

The Afar

Nomads in the Horn of Africa

An Afar song

If there is still any place

On which we have not already put our foot!

If there is still any place

On which we have not already put our herds!

The only place where we did not yet live is the sea.

We also do not want you oh grave!

The foreign land we do not want!

The foreign rivers will not water us.

Our herds expect no danger

And graze outdoors at night.

Our young men are there always there to protect them!

And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.

(Revelation 7: 16-17)



Despite being known as a warrior people, the Afar are very hospitable, filled with humor and enjoying in their own way the beautiful side of life. However the challenges of daily life in the hot lowlands of the horn of Africa can be crushing. Heat and drought shape the lives of these 1.5 million people, feared by their neighbors and maintaining a solitary existence. With their herds they trek across the hottest areas on earth: Africa's Danakil Desert which extends over southern Eritrea, northern Djibouti and parts of eastern Ethiopia. Most Afar are illiterate. They breed camels and live almost exclusively from camel's milk and corn bread. During drought periods in the early autumn the camel's milk is often only enough for the children – the parents live for weeks exclusively from tea extracted from coffee trees. Even in such meager times the Afar write poems and humorous and sometimes sarcastic songs about famine and the end. Visitors can be impressed with the tenacity and resilience of this people.

For centuries the Afar have had little chance to hear the Gospel. Recital of Qur'anic verses and fear of the spirits of the desert goes back generations for the Afar. But decades ago God sent people from the Horn of Africa. Together with the few Afar believers, a radio work of high quality has been developed. The Gospel is now heard! During the



last three years many in the Ethiopian church have begun praying fervently for the Afar. Some Afar have come to faith and are being trained and baptized. They often experience harsh persecution, but they are ready to suffer. In 2008 believing Afar sisters compiled an expanded radio series for women. Thanks to the devotion and love from these sisters, nomadic women have the possibility of new life in Christ.

Prayer Requests:

- ▶ *Pray for the radio production team and their many listeners of this area.*
- ▶ *Pray that men and women will hear the new radio programme and open their hearts to the message of freedom.*
- ▶ *Pray that whole families will come to faith in the Messiah and establish new communities of believers.*