

The Haasnoots in Mettu

Prayer letter - November 1998

In case you doubted: we are still in Ethiopia! It not only *seems* ages ago that you heard from us, it *has been* a very long time! For one reason or another we have problems getting an English prayer letter out (we do better on the Dutch version though). Anyway, the good news is that we have lots to tell you about! We will bring you up to date from A to Z!

Addis Ababa

We lived in Addis Ababa until March 1998. The big event of 1997 was the arrival of Desta, our joy! After Desta's birth (and some weeks of rest of course), Mirjam continued learning Amharic with a private tutor at home, while Jaap was in language school. In December 1997 we (formally!) finished our Amharic studies and were looking forward to the next stage: moving to Mettu, a town close to the Shekicho area. Also in December we bought a duty free second hand car. Well, that is to say, we bought it at that time from the first owner. After that, the paperwork process of paying the duty on the car started. It took until the end of February, 1998, before we finally could drive the car ourselves.

Belachau

This is the name of the language helper we worked with. He is an evangelist in the church in Masha. We enjoyed working with him, but unfortunately his church wanted him back in Masha to work there. We are now looking for another language helper who can work with us in Mettu.

Castle

Jesse (4 years old) went to Kindergarten at Bingham Academy for 2 weeks at the end of August. He was so proud to go to school with his big brother! Jesse's pronunciation of English still has a more British accent (not like Joel who sounds like *The Voice of America*). The words that Jesse learned at Bingham though, have a real American accent. An example is the word 'castle' that Jesse pronounces as: káááássel.

Desta

Desta (1 year old) is very busy walking and talking these days. We had a big party in Mettu for his first birthday. The only word he really knows to connect to an object is *boti*. If he hears this word, he starts to look for his boots! And he is right: Isn't

this the only word you really need to know during the rainy season?!

Enset

Something you will immediately see when traveling through the Shekicho area is the Enset or 'false banana' plant. The Shekichos know how to make use of this plant which is found around most of the small houses in the countryside. No meal is served without 'qocho', a product of the Enset plant which is like bread. The big leaves of this plant are used in many ways. A few examples: a container to store food in, a temporary sofa, a door mat, or a cup to drink coffee from.

Finns

If we look at the numbers of forengies (i.e. non-Ethiopians) here at the Mekane Yesus synod compound in Mettu, the Finns are number one. We are good friends with a Finnish family with three children. The children play together a lot and their common language is... Amharic.

Guesthouse

At the moment we live in the synod guesthouse in Mettu. Although we only have two large rooms, we enjoy living there. The synod compound is very big and our boys have lots of space in which to play and make themselves dirty.

House

We do not have a house in Masha yet but things are slowly moving forward! Stones and sand have been collected so that construction can start when the rains have stopped (hopefully this month). We will keep you informed.

'Ikko noone'

This is the title of a Shekicho song and it means: we are one. When I (Jaap) made a trip into the Shekicho area (see under: Trip), I experienced a wonderful feeling of unity in Christ. While sitting on a log in a small, dark Shekicho church, I felt very

strongly that these people were my brothers and sisters. Although we come from totally different backgrounds, our faith in Christ makes us one!

Joel

Joel (9 years old) has one big hobby and that is **READING**. It is so bad that we had to limit his reading because the 30 books from Bingham Library have to last for at least two months! When Joel becomes really desperate, he starts reading a cook book or his father's computer magazine.

Known

Jussi, a Finnish boy in Mettu, is well known in town. But if we walk with Joel in Mettu, all the children are calling Joel 'Jussi'. Joel is also a white boy with blond hair, so they think his name must be 'Jussi'!

Languages

Did you know that Ethiopia has 86 different languages between its borders? At the moment SIL is working in almost 20 Ethiopian languages.

Mettu

Mettu is a town about 600 kilometers from Addis Ababa in southwest of Ethiopia. It takes 12 hours to drive by car from Addis to Mettu. Most people in Mettu are bilingual: they speak Amharic and Oromo.

Netherlands

At the end of February we hope to go to the Netherlands on furlough for two and a half months. Jesse has great expectations: "In Ethiopia people eat injerra every day but in the Netherlands they have French fries every day, don't they?"

Ochikoch'

The Shekicho word our boys like most is: ochikoch' (for linguists: ሀወተርዕክወተርዕኔ). The meaning is simply: the day before yesterday.

Praise & Prayer

Praise: that we are healthy; that Jaap could make a trip to the Shekicho area which was very encouraging.

Pray: for a new full-time language helper; that the house building in Masha will start soon.

Quote

We heard this reminder during our yearly SIL retreat: "Never doubt in the dark what God has revealed in the light".

Rain

From June until November we had quite a bit of rain in Mettu. We are happy that the rainy season is behind us now and we can enjoy more sunshine.

School

Joel and Jesse are attending 'the Haasnoot homeschool'. There are rumors that students have to work hard at that school. It is also said that the students don't often have physical education since the headmaster is quite lazy.

Trip

In October Jaap was able to make a two day trip with Finnish colleagues into the Shekicho area. They visited two small churches in an area only accessible by foot or on horseback. The trip was very encouraging for Jaap. He had prepared a little introduction of himself in Shekicho and the people were excited when they heard a foreigner speaking their language. He also learned more about the culture. For instance, Shekicho people don't eat dinner very early. His was served at twelve thirty at night!

UFOs

No, sorry, we haven't seen UFOs in Mettu. But we often look at the African sky and are amazed at the many bright stars you can see here. It is the 'identified' work of our Creator.

View

A lot of people think that Ethiopia is a dry, hot place and that there is always hunger here. This is partly true for some places but other areas (e.g. where we live) are green and fertile. The 'Band Aid view' of Ethiopia is still very strong in the West. We heard that Ethiopian Airlines sometimes gets phone calls from people who would like to know if they will get anything to eat during their flight! The only association these people have with Ethiopia is drought and hunger.

Word

"The grass withers, and the flowers fade, but the **WORD** of our God stands forever" (Isaiah 40:8, NLT).

X-mas

What other choice would we have for the 'x' than X-mas? It's a little bit early but we wish you a Merry Christmas and a happy 1999!

Yessuussi taato ne

This means: 'Jesus is Lord'. This phrase is very meaningful for the Shekicho people. Many among them were (and are) afraid of powerful traditional healers. These healers were 'lords' in their lives. Shekicho Christians now confess that Jesus is LORD of their lives, nobody else! It is not fear that governs their lives anymore but the authority of Him who has said: "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened and I will give you rest".

Zoo

What is wrong with a monkey running around your house? When Jaap was reading a Dutch children's book to Jesse, this question came up. The story was about a monkey that had escaped from the zoo. The monkey was running around in a village and everybody was chasing the monkey. For Jesse it was not clear what the big problem was. If you live in a country where you see monkeys all the time, this story needs some more 'explicit information' about the original context!

You are now fully up-to-date with our latest news from A to Z! Thanks for your prayers and your support!

Warm greetings,
Mirjam, Jaap, Joel, Jesse and Desta Haasnoot