



ETHIOPIA

SIM Gains New Ground

Stephanie Dickerson, a freelance writer, spoke with SIM Ethiopia's Dorothy McGinley and Zenebe Gebrehana during Cook Communications Ministries International March 2001 International Christian Publishing Institute.

We are living and working in a 'window of opportunity,'" says Dorothy McGinley, of SIM Ethiopia. "We want to make the most of it, before it shuts."

After Emperor Haile Selassie was deposed in 1974, Ethiopia was ruled by a socialist government until 1991, when the

At that time, SIM received permission to print Christian materials. Political change has continued, and a new government was established with general elections in 1995.

"The government used to censor everything before publication," says McGinley, "but now we have more freedom."

SIM is experiencing exponential growth.

Located in the capital, Addis Ababa, SIM Ethiopia is dedicated to evangelizing the unreached, ministering to human needs, discipling believers, and equipping churches to fulfill Christ's commission. This non-profit ministry was started to provide theological

Heywot Church grew from SIM's work in Ethiopia. SIM's media ministry includes publication, printing operations, literature distribution and radio programming.

"There are about 70 languages in Ethiopia," says Zenebe Gebrehana, also with SIM, "but we mainly work in three of those at this time. Most publications are in the Amharic language," he adds, "for the evangelical churches of Ethiopia." SIM publishes theological books for Amharic Bible Schools, as well as materials for training and language study, marriage and family life, and women's ministry. Ethiopia has a population of 50-60 million people evenly divided between the Ethiopian Orthodox Church and Islam.



Be Daring is the title of Wiersbe's commentary on the second section of Acts, covering chapters 13-28.



The Amharic version of Warren Wiersbe's book on the letter to the Philippians, *Be Joyful* was published in 1996.

Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front seized the capital.

books in Amharic for the Kale Heywot Church's Bible schools. The Kale

Catholic and evangelical believers are about twelve percent of the total.

"We want to increase distribution of Christian books in our country," says McGinley. To do this more effectively, SIM recently evaluated the needs of its audience. "We have to pay more attention to the market," says Zenebe. "For example, pastors have shown great interest in the *Be* series commentaries on the New Testament. In

just the past year, SIM has been extremely successful with the Warren Wiersbe *Be* series." This series is based on Bible teachings, which are consolidated into themes such as *Be Victorious* (on Revelations) or *Be Faithful* (on 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus, and Philemon). "The books are well received," he adds. SIM has put 15 titles into circulation in the past five years; with more than 30,000 books in print.

As well as continuing to publish theological books, SIM Ethiopia is now publishing books with a broader appeal. SIM is producing books written in the simplest form of Amharic to encourage interest and prevent discouragement among readers. "We hope to entice the audience to read, giving them useful literature that interests them," says McGinley, "to create a hunger for further Biblical teaching and literature."

SIM has just released *Questions Young People Ask*, by South African authors Bruce and Carol Britten. The book covers the issues of premarital

sex, romance, money, and AIDS from a Biblical perspective. First written in simple, easy English, *Questions Young People Ask*

Zenebe, "but some churches have even put on weekend camps for youth to discuss *Questions Young People Ask*."



I and II Thessalonians are the subject of Be Ready, one of the first Amharic titles published in this series.

and non-Christians, so the staff is planing new strategies to capitalize on the success of this new book. "Along with new secular distribution outlets, we want to do some cross-advertising through radio and books, as well as direct mailing for the people who live down country," says McGinley.

"It is too early to predict the full effect this book will have, but it seems to be accepted even by Muslims," adds Zenebe. SIM's deliberate focus on market needs is having commercial success so far. McGinley and Zenebe are excited about the plans God has for SIM.❖

was also translated into Amharic. The translation is simple and readable. "It is the first book on the subject," says Zenebe, "that is both rigorous and comprehensive."

"This book has gone beyond the Christian market," says McGinley, "into the secular market in general bookstores." SIM's vision is to publish material for Christians

The book addresses issues that have long been kept silent in the Ethiopian Church, and in the country itself. "Talk of sex was once considered taboo in the Church," says



Zenebe Gebrehana, left, and Dorothy McGinley, right, attended CCMI's Marketing, Sales and Distribution International Christian Publishing Institute in March 2001.

