

# AFRIGO

Encouraging the Church in world mission

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IS MISSIONS  
TRAINING NECESSARY?

ONLINE VS. IN-PERSON TRAINING

SHOULD WE PURSUE TRAINING WHILE  
SOULS ARE PERISHING?

TRAINING FOR MISSIONS  
**HEAD, HANDS AND HEART**

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# CONTENTS



## 03 IS MISSIONS TRAINING NECESSARY?

Seasoned missions leader Tshepang Basupi describes the role of training both today and in biblical times.

## 04 CALLED TO SOUTH SUDAN

Robert and Carol Bett share their journey into missions, weaving in both formal training before the field and hands-on training in the field.

## 05 WHAT IS THE MOST USEFUL TRAINING?

Solomon Akalu, Global Missions Coordinator for the Ethiopian Kale Heywet Church, describes the founding of the School of Missions and the subsequent Hub Schools, which train hundreds of evangelists right in the field.

## 06 WHY PURSUE TRAINING WHEN SOULS ARE PERISHING?

Prof. Samuel Kunhiyop, a scholar with decades of service and leadership in African Christian academia, makes the case for investing in training even while souls have not yet heard the gospel.

## 09 ONLINE VS. IN-PERSON TRAINING

As access to technology grows, online schooling is becoming a viable option across Africa. But how do you choose if online is best for you?

## 11 ERRORS REDEEMED: A MISSIONS SCHOOL IS FOUNDED

Andrew Abah founded a missions agency only to discover missionaries destroying the gains they made. His new tack? Found a missions school to avoid those mistakes.



# IS MISSIONARY TRAINING NECESSARY?

BY TSHEPANG BASUPI

Is missionary training necessary in 2021? Why should we bother investing in ministry training? One may think if you are a Christian and you have a calling from the Lord, then you are ready to step out and be a missionary. But is being a Christian and having a clear call from God sufficient?

To answer that question, imagine a soldier on the warfront who has never used a gun. He may be as much a danger to his fellow soldiers as to the enemy. Better still, imagine lying in a hospital bed and the *doctor* doing surgery on you has never attended medical school. Now that's scary. If we would not send an untrained soldier to war or an untrained doctor to do surgery, then we should not allow any missionary to go to the mission field without training.

The Bible illustrates people who excelled in their ministries, and looking at their backgrounds, we can spot some significant training. There seems to be a relationship between training and effectiveness in ministry.

Before David killed Goliath, he killed a bear and a lion. Before Joseph rose to a place of overseeing Egypt, he oversaw Potiphar's House and some prisoners. Before the apostles turned the "world upside down" (Acts 17:6), Jesus called them and appointed them Apostles that they might be with him (Mark 3: 14-15). Those mostly unschooled, ordinary men were transformed by sitting at the feet of Christ and learning from Him (Acts 4:13).

From these examples, we see that the fruit and kind of ministry we will do will be greatly affected by the training we get. If we are well trained, we will most likely do well in the field.

Today over two billion believers live in the world – all because Christ invested in 12 ordinary men. Christ's training was informal and relational. His relationship with them provided a stepping stone to train and equip them for a life of service to Him. Training is not always in the classroom.

The Apostle Paul was one of the most effective missionaries in his time. He claimed to have *fully* preached the gospel from Illyricum to Jerusalem (Rom. 15:19). This huge area included places such as Syria, Cyprus, Galatia, Cilicia, Pisidia, Phrygia, Mysia, Greece, Macedonia and many other cities. What made

him successful? Acts 11:25-26 notes that Barnabas took Paul under his guidance and did ministry with him for a year in Antioch. Here we see a more senior leader taking time to guide a budding leader in ministry.

When Paul eventually went out as a missionary, he took along some younger disciples. After several trips with these protégés, he sent Titus to Crete to "put in order what was left unfinished" (Tit. 1:5). He also sent Timothy to Ephesus to teach against wrong doctrine that had become prevalent (1Tim. 1:3). Paul's confidence in sending these brothers signaled his confidence in the training he had given.

All this highlights the value of training before one is deployed to the place of ministry, and training revisited over time in ministry. When I decided to become a missionary over a decade ago, I underwent ministry training at a formal institution. It was hard and stretching. However, ten years later, I am grateful as it prepared me for a life of ministry. I can confidently say that with the hardships I have faced in my journey, I would have quit had not that training programme equipped me.

Is God calling you to be a missionary? A good place to start is getting the necessary training to ensure you are prepared for the task ahead.

In this issue, you will meet Andrew Abah who is so passionate about training that he founded a training institution in Nigeria. You will be inspired by Robert and Carol Bett from Kenya, serving in South Sudan, who have woven in both formal training and hands-on training over time. We will also hear from Dr. Samuel Kunhiyop who has been educating and mentoring students for the ministry for decades, and from Solomon Akalu who has helped to architect missions 'hub schools' across Ethiopia. You will also learn to discern if a training programme is good quality. Enjoy reading!

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# CALLED: ROBERT & CAROL BETT

BY MERCY KAMBURA

## Robert

The first time my pastor asked me to preach a sermon, I was so insecure that I asked him to write the sermon for me. I had been a Christian since I was a teenager; I read my Bible and believed the Holy Spirit guided me, but I didn't know how to package and deliver a sermon. That's the first time I knew that even with the Word and the Holy Spirit, I needed training.

Growing up, we hosted a missionary every Sunday in our home, and I always felt utterly disturbed. There seemed to be great needs, and I asked myself, "Who will go to these places and help solve these problems?"

Years later when I was 24, one of the missionaries told me, "Robert, we feel the Lord has called you, but you do not want to be obedient to the calling."

In time, my wife, Carol, and I decided to support missionaries with money we raised through our farming.

While I preached often in my church, I felt inadequate. So, I enrolled in Scott Bible College in Machakos, Kenya, with a single goal – to go to the mission field.

## Carol

I told my husband to go to the field and I, an athlete, would go for athletic competitions and provide the money. So, I went to the camp and came home for the weekend. After two years, the Lord showed me I should join Robert in Bible college.

After completing theological training, we felt the need for knowledge in cross-cultural missions. We heard about TIMO, Training in Ministry Outreach with Africa Inland Mission (AIM). It felt perfect – learning first-hand on the mission field. We went to South Sudan and lived among the Lopits for six months, learning language



and building relationships. We followed a strict curriculum, writing papers, exams and reports for the study period.

Going to an unreached people group can be frustrating but taking time to train among them transformed our ministry. This question kept us focused: "Why are we here?"

## Robert

The community didn't want missionaries preaching to them; but living with and among them was a great ice breaker. After two months, the chief, who had wanted nothing to do with us, brought us a chicken and officially invited us to stay and get him a Bible.

My advice to missionaries is: "Go, feeding on and living the Bible in the village, so people can see a difference and desire to follow Christ."

Training helped us differentiate between missions, evangelism and discipleship. If you want to do missions, learn the language and look for ways to approach the culture with the gospel. Many people want to evangelize immediately and meet with resistance. Training also helps you avoid misinterpreting the Bible.

Training helps you deal with your character. Sometimes people pray spiritual

warfare over issues they have caused. Getting your character in line is vital.

## Carol

By the time we finished the two-year training, we had no doubt that we must do missions.

The team is a great learning environment as you adjust both to your colleagues and to a different culture.

There is no way to know what training you will need at the beginning. Often you have to get some training, go to the mission field, then evaluate what else you need. We do not ignore the power of the Holy Spirit in missions and preaching, but getting training is invaluable.

Training also helps you avoid misinterpreting the Bible. Sharing the Word with no training could have devastating results.

Being in a different culture causes you to observe first. Ignorance can cause you to make mistakes that will hinder your work and the work of other missionaries reaching that community after you.

*Robert and Carol are missionaries from Kenya to the Lopit nation of South Sudan. They are currently in Nairobi for a study break. They have two sons, Neil and Gerry. Contact them at robert.bett@aimint.org.*

### PLEASE PRAY:

- For our growth in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.
- For the Lord's provision for our studies.
- For new Lopit believers to grow strong in the faith.

# WHAT IS THE MOST USEFUL TRAINING FOR MISSIONARIES?

BY SOLOMON AKALU

Up until the end of the 20th century, the Ethiopian Kale Heywet Church (EKHC) did not have a school where its cross-cultural ministers could receive training or specialize in missions. The majority of cross-cultural missionaries were graduates of Bible schools and sent out with no or minimal training in missions.

Hence, many lacked the appropriate communication strategy to share the Good News in different cultures. This also contributed to slow church growth in some parts of the country. Thus, the EKHC founded the Ethiopian Kale Heywet School of Missions (EKSM) in May 2001.

Initially, EKSM intended to bring all untrained cross-cultural evangelists to its centre in Durame town for training. But this proved impossible due to the huge finances and logistics needed to bring together 1200 evangelists at once. Further, removing all missionaries from their fields could be detrimental to the new churches. All these reasons provoked a question: What is the most effective, relevant, and accessible strategy to train missionaries?

After discussion and prayer with EKHC leaders, EKSM proposed to set up eight "Missions Hub Schools" at selected strategic sites. These were established by 2010.

The purpose of EKSM's Hub Schools is to take the training to the mission field, right where the cross-cultural evangelists work.

Research and experience show that cross-cultural workers are more effective when trained in the field and classroom together. Evangelists come to the training centres for one month and return to

their fields for one month (six times in a year). The programme takes one year, and successful trainees earn a diploma or certificate in missions, depending on the grade level they attain.

To be effective and successful in the mission field, missionaries must be trained in the three-fold philosophy of education: know, be, and do. This approach is designed into the curriculum to be implemented informally, non-formally, and formally.

Thus, EKSM Hub Schools aim to equip students theologically, missiologically and practically to serve in different cultural contexts by focusing on the three-fold philosophy.

## 1) Know (Head)

Some courses develop theoretical foundations and establish a biblical framework for missions. These are not merely theoretical. They help students better understand the Word of God for their own lives and apply it to others' way of life using different but appropriate communication methods. What is taught in the classroom must be field tested.

## 2) Be (Heart)

All knowledge gained needs to be applied in the lives of the trainees. The programme's objective is to produce mature and committed

cross-cultural missionaries growing in the image of Jesus Christ. To achieve this, the centres' curriculum includes courses that nurture character and attitudinal transformation. Module courses deal with spiritual formation, daily planned spiritual discipline activities, and interaction with the community around the training centre.

We also provide opportunities for students to develop their spiritual lives



Pastor Teferi Bezabih, testifies that because of the fervent prayers and contextualized evangelism of the graduates of the HubSchools the churches are doubled in number in one region.

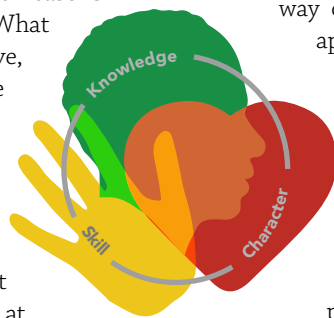
and character. The students and staff fast regularly in groups and as a whole school body. There are early morning group prayers and evening devotions. Intercession, hearing God, mentoring and chapel for the whole school take place from Tuesday to Friday morning. All these activities help the students to mature and develop spiritually.

## 3) Do (Hands)

The knowledge gained in the classroom and anticipated character development become more effective when supported with practical courses. These courses enable the trainee to gain creative problem-solving principles and methods that help to support themselves, alleviate poverty in the community they serve and expand the Kingdom of God.

Other activities help the students to enhance their character into Christ-likeness. Students clean the schools twice weekly and they work in agricultural fields. They also take turns to serve in the dining room. Every student should be involved at least in one of the school's 12 committees, where they can exercise leadership skills.

The informal and non-formal training helps the trainee to practice immediately what is learned in the classroom. They don't have to wait two or more years until they graduate. They bring questions or challenges they faced for discussion as they practice the theory they learned when they return to the class. This on-the-job training is very practical, effective, and relevant.



### WHO IS THE ETHIOPIAN KALE HEYWET CHURCH?

The EKHC is a large evangelical denomination of about 10,000 churches and 10 million members. Founded in 1927, its mission force today is about 1500 missionaries across Ethiopia, Africa and the world. Visit [www.ekhc.org](http://www.ekhc.org)



Solomon Akalu is the Global Missions Coordinator for the Ethiopian Kale Heywet Church (EKHC). Email him at [solomonserves@gmail.com](mailto:solomonserves@gmail.com).

# SHOULD WE PURSUE TRAINING WHEN SOULS ARE PERISHING?

INTERVIEW WITH PROF. SAMUEL WAJE KUNHIYOP

**M**issions is an urgent task. Millions of people still live in communities which have never heard the gospel. The consequences of an eternity without Christ are too upsetting to think about. And yet, missionaries delay going to the field or take study breaks from the field to get training.

What is the use of investing time and resources on cross-cultural training when the fate of souls is on the line? Should Christians study hermeneutics or systematic theology when so many have never heard the name of Jesus? Why pause to discuss books while war wages around us?

Abraham Lincoln, who abolished slavery in the United States, once said, “Give me six hours to chop down a tree and I will spend the first four sharpening the ax.” Similarly, solid cross-cultural and biblical training will result in missionaries who are more effective and avoid mistakes.

Dr. Samuel Kunhiyop is a scholar and follower of Christ with decades of service and leadership in African Christian academia. AfriGO interviewed him about the value of scholarly training, and the biblical precedent for both formal and informal training.

## What are the benefits of formal training?

Many new churches in Africa don't believe in formal training but that being “trained by the Spirit” is enough. But you see the heresies are being repeated. In my years of formal training following secondary school, I was exposed to many heresies that the church dealt with from the first up to the fifth centuries. This was excellent preparation for ministry today because people are repeating these heresies.

**If you don't have formal training, you will repeat a lot of mistakes as well as risk creating syncretism.**



One example I have seen distorts the doctrine of the Trinity. It posits that God the Father was for the Old Testament, God the Son was for the New Testament, and God the Spirit is for our times now. The Trinity is thus grossly misunderstood. But this heresy was already debated and discarded in the fourth century.

Being a Christian is about more than knowing Jesus as personal Saviour. Even Paul, after his experience on the road to Damascus, was discipled by Ananias. He was a trained man who submitted to even more training.

If you don't have formal training, you will repeat a lot of mistakes as well as risk creating syncretism – which we cannot allow. If we do, in 50 years from now we will have to send Christians to re-evangelize and that will be a very, very sad story.

## Are there any drawbacks to formal training?

There is the temptation to become too legalistic – theology without the Spirit. We need both/and – both good theology and the Holy Spirit's presence. When we have the right doctrine, we still depend on the Holy Spirit to do what is right.

Also, the accumulation of credentials for the sake of credentials can be a problem. In I Corinthians 12, Paul describes how the body is interrelated. The individualism of the West is shaping and even destroying the African people, even the church.

For example, if you go to school, you get your own grade, you get your own degree, you get your own PhD, and you become a big man. But the credential is not for the community. Traditionally in Africa, what I am is for the benefit of society. So, a potential drawback of formal training is that it rewards you as an individual and can remove you from being a benefit to your community.

## Do you see formal training in the scriptures?

Yes, the Apostle Paul had the highest level of education possible in his day. He



was versed in Greco-Roman culture and learning; no one could accuse Paul of not being prepared for ministry. He was prepared in both the letter and in Spirit.

2 Corinthians 3:6 says: "He has made us competent as ministers of a new covenant – not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life." This was a philosophical distinction in the first century. But when we read all of scripture together, we cannot pit Spirit against letter. We are created with a mind.

Dr. Luke had formal training; he was a physician who authored the books of Luke and Acts. Titus, Apollos and Priscilla were all highly educated. In the Old Testament, we see that Elijah and Elisha were trained in the school for prophets (2 Kings 2, 4). Eli the priest trained young Samuel, and Moses received the highest education in the land of Egypt.

Someday I will give an account to God for all He has given me. God did not just give me a heart; He gave me a brain. He gave me a mind. So why can't I use the mind? He also gave me a heart and feet to walk, so people will see. I have a lot in my head to pour out to my students, but I also have my heart and the way I walk.

### **How do you see informal training complement formal training?**

When I studied for my master's, my systematic theology professor chose four of his students - two Americans, one Chinese and one African, myself – to invite for breakfast every Monday from 6 to 7 am. So we had class with him and engaged our minds, but we also ate with him and engaged our stomachs and our hearts.

During one breakfast in 1986, he said to me, "Sam, do you think we need an African theology?" I could not answer him, but his question stayed in my mind. Twenty years later, I answered the question in my book, *African Christian Theology*. It is vital for every missionary and every trainer to engage with the mind, stomach and heart.



Today, not many of my students would say that because they had me for systematic theology, it changed their life. Rather, it is the personal things – when there is a death in their family, when they are struggling or out of money, etc. If my students don't see me practicing my theology, then what is the use?

### **What cultural advantages might Africans have in mentoring and informal training?**

The communal orientation of Africans can benefit discipleship and training, which is more organic, less dichotomized. In Africa, it is easier to combine theory and practice.

When you teach, students ask questions and tell you real stories of the issues. Africans don't prefer abstract thinking – debate without practical relevance. You need both – theory plus practice, orthodoxy plus orthopraxy. When we get that right, we can produce mature and equipped missionaries.

Africans have a sense of *ubuntu*, or in East Africa, *ujamaa*, which means "I am because we are; and because we are, therefore I am."

### **What if you cannot afford training?**

First, know the scriptures well. Even if you cannot afford to go to seminary, there are many resources to do personal study, to train yourself.

Second, read! Do not limit yourself to the Bible, but read extensively. Study where you are going to serve – geography, history, culture, language. Be an informed person. Reading will supplement your formal education, no matter how little or much you have.

God has not only revealed himself in the 66 books of the Bible, but in nature, history and conscience. There are lots of books you can read to self-educate and to be an informed person. In today's age, no one has an excuse for not being educated.

If you are engaged in a discussion, and you don't even know what it is all about, others will look at you like you don't know what you are doing. If you go to serve in ministry and you don't know more than the Bible, you will probably be irrelevant.

In today's age, you don't have to travel overseas to study. But you have no excuse to be ignorant about many things. No one is going to ask you what your qualifications are. But if you speak as an informed person, people know. If you speak from ignorance, people know. So, you have no excuse to speak as an ignorant person.

*Rev. Prof. Samuel Waje Kunhiyop is a scholar and Christ-follower with many years of experience in African Christian academia. He has served as academic dean, then provost, of Jos Evangelical Seminary (JETS) in Nigeria, head of the post-graduate school at the South Africa Theological Seminary, General Secretary of ECWA church in Nigeria, and more. He holds a doctorate in Systemic Theology and Ethics and is the author of African Christian Theology and African Christian*



*Ethics. He is ordained with ECWA. He and his wife, Yelwa, reside in Jos, Nigeria. They have four children and 11 grandchildren.*

## ACCREDITATION VS. NON-ACCREDITATION

A Nigerian pastor\* with a doctorate from a Canadian institution applied to teach at a Bible school in Botswana. However, his application was rejected without even an interview. Why? The Canadian programme was an online school with no accreditation. Not only was the teaching standard questionable, but the degree did not meet the qualifications to get a visa. This scenario is happening to many who desire to serve the Lord in other countries.

Before you get training, ask yourself what your purpose is. If you will work in your own country, then you will not need a visa. However, to work in other countries, an accredited degree may be a visa requirement.

What is an accredited school? It is one which meets academic standards set by the government or an evaluating body. It complies with criteria such as number of credentialed professors and quality of curriculum. This not only puts a stamp of approval on the school, it also assures others that its graduates possess a certain level of knowledge, skills or abilities.

How can you be sure an institution is accredited? The school should tell you its credentials. If the school is in another country, ask someone from that country to help you determine its status.

Brian DeVries, Dean at Mukhanyo Theological School in Johannesburg, warns that many new institutions offer quick results for little money and time. Very low cost is a red flag. If a school offers a bachelor's degree in two years and a master's degree in another year, it is not likely legitimate.

A well-regarded school in your country may not be well regarded overseas. Enquire about acceptability of your school if you are aiming for a higher degree, and whether the denominational theology of your school will suit your ministry organisation. Watch out for prosperity gospel church schools as well.

In summary, we urge you to fully investigate any school. A fancy website or a good vision statement is no guarantee of accreditation. Do not let a scholarship be the only factor in your choice. A free education that does not yield the result you need is also a waste. Consider carefully what you need, seek advice, and ask God to reveal wise choices which will lead you along His path for you.

\* Names and places are changed.



## LANGUAGE LEARNING

Although Africans are known for speaking multiple languages since childhood, learning a new language as an adult can be much harder. Yet many tips and methods have been developed by linguists to help our brains absorb a new language more quickly. Here is a Facebook page that provides tips for focusing on language skills and exploring culture.

Tip of the Tongue: Language and Culture Learning  
Tips: <https://www.facebook.com/language tips>

## Africa's association for theological education ensures high standards

The Association for Christian Theological Education in Africa, or ACTEA, has provided accreditation to theological schools and programmes across Africa since 1976. Its vision is to see theological education flourishing at a high standard, sustainable, Christ-centred, and interconnected such that scholars across the

continent can mutually support and benefit one another. ACTEA can assist your theological school or programme to achieve its quest for excellence and renewal.

☀ ACTEA accreditation standards can be viewed here:  
<https://bit.ly/2XICpLR>  
f [facebook.com/www.acteaweb.org](https://facebook.com/www.acteaweb.org)





## ONLINE VS. IN-PERSON TRAINING

As access to technology grows, online schooling is becoming a viable option across Africa. But how do you choose if online training is best for you? Here are some pros and cons to consider:

**Family:** There is no need to relocate and leave family for long periods. Families with young children who study abroad have no extended family support, and singles may be very lonely.

**Costs:** It costs less than traveling far-away and providing for your basic needs while there.

**Access:** Studying online can offer access to high-quality courses and academic fields which may not be available locally.

All of these advantages cannot be disputed. But there are also drawbacks of online study:

**Internet:** A daily reality for many of us is continual frustration due to poor internet connection. What are your technological assets, including the cost of data?

**Lack of group discussion:** Education experts emphasize the need for group discussion for learning. Online learning can be just a “data dump” - a great deal of information loaded onto the student, without any discussion to process the knowledge in order to understand and apply it.

**Motivation:** Online learning can be lonely and motivation may wane. A South African study found that the largest online university, UNISA, had just an 11.3 per cent completion rate compared to in-person universities at 39 per cent.\*

**Lack of mentoring:** In person mentoring, uniquely develops a student’s character and mastery of their subject.

Mentoring can be especially important in ministry training, where a candidate’s godly character is vital to ministry success.

**Brain drain:** There is the chance that graduates will never return to their intended ministry at home if they go overseas.

No option is all bad or all good. Instead, each person must evaluate and pursue a path that will best equip them for the ministry. Always consult with your pastor or mentor and enter a period of prayerful reflection.

\* Stellenbosch University paper: <https://bit.ly/3Dc4Odx>.



## EQUIPPED AND READY TO ENGAGE

BY KIRUBEL GIRMA, MOBILISER FOR THE EAST AFRICA MISSIONS OFFICE

The local church’s capacity to engage in missions is way behind where we hoped it would be by now. In the 21st century, mission is from anywhere to everywhere. God has called the local church to reach the unreached. The way that we plan and approach missions is not matching the shift of our world toward globalisation.

Our priority as believers should always be on spreading the good news to the whole world, starting with our family and neighbourhood to the unreached peoples in our nation and beyond.

When we identify and try to equip new workers, we should use diverse approaches to make sure that the worker, with his or her skills and capacity, is engaged in the right field of ministry. The local church is uniquely equipped to recognise and develop skills, talents and character in our congregations, since we can observe up close over a long period of time.

There are four areas in which the local church can equip those they send:

1. **Spiritual.** Discipleship and prayer are the foundation of missions training, and strength in these areas at home will continue as strengths on the field.

2. **Physical.** We sometimes fail to understand the necessity of keeping good health; life on the field can be rigorous and workers must not be hindered from accomplishing their aims due to physical breakdown.

3. **Mental.** Whether this is through academic or practical learning, there is much that a candidate needs to know before going. The local church is in a position to support missionaries in their preparation, and allow them to practice what they learn in order to build up the church as well as strengthen their skills.

4. **Financial.** Missionaries need funds to live on the field, to educate their children, and to travel home. When their sending church stands behind them in this way, it not only creates an opportunity for the lost to learn about Christ, but allows God to bless the church with a deeper understanding of His plan for the world through them, and spiritual blessings as a result.

The local body of believers should work together in missions through training, resources and other details, more than ever before. If we do this, we will avoid unnecessary costs, false expectations and will be able to reach the full capacity of each church to reach out.

# GO! NEWS OF AFRICA'S MOBILISING CHURCH

## MOZAMBIQUE MISSIONS SCHOOL CLOSES AMIDST VIOLENCE

In 2012, a Kenyan missions agency founded a missions training school in northern Mozambique, with the aim to train and send missionaries to unreached people.

By 2017, terrorist group Al-shabaab from Tanzania began attacking people of all religions in the region. The terrorists used the mango trees outside the school as their morning meeting place, and one student narrowly escaped capture. After several close calls, the school closed

in December 2018. To date, tens of thousands of people have been killed or injured; more than 700,000 have fled their villages.

Please pray for those suffering and for Christians who are reaching out to refugees despite their own difficulties.

Find more information for prayer:

AIM: <https://eu.aimint.org/pray-mozambique/>

Tear Fund: <https://bit.ly/3grqvN2>

## LIBERIA GROWS AS MISSIONARY SENDER

The Evangelical Church of Liberia (ECOL) hosted its second annual national missions conference from May 21-22, 2021, at their National Headquarters. The event drew about 80 pastors, church leaders, mission church planters, and Christians from across the country.

ECOL has seven church planting missionaries deployed cross-culturally. In the last two years, they have planted five churches in Sierra Leone.

The conference focused on sharing the gospel among oral learners. Speakers included orality specialist Rev. Tom Stout and Rev. Musa Sheriff, a former Muslim who gave rousing presentations comparing the person of Jesus in the Qur'an and the Bible. He also gave testimony of his journey from preparation in a *madrasa* to be an *imam* to a believer in Jesus Christ.

ECOL General Overseer Rev. Moses G. Paye says, "We began our national mission conference in 2019 to raise awareness of the importance of the Great Commission among our 115 churches. We want our churches to understand the importance of supporting missions cross-culturally."

Proceeds of offerings from the event help fund the small monthly stipend for the missionaries. The work has been fruitful; each missionary has planted multiple churches and primary schools where none existed within and beyond Liberia.




## ONE BIBLE COLLEGE; 85 LOCATIONS

Mukhanyo Theological College is a multi-location higher education institution. Its 900 students study across three campuses and two advanced learning centres in South Africa and at over 80 distance learning support centres in ten African countries.

In the distance centres, cohorts of students learn from tutors, study guides and DVD lectures by Bible and missions specialists. Mukhanyo offers accredited programmes as well as non-accredited Focus Certificates. The programmes are affordable and accessible.

For information on courses and pricing, or to establish a distance learning support centre in your area, visit their website.

 [www.mukhanyo.ac.za](http://www.mukhanyo.ac.za)



## FIRST OF ITS KIND MISSIONS CONSULTATION

From June 8-11, a nationwide Missions Consultation took place in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, drawing 400 pastors. It was hosted by the *Fédération des Églises et Missions Evangeliques* (FEME).

FEME, led by Pasteur Henri Yé, represents about 98 per cent of the churches in Burkina Faso, including 14 denominations and five missions agencies. Formed in 1961, its aim is to synergize for better proclamation of

the gospel in Burkina Faso and beyond. Daniel Salamu, director of the SIM West Africa Missions Office (WAMO), which has sent workers from the region for years, shared with the gathering: "The Great Commission mandate is given to all of us; this makes the church the *sender* of missionaries. SIM WAMO is ready to partner with churches to send more missionaries where Christ is least known. We all know that the task is bigger than any individual, church or organisation. Now more than ever is the time to accomplish the task together."

Despite terrorist activity since 2015, the church's missions vision is growing. World Watch List ranks this nation 32 among the 50 countries where it is most difficult to be a Christian: <https://bit.ly/3yvmopp>.





# ERRORS REDEEMED: A MISSIONS SCHOOL IS FOUNDED

BY VICTOR BAJAH

**G**race Foundation, a mission agency based in Nigeria, sent out missionaries for 31 years before they realized what they were doing wrong. Today, they are seeing fruit they never expected through a unique programme for training kingdom workers.

Started in 1989, Grace's focus was to recruit and send missionaries, which they did steadily. Their missionaries got quick results on the field, but eventually destroyed the gains they had made. Dr. Andrew Abah, founder of the organization, says, "At the onset, we recruited missionaries without bothering whether they undertook missionary training or not. The result was tragic."

For example, one of the first couples sent out planted seven churches in the first three years. Everyone was excited about the results, but that same work fell apart before long because of inadequacies in the character of the couple. The territorial powers that have held these places captive does not easily let go, and they were not prepared for the power encounters. How could these problems have been missed?

Dr. Abah found that his vision for growing a crop of missionaries across Africa shifted to making sure those missionaries are fruitful. He had a taste of theological training at a popular and

well-respected seminary in Nigeria, where theological training had been considered sufficient for preparation to serve on the mission field. But he found that the missions curriculum was shallow on frontier missions. He realized that at least one year of specialized missions training was vital to success. He began praying about how to do things differently.

The answer? The Grace Foundation's School of Cross-Cultural Missions, with training centres and resource people who have developed a curriculum that supplements and improves on the missions training programmes used by some theological schools.

Through experience, his agency found that a whole new set of courses was necessary for missionaries to be better prepared to serve, and that missionaries serving in difficult places needed re-training. The courses Cross-Cultural Communication and Missionary Anthropology equipped students to step back and assess cultures and practices with a practiced eye. Spiritual Warfare and Theology of Missions, the mainstays of theological schools, needed to be revamped to be relevant to the contemporary situations of missionaries on the field.

In 12 to 15 months, the trainers, all experienced missionaries, invest heavily in the recruits. They are required to

spend quality time with the students through lectures and interactive sessions, and have the opportunity to observe and mould the characters of the apprentices. Each student is sent out to the field for four months as an intern, and must participate in "flock groups" to learn how to take responsibility for discipleship. At the school, international mission conferences help expose students to global mission leaders.

Up to now, Grace Foundation has trained more than 300 students, who serve in diverse nations, some with the agency and others with different agencies and denominations. Dr. Abah says, "We are pleased to report that our new approach has yielded the fruit we always hoped for, and we encourage others to consider. We can truly say our missions training programme is a processing plant for missionaries in this part of the world, and we have raised more sustainable field workers."



*Andrew and his wife Lucy are blessed with four biological children and many foster kids. They live in Jos, Nigeria.*

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# PEOPLE GROUPS: UZBEKS

Uzbeks are famous for their hospitality, believing that guests are a blessing and a privilege. Even in the humblest of circumstances, a stranger is warmly received and hosted.

This landlocked country, bordering Afghanistan, has resources including oil, natural gas and gold. Ten percent of the land is irrigated and produces the world's second largest cotton crop and excellent fruits and vegetables for export.

Evidence reveals that Christianity once flourished next to Persian Zoroastrianism as the major religion. However, Arab invasions in the 700s brought Islam. Today, the majority of Uzbeks are Muslims who practice folk Islam, with neighbourhoods guided by elders. There is a resurgence of both mosque-centred and more conservative Islam.

Only 0.18 per cent out of almost 34 million people are evangelical Christians.

Over the centuries, Uzbekistan has been conquered and shaped by Persian rulers, Alexander the Great, Genghis Khan, Tamerlane, Muslim Arabs and Russia. Until 1992, Uzbekistan

was part of the Soviet Union where any religious practices were suppressed.

Modern day borders have divided the people groups of the region, leaving Uzbeks in all the surrounding countries. Many have also immigrated to work in Russia, Kazakhstan, Turkey and the USA.

The government forbids religious gatherings in homes and any unofficially authorized Bibles or religious literature. Police search for phone apps and confiscate religious literature during home raids. Certain social media apps are blocked. But believers are posting Uzbek Christian music and developing audio Bible stories in the country. Most people rely on social media to access the Bible and Christian material.

The few registered churches are officially for Russians or Koreans. Usually there is strong opposition and discrimination against new believers from their family, neighbours and the government. At times new believers are driven out of their villages and forbidden to bury their dead unless they recant their faith.

## At a Glance

- Uzbeks believe that a well on the outskirts of the city of Bukhara was dug by Job of the Bible.
- In 30 years, the Uzbek Christian population has risen from almost 0 to 10,000.
- Weddings are lavish, often taking place during the harvest.
- Customs are complex; everyone knows their place and responsibilities in the extended family and community.

## Pray

- For God to intervene in difficult family and community situations when someone chooses to follow Jesus.
- For those creating phone apps and educational materials in the Uzbek language.
- For traveling local teams who disciple and evangelize.
- For missionaries to come and teach English or serve in higher education. Pray for the Lord to send more labourers!



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