



# Mekane Yesus (“Place of Jesus”) University Under-formation Project Newsletter (MY-UUFPN)

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August/September 2018 Newsletter

## Does God Still Amazes You?

As we conclude our summer activities in building new and strengthening existing partnerships we **praise the Lord for opening many doors and blessing the efforts!** Thus, in reflecting on the Lord’s guidance and blessings during our summer work, as I prayed for the right title, the Lord used our pastor the Rev. Jason Hong! During his sermon on



Sunday  
September  
9, 2018  
from Mark  
7:31-37, he  
asked;  
“Does God  
Still  
Amazes

You?” ... “Do we find ourselves amazed by our God?” .... “How often do we speak about amazing things that Jesus has done for us?” ... and my answer is **YES!**

The story below is one of the **amazing things the Lord has done in my life through this ministry!** He continues to amaze me! As you read this newsletter, all the glory and honor go to **our Heavenly Father!** Happy Reading ☺

## The opening of an amazing chapter!

---In the mid 1970’s while attending the Ethiopian Evangelical College (EEC) in Debre Zeit (current location of the Bishoftu campus project), as a 9<sup>th</sup> grader, I wished that someday I will be a missionary like my teachers. I was blessed to have excellent missionary teachers from; Ethiopia, Germany, India, Norway, Sweden and the United States of America who facilitated a Christ centered learning environment!

However, due to the political unrest in Ethiopia, EEC closed in 1977. Shortly after that in 1980, I left Ethiopia after the end of the terrible **Red Terror years.** Due to the bad experiences and memories, although I prayed for my

family, **I had closed the chapter about ever going back to Ethiopia.**

In 2013, 33 years since I first left Ethiopia, the Lord began working in my heart by reminding me of my childhood wish to be a missionary. Although I did not know, when, where and how this missionary wish will materialize, I started praying for the Lord’s will in pursuing ministry work. It is during this time that I learned forgiveness and being healed of bad memories from the Red Terror time were vital, before I can be fully functional, to do the Lord’s work anywhere in the world!

Through many prayers of Christian brothers and sisters, eventually I was able to forgive and transition to ministry work in serving the Lord utilizing my experience in education by loving, caring, mentoring and teaching His children in Ethiopia through the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus (EECMY)!

In reflecting on how the Lord has blessed this ministry for the last two years, I have many stories to tell for years to come! However, for this month I have a very special story that I would like to share with you that began with the



picture below.

This picture was taken in the 1950’s. The Swedish boy in the middle, Stefan, lived in Bishoftu and had returned to Sweden, in 1958, when he was about 8 years old.

At the time this picture was taken, , both men were in the Imperial Ethiopian Air Force (IEAF) where the man on the left was a pilot and the man on the right was a flight engineer. From what we know so far, Stefan’s father was a flight engineer

instructor and the man on the left was trained by Stefan’s father.

On November 10, 2017, a Swedish couple, Pia and Bjorn came to the Bishoftu campus to see the progress and to inquire about one of our programs. During this conversation we learned that our fathers have played key role in the early years of the IEAF and the development of the city of Bishoftu. In addition, Pia and Bjorn have been coming with their Swedish childhood friends who lived in Bishoftu, to support the elementary school they attended.

Thus, we agreed to meet again so that the other Swedish friends could join us to hear about the progress on the Bishoftu campus, to learn about each other’s family background and our current work! As planned we met on campus and since we were only 5, instead of using a projector, we sat around a table as I presented the progress of the campus.

Towards the end of my presentation, Stefan pulled, the previously showed picture, on his iPad and asked me if I knew the man on the right and if I could help him reestablish connection with him and his family.

I looked at the picture, surprised and stunned, said “why do you have this picture? He is my



father”! Since this was unexpected, we were all shocked, stopped talking and did not know what to say to each other. Because the man he had wished to see alive for many years was killed by the Derge Regime, the family to this day does not know his where about nor how his life ended ☹

However, knowing that God is in control, we encouraged each to focus on the positive aspects, about the father’s friendship, life as colleagues,

contribution to the formation of Bishoftu and IEAF! Then, I pulled the picture I had, my father with his Swedish friend.



We were all surprised again as the picture I had was, Stefan's father in

the middle with my father and the pilot as in Stefan's in the picture! This time we laughed and concluded that our coming together is more than just a coincidence!



Then, as we began waking on campus

recoiling our childhood experiences in Debre Zeit (Bishoftu), I said, "wow the fathers have passed away and the children are now by themselves." Then Bjorn said, "but the children are grown, and they are responsible"! As we ended our day it was clear that the work which began by our earthly fathers now will somehow continue through us! **Hence, the chapter that was closed, in 1958 for Stefan, and in 1980 for me, is now open because of this picture!**

Following this amazing connection, during the month of August, there was an opportunity to share the progress of the Bishoftu campus at an event



organized by the Rev. Eric Johansson, International Mission Director, Swedish Evangelical Mission and former

building Engineer with EECMY Mr. KarlErik Lundgren in Uppsala, Sweden! This also gave us the opportunity to

meet with the former EECMY General Secretary (1963-1966) who was a student at EEC, well know historian and author the Rev. Dr. Ezra Geberemedhin!

Attendees included, former Ethiopian Evangelical College (EEC) students, former missionaries to Ethiopia, children of IEAF, children of former missionaries



and children of the first principal of the former EEC 1955 – 1958,

Mr. Sven Rubenson! There were approximately 50 people in attendance. An amazing gathering filled with emotions of love about mission work in Ethiopia! This was the beginning of a new chapter for this ministry in connecting with former Swedish missionaries and children of missionaries who had direct connection to the formation of the current Bishoftu campus project (former EEC campus) **dating back to the inauguration of EEC in 1957 by the Emperor Haile Selassie!**

In addition, since we have never been to Sweden, the IEAF Bishoftu children Swedish brothers and sisters were attending to our needs so that we will have productive time in sharing about the ministry in Sweden! **Through our Lord's amazing work, this ministry has now established relationship with brothers and sisters in Sweden!** More development of this story to follow!

Thus, as it was shared at our Concordia Mission Institute in July about the call of Abraham (Genesis 12:1-4), because he obeyed; he was blessed, he became a blessing to others and **the Lord's agenda was fulfilled!** Thank you for your continued prayers and support of this project and for the people of Ethiopia!



**The Second Annual Fall Mission Festival Day at Prince of Peace Lutheran Church (POPLC) ...** is set for November 3, 2018! The theme for this year is "Being Kingdom Minded"! it was a privilege to meet and share my



testimony and missionary work in Ethiopia! Activities will include; food from different countries where POP has missionaries, children games and more! We praise the Lord for POPLC for their intentionally focused effort to increase awareness of mission work throughout the world! Your prayers for the success of this event is greatly appreciated!

**The Lutheran Women Missionary League/Gracious Ladies (LWML/GL)** of Grace Lutheran Church in Banning was reactivated on Saturday September 1, 2018! It was a privilege to share about my missionary journey. The LWML/GL is reevaluating what was done in the past and looking forward to what is next both locally and internationally!

**Please pray for -**

- > Safe travels back to Ethiopia
- > Accreditation Process for the Bishoftu campus
- > Reliable vehicle transportation between Addis Ababa and Bishoftu
- > Begging of new academic year activities

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