

Profile in Mission: Peter and Patty Ford



Ministry: Theological Education

Location: Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Partner: Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus

What Need Is God Showing Us?

In recent years Ethiopia has been wracked by severe drought, famine, ethnic conflict, and rapid population growth. About 45 percent of that population is Ethiopian Orthodox, an ancient branch of Christianity; another 40 percent is Muslim; and the rest of the people are either evangelical Christians or practice traditional religious customs.

What Is God Telling Us to Do?

The RCA is helping the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus (EECMY) establish a training program in Christian-Muslim relations. The program will equip evangelists and teachers to reach out with the love of Christ to Muslims in Ethiopia.

How Are We Doing What God Is Asking?

Peter Ford has established and now directs the new program in Christian-Muslim relations at the EECMY's primary seminary, Mekane Yesus Theological Seminary (MYTS); he also serves as the program's primary teacher. "I have established the program's curriculum, structure, textbooks, library books, etc.," says Peter. "I am teaching the first round of courses and establishing syllabi for each. I also have been assisting the church in sending two Ethiopians for training, who will join me in the teaching. I plan to train a successor to direct the program and enough teachers so that I can leave with the program running well." Patty volunteers for various ministries, including serving as the MYTS campus nurse.



Who Is Our Partner?

The Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus was established in 1959 with the merger of Lutheran and other groups established by various missions. The EECMY began with 20,000 members. In 1991 it had over a million members, and in 1997 it had almost 2.3 million members. This phenomenal growth is both miraculous and challenging, as the church struggles to provide effective ministry with very limited resources in one of the poorest countries in the world; in addition, as many as eighty languages and dialects are spoken in Ethiopia.

Up Close and Personal

In 1982 Peter and Patty Ford responded to God's call to missionary service and were assigned to serve Arabic-speaking people in Muscat, Oman. Five years later the Fords were invited to serve in Khartoum, Sudan, where they taught Christian leaders at Gereif Bible School and Nile Theological College. In August 2002, the Fords relocated to Ethiopia to continue their missionary service. Peter holds master's degrees from Gordon-Conwell and Western Theological Seminaries and completed his Ph.D. in Islam and Christian-Muslim relations at Temple University. Patty has a B.S. in nursing and a master's degree in Christian Education from Princeton Theological Seminary. The Fords have two sons, David and Andrew.