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## Celebration Story

*We invite you to share with your congregation the following story from Dianne Dobbie-Legesse in Ethiopia, where she and her husband Fanosie are Mennonite Church Canada Witness workers. The story should take no more than 2 minutes to read aloud. You might also wish to include it in your church newsletter.*

*–Deborah Froese, PrayerNet Coordinator*

## Planning ahead through Education



Yeshi is a seven-year-old Ethiopian girl whose mother I first met out in a field while she was collecting cow dung for fuel. Chaltu was left with two children to raise when her husband suddenly left. They live in a one room shack without flush toilets, running water, or electricity.

Like many other children in Ethiopia, Yeshi had been in a local school for a short time, but stopped attending because her mother did not have the modest finances required for school registration and supplies. When the local International School asked if I

knew someone who could use a scholarship to attend classes, I recommended Yeshi and her brother, Melese.

Getting the scholarship was the easy part, but how would they get to a school seven kilometres away, or find clean clothes, a nutritious breakfast and lunch to take along? We deliberated over these questions as September approached and decided that we would help.

On the first day of school, Yeshi and Melese arrived at my door at 6 am! We bathed, clothed, fed them and provided lunch boxes before they set off to school.

Is it worth it? I must say yes! I can see right before my very eyes the great gift of education. Without education, children suffer, society suffers and countries suffer. How can a nation grow and flourish when even the simplest teaching cannot be received? Before the scholarship, Yeshi did not know how to use scissors, and had probably never used crayons or markers.

When I was driving the kids to school soon after they began classes, Melese burst into song in English... "This is the day that the Lord has made. Let us rejoice and be glad in it..." The best part of this opportunity for Yeshi and Melese is that their teachers are Christians. Yeshi and Melese are prayed for and seeds are being planted. One day we hope that they will have the skills to live well, enough food to eat, and maybe a little extra to help the child next door.

A Chinese proverb says, "If you are thinking a year ahead, sow a seed. If you are thinking ten years ahead, plant a tree." But if you are thinking one hundred years ahead, educate the people. By sowing a seed, you will harvest once. By planting a tree, you will harvest tenfold. By educating the people, you will harvest hundredfold.

*"For no one can lay any foundation other than the one that has been laid; that foundation is Jesus Christ." 1 Cor. 3:11*