



CANADA

**Langham**  
PARTNERSHIP  
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Colin Macpherson (right) and Tekalign Duguma (second from left) with Ethiopian authors

## LANGHAM IN ETHIOPIA: BUILDING A GOSPEL WITNESS FOR THE FUTURE

“Ethiopia’s future rests in the hands of theological education,” says Bruk Ayele, president of the Mekane Yesus Seminary in the capital Addis Ababa.

Misgana Mathewos, Director of the Ethiopian Graduate School of Theology (EGST), and a member of the Mekane Yesus Church (with 9 million members), and Ermias Mamo, Deputy General Secretary of Ethiopia’s largest evangelical church (Kale Heywet, with 10 million members) are Langham Scholars.

Another Langham Scholar, Seblewengel, is the first female PhD in theology from Kale Heywet Church, and serves as Executive Director for the Women’s Commission of the World Evangelical Alliance. In 2019 Langham published Seblewengel’s book *Perception and Identity*, which examines evangelicalism in the context of Ethiopia’s ancient Christian tradition. Though there is no official persecution, evangelicals are often viewed as having betrayed their Ethiopian identity and community, leading to social ostracism. Seble today directs SIM’s East Africa Sending Office, which is very engaged with global missions, currently with 74 East African workers in 14 countries. She mentors many Christian women, as the chair of women in her denomination, and as a spokeswoman addressing harmful traditional practices affecting girls.

Seble teaches part-time at the EGST, alongside several other Langham Scholars. EGST has graduated 876 men and women over 25 years, with 255 students currently. But Ethiopia’s evangelical Church, with about 63,000 local congregations, is growing so fast that many churches do not have trained pastors.

Dr Frew Tamrat, principal of Addis Ababa’s Evangelical Theological College (ETC), says, “This numerical growth is not met by maturity. There is a theological famine, and many churches are largely without properly trained pastors.” Islam, now at 33% of the population, is increasingly assertive. Political instability, and sporadic civil war especially in the north, are feeding growing religious extremism. Within the evangelical churches and theological schools themselves,

postmodernism and theological liberalism also pose a growing challenge. The urgent need is to equip evangelicals to engage with their Muslim neighbours, and to have discernment given widely available polemical Islamic literature.

Langham Partnership addresses Ethiopia’s needs in several ways. Langham Scholars are teaching future pastors in Ethiopia’s seminaries. Langham Preaching has worked in Ethiopia for 12 years, under Frew Tamrat’s leadership. In the past year, about 86 pastors participated in Level 1 Preaching seminars held throughout the country.

Misgana, a pastor mentored by Frew Tamrat at ETC, left a thriving church in Addis Ababa to serve rural Ethiopia. “It was a good privilege for me to proclaim the Word to them,” he says. “Nowadays, their hearts are open to the Gospel . . . The people are thirsty and they want to know the truth.” During a leadership training in an ethnic Oromiffa-speaking village, Misgana says 150 people came to Christ. However, Misgana adds, “There are a lot of needs when you go into a rural place. They need discipleship training, youth training, children training.” He emphasizes that most pastors in the rural areas can’t study at a Bible school, so Misgana thanks Langham for the training he received and the opportunity to train rural pastors in turn. He says his knowledge of the Bible – and its application – increased because of his training. Seeing the impact of the gospel in communities brings him joy. “You know the goal of preaching is life change, so when people say, ‘God spoke to me, and I changed my life,’ when I hear this, it is joyful for me.”

The Ethiopian Church has long depended on books from the West. Ethiopia has some Christian authors, but without local publishers, they must seek out western publishers, impacting their ability to write books addressing important issues from within the local cultural context. One answer was the Amharic translation of the *Africa Bible Commentary*, one of Ethiopia’s major languages.

Langham has now identified a local indigenous publisher, with a vision for Christian literature published locally, in national languages, written

by local Christian leaders with a heart for the Ethiopian Church's needs. Tekalign Duguma was contemplating suicide when he was miraculously saved. Within weeks, he had enrolled in a theological college, the beginning of 14 years of study at several schools, concluding with post-graduate work at EGST, then a PhD in New Testament at South Africa's Stellenbosch University, eventually serving as exegetical consultant for Wycliffe Bible Translators in Ethiopia, and now full-time faculty at EGST. He is today married to the daughter of Bishop Hiruy Tsige, one of Ethiopia's best-known Christian leaders. From the time of his conversion, he has had a vision for Christian publishing. His new company is now preparing to publish Amharic and Oromiffa versions of commentaries on John, Matthew, Ephesians, 1, 2, 3 John, and a Bible dictionary.



*Tekalign with his wife Kalkidan, Noah and Nathaniya*

Ethiopia has a rich Christian history, upon which Langham and its scholars, authors and pastors can build. It is one of the oldest Christian countries in the world, tracing its history back to King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba, believed to be Queen Makeda of Ethiopia, whose

son King Menelik I introduced Judaism to the country. The historic Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo (EOT) Church's deep legacy presents both challenges and opportunities for evangelical ministry. Ninety-eight percent of Ethiopians say their religion is "very important" to them, so they are very open to thinking and talking about faith.

From the beginning, the Scriptures were translated into Ethiopic, accessible to lay people, and Orthodox Christianity was firmly tied to Ethiopian identity. Ethiopia thus could withstand the Islamic sweep through northern Africa several hundred years later, especially in the north of the country where Orthodoxy was most embedded. However, over time, EOT Church teaching increasingly moved away from what evangelicals regard as biblical teaching about the nature of Christ, the relationship of His humanity to His divinity, and the role of Mary.

Since the arrival of evangelical missionaries, these have become major issues. What does 'saved by grace, and not by works' mean? Is Jesus really the only way to God, or is Mary also a co-redeemer? Ethiopia's South, traditionally more pagan than the north, where Orthodoxy was firmly embedded, became the focus of evangelical mission work. During Emperor Haile Selassie's long reign (1930-1974), missionaries could work only in the southern and western areas, where the evangelical churches are thus strongest today.

Ethiopia has about 129.4 million people. Evangelicals were at 18% in 2007, though many believe they are now at 23%. The Orthodox population is about 43%, with 33% Muslim. Evangelicals are growing quickly, at about 4% a year, thanks to modern Bible translations, modern hymns, widespread Christian radio and outreaches to university students, and religious liberty. Langham has been working with the Ethiopian churches for decades and will continue to do so, building and expanding on a strong, historic tradition.

## LANGHAM'S LOSS BUT HEAVEN'S GAIN

Bishop Timothy Dudley-Smith, an important figure in the life of Langham Partnership, died on August 12, 2024. His promotion to glory feels like the passing of an era in British Church life.

The life of the Right Rev. Timothy Dudley-Smith OBE (1926-2024) was very closely tied into the life of John Stott, and thus of Langham Partnership itself. Dudley-Smith was a strong evangelical voice in the Church of England for many decades, back as far as his university days when he studied at Ridley College, Cambridge University with John Stott. Over the years, he and Stott became close friends and collaborators. Dudley-Smith wrote an excellent two-volume biography of Stott (published by IVP). It was a great act of humility on Stott's part to give his friend full access to all his papers, and to accept Timothy's judgment on Stott's life and work – during his own lifetime.

Dudley-Smith was deeply involved in the life of Langham in its early years, and in 2011 he preached at Stott's funeral. In 2022, I was among the Langham international leadership team with whom Timothy

shared wonderful – even hilarious – memories of his years with John Stott, during our visit to Ridley College.



*Timothy Dudley-Smith with John Stott*

During the 1950s, Dudley-Smith edited *Crusade* magazine, an offshoot of Billy Graham's impactful UK campaigns. He was ordained in 1950 and served ultimately as the Bishop of Thetford (1981-1991), but will be remembered especially as a hymn-writer (for which the late Queen made him a member of the Order of the British Empire). He generously covenanted all his book and hymn royalties to Langham Partnership. Of his more than 400 hymns, the best known is *Tell Out, My Soul* – a setting of the Magnificat from Luke 2. A soaringly beautiful recording by the Choir, Congregation and Orchestra of All Souls Langham Place can be heard on YouTube by searching *Tell Out, My Soul Timothy Dudley-Smith All Souls Langham Place*.

– Steven Van Dyck, Executive Director, Langham Partnership Canada

# AN INSIDE LOOK AT LANGHAM PREACHING IN LATIN AMERICA

Wilfredo Weigandt is Langham Preaching Regional Coordinator for the Southern Cone (Argentina, Uruguay, Chile and Paraguay). He owned an architectural practice in Córdoba, Argentina's second largest city, when he attended John Stott's first Latin American vision-casting visit in 2001. Wilfredo was among the first cohort of 37 pastors trained in 2003, in the city of Villa Maria. "I could build more buildings, or I could dedicate my life to training preachers. So, I sold my company and started to train pastors," he remembers saying at the time.

Today, Preaching seminars are held in 12 cities in Argentina, with 12 facilitators throughout the country. Wilfredo's work covers an enormous geographical area, and a wide range of ministries. "This implies accompanying virtual and face-to-face seminars and workshops, forming leadership teams, training facilitators, generating contact and agreements with Pastors' Associations, Institutes, and denominations," he says. "The diversity of cultures and situations of each Movement is very challenging. One weekend I am facilitating a seminar-workshop in a modest country house, for pastors who barely know how to speak Spanish, and the next I'm in a hotel facilitating another seminar-workshop with pastors who manage the original languages of the Bible!"

This growth reflects broader trends in Argentina. In 1960 over 90% of the population was Roman Catholic. Many factors since, including harsh economic decline, military defeat in the 1982 Falklands War, and a period of brutal military dictatorship, led to massive spiritual questioning and change. By 2019, Roman Catholics were an estimated 63%, with 15% evangelicals, and 19% "nones." As of this year, reflecting evangelicals' new status, October 31 of each year (Reformation Day) has been officially declared the "National Day of Evangelicals and Protestant Churches."

Protestants spoke to the deep needs of the common people, especially the urban poor. Biblical Christianity offered not just spiritual peace, but a redeemed lifestyle, transforming believers' lives. The late Rubén Proietti, a Baptist pastor and head of the Argentinian Evangelical Alliance, said: "When you let Christ into your heart, you love your wife, you paint the house, mow the lawn, stop wasting money on gambling and bad habits. Life changes, and that's what makes the difference."

Proietti worked closely with Luis Palau, the "Billy Graham of Latin America," and John Stott, during these years of explosive growth in Latin America's Protestant movement. (Proietti's influence was apparent following his tragic passing due to Covid in 2021, with tributes from the World Evangelical Alliance, the current and former presidents of Argentina, Spain's former minister of religious affairs, politicians across Latin America, the Embassy of Israel, and Pope Francis.)

The biblical preacher's challenge is to ensure that the Bible is allowed to speak to the society and the needs of ordinary people, including deep needs rooted sometimes in Argentina's history of the occult,



Wilfredo Weigandt

while avoiding the dangers of prosperity gospel preaching. Nelly Perez, National Preaching Coordinator, says: "Manipulative preaching is a nationwide problem. There are many people who like it because it is preaching that makes you feel good but doesn't generate commitment."

Langham aims to build up Christian disciples in Latin America who love God's Word and whose lives, families, churches and societies are being transformed by it.

In 2019, after 12 years' work, a team of over 100 Latin American scholars completed the *Latin American Bible Commentary*. Gerard Jugalde is a pastor in Guacimo, a rural community in Costa Rica. He prizes his commentary: "Most pastors have not studied in a seminary so they don't preach exactly what the Bible says. Instead they preach from their experience," Gerard says.

"When we started, we lacked training and resources, so we weren't really preaching what the Bible says either. I had never really studied the Bible in a systematic way and I didn't really have books to help me. A book like this commentary, for me is a treasure. After we started using it, our people kept coming to us saying 'I had never heard the Bible that way or had it explained so clearly that I could understand it.' Thanks to Langham we have tools like these. Today, we as pastors are trying to impact our community."

Langham Literature also recently published Wilfredo's book *Preaching and News*, a collection of sermons which was selected by Letra Viva, a network of Latin American book publishers, as the best Latin American book of 2022. Wilfredo's desire is that these sermons will help build the preaching culture of Argentina, and Latin America, but that they will also edify the many millions of believers throughout the region seeking enriching, biblically solid teaching. For a quarter-century, Langham has been working to make this happen.

## NEW WEBSITE PROVIDES CHRIS WRIGHT RESOURCES

A new digital hub dedicated to the remarkable life and work of Dr Christopher J.H. Wright, Global Ambassador of Langham Partnership, is now online. Friends, supporters, and followers of both Chris and Langham now have an accessible and dynamic platform at [www.ChristopherJHWright.com](http://www.ChristopherJHWright.com) to explore Chris's extensive contributions as a theologian, author, and speaker.

"Books are like students, they're the fruit of one's labour," said Chris, at a launch event for the website, designed to share the fruits of his labour with an even wider audience.

On the site visitors can delve into Chris's books, including *The Mission of God*, his many Old Testament commentaries, and other publications now translated into several languages. These works are not just academic contributions; they are tools for equipping Christians to engage with the Bible and apply its truths in their daily lives. The site also features links to sermons, podcasts and other resources to help individual believers and the Church as a whole.

## LANGHAM CANADA EXPANDING ITS PRESENCE ONLINE AND IN PERSON

Come find us on Instagram. Langham Canada is now on the popular social media site, as well as our Facebook page. Our website always features up to date stories on Langham's work around the world. Our Canadian director, Steven Van Dyck, will be visiting Vancouver in November with Riad Kassis, Langham's International Director. They will be visiting Regent College, Columbia Bible College Abbotsford, and several Vancouver churches. **Would you like a Langham speaker to visit your church?** Contact us at [canada@langham.org](mailto:canada@langham.org) and let's work together to expand Langham's presence in Canada, to help build the Church around the world.

## WHY I SUPPORT LANGHAM PARTNERSHIP



*"As someone who has witnessed the struggles of pastors without access to theological training and resources, I know how painful it is for them to feel unheard and unsupported. By supporting Langham, I'm helping answer their prayers and empowering them to serve Christ more effectively. It's a way to reach beyond what I can see, to go where I can't be, and to empower pastors worldwide for Christ's church."*

– Manasseh Muvandimwe is a member of the pastoral team at Metropolitan Bible Church, Ottawa, has led many seminars to train pastors in his native Rwanda, and joins the Langham Canada board this year.

## YOU CAN BE PART OF LANGHAM'S MISSION!



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