

A Gospel Lighthouse



Dr. Kebede of the Lutheran Church of Ethiopia stands in front of their new Gospel ministry center

የሱስ እረኞቹ የሚመራኝ

በሕይወት ጎዳና የሚወስደኝ

እርሱን አገኘሁት የማይተወኝ

ጓደኛ ዘመድ ሲከዳኝ

(English translation)

Jesus, my Shepherd

The One who guides me on the way of life

He found me who never leaves me

While all my friends and relatives deny me.

Christianity's roots run deep in Ethiopia, yet the Gospel is struggling to make purchase on this rocky soil. The Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church enjoys a privileged position in society, and the pews are filled at the high festival days – but the people are told that their salvation is an ongoing process and not a completed fact. Many large Protestant churches of the charismatic variety are also gathering many converts through promises of prosperity and healing to those who are worthy.



Churches promising prosperity and success are popular all over Africa

The Lutheran Church of Ethiopia (LCE) was registered with the Ethiopian government in 2013 by Dr. Kebede Getachew Yigezu and 56 founding members. By

the grace of God, the LCE opened Maor (Hebrew for “light”) Lutheran Theological Seminary as a Christ-centered, Bible-based and Reformation-driven confessional Lutheran theological seminary, which is authorized to offer bachelors and masters degrees and also doctorate programs. In 2017 the LCE and the WELS declared fellowship and since then have been collaborating to advance the Gospel in Ethiopia.

Last December, the LCE held its 6th annual General Assembly meeting in Bishoftu, Ethiopia. The delegates who had gathered gave thanks to God for the many blessings he had poured out on their small but dedicated church body over the past year. One of those blessings was the third historic graduation of students from Maor Lutheran Theological Seminary on October 27, 2019. The ceremony took place in the midst of political unrest that Ethiopia was experiencing at the time. (<https://wels.net/unrest-in-ethiopia-affects-wels-sister-churches/>)



Class of 2019 Maor Lutheran Theological Seminary

Delegates also gave thanks to God for the construction of a new five-story multi-purpose building on the campus of Maor Lutheran Theological Seminary. Thanks to the oversight of LCE Assistant Deaconess Werknesh Negash Degefa and Brother Wondirad Balcha WoldeSemayat and the generosity of WELS donors the building reached the finishing stage in one year's time. It is the LCE's ardent prayer that this

new building will help bring the Gospel light to the people of Ethiopia.

The LCE also celebrated its partnership with WELS Multi-Language Productions, which hosted an Africa region workshop in Lusaka last summer. Dr. Ernst Wendland, who has served WELS World Missions for over 50 years and also participated in translating the Bible into the Chichewa language, shared his considerable experience and insight into the translation process. Using that knowledge, the LCE was able to translate the evangelism tract, “God’s Great Exchange” into the Amharic language.



The MLP Evangelism poster, “Do You Know Jesus?”

In an email Dr. Kebede writes, “We were surprised that getting the right wordings with the right meaning in our language for words like “Exchange” in the literary context of the tract on “God’s Great Exchange” was not easy. Indeed, the lessons we received at the MLP Translation Workshop and Publication Expo under the instruction of Professor Ernst Wendland in Lusaka have helped Brother Shambel and me a lot to lead our team so that we reached at the best translation which communicates the right meaning clearly both theologically and linguistically.” The

LCE sent the translated Amharic text side by side with the English text to WELS MLP graphic design artist Michele Pfeifer, who completed the final layout.

Looking ahead to the future, one of the most pressing tasks the LCE faces is to renew their church body's registration with the Ethiopian government. The current registration was good for six years (2013-2019). Please pray that God continues to let the light of the Gospel shine in Ethiopia through the work of the LCE and Maor Lutheran Theological Seminary.

Missionary John Roebke lives in Malawi

Please pray for those working in fields that are ripe for harvest. Share their story, engage with future news and receive updates. Learn more about our mission fields in Africa and how the Holy Spirit is working faith in people's hearts at <https://wels.net/serving-others/missions/africa>