** at the Ethiopian Graduate School of Theology in Addis Ababa. Pray for the provision of theologians and teachers who are godly and steeped in the Scriptures. Pray for provision for students who wish to pursue studies.
- b) **Degree-level training** – the Evangelical Theological College (KHC and **SIM**), Mekane Yesu Theological Seminary, Meserete Kristos College, the Pentecostal Bible College, Berhane Wongel Theological College, Trinity College and St. Paul's (both Orthodox).
- c) **The numerous Bible schools** across the country run by denominations, such as the 127 Amharic Bible schools (KHC) and Mekane Yesu with many more.
- d) **The network of evening and short-term Bible schools and TEE programmes** around the country where many thousands of local leaders and evangelists are trained. The Berhan Media Ministry runs a widespread Bible Correspondence Course. Bible Training Centres for Pastors trains nearly 1,500 students as part of a TEE programme. Poverty and long distances make these programmes all the more essential.

**6 The less evangelized.** ECFE and **DAWN** cooperated on studies that established the need for further mission research, and identified 30 unevangelized peoples accounting for 25 million people, mostly away from the centre of the nation. There are Ethiopians working among all of these:

- a) **The largely Muslim Somali, Harari and Afar regions** in the east. Many thousands of Somalis have crossed into Ethiopia, fleeing the violence at home. Ethiopian ethnic Somalis number 4.5 million and are one of Africa's least reached peoples. The number of Christians is growing, but ministry to these people comes at great risk and personal cost to those sharing.
- b) **Many sections of Oromia**, especially in the east and south, are strongly Muslim and increasingly assertive within the federal framework. A number of agencies, foreign and national, reach out despite some hostility toward Christianity. Intertribal Oromi warfare has disrupted much work but gives opportunity to show compassion.
- c) **The many peoples of the southwest**, bordering on Sudan, are isolated and smaller in numbers; some are nomadic. Nearly all are now engaged by evangelists and missionaries. Pray for healthy churches to be planted through pioneering work among the Aari, Bench, Bodi (5,000), Bumi (40,000), Hamer-Banna, Daasenach, Dime (15,000), Ebore (5,000), Karo (5,000), Me'en, Mali (39,000), Mursi (5,000), Tarra (15,000), Tsamai (20,000) and Wata (5,000).

**7 Islam is becoming a greater challenge.** Ethiopia has remained a bastion of Christianity, withstanding Islamic advances for centuries. Muslims now target this nation for Islamization – educational, employment and financial inducements are offered, a massive mosque-building programme is underway and thousands of wells are being drilled. Violent – even murderous – reactions against evangelical outreach create a climate of religious tension and fear, but this same violence causes many other Muslims to consider Jesus. Those committed to reaching Muslims for Christ demonstrate that, while costly, it is possible. From only a few hundred believers 10 years ago, there are now tens of thousands of believers from a Muslim background.

**8 Young people** make up the majority of Ethiopia's population – 70% are under the age of 30. Yet, far too little ministry is focused on reaching and discipling them. Among students, EVASUE (**IFES**) and **CCCI** see incredible growth and fruitfulness despite frequent opposition. Pray for children to be able to be schooled and to find employment as they finish. Pray also that church and parachurch ministries would make discipling the next generation a top priority.

**9 AIDS is a major scourge** of the nation; Ethiopia has the world's fifth-highest number of people with HIV/AIDS. About one million have already died of the disease, and another two million have HIV. Over one million have been orphaned by AIDS-related deaths. Many ministries are meeting this call for love and mercy. From local churches (such as KHC and Lutherans) to foreign agencies (**SIM**, Food for the Hungry) to other ministries (The Bible Society), Christians are working in education, prevention, counselling, home care and orphan ministry.

**10 Foreign mission workers** will never regain their pre-Marxist-revolution numbers or influence, but their role today is different. Lutheran and Pentecostal missions from the four Nordic nations have a long tradition of faithful service, as does **SIM**. The growing and maturing Church needs co-labourers and partners in areas such as training, Bible translation, reaching the last remaining unevangelized groups and especially in holistic ministry – health, agriculture, education and community development. The largest agencies are: **SIM**, Norwegian Lutheran Mission, Swedish Pentecostal Mission, Word for the World.

**11 Bible translation remains a major challenge.** Up to 88% of congregations use local languages in their meetings, so Bible translation is a must. There are 35 translation projects in progress; this represents nearly half of all living languages. Another 17 languages have translation needs that are currently unaddressed. Many groups are involved with projects: **WBT**, Mekane Yesu Church, KHC, **SIM**, The Bible Society and Word for the World. Pray for wisdom in knowing which projects are priorities, and pray for more nationals to become involved in them. A hugely ambitious Bible distribution programme by The Bible Society needs finance and prayer.

**12 Christian help ministries.**

- a) **Literature.** Improved literacy and swelling populations create millions of new readers. Reading materials are increasing in various languages, and opportunities for “evangelism through literacy” are growing. Pray especially for good resources in minority languages, for youth-oriented literature and for widespread distribution in a country where poverty and poor infrastructure present many challenges.
- b) **Audio Scripture.** This alternate format for presenting gospel material is vital and very much in demand in Ethiopia’s oral society. **GRN** has 73 languages on offer, Faith Comes By Hearing has a successful audio programme and hundreds of “Bible Listening Groups” have sprung up, even among the Orthodox.
- c) **Radio.** Religious broadcasting from within the country is prohibited. But there are about 77 hours per week of shortwave broadcasts – in Amharic, Tigrina, Oromo, Somali, Afar – by **TWR**, FEBA and Adventist World Radio. Pray for more foreign radio broadcasts aimed at Ethiopians and for the future opening of Ethiopia to local Christian radio.

