



Year end update from the Hubers

RCA Missionary Partners in Ethiopia

One of the more unsettling realities of working cross culturally, particularly in less developed countries, but most anywhere these days, is how quickly things can change (I think the word “pandemic” can be inserted here). But the good news is that God has a way of using disruptions, even tragic disruptions, to allow something more fruitful to emerge. That has certainly been the case with us during this pandemic.



According to our original plan we would have now been in Addis for 10 months where I would have been teaching classes and working with the seminary to help bring revitalization to the Christian/Muslim relations program. I’m still doing that, but at a distance, which, by the grace of God, has turned out to be a blessing on several different levels.

First, it has meant developing a creative way to team teach with a dynamic young woman who recently got her degree in Christian/Muslim relations from a Christian university in Kenya. Keriya had some misgivings about teaching for several reasons, not least of which was her relative youth and inexperience. Because we are teaching together, with her doing the hands-on instruction under my guidance, she has developed a confidence that will not only serve her well, but the CMR program too, as her role is critical to its long term success. This would not have happened if I had been onsite.

Second, it was becoming clear that the seminary saw me as someone who could be used to teach various theological classes given that there are so few Ethiopian professors with PhDs, including classes that were not associated with the CMR program. Being at a distance has helped clarify that this was not the reason I accepted the call, allowing me to focus on the most critical task I was given – to help bring revitalization and growth to the CMR program. Right now, what that means is working with my colleagues on an **exciting project** – to create a center at the seminary dedicated to empowering church leaders throughout this large denomination (the world’s largest Lutheran body with 10 million members) to engage their Muslim neighbors (40% of the total population) with a compassionate Gospel witness. In other words, the center will be bringing



the education that is otherwise given to just the few who sign up for the degree program to the folks on the front lines of ministry. It is about equipping the saints, and the seminary president is excited about the possibilities this opens for new avenues of ministry.

Practically what this means is that I will only be onsite this year and possibly next part time, making the move when I am able to get a covid vaccine. Our age is such that it is not wise to travel until this is the case. We have also decided that Lynne will not be making the trip with me given the shorter time I will be in Addis. This will free up funds that are currently being used for her travel to serve as seed money for the center.

What I am going to be asking **in the near future** is for you to consider shifting some of your support for me into the ongoing program, as the center will require an Ethiopian director as well as program funding in order to get off the ground. The seminary is also starting a new MA program in January which needs scholarship support to go forward. My colleagues and I have been actively engaged in curriculum development and planning for the launching of this new MA program in this interim period. The hope here is that what you have invested in allowing me to serve as a catalyst for this vital ministry will continue as a foundation for the ongoing work that will be in place as I eventually move on to transition to indigenous leadership. For the time being we will continue as we are, but I will be writing to you again when and if this becomes a reality.

In the meantime, please continue to pray for the seminary and this ministry as they, like institutions everywhere, are struggling in the pandemic to find ways to be safe, yet effective in their educational calling. Continue to pray, too, for peace as the fighting in the northern province of Tigray at the time of this writing continues.

With prayers for a blessed celebration of the Incarnation and a post pandemic New Year's!

John & Lynne Hubers
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