

Hamer-Banna of Ethiopia

Population: 91,000

Language: Hamer-Banna

Location: Only in the highlands of southwest Ethiopia, mostly in the Lower Omo region in the Gemu Gofa province, east of the Omo River and north of Lake Turkana

Religion: 85% Ethnic Religions; 13% Islam

% Christian: 1.5%

% Evangelical: 0.6%

Christian resources available: MegaVoice Audio Bible & Stories; Global Recordings; Jesus film; no written Bible



The people: The Hamer-Banna are actually two ethnic groups that speak the same language, which they call Hamer-Banna, though they refer to themselves as either Hamer or Banna.

They are primarily cattle breeders, so cattle is their most treasured possession. They traditionally have cattle-raiding wars with those in Mali, Bodi and Mursi. They may also have sheep, goats and camels. The area where the Hamer-Banna people live is one of the most inaccessible and least developed part of East Africa.

Several related families live in tents arranged in a circle. The tents are made of flexible poles which are covered with thatch in the dry season and canvas mats in the rainy season. The women and young children sleep in beds, while the men and older boys often sleep on cots or stools in the center of the camp near the cattle which are brought there each night. The Hamer-Banna are nomads, but they plant sorghum and maize at the beginning of the rainy season before they leave for their journey. Some also plant sesame and beans. The crops are left unattended, so often have low yields.

The men engage in elaborate hair-dressing; they wear a clay "cap" that is painted and decorate with feathers and other ornaments. A well-dressed man will wear a toga-like cloth and carry a spear. Women often wear colorful toga-like clothing.

Men may marry as many women as they like, within their own tribe. Marriage celebrations include feasting and dancing. Men choose women who can endure a severe whipping. Women who can't endure the whipping, may never marry and their families will be disgraced. Young girls and boys are circumcised.

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Religious Beliefs

Some Hamer-Banna are Sunni Muslim and observe the five pillars of Islam. However, they blend into their Islam many elements of their traditional ethnic religion. Most Hamer-Banna practice animism, believing that physical objects such as rocks and trees have spirits. They also believe in jinns, spirits that are capable of taking on human or animal form and have supernatural influence over people. Prayer is the key to reaching them with the gospel.

Prayer Points

- Pray for the Ethiopian churches in the diaspora & in Ethiopia to mobilize their people & resources to reach the Hamer-Banna.
- God to grant favor & wisdom for the agency currently focusing on the Hamer-Banna
- Additional long-term workers to live & work among them
- Strength, encouragement & protection for the few known believers
- **Boldness for the believers to share Jesus with their people**
- **Prayer teams to begin breaking up the soil**
- **God to raise up strong local churches among the Hamer-Banna**

Information from The Joshua Project at www.joshuaproject.net, <http://www.peoplegroups.org> and the Jan. 4, 2013 Global Prayer Digest

"How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed?
And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard?
And how are they to hear without someone preaching?
And how are they to preach unless they are sent?
As it is written 'How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!'"
Romans 10: 14 - 15



For information on adopting the Hamer-Banna

<http://www.hornofafrica.org>

www.engagers.org



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- God to grant favor & wisdom for the agency currently focusing on the Hamer-Banna
- Additional long-term workers to live & work among them
- Strength, encouragement & protection for the few known believers
- **Boldness for the believers to share Jesus with their people**
- **Prayer teams to begin breaking up the soil**
- **God to raise up strong local churches among the Hamer-Banna**
- **Translation of the Bible to begin in their primary language**

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