

UPDATE FROM THE STELLE'S

A Surprising September

On Monday, September 1st, we began the move to Dembi Dolo. We loaded up an Isuzu truck with all our things (much that was given to us) and by 9 AM the Addis apartment was completely empty. Our things were on their way. We flew out of Addis early Tuesday morning, arrived in Gambella by 8:30AM. We were on our way up the mountain in a synod vehicle by 9 AM. Very Nice! Very Simple! Just as Planned!



On the outskirts of Gambella, we were surprised to see a man standing in the middle of the road, waving us down. It was obvious his arm was broken, hanging limply, and was giving him great pain. To the right of the man we saw the Isuzu truck which had slid off the muddy road and had crashed into a large tree.

Kana (as we learned later) had been a passenger in the Isuzu truck. He begged us for a ride to the hospital in Dembi Dollo. Our truck was full of people (the two of us, the driver, the driver's mother, the driver's brother and the driver's friend) but we somehow managed to get him into the vehicle. He was in so much pain, moaning and groaning and we still had a 3 hour drive up the mountain. Brenda found some Tylenol in her bag and gave it to him to try to ease his suffering and tried to make him comfortable using some of our clothes for a pillow. (Brenda's dad had wanted her to either become a teacher or a nurse; perhaps in Africa she will be both.)

When we had almost reached the mountain plateau, we came upon another Isuzu truck stuck in the middle of the road. We sat and waited for a few minutes as about thirty men pushed and pulled the truck. They managed to move it to one side of the road and Yonas, our driver, was able to make his way through the mud and past the Isuzu. We were back on our way.

The rain started shortly after that, but after all it is the rainy season. We could not expect an entire morning of sunshine. And Yonas is an experienced driver in the rain. So on we went. About ten miles outside of Dembi Dollo, we hear a pop and hissing sound. Flat tire! No problem there's a spare in the back. Steve and Yonas gently move Kana to get out the jack and tire. Spare tire---has no air! What to do? Or as they say in Afaan Oromo: maal gocha wayyee?

Fortunately, about 15 minutes later, another truck came along. They stopped to help us, and when they heard of our situation, they loaned us their spare tire. When we arrived in Dembi Dolo, we would just return it to them. In return, we gave them Kana to take on to the hospital. Soon after, with the loaned spare tire in place, we arrived in town, before the Isuzu truck carrying our things. We dropped off most of our extra passengers and Yonas navigated the very wet, muddy hill up to the BESS compound where lunch was waiting for us.



All this adventure----before Lunch!

Within an hour we received a phone call saying our Isuzu truck was safely in town. However, the driver took one look at the hill out of town to the BESS compound and said, “No Way!” He did not want to end up exactly like the Isuzu truck we had seen earlier crashed into a tree. So he parked the truck at the Bethel Synod compound while they figured out what to do. Steve and Brenda began praying the roads would soon dry out.

Thankfully the next day the driver decided to risk the road (BESS had their big tractor ready if he needed pulled out) and our furnishings had arrived. Amen!

During this month, the hard workers at BESS (Solomon, Gezahu and Jalata) have been making some repairs to our home. The shower drain was plugged, so the men dug out the pipe and laid in a new drainages system. They put a new lock on the back door and are now trying to fix our electricity so Brenda can use the oven. Steve then dug a fire pit for burning and garden.



Soon after our arrival Brenda discovered the school’s starting date has been delayed three weeks, so she will not begin teaching until Oct. 6, (she hopes). The government decided to conduct teacher meetings for two weeks, followed by a week of meetings for high school students. The delay has been very frustrating for Brenda; she is ready to begin teaching English to the eleventh and twelfth grade students here at BESS. She did help proctor and grade the English and Math Entrance Exams for the ninth and tenth grade students wishing to attend BESS this year. Over 230 students applied for the 120 available slots at the school. After the list of students who were accepted into BESS was posted, Amanual (Brenda’s principal) was inundated by parents of students who were not accepted. They came begging him to find a spot for their child. BESS’s reputation for a quality education is so strong in the community.

Steve was surprised to learn that the Gidada Theological College has a new director. Kes Gizawu who Steve met at Easter is continuing his education in Addis Ababa. Kes Mesfin Yigezu is now the new director. Steve began teaching on Sept. 24th. He is teaching his three classes on Mondays and Wednesdays so he only has to make the 3 kilometer (1.8 miles) trip to Gidada twice a week. Because of the steep slope and muddy terrain of the path between BESS and Gidada, the Bethel Synod has arranged a car to take Steve back and forth to school (at least until the end of the rainy season).

WE LIVE IN AFRICA MOMENT!

During our first week, while the men workers were moving the stove into the kitchen to rewire the socket, Steve severely cut two fingers, resulting in a trip to the local clinic. The clinic just a small, dark dirty, cement room with extremely poor lighting. There was no brightly lit, sterile environment--no doctor with latex gloves—just a very skilled nurse who cut and made a butterfly bandage by hand to put on his wounds. Fortunately, stiches were not needed, but Steve realized we live in Africa. This is what is available to our village; this is how it's done. He is healing well, but he has decided to be more careful. Oh, by the way—cost for the clinic visit, bandage, nurse and everything—30 birr (\$1.50)

PRAYER REQUEST: Please remember our students both at BESS and Gidada as the new school year begins, and please remember us as we begin our new school year and adjust to life here in Dembi Dollo.

As always, we thank you for your financial support of our ministry in Ethiopia. If you would like to contribute to our support, gifts can be sent to the Presbyterian Church USA. Be sure to include our account # D507574 for congregations or # E200507 for individuals. We are excited that the time has finally arrived for us to begin our teaching responsibilities. And we praise God for your partnership with us in doing God's work in Dembi Dollo.

In Christ's service,
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