

# Silt'e in Ethiopia

Population: 1,155,000  
Language: Silt'e  
Location: South of Addis Ababa 150 km, Silte administrative zone, Werbey Town  
Religion: Islam  
% Christian: 2%  
% Evangelical: 0.50%  
Christian resources available: Bible portions, audio recordings, Jesus film

## The people:

The term Silt'e is the modern name of the speakers of the Silt'e language. Today's Silt'e comprise the following major historical sub-groups: Azernet, Berbere, Alichcho, Wuriro, Melga (or Ulbareg) and Silt'i (or Summusilt'i). The name Silt'i (for the subgroup) is derived from the alleged ancestor Gen Silt'i. The modern name Silt'e was chosen in memory of this ancestor and as a reminiscence of the old Islamic sultanate of Hadiyya the Silte people claim a historical relation to.

Until the second half of the twentieth century the Silt'e were considered to be part of the Gurage (but called Adiyya or Hadiyya by the Sebat Bet Gurage). After the fall of the Derg regime in 1991, a political movement formed to establish an independent ethnic identity for the Silt'e, as they now called themselves. In 2000, the Silt'e voted unanimously to form their own administrative unit and successfully obtained creating their own administrative zone, the Silt'e Zone.

In the countryside the Silt'e practice mixed farming. Their main staple food is the false banana plant, Enset Edulis. The fruit is not edible but the massive roots feed their families. They also grow cereals, legumes, coffee and sorghum. There is a shortage of farmland, so many have migrated to towns and cities. A considerable number of Silt'e live in Addis Ababa, Adama and other cities and smaller urban centres of southern Ethiopia where they have become successful merchants, traders or businessmen.

The Gurage people were followers of a traditional religion which focused on three lesser dieties. This became weakened as more Christian and Muslim influences penetrated the tribes. The Silt'e became Muslim. However, there has been widespread church planting within this people group in the past few years.



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### What are their needs?

There is a need for addressing poverty, human development, rural development, food security, capacity building, greater commercialization of agriculture, enhancement of private sector development, and industrial development. There are wonderful opportunities to show the love of Christ to the Silt'e especially in areas of health and education.

There are many local resources that the church can use such as businesses to support the indigenous leaders. There are many opportunities to work with the youth of Silt'e because they gather together often. Ministries such as football, friendships, water aid and the like can be helpful. There are opportunities to help the local people with sustainability and independence.

### Prayer Points

- Pray for the Ethiopian churches in the diaspora & in Ethiopia to mobilize their people & resources to reach the Silt'e for Christ.
- Pray for the completion of Bible translation in this people group's primary language.
- Pray that God will protect, nurture, feed and grow the new church plants that will lead to many Silt'e people coming to follow Christ.

Information from The Joshua Project at [www.joshuaproject.net](http://www.joshuaproject.net) and [Global Prayer Digest January 2011](#)

"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 Silt'e of Ethiopia

[www.hornofafrica.org](http://www.hornofafrica.org)

[www.engagers.org](http://www.engagers.org)



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