



Meserete Kristos Church

Quarterly Newsletter December 2023

#49



Photo: Participants of Pastors' Training

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I Watch in hope for the LORD



*Pastor Desalegn Abebe
MKC President*

“But as for me, I watch in hope for the LORD, I wait for God my Savior” (Micah 7:7)

When the prophet Micah was serving, God's people were not in good condition. The people's relationship with God was broken. They transgressed God's laws and were doing what was evil in God's eyes. As a nation, they were not treating each other with love and care. They hurt each other. No one was showing compassion to one another. The people chose to kill each other instead of living together in love and tolerance. They chose bloodshed rather than reconciliation. They devised a way to trap the other.

The public leaders used to accept bribes from the people. They were not willing to serve the people with honesty and justice. The people paid money to get justice from the leaders. Justice was bought with money.

Because the times were evil, it was difficult for anyone to trust anyone. Neighbors who lived together had trouble trusting each other. No one could speak his/her heart to anyone. The saddest thing was that there was a lack of mutual respect and trust in the family. The husband could not trust his wife. The wife had trouble trusting her husband. Family members live with each other with suspicion.

At present, we are living in a situation that resembles the time of the prophet Micah. The cause of many conflicts and bloodshed in our time is the wickedness of the human heart and disobedience to God's commandments. A nation that refuses to obey God cannot have peace with itself or with one another. The spiritual illness affects our whole life. If our relationships are damaged, so are our social bonds. Mistrust is one of the causes of conflict and one of the hindrances to reconciliation.

Although the people of Micah's time were doing evil, disobeyed God, and refused to return to God, the prophet hoped in God. He believed that God could solve their problems. The solution to the holistic problem of the people is to trust God, hope in Him, and walk honestly before Him. Like the prophet, we fix our eyes on God, hope in Him, and cry out to Him for a lasting solution.



Spreading the Gospel is Our Permanent Agenda

By Abayneh Anjulo

E&CP Director

The Meserete Kristos Church Head Office organized a workshop for heads of evangelism and mission of Ketana and regions of the church at the Bishoftu Campus of MK Seminary in November 2023. A total of 83 mission leaders from all MKC regions participated in the workshop.

During the three-day workshop, the evangelism and mission strategy of the church, cross-cultural mission, and qualities of evangelism and mission leaders were presented.

Pastor Desalegn Abebe addressed the participants that preaching the gospel and planting churches do not wait for a convenient time. According to the strategic plan of MKC, every local church needs to grow by 10% annually. To make this a reality, the leadership has been supporting the churches in all possible ways.

The participants spent quality time in corporate prayers for the mission activities of the church and peace for the country.



Training Pastors to Guard God's Flock

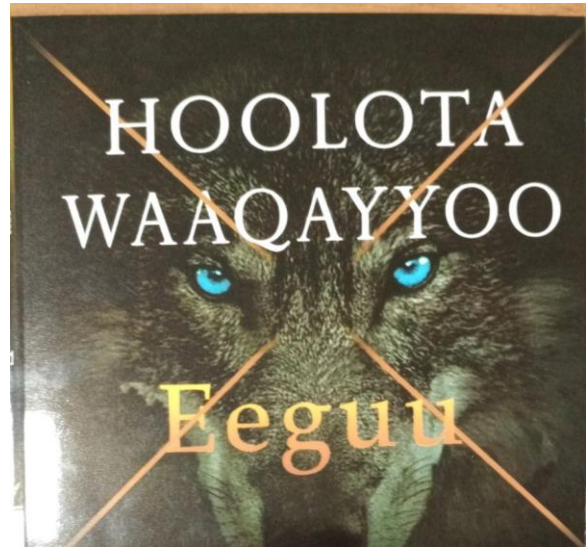


By *Pastor Sebrela Kedir*
Pastoral Ministry Director

The Pastoral Ministry Department of the Meserete Kristos Church Head Office organized a pastors' training on guarding God's flock in December 2023. Pastors who came from MKC Ketana and regional offices participated in the training.

The training aimed to train more than 3000 pastors in MKC in the coming two years. Those who received the training are expected to cascade the training to other pastors in the local churches.

Training manuals were prepared in the two local languages in collaboration with the Church Transformation Network (CTN). The manuals were printed and given to pastors who received the training.



Equipping the pastors with knowledge, skills, and ministry tools will help to care for and protect God's flock from false teachings.



Strengthening Community-based Peacebuilding



By Mekonnen Gameda
MKC Peacebuilding Director

The Meserete Kristos Church has been implementing community-based peacebuilding activities in Nono Woreda of

West Shewa in Oromia Regional State since 2021.

This project has been implemented in partnership with The International Mission Along Nile which is based in Switzerland. Reverend Alain, the International Program Manager visited the MKC Head Office to learn about the progress of the project and strengthen the partnership to bring a positive impact on the lives of communities affected by violent conflicts.

During the visit, Pastor Desalegn Abebe, MKC President, expressed his gratitude to the leadership of the organization for partnering with us to bring peace to those who seek peace.

The Nono Peacebuilding Project has been impacting the lives of people and groups affected by the violence. The project will continue for the next two years and is expected to facilitate activities tailored to restore peace and heal the victims of the violence.



MKC-DC and MCC-Ethiopia Launched Peacebuilding Project in Southern Ethiopia

The Meserete Kristos Church Development Commission (MKC-DC) with the financial support of MCC-Ethiopia launched a peacebuilding project in the four zones of southern Ethiopia regional state at the end of 2023. The project aims to heal the traumatic experiences of the people and restore peace through training on peace, forgiveness, and reconciliation of people and groups affected by the violent conflicts that occurred in the past three decades.

In December 2023, the first phase of peacebuilding training was given to community elders, faith leaders, women and youth representatives, local government officials, schoolteachers, and influencers in the community. A total of 210 people participated in the training in four zones.

After the training, some community leaders commented, “We would not have killed each other if we had such peace training before. Our ignorance led us to kill each other.”

The communities trusted MKC to help them deal with their problems to restore and sustain peace in the areas.





Visiting Butajira Prison

The Meserete Kristos Church Prison Committee visited Butajira Prison on October November 9, 2023, to learn the impact of prison ministry on the lives of inmates and the communities surrounding the prison.

During the visit, the committee members talked with inmates and had discussions with the prison administrations to strengthen the working relationship between the MKC Prison Ministry and the prison administration. The head of the prison administration appreciated the support given to the inmates in the prison to learn vocational skills to help themselves and the community after being released from prison. MKC Prison Ministry supported inmates in learning vocational skills in sewing, hairdressing, making bricks, and woodwork.

Finally, the committee members distributed Bibles to the inmates, shared with word of God, and prayed with them.



“I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.” (Matthew 25:36)



A murderer encountered Jesus in Jail

Habtamu came to Christ while he was in jail. He was sentenced to 20 years for murdering a young man. While he was in prison, he felt abandoned and forgotten. His family, relatives, and friends forgot him. No one came to the prison to visit him. He felt guilty for what he had done. He could not undo it. Because his guilt was too much, he could not bear it. He decided to kill himself. He tried committing suicide several times but was captured by guards and fellow inmates. After that, he did not know what to do to get relief.

One day, an inmate who knew Christ observed his condition and told him to go to a chapel in prison to seek advice. Habtamu agreed and went with him to the chapel. In the chapel, he found the MKC Prison Chaplain who listened to his story, encouraged him by sharing the word of God, and prayed with him. Habtamu said, “That night I slept well and felt peace of mind.”

Habtamu continued attending the chapel services and believed in Jesus Christ. His life was transformed. After experiencing God’s peace in his life, he realized that there is a purpose for which he should live. Coming to Christ gave him a sense of purpose.

Later, he received vocational training provided by the MKC Prison Ministry. While in prison, he started tailoring.

Habtamu also heard about the restorative justice that the MKC Prison Ministry facilitated for inmates willing to reconcile with the victims. He expressed his willingness to meet with the victim’s family. The MKC Prison Ministry arranged for the offender-victim meeting. Habtamu met with the victim’s family and asked them for forgiveness and to reconcile by paying any price that they asked for. The community elders intervened and settled the issue.



After some months, he was released from jail. Now, he is a productive citizen in his community. He became one of the known tailors in the area and is earning a good income. Habtamu is also sharing good news with other people in the community. He is very grateful for the ministry and support of the MKC Prison Ministry.

Taiwanese Church Pastors Visited MKC

Two pastors from Twain visited the Meserete Kristos Church to strengthen their relationships for joint mission activities. Pastor Dr. Samuel Change and his wife pastor Gloria have been pastoring the Lutheran Church in Twain.

During the visit, the guests visited the various ministry activities of the Meserete Kristos Church and the MK Seminary.

Last year, Pastor Desalegn Abebe and his team visited Twain at the invitation of Pastor Samuel and his wife.



MKC-DC Launched a Relief Project in Borena

MKC DC has signed an agreement for the Teltele Borena emergency relief project worth 42,784,836 Birr. The project was designed to support 21,797 drought-affected people with food items for two months. The project is sponsored by Compassion International Ethiopia.





MKC-DC Responds to Starvation in Tigray Region

By Shambu Balcha

MKC-DC Director

Famine is now widespread in many districts of Tigray Regional State. Local government officials reported the death of people because of famine. The civil war and long drought caused famine.

The Meserete Kristos Church Development Commission – MKC-DC in collaboration with partners is responding to the crisis by providing emergency food assistance.

Recently, MKC-DC provided 3 months of nutritious food assistance for 47 children in the Nebelet town of Benbasaneity District.



In addition, emergency food assistance was given to 665 households in Seharti District. The commission was grateful to donors who provided financial support to save the lives of people in the region.





MKC Head Office Held Quarterly Review Meeting

In October 2023, the Meserete Kristos Church Head Office held a review meeting to monitor the ministry performance of the departments. The focus of the review meeting was to learn the progress and challenges of the departments in implementing the strategic plan of the church. The department heads are responsible for assisting the regional offices and local churches to align their ministry activities with the strategic plan of the church.

Pastor Desalegn Abebe led the review meeting. In the end, he stated that the meeting was fruitful in highlighting our achievements and identifying our growth areas. The church has been holding such review meetings quarterly for updates and to learn from each other.



MKC Participated in IMA Meeting

Pastor Desalegn Abebe and Pastor Abayneh Anjulo attended the International Mission Association (IMA) held in Indonesia in October 2023. The Meserete Kristos Church has been a member of IMA since its formation in 1997.

During the meeting, the participants prayed for each other, learned from each other, and shared their visions for cross-cultural missions to share the gospel of Jesus Christ with unreached people in various countries.





Condolences

The Meserete Kristos Church expressed deep condolences to the families of Janet Dorene Kebede who went to be with the Lord on December 10, 2023.



Janet Dorene Kebede, 84, of Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, died peacefully on Sunday, December 10, 2023, in Chennai, India. Born in Lancaster, she was the daughter of Richard and Mabel (Esbenshade) Shertzer and the loving wife of Negash Kebede for 51 years.

Janet's life was centered around her faith, her work as a missionary, and the international Mennonite community. She began working as a missionary in Ethiopia in 1963 at the Menno Book Store in Addis

Ababa and met her husband Negash when they both worked at the Bible Academy High School in Nazareth, Ethiopia.

In 1982, when the Communist Derg regime closed the Bible Academy and imprisoned Negash for his role as a church leader of the Meserete Kristos Church, Janet moved to Addis Ababa with Rebekah and David, working at the Junior Commercial College and the Economic Commission for Africa, where she taught shorthand and then English as a Second Language.

Cross-cultural connection was central to Janet's life. Throughout her life, she delighted in learning about new cultures and meeting and getting to know people from all over the world. Janet's life was focused on connecting with others, friends, family, colleagues, and students.

When they married in 1972, Janet and Negash's multi-cultural marriage was far more unusual than it is today. Throughout their five decades of marriage, they enjoyed counseling many multi-cultural couples both informally and formally through their church.

In addition to her husband, Janet is survived by her daughter, Rebekah Kebede, wife of Sean Brennan, son David Kebede, husband of Amal, and grandchildren Negash and Zara Kebede and Luca and Alessandra Brennan. Also surviving are sisters Jo (Gary) Sensenig and Mary (the late Nelson) Martin.

A memorial service was held at the International Evangelical Church, Addis Ababa, where Janet was a member, on Thursday, December 14. Her body was rested at St. Josef Church Cemetery in Addis Ababa.



PRAY FOR MESERETE KRISTOS CHURCH



“Let us then approach God’s throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.” (Hebrews 4:16)

Prayer Requests

- Pray for peace and stability for Ethiopia and other countries suffering from conflicts and wars.
- Pray for displaced people, especially Christians who are in makeshift shelters without receiving humanitarian aid.
- Pray for MKC to develop competent and committed servant leaders at the head office, Katena, regions, and local churches. A few regional general secretaries will finish their two terms next year, and pray for leaders to make the right decisions in recruiting new leaders.
- Pray for church planters who are spreading the gospel of Jesus Christ in hostile areas for the empowerment of the Holy Spirit, God’s protection, and wisdom to share the gospel with people to lead them to faith in Christ.
- Pray for MKC to get adequate resources to serve the Lord effectively.



About Meserete Kristos Church

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Branch name: Meskel Square
SWIFT Code: CBETETAA

The Meserete Kristos Church (MKC) was established in 1951. At present (August 2022), MKC has 1 Ketena office, 52 Regional Offices, 1462 local churches, and 992 church planting centers in all the regional states of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia.

Vision

MKC aspires to be a missionary church empowered by the Holy Spirit to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ and expand God's Kingdom in Ethiopia and beyond.

Mission

The Meserete Kristos Church exists to preach the Gospel to all people and teach those who believe in Jesus to make them disciples of Christ.

Strategic Goals

The Meserete Kristos Church has the following strategic goals:

- To preach the gospel of Jesus Christ to all people
- To provide effective pastoral ministry to church members
- To equip church leaders and ministers for the ministry of the gospel
- To promote justice and peace in society
- To provide holistic service to address the basic needs of people

