

Week 5: Pray for Tekleab Menghisteab (Eritrea)



Rev Dr Tekleab Menghisteab (57) is an Eritrean Orthodox priest and physician who was arrested in November 2004 because of his leadership in the Medhane Alem ("Saviour of the World") Bible study group, a renewal movement within the Eritrean Orthodox Church. He has been held incommunicado ever since and has never been tried.

Dr Tekleab grew up in a large family in Asmara, the capital, and from his early teens he was devoted to serving God and studying and teaching the Bible. He studied medicine in Ethiopia and returned home to work as a doctor.

He was also ordained as a priest in the Eritrean Orthodox Church and was well known for his Christian writing, including a five-hundred-page commentary on the New Testament, published in 1999 – the first ever in the Tigrinya language. Along with his friends Rev Dr Futsum Gebrenegus and Rev Gebremedhin Gebregioris, Dr Tekleab organised the Medhane Alem movement until security forces arrested them and outlawed their ministry. Patriarch Antonios protested about their arrests and accused the government of interfering in church affairs, and in 2006 he was deposed by the government and put under house arrest.

Dr Tekleab and his two friends are imprisoned in the maximum-security Wengel Mermera Central Criminal Investigation interrogation centre in Asmara, a labyrinth of dungeon-like cells where they are held in an unlit room with Christian leaders Dr Kiflu Gebremeskel, Kidane Weldou, Mussie Ezaz and Meron Gebreselasie. It is believed that many prominent political and military prisoners are in the same prison.

Dr Tekleab is an insulin-dependent diabetic and has reportedly suffered from hypertension. He has occasionally been seen on hospital visits over the years – once when his friend Helen Berhane, the imprisoned Eritrean gospel singer, was taken to hospital she was heartbroken to see him being abused. She had been encouraged in her faith through his ministry.

Family

Dr Tekleab's wife Wubie Kahsay and their daughters Hana, Sesayit and Rediet have left Eritrea for security. They have not seen or spoken to him for 16 years. When he was arrested, Hana was six, Sesayit was four and Regiet was one.

Latest News

While there has been no direct contact with Dr Tekleab during his imprisonment, it is believed that he is receiving regular insulin to inject.

Prayer Diary

- Sunday** Ask God to strengthen and encourage Dr Tekleab.
- Monday** Ask God to sustain his wife, Wubie, and give her hope
- Tuesday** Ask God to bless and encourage Hana, Sesayit and Regiet.
- Wednesday** Pray for the six Christians imprisoned with Dr Tekleab.
- Thursday** Pray for Dr Tekleab and his friends to be released.
- Friday** Pray for Dr Tekleab's witness to other prisoners and guards.
- Saturday** Pray for an end to persecution of Christians in Eritrea.

