



Heart of Compassion Missionary Ministries Newsletter

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Back to Ethiopia

It's October/November 2010 and we were happy to be back in Ethiopia. Ethiopia is a land of contrast and extreme diversity—from the lowest lowland on earth to the second highest mountain in Africa. It's also the original home of the coffee tree, and boasts some of the world's finest quality coffees.



But sadly, Ethiopia is also a country where people live on less than \$2.00 a day and is estimated to have an unemployment rate of about 30% for 15 to 30 year olds—among the highest unemployed in the world. This is one of the reasons why God sent us: To help people to help themselves.

Refugee Camp at the Ethiopia-Sudan Border

One of the missions that we had on this trip was to reach out in an area that many ministers overlook or choose not to go because of the time that it takes to travel, the difficult terrain that you must cross, and it's somewhat dangerous!



On this mission, we ministered at a refugee camp on the Ethiopian-Sudanese border. It's not a place that I would invite a first-time missionary to go, unless they were called by God.

Many people don't know this but Ethiopia hosts a large population of refugees from many African countries, which includes: Somalia, Sudan, Eritrea, Rwanda, Burundi, Angola, Liberia, Djibouti, Uganda, South Africa, and Yemen. However, refugees from Somalia, Sudan, and Eritrea make up the majority.



Currently, there are a total of nine refugee camps located in the east, west, and northern parts of Ethiopia. The refugee camp that we visited housed refugees primarily from Sudan. Many of the Sudanese refugees arrived in Ethiopia in the 1980s and have lived in the camp for so long that the camp is all they know.

New arrivals continue to flow into Ethiopia because of conflicts in Sudan. The conflicts in Sudan are a result of religious, ethnic, economical, and also tribal differences. The refugee population in Ethiopia currently stands at about 90,806.



In general, people become refugees for a number of reasons but the most common are: Conflict-induced, Economic, or Political. Refugee influxes in Ethiopia are primarily a result of ongoing political and civil unrest.

The camp that we visited was called Fugnido refugee camp, which is 2 hours from Gambella, Ethiopia. Basically, it's in the boonies! Fugnido is the largest camp, hosting about 35 per cent of current Sudanese refugees in Ethiopia. The two major tribes that we worked with were the Anuak and Nuer tribes—they make up a combined total of over

20,000 refugees. Although Ethnic clashes between the Anuak and Nuer tribes have become common due to tribal differences, there were no conflicts during our visit.

Additionally, due to ongoing conflicts in Sudan and the outcome of the referendum that may or may not be conferred, the number of refugees could rise. The referendum will decide whether to divide Sudan into two separate countries; North Sudan and South Sudan.



Finally, while we were in the United States, we learned that many children in the camp did not have underwear. Based on their need and your donations, we purchased 525 pair of underwear to give out to the children in the camp. Although there were many more children than we could help, those who did receive the underwear were very grateful.

There are many people who live in these camps who do not have the material things that we have in the United States. Although from the smiles that we saw on their faces, we know that happiness is not based on how much wealth we have but on the relationship that we have with God. Amen!



Furthermore, even though paganism and indigenous religious beliefs are still widely practiced in Fugnido, many of the refugees that we met requested that we bring English Bibles upon our return trip. Amen!



Helping People to Help Themselves

Another mission of our ministry is to help people to help themselves, so they in turn can help other people. While in Ethiopia, we worked with several church pastors to accomplish this mission. Although we couldn't help everyone that we talked to, after interviewing many people with the desire to help themselves, we finally connected with someone with a desire to own a taxi. We learned from experience that the best way to help someone is not from "handouts" but by giving them an opportunity that they have never had before.



The Lord led us to a young lady named Beletu. We learned that she is faithful in her church and is the sole caretaker of her family with little to no income. The Lord placed it on our heart to assist her in however we were led to

do so. Based on the leading of the Lord, Beletu was given a scholarship through Heart of Compassion Missionary Ministries to attend training to become a bajaj driver. You may ask "what is a bajaj?" It's a three wheeled covered taxi. Most people do not own a car or a bicycle, so a Bajaj is a convenient way to get around town. Because of her faithfulness to God and to her church, we felt to do more, so Heart of Compassion provided her with a micro loan to purchase a bajaj so that she can earn a living.



Once she has repaid her loan, the money will be advanced to help another person. Since many people are not able to tithe financially because they do not work, they willingly give their time as did Beletu. Once Beletu begins to work, she will not only be able to take better care of her family, but she will be able to pay her tithes and give offerings to the church.

You see, the opportunity that Beletu didn't have was access to money. It can be very difficult to get a loan in many developing countries and Ethiopia is no different. We found that the best way that we could help is by lending the money, as opposed to giving a handout, to start a business. And as these funds are paid back, we will continue the process for someone else. In this particular case, we funded the opportunity for this young entrepreneur to start a taxi business. We will keep everyone up to date as her business venture grows.

Scholarship

In another case, Heart of Compassion paid for a young man to attend training to become a taxi driver. This young man freely opens his home to missionaries; he assists them however he can. He and his wife are not rich by any means, but their love for God's people is extraordinary. Amen!

Testimonies

Remember the Donkey Named Gift?
During our mission in April-May 2010 to

Ethiopia, we ministered in a small town called Gorbecha. And in the our last newsletter, we told you about a young lady whose name is Elemalish. With your donations, Heart of Compassion was able to bless her with a donkey and two sheep.



Well, we would like to share with you her testimony of God's blessing. God is a God of increase and we being His children should also increase. Elemalish's donkey, whose name is Sitotha, meaning gift, has increased. The donkey is pregnant and the two sheep have multiplied as well. Elemalish, sold one sheep, purchased another that is now pregnant. And with the extra money from selling the sheep, she bought a chicken. Now, the chicken has laid eleven eggs! We are praying for all eleven to hatch. Amen!

Coffee Shop Update

One of the ladies who worked in the café at the church was able to make enough money to pay off a debt she owed a neighbor who harassed her for payment. The harassment was so bad that her daughter use to run as fast as she could when passing by her neighbor's house in order to avoid hearing derogatory insults directed at her family. Since her mother is now employed by the church coffee shop, she was able to pay her debt in full to her neighbor. Now, her daughter can walk home with her head high because the family is debt free! And yes, there are many more testimonies of God's goodness. Amen!

Thank You

As you continue to sow into this ministry, we will continue to sow into God's people; financially and spiritually. We love what God has commissioned us to do and we will not stop until He says to stop. We are planning to return again in May or June 2011, so please keep us in your prayers. Many of you have mentioned to us that when we are on the mission field, you actually feel like you are with us.

One day we hope that some of you will be able to join us to see what God is doing on the other side of the world.

Still more to do!

Although we were not able to make it to the Bodi tribe, we learned of a tribe in the South Eastern region of Ethiopia called the Afar.



There are over 1,429,000 people in this tribe and are predominantly of the Islamic faith. Less than one percent has ever heard the gospel. Pray that God will make a way for the gospel to reach the Afar tribe. Amen!

Reaching People and
Touching Lives
Around the World

**"But when He saw the
multitudes, He was moved
with compassion for them..."
Matthew 9:36**

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