

Maji Report and Prayer Requests
February, 2007

The compound in Maji was returned to South West Bethel Synod of the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus, from the government, in 2006 – Praise God. Phase I – remodeling, started when two truck loads of materials and the contractor were dispatched. Persistent rain prevented the trucks from making it down the hill to the compound. This together with other reports of delays and problems reported by Petros Tsanos, President of SWBS, I heard myself say to him, “Petros, I believe we need to have a cleansing, a deliverance for the Maji property. We need to claim it for God’s work and in Jesus Name, cast out all negative influences.” He and other SWBS staff agreed.

In the meantime Gwen Haspels invited me to teach HIV prevention to the women in Tulegit at the Suri Project again this year. How to get there? Then, remembering that Trinity UPC of Santa Ana, CA engineer team was visiting in February, we both came on the idea that I could travel with them. Then Gwen mused, “I wish you could repeat this program in Maji. Trinity Team intends to go there to take water measurements – you could travel there with them also.” So plans were laid, dates set and SWBS Development Office mobilized resources to invite and feed up to 50 people.

On February 16, 2007 John Haspels drove the Trinity Team, my translator Gash Kebed (nurse from Gwen Haspels clinic), SIL translator Haile Mariam (who would translate into Deze) and 3 women from Tum and Dorothy Hanson to Maji. Once I got my directions, I raised my hands to the heavens, calling on Jesus name, first to the East, then to the South, then facing the West and finally the North. We had arrived to do God’s work and I wanted to claim His presence on this choice piece of real estate in remote southwest Ethiopia. The contractor proudly showed us the completed work on the Kurtz and Templin houses. Which one would we like to stay in? We chose the smaller, cozier Templin house which we shared with Tadessa, the contractor. Everyone warned me that I would be cold – I was prepared for overnight, but found it no colder than my bedroom at BSCO here in Addis Ababa.

February 17 we awoke to rain. *Ah, God is washing the compound.* Trudging up the hill to the church, in the rain, we started our program with worship and introductions. The brisk wind blew outside. *Oh, the Holy Spirit is blowing around us.* We were without the Development Team from SWBS. Later we learned of their vehicle breakdown the day before. Three officials and a cook (the contractor’s wife) arrived in time to join us – the 36 participants, two translators and myself – when, instead of tea break, we walked back down to the compound to claim it for Jesus work. Together we circled the inside perimeter (now fenced with new barbed wire) singing (in Deze), then praying at the entrance. By this time the sun was shining brightly. *Yes, God is smiling on us!*

This two-day HIV Prevention workshop was very different from the one held in Tulegit with the Suri earlier in the week. Maji participants wanted to know what to say to someone who is HIV+. They claimed there are two kinds of people – those who fear God and those who sin and contract the virus. They know people who are infected and are

acquainted with what AIDS looks like as it takes lives away. Testing is available in Tum and Maji, but for medicines one must travel to Aman, Jimma or Addis Ababa. (In Tulegit, however, the virus has not entered, praise God.) Scripture made up the greatest portion of the teaching. I was so grateful for Haile Mariam, who, once given a list of scriptures, could read in Amharic, then translate into Deze. God was present as we learned together!

And so the work in Maji has been launched at SWBS EECMY Multi Purpose Training Center. I am encouraging everyone to find a meaningful Deze name for the center. And this leads me to ask you to pray for:

1. SWBS administration clear vision and plan for the center.
2. Evangelist for the Maji Parish (Qes Keneto, a Kafa, came, assigned from Mizan Teferi but was rejected by the congregation)
3. Reconciliation between the four families who run the Maji congregation (<50 members participating, out of 200).
4. Safe and smooth completion of Phase I.

Together our prayers are a covenant – an agreement and Jesus said He will honor the gathering of even 2 or 3, after a covenant together, prayer requests. I acknowledge that I am a novice – those receiving this communication can add wisdom as we go. God has blessed me in allowing me to return to the property that Fred Russell, my father, Charles Haspels and Bill DenDulk surveyed for the United Presbyterian Church in what year? (My mother's Diary accounts events or regular life there, with Nessie Pollock as nurse, in 1952 and 53.)

Prayerfully,
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