

OSWEGO UNITED METHODIST CHURCH RECOGNIZED FOR HELPING ETHIOPIA

On Sunday, February 21, 2010, Dr. David Blankinship, ceo of The Praxis Ethiopia Foundation, presented a certificate of appreciation to the congregation of the Oswego United Methodist Church. In presenting the certificate, Blankinship cited the congregation's generosity and continued support of the Foundation's work to end hunger and illness. The congregation has participated in the Foundation's Change for Change program since August 2007. Since then, the members have contributed \$1,723 in spare change to help end extreme poverty in Ethiopia and sub-Saharan Africa.

The congregation's financial support has paid for cataract surgery for farmers in the Oromia district of Ethiopia. This area has been very hard-hit by draughts and famines, and the farmers who received the surgery were also trained in innovative techniques of water harvesting and sustainable agriculture to produce as much food as possible under the most challenging circumstances. The congregation's kindness means that the farmers whose vision was improved helped thousands of people by the increased productivity of the farmers and the fact that the farmers also train others.

The congregation's financial gifts have also contributed to an intensive training program for women who have HIV/AIDS. This program will teach them

how to grow food in very limited spaces (for example a backyard) with very limited water, and it will provide them with the knowledge necessary to use solar cooking technologies to prepare food and to pasteurize water to make it safe to drink. Using solar energy for cooking and water pasteurization is vital to Ethiopia and developing countries around the world because it is efficient and economical.

The Bioeconomy Association and the Addis Biofarm demonstration project will provide the training for the women. As Dr. Selamawit Assefa, the project's manager noted, this training will "improve their nutritional status and increase their immunity against the disease" and it will create income generation to improve their livelihood.

"We are grateful for this opportunity to help those who are living in extreme poverty," Pastor Robert Conway said.

"As a congregation we have felt a deep calling to minister to those who are hungry and ill. The Change for Change program helps us as a church to reach out to the world in a meaningful way to improve the lives of those living in the most desperate of circumstances."

To learn more about The Praxis Ethiopia Foundation, please visit www.praxisethiopia.org.



David Blankinship (left) presented a certificate of appreciation to Pastor Robert Conway (right) of the Oswego United Methodist Church