



# *EthioFaith USA: Developing Christian Special Education for Ethiopia*

## NEWSLETTER: Fall/Winter, 2022

*EthioFaith USA; 3500 Eastview Dr. NE; Grand Rapids, MI 49525*

### **A Long Journey**

During the last six years, our challenge of finding the right space for Faith School has not always been front and center, yet always an underlying concern. It's probably time to back up and explain the history up until this current day.

When we began to realize the dream to begin Faith School, our initial fundraising was to build a school building. And in our first year, we were successful; you may recall our including a picture of the school in an early newsletter. The government was involved in each step, giving us necessary construction permits and the like.

However, as we began the school, the government began to make things difficult for us. They would not provide us a license for use. Why? They said because there was an industrial site across the street and it wouldn't be good for the children. In actuality, the garage across the street was a small furniture business—harmless to all.

For a couple of years, we tried many ways to get final approval, but we were certain it wouldn't be appropriate to pay a bribe. And so, we began to rent a smaller facility in the same general area. This proved to be a good solution at first, but we were beginning to out grow it, and the rent started to rise (all this while we were renting out our school building to make this all work financially).

Finally, the Board in the U.S. and the Advisory Board in Ethiopia agreed we needed to make a plan. At first it seemed the local church-affiliated regular school would give us space. That would have been an excellent solution, providing a more normalized environment for our students. However, that school ran into trouble with the government, so that plan could not go forward.

Finally, two important things happened recently. We were able to sell our building, fetching a price that covered all of the costs we had incurred building it. Second, we were able to identify an appropriate new site for the school.



### **The New School Facility**

Throughout the history of Faith School, we have been friends with a Christian ministry with a longer history: Yezelalem Minch. This ministry was led by a married couple, Birtukan and Nesibu. At first the ministry focused on caring for orphans and providing for their adoption. Then, as the government stopped adoption abroad, the ministry shifted to pre-school education, family care, and other means to support needy families and children.

A few years ago, they were privileged to build a new building—a building that included offices, rental rooms, and other spaces for their ministry. The government required it to be five stories, creating space for new endeavors. However, then the unthinkable happened: the pandemic took the life of Birtukan, so her husband Nesibu now has faced the challenge of filling this facility.

Thankfully, the lower level has been empty, and when we inquired about using it for Faith School, Nesibu agreed! So this fall, we began at this new site with room to grow and a safe and pleasant environment.

Through all of the ups and downs, we can see the hand of God has been guiding not just us, but the Yezelalem Minch ministry as well. And furthermore, during this transition, we have become acquainted with an educational ministry run by the Mekana Yesus (Lutheran) denomination—the only other school for special needs children in Addis Ababa. Their leader has completed training with our staff and parents to start off our year. In addition, they have a vocational component, so two of our students entering their teen years have now shifted to this other school for vocational preparation.

We are grateful for how God has guided this journey to a new space and a key new partner. Our financial needs for program operation (\$23,000+) continue each year, and we are grateful to all of those who support us in this important ministry!

#### **Get Involved!**

**Our email: [ethiofaithusa@gmail.com](mailto:ethiofaithusa@gmail.com) Website: [ethiofaith.org](http://ethiofaith.org)  
Give on line at the website or mail to EthiofaithUSA; 3500 Eastview Dr. NE, Grand Rapids, MI 49525. And pray!**