

July 2004

What Washington Presbytery Is Doing!

Women's Sewing Project

Presbyterian Women eight years ago helped to launch the Women's Sewing Project in partnership with the women's program of South West Bethel Synod. At that time, the Presbyterian Women raised funds to buy three treadle sewing machines. Ethiopian women were trained to use the machines to make good quality clothing to sell locally to raise funds for women's programs. The project was a huge success. Today the women of South West Bethel Synod operate out of a storefront. Their sales of suits and other clothing fund an expanding effort to train and educate women.

In April 2004, the women sent eight traditional Ethiopian dresses for our Presbyterian Women to auction at their Spring Gathering. The funds raised are being sent back to support the Sewing Project. (The photos show two of the dresses being modeled here, and the same dresses as they were being created in Ethiopia.)

Vacation Bible School Supports Spring Project

Some of our Vacation Bible Schools have started to use Ethiopia as their mission focus. Three of them succeeded in each raising \$500 to protect a spring for a community through South West Bethel Synod's water program. This was pretty exciting stuff for us. (See photo.)

Charles Haspels Bible School

The Rev. John Salley of Washington Presbytery will be spending two months in early 2005 teaching at the Charles Haspels Bible School, the main training facility of South West Bethel Synod. His congregation is busy raising the funds to send him and to allow his wife and two children to accompany him for part of the time. Each year the School graduates about 25 evangelists through a one-year certificate program. The School also carries on a vital training program for laymen. In previous years, Anne and John Wheeler-Waddell taught at the school; they may teach alongside John Salley if their duties permit. (The photo shows Anne and John with the graduating class of 2002.)

South West Bethel Synod's Literacy Project

Our biggest project is trying to fund one year of South West Bethel Synod's Literacy Project. We hope to do this by raising an acre of pumpkins and selling them for \$15,000. To succeed, many of the 65 churches of the presbytery have to take part in the project. So far, the response has been great. For each 300 pumpkins we sell, a school can be started to teach reading and writing in the Amharic language in a remote part of the region served by South West Bethel Synod. In these remote communities, not a single individual can read or write. The Literacy Project is an evangelism project at heart, for literacy is essential in sharing the Scripture. The project aims to start schools in nine regions, hoping to train 1,470 men, women, girls and boys to read and write.

The photos show our planting day, May 29th, when fifty people from eight congregations came to plant the acre. The Future Farmers of America have put an experimental anti-deer fence around the acre. Harvest day will be October 2nd.

This project was inspired by similar projects done by Presbyterian Disaster Relief, explained to us at our Ethiopia Mission Network conference in March 2003.

Visitor Exchange

We hope to have three visitors from South West Bethel Synod here in Washington Presbytery in September. They are in the midst of the process of applying for their visas. We shall have to wait and see if any are approved.