

## Update from the Stellas: Forming New Relationships

Upon leaving the Gambella airport, we were greeted by baboons and bumpy roads as we made our way up the long and winding road to Dembi Dollo. However this initial welcome was nothing compared to the wonderful reception we received from the entire church community in Dembi Dollo.

Amanuel, Brenda's principal at the Bethel Evangelical Secondary School – BESS, was our gracious host during our six day visit. He and his staff introduced us to the school, along with the Gidada Theological College, the two local Mekane Yesus Churches and the town. Here Brenda learned she will teach English to the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> graders this fall, saw her classrooms and even received her textbooks so she can begin planning for the school year. In chapel on Monday, Brenda introduced herself (using Afaan Oromo language) to students; she made a few mistakes (she accidentally introduced Steve as her wife—everybody laughed), but overall the students and the faculty were excited at the prospect of having a native English speaker join the staff.

On Saturday, we spent an afternoon at the Gidada Theological College. Gizawu (Steve's dean) gave us a tour of the campus, which included a well-stocked library with books from Princeton Seminary, Steve's alma mater. Steve will teach a three courses in the fall semester: Introduction to the Old Testament, Genesis, and the Psalms to Diploma 1, 2, and 3 students.



On both Good Friday and Easter Sunday, we worshiped in the brand new Dhanqa (pronounced danka) Church. This congregation traces its roots to Dr. Thomas Lambie, the first Presbyterian and American missionary to Ethiopia. The Good Friday service included the reception of their confirmation class, a group of 60 teenagers. On Easter, Steve introduced us (in the Oromo language) to the congregation. After both services, the pastors and elders of the church welcomed us and invited us to join them for tea. What a blessing! We met the church community and many of its leaders.

The evening before our departure, Kes Chali (the President of the Synod) hosted us for an afternoon and dinner on the Synod compound. There we met with Synod leaders and learned of their evangelistic outreach plan to further share the gospel of Jesus with unbelievers. They are excited to once again have Presbyterian missionaries teaching at BESS and Gidada and consider our arrival this fall as an answer to their prayers. Brenda met two pastors' wives who were starting a work project of making and selling soap to empower and help women in poverty.

## WE LIVE IN AFRICA MOMENT!

Throughout these first few months, we have found there are times that suddenly it just strikes us that we now live in Africa. We, just like everybody else, usually just go about our normal work and day to day activities. But then we see or experience something different, and we look at each other and say, usually with awe and amazement “We Live in Africa!”

We have decided we want to share a few of these with you, our dear friends and supporters.

For the weekend, we stayed in the house where we will be living for the next three years. On the first morning we woke up to discover the mango trees in our front yard were full of monkeys. There had to have been 10 or more of them, climbing all over, swinging from branch to branch, grabbing mangoes and throwing them at each other and on the ground. Brenda said to Steve, “It’s like living in a zoo!” And we looked at each other, and jointly exclaimed in amazement, “We live in Africa!”



### PRAYER REQUESTS:

1. Please keep the students at (BESS) and the Gidada Theological College in your prayers as they finish this school year.

2. Also please continue your prayers for us as we continue our study of the Oromo language and as we begin preparing our course lessons for the fall.

Once again, we thank you for your prayer and financial support of our ministry in Ethiopia. If you would like to contribute financially to our support, gifts can be sent to the Presbyterian Church USA. Be sure to include our account number D507574 for congregations or number E200507 for individuals. We are excited that in a few months we will begin sharing our knowledge of English and Scripture with our students. We praise God for our partnership with you in God’s work in Ethiopia.

In Christ’s service,

Rev. Steve & Brenda Stelle

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