

Profile in Mission

MINISTRY

Christian-Muslim Relations

LOCATION

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

PARTNER

Ethiopian Evangelical Church
Mekane Yesus



ABDI TADESSE MULAT

What Need Is God Showing Us?

Almost half of all Ethiopians are Muslims, and Islam continues to make inroads. “My heart fills with a burden when I see that in every place new mosques are erected,” says Abdi Tadesse Mulat, who is training to provide leadership in a new program in Christian-Muslim relations at Mekane Yesus Theological Seminary in Addis Ababa. “I have been praying before God that he might reveal how and when I could engage in this ministry. I believe that God has called me to respond to this need at this time.”

What Is God Telling Us to Do?

Islam isn’t the only religion growing rapidly in northeast Africa—in the last forty-five years the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus (EECMY), the RCA’s partner in Ethiopia, has grown from 20,000 to almost 4 million members. But leadership development in the church has not kept up with the number of new converts and new congregations. EECMY has only about one thousand ordained ministers to pastor its total membership.

How Are We Doing What God Is Asking?

Trained ministers—particularly those trained in the sensitive and vital field of Christian-Muslim relations—are needed for the Ethiopian church to fulfill its calling. Abdi is currently enrolled in the Islamic studies program at Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, California. When he graduates, he will return to Ethiopia and join RCA missionary Peter Ford in leading the program in Christian-Muslim relations at Mekane Yesus Theological Seminary.

Who Is Our Partner?

The Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus was established at the national level in 1959. It now carries out its ministry through nineteen synods with more than five thousand established congregations and two thousand “preaching places” throughout Ethiopia. Because of the shortage of trained pastors, most of the church’s ministry is led by lay people, many of them volunteers.

Up Close and Personal

Abdi Tadesse Mulat devoted his life to Christian service at age eleven. Soon after he began ministry as a volunteer leader in his home church, a communist revolution swept through Ethiopia. Abdi was arrested and tortured repeatedly. Though no Bibles or prayer were allowed in prison, he witnessed to his fellow prisoners, confirming and refining his faith and his gifts as an evangelist. After his release from prison the government assigned him to Bale, a predominantly Muslim area. Initially resistant to moving to an area with no churches and few Christians, Abdi came to see this placement as an opportunity to share the news of God’s love for all people. His witness brought many people in the Bale area to faith, and today a number of Christian churches thrive there.

