



Chris and Suzy Wilson

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Location: Ethiopia



What we do: Working in reconciliation and peacebuilding with local Christian leaders.

Dear friends and supporters,

Greetings from Addis Ababa. It's been a while since our last link letter and so we'll focus on some of the major highlights and developments in the last few months.

When we last wrote, we mentioned that I (Chris) – as a result of continued conflict in the country – had agreed to help the Anglican Church by travelling to deliver a training course in a refugee camp. In September, I attended the first synod of the new Anglican Diocese of the Horn of Africa, and travelled to a camp nearby where I taught a three-day training course on basic Christology. The course was attended by about 15 leaders from several different churches. It was a real joy to be reunited with former students and the time there felt like three of the best days of ministry I've had in Ethiopia.

Just before Christmas, I returned to the same camp to run a three-day training course on soteriology. As a result of new connections that we had formed, this time about 40 leaders (from 11 different churches and eight different ethnic groups) attended the training. It seemed to be very well received, and church leaders from several different church networks asked us to consider running more training in the refugee camps, particularly to help those who are tasked with preaching in the churches.

The first part of this year has been spent following up this request. I have designed a pilot training course for those who are preaching in the churches, and had encouraging meetings with SIM, who like the idea and are happy for me to invest time training these refugee churches. I've since had meetings with the two largest church networks in the refugee camps – the Anglican Church and SIC – who are both keen to have church leaders do the training course. I've also just completed the complex process of getting the authorities to approve our plans and grant us access to run this course. So, as I write this, I'm preparing to return to the camp. Please pray that God would bless this training course and that it would lead to better preaching and teaching and to greater cooperation and partnership between church leaders from different ethnic groups and church denominations.

This is a significant, and in some ways unexpected, ministry development for us. I had thought my trip to the camp would simply be a way of assisting the Anglican Church in Ethiopia to solve problems that arose from being unable to transport students through conflict-affected areas. However, the impact of



Teaching in a church in the camp

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the training and the sheer number of churches and leaders who were keen to attend really surprised me. I left convinced that these two trips were the most impactful training I have been able to deliver since we came to Ethiopia in 2016. In a strange way, my whole history – the PhD work, the experience teaching theology in Gambella, and even the experience of 18 months living without running water or electricity in Zambia – felt like perfect preparation for this kind of ministry. It was also slightly surreal to look back at our first CMS link letter from October 2014 and to see how similar these new opportunities are to the

calling and vision we felt God had given us long before we had ever set foot in this country.

In addition to this, there are some other developments. In November, we reached the end of our intensive Amharic studies. In order to consolidate our learning, we spent a month in Bahir Dar, in north-western Ethiopia, where we got huge amounts of practice. While there, we had an Amharic teacher who is a deacon in the Orthodox Church, which provided a great opportunity to learn more about that tradition and about the history of the Church in Ethiopia. We were also able to spend time in a few different local schools, which was a really helpful experience, especially for Suzy as she considers the possibility of starting to do some teaching in Addis. Bahir Dar is on the shores of Lake Tana and so we were also able to take a boat trip to an Orthodox monastery on one of the islands as well as visit the impressive Blue Nile Falls.

Suzy has continued to homeschool the children and this has continued to feel like a great decision. Living on the compound means they have plenty of social time but we are also able to enjoy the local community (generally through eating at various cafes around here!) and enjoy learning together. Suzy has also very recently had the privilege of helping a few Ethiopian missionary mums living in other parts of rural Africa with some guidance, as they are needing to homeschool their children.

We have enjoyed a few visitors, including a week with Suzy's mum, and an opportunity to spend Christmas with an old university friend and her kids, who came over from Kenya.

With love from,
Suzy and Chris



Photos from top to bottom: A bed designed by one of our students using mosquito netting. This is what Chris slept on and it was very comfortable!; a group of South Sudanese refugees from the Maban ethnic group during the training; Suzy working to help Ethiopian missionary mums with some homeschooling; Christmas Day at Lake Langano, a few hours south of Addis.



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