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# MERF News

Middle East Reformed Fellowship—“Declaring the Whole Counsel of God”

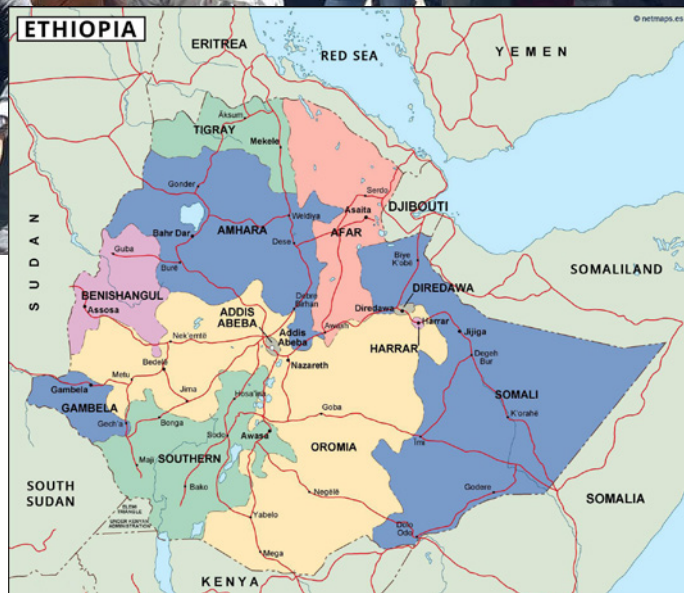
February 2024



## Ethiopia Ministry Update



Biblical Training



Ethiopia is the 2<sup>nd</sup> largest country in Africa. It is the mountainous source of the Blue Nile. It has always remained independent, never colonized by foreign powers. Ethiopia is home to 116 million from many different tribes and languages. It is landlocked on the Horn of Africa. Its coastal neighbours along the Red Sea and Indian Ocean are Eritrea, Djibouti and Somalia (including Somaliland). Other neighbours are Sudan, South Sudan and Kenya.

The capital, Addis Ababa, is a modern city. The new Grand Ethiopia Renaissance Dam on the Blue Nile has dramatically increased capacity to produce electrical power. Still, most Ethiopians survive at a subsistence level. In recent years, civil war and armed tribal clashes along with unprecedented drought have displaced many and brought widespread hunger.

About one third of the population identify themselves as Muslims. They constitute the majority in the Oromo, Afar and Somali language regions. Small churches in these areas often face persecution.

The ancient traditions of the Ethiopian Coptic church are followed by almost half of the population. They constitute the majority in the Amhara and Tigray language regions.

About 18% confess to be evangelical Christians. These belong to various tribes, but are the majority in Nuer and Anuak language areas bordering South Sudan. Since so many in Ethiopia have had little or no opportunity to hear the gospel of Christ and small believing fellowships are so widely scattered, radio provides an excellent means to share the good news and nurture young believers.

### MEDIA MINISTRY: Gospel Radio & Christian Literature

For about two decades, MERF gospel radio and online teams have been producing programmes in three major Ethiopian languages: Amharic, Afan Oromo and Somali. The teams use various programme formats. The radio signal reaches widely and there is good response:

*“I am from Muslim background. Your radio programme testimonies of brother Kedir means a lot for me. After his testimonies I started*

*reading the Bible and was converted. I love to hear your programmes.”* Jamal from Oromia

*“I am in a very difficult situation because of my faith in Christ; please remember me in your prayers and send me any useful literature in Afan Oromo.”* Kadi from Jima

Current radio programmes in Amharic and Afan Oromo languages give basic Bible teaching based on: *Walk Worthy, Guidelines for the Christian Life* by Peter Jeffery. The MERF team translated and published this book and other solid

basic Christian literature in the national Amharic, Afan Oromo and Somali languages. This includes *Reading the Bible* by Geoffrey Thomas, *Healthy Christian Growth* by Sinclair Ferguson and *Living the Christian Life* by Albert Martin. These are distributed with the Bible and Scripture portions to radio listeners as well as pastors and evangelists who use them for witnessing and discipling new believers.

*“It was very difficult to buy Bibles and other spiritual materials. Thankfully, now you give them to us free of charge.”* Pastor Kajela, from Wonji area

The radio programmes and literature are also freely accessible at these websites: Afan Oromo - ([sagaleed-hugaaministry.com](http://sagaleed-hugaaministry.com)) -- Somali ([somalforchrist.com](http://somalforchrist.com)). The Amharic is under development.

### Youth Study Course

The newest literature project is the translation to both Amharic and Afan Oromo of the *Tens-to-Teens Shorter Catechism course*. This enables Ethiopian churches to ground their young people in the teachings of the Bible. Units 1 & 2 are newly printed and Unit 3 is scheduled this year. *Pray for the Lord's blessing on many Ethiopian families and churches using this*

*tool to learn His Word.*

### Biblical Training

Many church leaders have little or no formal training. So, Bible study conferences are an important part of the MERF ministry in Ethiopia. This includes *Weekly & Monthly Discipleship Training* for those in fulltime ministry, *Regional Biblical Training* conferences for young people of churches in various towns and villages and for newly-planted churches in predominately Muslim areas. These are held in Amharic, Afan Oromo and Somali languages. Often this means training given in one language with immediate translation to another.

*“After joining your training group, I intentionally worked on Bible Study groups and our church has been changed in many ways. The impact is significant. Thank you for your ministries.”* Pastor Timothy - Mekane Yesus Church

*“I am serving the LORD in the west of Addis. I heard about your training and attended for the first time. It is eye-opening and very encouraging. It guides us to focus on God's Word...”* Pastor Wagari

### Regional Evangelists

There is much hunger for the gospel in the rural areas of this vast nation. Praise God



Diaconal Aid

for Ethiopian evangelists who zealously share the good news with neighbouring communities. This is a blessing to local faithful churches, with whom MERF has teamed up, providing half the support of about fifty evangelists. *Please pray for their efforts to plant faithful, self-supporting congregations.*

### Aid to Suffering Churches

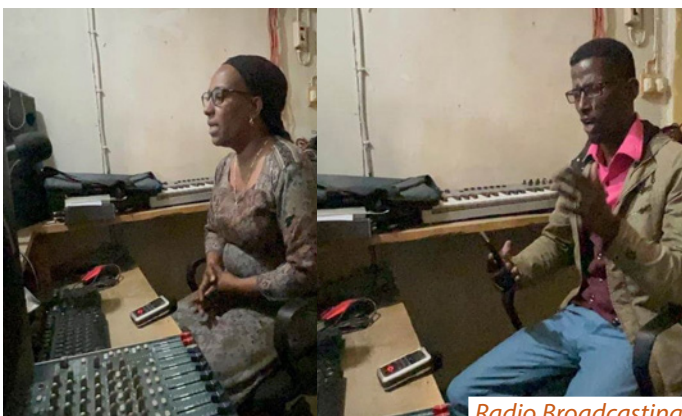
Every year a few churches are burned down in Muslim dominated areas. Often believers must flee for their lives. MERF's team seeks to help these brothers and sisters get back up on their feet.

*“Thank you for your kind support in this time of need. your prayers, comforting phone call and practical support provide us much encouragement...”*

Pastor Tesfaye, from Qulit Silte

Armed tribal conflicts have resulted in the displacement of whole communities and several years of extreme drought has brought many to the brink of starvation. In Muslim areas often Christians are passed over in the distribution of aid provided by rich Muslim charities. MERF's diaconal aid helps the neediest in local churches with basic food stuff.

*“This aid made people realize that God will feed His people. I was continually challenged, wondering what to give those to eat who are very weak and have children without flesh on their bones, who lost their physical fitness...”* Pastor Mohammad Legese from Bonosha



Radio Broadcasting

### MERF-Australia

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Rev Dr Dennis Muldoon, Mr Basil Yakoubi

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### MERF-New Zealand

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