

It is great to hear from you! Things are not looking good politically here, that's for sure. Despite this, there are lots of good things happening with our churches. Two weekends ago we had 7 baptisms at our church plant in Abram, just outside Assosa. There will be more in both our Assosa church and in our Bambasi church plant this month. The ministry center/church building is almost completed in Assosa and we have already had two church leader trainings there. We would have finished the building by now if concrete was available ... but one of the ramifications of the civil war and all the political turmoil is that some stuff is not available due to manufacturing and transport problems.

Despite the issues, we still pulled off 2 trainings with over 30 church leaders at each one. The political problems extend into major areas of our church work. We have about 50 churches right now that are inside the conflict zone. These leaders are not able to travel in or out of their areas so they were not able to attend. I speak with many of them on the phone weekly. One of our evangelists (Alemayu) who was working in a place called Melkan near Aygali, where we used to live, was killed in a government raid in his village. Rebels had hidden in huts in his village so the government went door to door. He was caught in the crossfire. Two other evangelists have been arrested as they were swept up in a mass roundup of suspected rebels. Basically, any man under the age of 35 was assumed to be working with the rebels. One of these evangelists is still being held.

We have been helping evangelists families and other believers as much as we can financially. This year will be a tough one for them because many of them are hiding in the woods and their fields have been burned and their stores of grain have been stolen. The violence is an issue but it may be the other factors (famine, disease, lack of medicines, etc.) that end up causing the most damage.

In Addis Ababa things are normal but getting more tense. Allison and I still travel out to ministry areas almost every week but we are limited to places that aren't currently in conflict zones.

Please keep praying! We need it.

Craig and Allison