



# “Dr. Perspectives”

## A Cataract Surgeon

By MARKOS ZEMEDE, M.D.

**Markos Zemedu** immigrated to the US from Ethiopia as a teenager. His life was transformed by the Perspectives course and today he leads a mission organization called Horn of Africa Mission. He can be contacted at [markos@hornofafrica.org](mailto:markos@hornofafrica.org).

I was 18 years old when I arrived in the United States in 1984. I gave my life to Jesus two years prior while a refugee in Rome, Italy. Coming to the US was a huge blessing for several reasons. Firstly, I found the freedom to love and follow Jesus. At that time, Ethiopia was under a communist regime, and it was illegal to be a disciple of Jesus. Coming to America, I was able to grow and mature in my faith. Secondly, I had a childhood dream of becoming a medical doctor. America was my best chance to fulfill my dream. Lastly, I was unaware of my need to have surgery, but I met the surgeon, “Dr. Perspectives,” in America.

In 1996, by the grace of God, I accomplished my childhood dream of becoming a medical doctor and started my medical practice. I thought, “Now I can live the American dream.” But before long, my church introduced me to the *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement* course. Though I had never heard about this course before, I signed up and took it. As a result, my life’s trajectory forever changed. It was in this Perspectives class that I exchanged my idea of the American dream with God’s kingdom dream. One Perspectives instructor defined the

American dream as “Buying things we don’t need, with the money we don’t have, to impress people we don’t like.” With this understanding of the American dream, I was so happy to exchange it for a life with meaning and purpose.

God used the Perspectives on the World Christian Movement course as a skilled surgeon to perform cataract surgery on the eyes of my heart. Now, I can see clearly and in colors. I started seeing the Bible as one book. Its grand metanarrative became apparent. Knowing God’s dream of seeing worshipers from every nation, tribe, people, and language (Rev 7:9) challenged me to exchange my small dream with God’s big dream. Living to fulfill God’s dream became my ambition. Instead of seeing people only as “saved” or “unsaved,” I started also seeing people as “reached” or “unreached.” I moved from thinking only of “what God has saved me *from*” to “what God has saved me *for*.” I started realizing all lost people are not the same. Some are lost with access to the gospel. Many others are lost without any access. All these new perspectives caused me to have a paradigm shift and created a passion in my heart to take the gospel to those who

have little or no access to the message of Christ. Those who are last to hear became my priority. With that new understanding and passion, a couple of my Ethiopian friends and I started a mission organization called Horn of Africa Mission in 2002.

It was not natural or easy to start a mission organization as an African immigrant living in the US. On the one hand, we didn't know any mission organizations that were started and run by African immigrants. On the other hand, the American mission organizations we knew needed a lot of money to be fruitful. God in his wisdom helped us to start and lead a very fruitful missions organization that is not dependent on a lot of money yet, at the same time, impacts many nations.

When we thought about where to start our ministry, being born and raised in Ethiopia, the Horn of Africa region was a natural first choice. Beyond familiarity and natural connection, it is a region where a large percentage of the population is unreached. We began our work in Ethiopia and Eritrea in 2004. We started by organizing annual missions conferences where we invited all evangelical leaders to attend. These conferences helped us to know the leaders, introduce global missions, and create partnerships with churches and mission organizations. Soon after, we started to train, support, and send church planters in Ethiopia and Eritrea. Back then, our rallying cry was to plant "10,000 churches by 2010!" To many of our friends, this was a crazy dream, as our goal seemed impossible for a newly birthed ministry. Our answer was, "We learned in the Perspectives course that our assignment is to make disciples of all nations, and the best strategy to accomplish that is to plant churches. God will help us to disciple the unreached people groups of the Horn of Africa and in the process will plant these 10,000 churches by 2010!"

God faithfully provided church planters, funding, and the strategy of CPM/DMM so that we could march full speed toward our goal. By 2010, our ministry grew beyond Ethiopia and Eritrea to include Djibouti, Somalia, Sudan, Kenya, and Tanzania. We observed the hardest places produce the greatest of harvests. We saw amazing multiplication in many of our mission fields. By the end of 2010, more than 10,000

simple churches were planted in the nations of the Horn of Africa/East Africa region. To God be the glory! Today, our ministry has expanded to include 23 nations in Africa and the Middle East. We have seen over 28,000 simple churches planted and more than 750,000 people added to God's kingdom.

In addition, God is pleased to use us as an instrument to awaken the African church for missions. A recent experience serves as an example. A few months ago, we trained church leaders in Chad with the goal of starting a mission organization there. Afterward, we encouraged the leaders to found a mission organization with a vision to reach their nation and one day send missionaries to reach their neighboring nations. Our story—African immigrants used by God to reach nations in Africa and the Middle East, ignited a fire in their hearts and increased their faith. We made it clear that it is not our intention to open a branch of *our* ministry but to help them start a mission organization that *they* lead. And this gave them great confidence. As partners, we agreed to give them training, avail ourselves for coaching, and provide them with resources including finances.

Today, they're doing a great job, making great strides to engage the remaining UPGs in their nation. We believe they will be more fruitful as an indigenous ministry led by locals than if they were a branch office of our ministry. In this way, the Chadian church will be revealed as the gift that it is and will help the African church to play its role in God's mission. We have established organizations like this in a few other countries and rejoice in what God is doing through his people in Africa and the Middle East. We look forward to the day when the African church sends a multitude of missionaries to reach the remaining hard-to-reach people groups of the world. The harvest field is becoming the harvest force.

The world came into focus for me after a successful cataract surgery. "Dr. Perspectives" (Perspectives on the World Christian Movement course) gave me a clear vision of God's Word and his mission. I am forever grateful for the course that connected me with my purpose by restoring my sight and shaping my ministry to impact nations. 