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Dear Friends in Christ:

As always we want to thank you for your interest in God's mission to Ethiopia, and your partnership with us as Presbyterian mission co-workers as we work with the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus.

There are times when we travel the streets of Addis Ababa in our neighborhood, and it's easy for us to believe we are simply walking through a large U.S. city. But then a herd of goats crosses the street or the stench of garbage hits our noses, or a beggar asks for a handout or a steer nearly runs us over on the sidewalk and we realize that we really are living in Africa.

Already, much has happened in our first two weeks since arriving in the country.



We are slowly adjusting to a different lifestyle here and have settled into our apartment which is very close to our language school. A week ago we began the study of the Oromo language, the language spoken in Dembi Dolo. Because we are the only two students in our course, (the other forty students are learning Amharic – the national language which is spoken here in Addis), we are moving at a rapid pace learning about 50 to 75 new words each day.

This past weekend was very exciting. On Saturday evening we watched the Ethiopian Orthodox church celebrate “Timkett” or the Baptism of Jesus. The police closed the main street in our neighborhood, as about ten thousand Orthodox Christians gathered to watch their priests lead a representation of the Ark of the Covenant through our community and then down to the

river. There was singing, dancing and flag waving; many people camped out all night by the



river.

On Sunday morning, hundreds of people were baptized in the river. Also on Sunday, Steve preached at the International Lutheran Church.

But most importantly, on Sunday afternoon we met and ate lunch with our partners from Dembi Dolo. Kes Chali and Amanuel traveled to Addis to meet with us and welcome us to their country. They shared how excited they are to have us come to serve in Dembi Dolo this fall. Amanuel is the principal at the Bethel Evangelical Secondary School (BESS) where Brenda will teach English. Kes Chali is the president of the Synod and oversees BESS, the Gidada Bible School (where Steve will train pastors) and the 340 churches in his synod. We had a pleasant time meeting our new “bosses” who were very warm and gracious towards both of us. They invited us to visit Dembi Dolo at Easter, during our break from language school. We look forward to seeing the community and schools where we will serve for the next three years.

We ask that you keep us in your prayers as we learn the Oromo language over the next five months and continue to adjust to life away from family and friends.

In Christ’s service,

Steve & Brenda Stelle