



Friends, we are in the final countdown toward our departure to Ethiopia. Months of thought, prayer and planning have gone into this event. Hundreds of e-mails have shot back and forth. Funds have been transferred. Bookings for flights, hotels, taxis rentals have all been made. Funds have been transferred. We have packed carefully trying to think of every eventuality. What medications might we need? How many days' worth of pills do we need to take... actually 112? Do we have the right connections for our phone, laptop, and portable printer? Next Sunday we will be commissioned by our church and Monday night while most of you are sleeping, we will be flying over the North Pole on our way to Dubai and Addis Ababa. On a trip like this, you plan as carefully as you can... and then you leave the rest to God.

Thanks God for all those who have helped us with finances and words of encouragement. One dear friend came over last night saying "I came to pray over you." Wow! Today in our Bible Study we noticed that in Malachi 1 God is called "Lord of Hosts" eight different times in just one chapter. This reference refers to the fact that God is "Lord of the angel armies of heaven." A member of our class prayed over us that God would send his angels to protect us, guide us and supply all our needs.

Most of our time in Ethiopia will be spent in the classroom with 35 men and women who are leaders of the Gurage churches where we minister. But there are a number of conference and special events woven in. When we arrive we will head for a mountain in Southern Ethiopia where 100,000 people come to pray for world missions. In February a team of five of us will be holding a peace conference between two warring tribes. At the end of our time in Ethiopia we will head for Amman, Jordan to be with Lisa and her family. Lisa and Howie are planning a six-day trip into Turkey to trace Paul's first missionary journey. If all goes as planned, we should be home April 30.

We know that many of you are faithful prayer warriors. Thank you. We do need your prayers. There are lots of critical issues we will face along the way. In Gurage there is division in the church. There are leadership issues that need to be sorted out. And there is a part of Gurage (Zebidar) that is solidly Muslim with no believers. Lord willing, I want to take some Bible School students there and spend some time witnessing in that very place...I have witnessed there before with NO result. If only we can establish a beachhead for the Gospel with a few believers... it will grow from there.

Friends, we will be out of contact while we are in Gurage. You may not hear from us regularly but we go assured of God's blessing and your prayers. As God said to Joshua, "Be strong and of good courage." We believe the "Lord of hosts" will be with us.

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