

# AFRIGO

A Testimony from Birhanu Koyra  
Ethiopian Missionary to Mali

By Mercy Kambura

On 17th February 2023, God called Tirunesh to her heavenly home. Tirunesh was relentless, resilient, and full of love for the Gospel. Despite her prolonged illness, she was determined to remain in the mission field. We will surely go back to the mission field. We are an army of the Lord, and Tirunesh's going home will not deter us from our calling. We have been missionaries to Bamako, Mali, and previously in Ethiopia, our Jerusalem.

I grew up a shepherd boy. One Sunday morning, I listened to our pastor speaking about his education and prayed, "Can I acquire some education too, dear God?" The Lord visited me in a vision that night. I saw many people marching, following a man full of light. They had torches in their hands, but I had none. I cried, "Please do not leave me behind; I have no torch. Please take me with you." Then I fell at His feet sobbing. He turned His face towards me and said, "I will never leave you. Fear not!" I woke up trembling, lit a gas lantern, and prayed as best as possible. The following day, I took my father's mother-tongue Bible, held it close to my heart, and prayed, "Oh, dear God, please let my dream come to light. Please let me serve you all my life." The Lord answered this prayer and sent me to local and global mission fields.

Tirunesh and I grew up in Christian homes in Wolaita, Southern Ethiopia. We met while studying in a Bible School and preparing for ministry. I already had a construction certificate, the job that would bring in significant income. But I gave it up when God called me into ministry. As we started married life together, God led us into global missions.

We began our ministry, leaving our people to work among another large ethnic group called the \*A. During our eight years of ministry there, we planted 13 churches. Four years ago, we left Ethiopia for Mali in West Africa. There everything was different. The national language was French, but the local language was Bambara. We learned both. The area was hot and mosquito-infested. Despite all this, we planted three small churches among the Bambara in just four years.

It was while in Mali that Tirunesh began feeling ill. She received treatment for various illnesses. In 2021 when their mother was seriously ill and was preparing for a third major surgery, our daughter told her, "Mommy, we have been praying for you for a long time, but you are getting weaker and sicker. It seems that the Lord wants to take you home. I will not pray for your healing anymore. I think God wants to take you home. Do not fear. You will go to your Father. Do not worry about us. We will be fine. God will take care of us."

After four years, we returned to Ethiopia with our two daughters, aged 14 and 10. Tirunesh did well for some time, but in the sixth month, she fell ill again. She was rushed to the hospital and died after

a few hours. Our daughters are devastated; they are in unfamiliar surroundings without their mother.

Having left the mission field, it has not been easy for the Ethiopian Church to continue supporting us fully. Our daughters desperately need quality education. My eldest daughter has applied for a scholarship to a high-quality boarding school in Kenya. I discovered she wrote a compelling letter to the institution of her volition. Our greatest desire is that they're both accepted under scholarship.

"We need your prayers for the rest of our lives, so please keep praying for us." said the girls.

[#Pray:](#)

- For God's people to come in and help us.
- For God to console these beautiful young ladies as they face life without their mother.
- For the girls to be accepted into one of the best missionary kids' schools in Kenya they applied to.

PS: If you wish to support this family, please contact Dr. Seble Daniel at +251 963 737 271, or send an email to [EastAfrica.Director@sim.org](mailto:EastAfrica.Director@sim.org).

\*Name hidden for security purposes.

Note: SIM East African Sending Office was established in 2012 to facilitate churches in East Africa to engage in global missions. In partnership with churches in East Africa, it has sent more than one hundred workers to nineteen countries worldwide. Currently, it has sixty-eight workers serving in thirteen countries.

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