



June 2022

The seminary with which I'm in partnership—Mekane Yesus ("Place of Jesus") Seminary, which is the flagship theological institution of the world's largest Lutheran denomination—started a new MA program in Christian/Muslim Relations two years ago. This month they will graduate the first students from that program—nine students, most of whom are serving as pastors, two of whom are converts from Islam, all committed to taking what they have learned into ministries that will empower a sensitive, impactful witness among Muslim neighbors. Several of the churches they serve or will be serving, have large Muslim populations on their doorstep. All would note that their congregations are doing too little to share Christ's love in these settings, at least partly because they feel they know too little to do so. And that's why they've made the effort to get this advanced degree—to help their congregations gain a better understanding of what it takes to live into Christ's love for their Muslim neighbors.



MA Students

It was my privilege to serve as an advisor to two of these students as they were researching and writing their MA thesis. One, a Muslim convert, chose to write about a phenomenon he has witnessed in his parish—Muslim converts (of whom there are many) reverting to their former faith. It has happened enough for him to ask "why?" That's what his thesis explored using interviews as well as his insights as a convert who has lived with great pressure to revert himself to help gain the kind of understanding that he hopes will allow him to help churches do a better job of welcoming and incorporating new believers into the fold.

The other student with whom I was privileged to work is the pastor of a large congregation on the north side of Addis Ababa. He noticed how little his congregation was doing to reach out with Christ's love to a large community of Somali immigrants who live near the church. This was a dynamic congregation with a high level of commitment to a missional outreach. But they were largely ignoring these neighbors. Why? That's what he wanted to find out. What he discovered makes him believe that his MA degree will help him lead his congregation into a more vital witness among Muslim neighbors. The fact that he was working on this degree while pastoring a 1,000-member congregation is a testimony to the high level of commitment he has to this ministry.

That's what has impressed me most about the students I've met during the time I've been privileged to serve as a partner with the seminary—their high level of commitment. Many make great sacrifices to be in this program.

Would you like to receive these updates digitally? Please email Kelli at kgilmore@rca.org to be added to the email list. You will receive more timely updates from the missionary you support and help us be good stewards of our resources.

Few do it for any other reason than to serve as catalysts for a vital gospel witness wherever God chooses to call them.

And all of this makes me especially grateful for the support you've offered me to be able to do what I can to help this program thrive.

(NOTE: IN MY NEXT LETTER, I WILL GIVE YOU AN UPDATE ON THE PROGRAM IN TERMS OF WHAT YOU MIGHT BE ABLE TO DO TO HELP MOVE IT TO THE NEXT LEVEL)

Blessings,
John Hubers