

LHM-Ethiopia on Glocal Mission

The following report deals on the joint activity of the visiting group from Concordia Lutheran Church Fort Wayne, Indiana and the Lutheran Hour Ministries of Ethiopia.

We have given a short account on the groups visit and activity on our October 2010 ministry report and this one includes some details about the works done by the mission members.

This is the third visiting group from the United States of America that came to Ethiopia on the evening of **Saturday October 23, 2010**. As this is part of the Global works and witness program that works with the local LHM office, the name Glocal is coined by combining the two words "Global" and "Local".

It was in October 2006 that the first group named International Volunteer Service came to Ethiopia. The Second group came in October 2008 and the third in October 2010.

As the first two groups did, this third group from Fort Wayne, Indiana in collaboration with LHM-Ethiopia has tried to reach some Christ centered activities and a reasonable amount of support was extended to the unreached and unprivileged class of the society. This includes the HIV/AIDS victims, the orphans, the widows and the mentally disabled ones.

The church has Godly calling to bring hope to the hopeless world. Jesus is the hope of the world and the church is entrusted with this hope not to sit with it but to spread it all over the world. The Concordia Lutheran Church Christians have done exemplary works among our people. The challenge is to assist church from judgmental to compassionate action. While on earth, Jesus has demonstrated his love in the most radical way possible. He was filled with compassion as he looked at the people around him (Mt. 9:35-36). In the process of his mission he repeatedly annoyed the church of his time by being with

and loving the unacceptable ones (Luke 15:1-2). Even in this day God is calling his church to respond with the same radical love; that is our primary call. We are saved by God's generous grace alone and yet we are still sinners by deeds and words and fail God repeatedly and have nothing to boast about (Romans 7: 7-25). God is therefore calling us to turn our pointing finger and malicious talk into action for the needy, the weak and the oppressed (Is. 58: 9-10).

The body of Christ from Fort Wayne, Indiana has felt the pain of the Ethiopians as when one part of the body suffers, the whole body suffers. There are no 'they' or "we" all are affected. As Lutheran Hour Ministries Ethiopia working with his church is required to call back the people to the obedience and love of God. It is more convincing if we demonstrate God's love through action as done by Fort Wayne Lutheran Christians. We thank God for the above truth is demonstrated in action by our brothers and sisters.

In this years program the Glocal Mission group has visited the HIV/AIDS victims of the Addis Ababa Mekane Yesus congregation, the mental rehabilitation center patients at Geferssa, the church school and has sponsored the Muslim outreach workshop that was conducted at the Gudina Tumssa Multi Purpose Training Center. The center is the churches workshop center that gives accommodation for various types of church related workshops and conducts several programs like school for the deaf and retard minded children, carpentry and other technical workshops.

Activities of the Glocal mission members

Second day was Sunday November 24, 2010 at 8:00 am in the morning the group has been at the Ledeta Mekane Yesus congregation (this is the church where LHM-Ethiopia director worships) to join the worship service. The group leader pastor Kevin Wendt brought an inspiring message from Luke chapter 15, the Lost Sheep, Lost Coin, Lost Son. Three most common elements mentioned in his sermon were

a) Some thing valuable is missing, b) an all-out search is made and c) a celebration was made when the lost are found. Pastor Kevin's humble approach and respect to the pulpit and preaching of the word was lasting lesson for the church members and leaders. The worship service was led by a seminary professor and friend of LHM-Ethiopia Rev. Kiros who also administered the Holy Communion to the church members and the visiting group of the Glocal mission.

The same day afternoon the Glocal mission group met the Addis Ababa Mekan Yesus congregation leaders, youth and women ministry leadership. Pastor Kevin Wendt was invited to share his thought on church leadership and he did it in a way that answers some of the participant's questions.

The third day was Monday October 25, 2010: - The Glocal Mission group members started the day with the visit of LHM-Ethiopia office. The team members arrived at LHM-office at about 8:30 and the program started at 9:00 by the welcome speech of the director then spiritual songs were sang both in local Amharic and English languages, LHM-Ethiopia singing group called SOG (Servants of God) sang two inspiring English songs to welcome the visiting Glocal Mission members and the word of God was shared by ato Solomon Hebistu after which LHM-Ethiopia Director gave a brief orientation about the country the people and LHM ministry in Ethiopia. After the briefing the Glocal mission group leader Pastor Kevin Wendt introduced the group members by name and profession. After the orientation, Ethiopian style coffee ceremony was conducted by LHM staffs and a signing ceremony of Mission Covenant was done by the Addis Ababa Mekan Yesus congregation senior pastor Markos Hadero, the visiting group team leader Pastor Kevin Wendt and LHM-Ethiopia Director ato Berhanu Moges. The signing ceremony was the highlight of the daily event and it was done in the presence of the group members and other invited guests of the day. The signing of the mission covenant

that formalized the relationship is considered by the signing parties as a sealed corner stone of the mission.

In this program a Muslim convert named Temesgen Abebe now working as contact person of LHM-Ethiopia in one of the remotest area gave his testimony by saying that he was an Imam of a mosque and was arranging several missions to destroy the church and its members but God in his wisdom showed him the truth and way salvation while he was leading a Muslim worship service in the mosque. After several incidents of revelations of the truth the Lord led him to the church. Now he serves as evangelists and is an effective BCC distributor even beyond his assigned area. His testimonies arouse the interest of glocal mission members and some of the group members we moved to interview him more and took several photographs in memory of his testimony.

The fourth day was Tuesday:- On this day of the 26th of October 2010 morning about 40 workshop participants, and other invited guests from different churches and organizations and the sponsoring Concordia Lutheran Church members have arrived for the opening session of the Muslim outreach workshop. The program was started by singing from the hymnal and the word of God was shared by the Rev. Dr. Debella Berri, LHM-Ethiopia Board vice chairperson. His message was based on Luke chapter 10: 38-42 that tell Jesus presence at the home of Martha and Mary. In his message he stressed the need to study God's word while sitting at the Lord's feet where the Lord affirmed that Mary has what is better.

After the devotion LHM-Eth. director ato Berhanu gave the opening ceremony welcome speech both for the workshop participants, the visiting group and invited guests of the day. Then the director asked the workshop participants to introduce themselves as they were from different regions of the country. After the introduction and he asked two volunteers to give their testimonies for the gatherings. A senior Muslim Shekie who now has become Christian was the first to tell

about his conversion and the second convert is a person who says has planted about thirty six churches in remote places where he reached the nations for Christ. The converts testify that right after their conversion they have faced several challenges and persecutions from their families, relatives and faith leaders. However through all that challenges they have become strong in faith and able to win many for Christ.

After the introduction and testimony programs invited choir members from Ledeta Mekan Yesus church have sang two songs. The choir's song moved the participants to join them in singing specially the chorus that says "Nothing is impossible with God". After the songs drama was played by of LHM-Ethiopia drama group. The Drama was played to show how to approach a person to bring to a Christian faith". Right after the drama show the opening ceremony was concluded and both the participants and the visiting guests left for tea break.

After the break training session started on the topic called "contextualization approach in Muslim Evangelism" The topic was dealt by Rev. Abdi who is a seminary professor on Christian/ Muslim relations.

The fifth day was Wednesday October 27, the Muslim outreach training continued after short devotion by ato Teshome Ameno the coordinator of the Muslim outreach workshop and then Mr. Gary Penner and Joe Milledge did their short presentation assisted by power point about Glocal Mission. Right after their presentation the Muslim outreach session started with the topic "Nurturing and caring for Muslim converts." The lecture and discussion continued for the rest of the day.

The sixth and seventh day was Thursday and Friday October 28/29, 2010: – On these days various topic including "the challenge that Muslim converts face" by Ato Samuel Yonnas, "Trends and challenges in Christian-Muslim Relations in Ethiopia, past and present"

“Are God and Allah the same? What does it mean for our relationship with Muslim” By Rev. Jurgen Klein were dealt extensively.

Other Activities of the Glocal Mission members

After the Muslim outreach workshop opening session and right after the lunch break of the fourth day, the glocal mission members were split to their respective areas of assignment to have a qualitative time with their counter partners. While the Muslim workshop was on action attended by Joe Milledge and Gary Penner other visiting glocal mission members were in the following areas of work.

1. a) Mr. Joe Milledge and Mr. Gary Penner continued with Muslim outreach workshop program
2. b) Pastor Kevin Wendt, Mrs. Loretta Sassmanshaus and Carla Schaller went to the Addis Ababa evangelical church Mekane Yesus to meet the HIV/AIDS program coordinator and counterpart Eva.Dabba Taddesse
3. c) Mrs. Barb.Johnson, Miss Conner and Miss Melani met at Abera Seifu the school head master.

The Church Relation: - The Addis Ababa Mekane Yesus church is the oldest Lutheran congregation in Ethiopia. Pastor Kevin Wendt with his counterpart senior pastor Markos Hadero has spent quality time in Gods mission. They have taken a wider time in sharing experiences in regard to the churches background, growth and the challenges the churches are facing these days. Together they have visited some church members in their houses and in some place they have administered Holy Communion services. They have joined together to give marriage counseling to a couple who will be married soon. Pastor Kevin Wendt was also invited to share the word of God in the youth meeting that was conducted on Thursday evening. He has shared to the gathering what the Lord plan is for our lives. He mentioned his own life experience that his plan was to be some body else than he is now due to God’s eternal plan. The same evening one of the youngest

glocal mission members Miss Conner gave her testimonies as how she plans for her future and how the Lord wants her to serve him with the youth as a missionary to other countries.

HIV/AIDS program of the AAMYC: - Pastor Kevin Wendt together with Mrs. Loretta Sassmanshaus and Carla Schaller went to Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus to meet the counterpart Evangelist Dabba Tadesse. Eva. Dabba gave a short briefing to the visiting members on the general social work of the church, how the church is conducting The HIV/AIDS victims program, the way they assist the patients and the establishment of a welfare association. It is learnt from Dabba that about 380 orphans and half orphans of which some are HIV/positive children were assisted in the program. The program includes teaching of God's word and the love God showed to the world by giving his own begotten son. Currently the program is shortened to few numbers of beneficiaries due to lack of adequate fund.

The Church School:- The counter partners Barb Johnson, Conner and Melani met at Abera seifu the head master of the school and visited the class rooms while the student were attending classes. The glocal Mission members introduced themselves and the schools in the U.S. They also thought in some of the selected class rooms. During the week they were visiting, teaching, giving what they have in their hearts and hands. They have discussed with the teachers extensively to arrange a program so as to meet by monthly report from selected classes. They have found out the short and long term need of the school and have promised to send computers both for the students and the school teachers. They also have promised to help the school with internet facilities. In conclusion the glocal mission members have appreciated how the students are disciplined.

Geferssa mental health rehabilitation center: – After Loretta's visit to the rehab center the previous day herself and Carla went to the Merkato (the biggest open market in Africa) to buy gift of trade for the weaving work of the Geferssa rehab center patients hand work. The

next day Loretta and Carla together with the counter partner Ms. Merat Kebede and ato Solomon went to Geferssa to give the purchased gifts and spend quite a considerable time on how to proceed with the Geferssa rehabilitation center.