



Dr. and Mrs. K. Hogganvik in front of their home at Debre Tabor Mission.

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## Hogganvik, Kristian (1911–1994)

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Kristian Hogganvik was a Norwegian Adventist pioneer medical doctor and missionary in Ethiopia.

### Early Life

Kristian Hogganvik was born January 5, 1911, in Mandal, a small town in the southern part of Norway. He was the second among ten children, five girls and five boys. His father was a shoemaker. The family accepted Adventism when Kristian was about five years old.<sup>1</sup>

After he finished twelfth grade, Kristian received financial support from the Adventist headquarters in Oslo to study medicine and become a missionary. During his six years of medical studies, Kristian exercised his passion for practical work and helping others. He picked up many broken bicycles from the garbage collection and took parts from one to repair another. He gave about 30 bicycles to young people. Kristian Hogganvik started a Boy Scout group and they traveled by bicycle to Sweden, Finland, and Denmark. He also made musical instruments like guitars, balalaikas, and violins. He could not play any musical instrument himself, but he gave instruments to talented young people and paid for music lessons for them.

## His Missionary Work

When he was through with his medical studies, he was sent to northern Norway by the Adventist Church. Northern Norway was a very different place from his home, with cold winters and snow. During his stay in Norway, Hitler invaded Norway, and Hogganvik was forced to leave. He went back to northern Norway after the war and began work in Drammen Hospital to learn to become a surgeon. When he received a call to replace a sick doctor in Debre Tabor, Ethiopia, he willingly left his home in Norway with his wife and two daughters in 1949. Debre Tabor is in northern Ethiopia, about 667 kilometers from the capital city, Addis Ababa.

In the beginning, Hogganvik did not have many patients who dared to come to the hospital in Debre Tabor. There was a lot of prejudice and fear that people would not be able to enter into heaven if they died in an Adventist hospital. One day a young man came to the hospital with Ileus, a blockage of the intestines. The family asked if Hogganvik would promise to heal him if he was operated on. He could only promise to do his best, so the family would not allow him to operate. After two days, the patient was so sick he started vomiting faeces. He felt like he was going to die, so he asked the doctor to do something, even an operation, if necessary. Dr. Hogganvik prayed to God and operated on the man. By God's grace, the surgical intervention was successful, and the man returned home. After this successful operation, rumors went around that if there was any problem with the stomach, people should just go to Dr. Hogganvik, and he had many patients after that.

Kristian was not only a physician, but he also worked as an electrician, plumber, carpenter, builder, and mechanic. Many times, he would lie under a car he was repairing, and his hands would be covered with black oil. The nurse would come from the hospital and tell him patients were ready for operations. He would scrub his hands and operate on a large goiter or a patient who was having a difficult delivery. Rumors went around that he had x-ray abilities in his hands because he could tell them what was wrong after feeling with his hands on the stomach for, example.

## Community Work

Kristian loved the people of Ethiopia and wanted to do everything he could to help in every possible way. He liked to stay in Debre Tabor where he could do much necessary medical as well as mechanical work. He helped people in town to repair their sewing machines, mill grinding motors, cars, and different mechanical devices. With the help of Debre Tabor prisoners, he made 11 ditches on the airfield so that Ethiopian Airlines with their DC3 airplanes could also land in the rainy season. He helped many poor students to get an education. He bought many oxen for farmers. He liked to help people learn to help themselves.

After he served 26 years at Debre Tabor, one Thursday morning, on September 17, 1975, about 300 robbers came and looted and destroyed the hospital. The robbers burned Hoggavik's house and threatening to kill him and his wife. Dr. Kristian Hogganvik and his wife escaped to their merchant friend, Kibret, who opened his home to them. The next day the Adventist mission plane came and took them to Addis Ababa. After this sad experience, one could imagine that Dr. Kristian Hogganvik would like to go back to his peaceful country of Norway. But he was not like that. He moved to Gimbi Hospital in Wollega, western Ethiopia, and worked there for six more years until he retired at 71 years of age. He continued serving God after he retired until he died in February 1994 at the age of 83.

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### SOURCES

Frame, R. R. "When He is Away, the Sun Never Shines." *ARH*, June 27, 1968.

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### NOTES

1. This article is based on the author's interviews conducted with Kristian Hogganvik's children in Debre Tabor, Ethiopia: Arvid Hogganvik (son), June 20, 2019; Kristel Hogganvik (daughter), October 27, 2019; Voesslemoy Hogganvik (daughter), June 20, 2019. See also, R. R. Frame, "When He is Away, the Sun Never Shines," *ARH*, June 27, 1968, 2-3.

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