

# Bits of Hope

2013 — Issue Two

## Sustained by Prayer

by Sam Dersu

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In May, I had the privilege of leading a mission trip to Ethiopia and Kenya. Randy Wright, Wade Jones, Dick Spencer, and I flew from Nashville, Tennessee, to Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. From there we drove down to southern Ethiopia to minister in Yavello, Mega and Teltelle. Once we completed nearly a week of ministry in Ethiopia, Dick returned to the United States while Randy and Wade accompanied me on into Kenya.

This was a unique trip for me because I returned home to America by the same road I walked on when I left Ethiopia over 23 years ago, escaping the communist government in control of the country at that time. Twenty-three-year-old memories raced through my mind as we passed through Kenyan police

checkpoints and spent a night in the town of Marsabit. I'd had no plans to take any type of trip to Kenya since spending two years there in refugee camp 23 years ago. I especially didn't think that I would travel there to do God's work — that

was until I reconnected with a dear childhood friend who was connected to the church in Isiolo. The church in Isiolo had heard of the work that Hand of Hope Ministries was doing in Ethiopia with needy children and evangelism and wanted us to expand into Kenya and partner with them.

After seeing the area and the needs of the children in the northern part of Kenya, I now understand why God directed us to expand our ministry into that country as well. All the way from Moyale to Isiolo we saw the need for evangelism. We were able to feel and see that the enemy was after us. The prayer support of people we left at home as well as the people we were going to see sustained us, and the enemy did not prevail!

One thing we did in Kenya that touched my heart deeply was visiting with and having lunch with HOH children and caretakers. Seeing the chil-



Sam Dersu with Nadi, one of the HOH Children in Marsabit, Kenya.

dren and talking to the caretakers showed us how great the need is to help these children. To me, these are children who are forgotten by most people, but not by God or the caretakers. God is the one who led HOH to support these children. We did not even know their names until we started supporting them, and now we even know their faces.

Several of the HOH children in Kenya are cared for by someone who is not a blood relative. This is because there is no blood relative in a position to take care of them, or in some cases, they don't have any known relatives. We met a little boy who is cared for by a family who has seven of their own children. I asked the caretaker, "Why did you take this little boy into your home while you have your own children to care for?" Her answer was, "What else could I do when the widow

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A couple of the HOH children and their caretakers in Marsabit and Sololo, Kenya.

## God's Presence in the Middle of Nowhere

*Since 2007, Randy Wright has traveled to Ethiopia from Nashville, Tenn., four times with Hand of Hope Ministries. Every trip has brought adventure, blessing and awareness of God's presence. Here he shares some experiences from his last trip in May 2013.*

As I reflect over my recent mission trip with Hand of Hope Ministries, I am reminded over and over again of God's guidance and protection over the team. Let me share a couple of examples – both involving car troubles.



**Workers putting up the walls on the church in Saarite.**

Sam Dersu, Wade Jones and I were headed to Saarite for our second day of working on the new church building. We were about halfway through the “off-road” part of our journey, with still 8 to 10 kilometers to go, when the car stopped. We couldn't get it going again. Then it began to rain. Mechanics were called, and while waiting for their arrival, Wade and I began walking around and praying, not together and not getting too far away from the car and our group. But we were far enough away that we couldn't see the group and we couldn't see each other. We each encountered two Borana women from a nearby village who were out gathering wood. They were friendly, even to an unknown white guy out in the middle of nowhere! I tried to communicate as much as possible, mentioning “Saarite.” At this point, they became obviously concerned. We were close enough to the car that I was able to get them to follow me back to Sam. I explained to him what had happened and asked him to

advise that we were OK. He spoke to them for a few minutes. In short, they were worried that we were lost and they were trying to communicate both the direction to Saarite and the fact the earlier rainstorm would keep us from getting there. Once they realized we were OK and had help on the way for the car, they warned us against snakes and went on their way back to gathering wood – killing a poisonous lizard on the way (and showing it to us so we would know to stay away!).

How do I see God at work here? First, here were two white guys way off the road in the bush. The women hadn't heard a car, yet their immediate concern was for us, wanting to make sure we were OK! Second, if the car had not broken down and we had made it to Saarite before the rain, we would have enjoyed spending time with the folks there and helping with the church building. However, there is a good possibility we would not have been able to make it back to Yavello (and the only hotel anywhere around) that night.

The second example of God's protection that I would like to share occurred when we were en route from Moyale, Ethiopia, to Marsabit, Kenya. We had stopped in the Sololo area to have a late lunch with a few of the new HOH children and their caregivers. We were traveling later than planned and it was now dark. We had just gone through a checkpoint in Turbi, and Pastor Wubshet, our driver in Kenya, decided we needed to stop and check out a noise he was hearing in the left front wheel. We were grateful to be in the small village of Turbi at this point, and though there are minimal facilities, there was a mechanic available. However, we were “after hours,” so the process of getting our car taken care of was a little slower than it might have been.

This turned into a GREAT object lesson for me. Here we were stranded in the middle of nowhere, hours from our destination, hours from the last real town we had passed, in pitch dark, with the wheel off the car. The situation was somewhat scary as long as we were looking at that wheel or the unfamiliar buildings or some of the people who were looking at us with a what-in-the-world-are-you-doing-here expression. However, as soon as I looked UP, it was the most incredible night sky I have ever seen! I could see the haze of galaxies. Psalm 147:4 immediately came to mind: “He determines the number of stars and calls them all by name.” Our God not only determined how many stars there were in the heavens, but He also knows their names! Then I recalled that verse 3 says, “He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds.” This God – our God – breathes stars into existence, yet He cares enough to heal our hearts and bind our wounds. How can that be? I don't know. I just gratefully determined years ago that I don't have to know or understand. I just believe. I do know that on



**The team waits, on the road to Saarite, as their driver and mechanic try to fix the broken down vehicle.**

## God's Presence in the Middle of Nowhere

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The broken down vehicle in Turbi, waiting on parts.

this night, having seen the beautiful, wonderful, unfathomable expanse of the heavens and allowing this to remind us of Who He is, we Tennessee travelers immediately relaxed, resting in the comfort that He loves us and was in control.

When the mechanic determined the car wasn't going to be fixed without parts, which had to come from Moyale, we were able to find another vehicle to come pick us up although it was going to be several hours before it arrived. We were able to find rooms to lie down and rest for a few hours. Then we got back on the road to Marsabit about 4 a.m.

Initially we were disappointed about the delay and "losing" a day – still not sure when the car would be fixed. But we soon realized God was working in this as well. As we were waiting in Marsabit, we were able to meet and spend some time with Pastor Benjamin, from Our Redeemer Evangelical Church, whom we wouldn't have seen otherwise. Sam, Wade and I felt this was another "God-thing," and we were grateful He orchestrated details to allow this unplanned meeting.

With the car repaired, we continued south into Kenya. Though the scenery was different (yet still beautiful), we found the Borana people were the same – caring, hospitable, loving, concerned for us – even in the midst of their need. Every visit to Ethiopia renews and deepens in me the awareness of God's provision, protection and presence.



Wade Jones and Randy Wright arriving in Marsabit after being delayed in Turbi.



This is the hotel tin Turbi where the team rested for a few hours while they waited for a replacement vehicle to take them to Marsabit.



Sunset near Isiolo, Kenya



## Equipping Evangelists — From Ethiopia to Kenya

HOH was excited to provide an opportunity for evangelists and church leaders in Ethiopia and Kenya to receive valuable Bible training. In May, HOH sponsored a four-day seminar in Mega, Ethiopia, for area evangelists and church leaders. Wade Jones and Dick Spencer traveled to Ethiopia as part of a small mission team on behalf of HOH to use their gifts to minister to nearly 50 evangelists and church leaders. Wade, associate pastor at Priest Lake Christian Fellowship in Antioch, Tenn., taught one of the sessions during the first day and over the next three days, Dick used his gift of teaching to bless those attending the seminar.



Dick Spencer teaching in Mega, Ethiopia



Participants of the HOHM sponsored seminar in Mega, posed for a picture with Dick Spencer (center back).



Participants of the HOHM sponsored Seminar in Mega, spent time worshipping together each day of the conference.

In October, HOH sponsored a three-day conference in Isiolo, Kenya. Christ Community Church in Isiolo hosted the conference that was attended by nearly 90 people from the area. Dick Spencer traveled alone from the USA to serve as one of the main speakers for the conference. Dick is a gifted Bible teacher and has a heart for equipping evangelists and church leaders around the world with sound biblical teaching.



Above & Below: Participants of the HOHM sponsored conference in Isiolo, Kenya.



Dick Spencer (center), posing for a picture with elders of Christ Community Church in Isiolo, Kenya.



## Growth in Gaayo and Batangaldo

Evangelist Dokole continues to shepherd the group of believers in Gaayo. HOH provided a portion of the funds needed to build a new church building for the congregation in Gaayo, who had outgrown the home they were meeting in for services. The church is nearly completed. It was a blessing for the mission team of Sam Dersu, Randy Wright and Wade Jones to be able to spend an afternoon in Gaayo. They were able to not only see the church building, but hear testimonies of a few people who had been delivered from evil spirits to serve Jesus! Yes, God is working in Gaayo! While in Gaayo, the team was able to meet with the HOH children in the area and present award certificates and incentives to those who performed well in school this past school year.



HOH Mission Team members met with HOH children and other church members in the new church building in Gaayo.



Sam, Randy and Wade continued on to Batangaldo later in the afternoon to visit Evangelist Nuno's church. The team had a great time of sharing and hearing the Word, together with believers in Batangaldo. Nuno is doing a great job with the children in this area. It was a blessing to see that the teaching materials, prepared by PLCF church members in 2011 and given to each of the evangelists, were being used. We praise God for what He is doing in Batangaldo.



The church in Batangaldo, led by Evangelist Nuno.



The group of believers in Batangaldo.



## A Church in Saarite!

Evangelists Dida Barako, Guyo Tade, and Godana Duba regularly come together to pray for the gospel work that is going on in their region of Teltelle. In May, they were blessed to be visited by a mission team from the United States led by Sam Dersu.

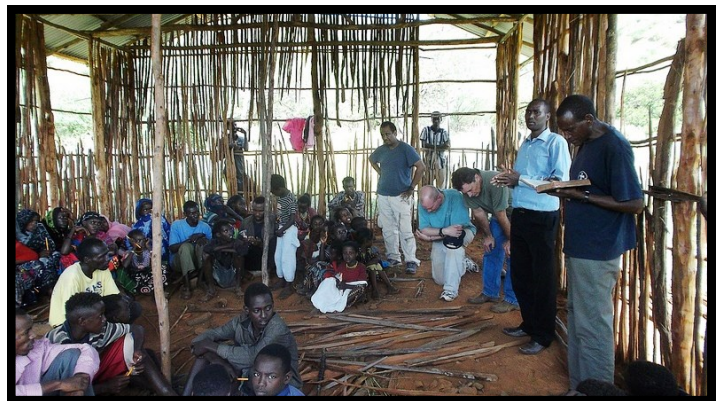


Godana Duba, his wife Dake, and their three children serve in Dalemale and Saarite

Evangelist Godana Duba continues to shepherd the growing number of believers in Saarite. Godana has led the group of believers to work together to build their own church building. This past May, HOH sent a three-man mission team to the remote village of Saarite to help build a church building in Saarite. The team joined many church members to work on preparing the walls for mudding. They arrived to a shell of a building, and by the end of a hard day's work, the walls were nearly ready for mudding. It was a blessing for the team to work side by side with believers in Saarite and encourage them. The day also included a time of worship and prayer. Although the team planned to return for a second day of work, they were unable to due to problems with transportation. HOH was happy to learn that since the team's visit in May, church members have completed the church building.

Saarite is the second church in the Teltelle area that a HOH Mission Team has helped with building. In 2010, a team helped build a church in Ghandille where Evangelist Dida Barako, the senior evangelist in the Teltelle area, continues to minister.

Continue to pray for the three evangelists serving in the Teltelle region. Pray that God would continue to soften the hearts of the people in the area.



HOHM Mission Team worshipping with believers in Saarite.



Pictured above, and to the right, is the church in Saarite. Above, is what the church looked like when the HOHM mission team arrived; by the end of the day, much progress had been made, as seen in the picture to the right.





## Stiches of Love

Ladies at Central Free Will Baptist Church in Royal Oak, Michigan, put their talents to work to bless children they didn't know and would most likely never meet. This small group of women, rich with talent, handmade nearly 50 dresses. The pattern was simple, but the details added to each dress made each one unique and beautiful.

The 2013 Hand of Hope mission team, led by Sam Dersu, delivered the dresses to several Hand of Hope Children as well as to children in remote villages where HOH evangelists minister.



## Sustained by Prayer

(continued from page 1)

mother passed away suddenly and this 5 year old little boy was left all alone in the house? Who would take care of him if I, the next door neighbor didn't take him in and raise him?" I was touched by this and never stopped thinking about it. This was the first boy we met in Moyale, Kenya.

Hoping for a better story, I asked a second caretaker about the boy he has been caring for. He said that the boy came to him to work for a short period of time. After the job was completed, the man told the boy that he could go home. The boy's response was, "I have nowhere to go. I have no parents and no home." The caretaker said to me, "What do you do in that situation? You just can't tell him to go sleep outside." My heart started crying after hearing this story.

There are thousands more children in need in the northern part of Kenya. Hassan Bagaja, HOH volunteer coordinator in Kenyan for the children's program, receives many requests from children who need financial assistance. HOH's financial income is limited, so the majority of requests are denied. It is very, very, hard. We should continue praying for financial resources and seek ways to help more children in Kenya.



The team's broken down vehicle on the way to Isiolo.



Wade Jones & Sam Dersu waiting on the side of the road from Marsabit to Isiolo while their vehicle was being checked out.

God taught me a lot on this trip. He showed me that He is in charge and I just need to allow Him to be God. Looking back, there is no doubt that God was in control of every detail, from the time we left the USA, until the time we returned home. Before we left the United States, God was already showing me that He was with me. In Washington, D.C., as I was on my way to the departure

gate for our flight on Ethiopian Airlines, I realized that I was missing my laptop case; I had left it on the train in Dulles Airport as I was changing terminals. In the laptop case was a new laptop, a new Samsung Galaxy phone, a new digital camera and my Bible. All of these were items that I was taking to leave with individuals in Ethiopia. I tracked down an airport police and told him what had happened. He told me that it would be a miracle if I recovered the laptop bag. He told me to

go ahead to my gate and if the bag was found, he would bring it to me. Sure enough, the bag was found in the stopped train -- untouched. The police brought it to me. Praise the Lord!

As we travelled throughout Ethiopia and Kenya, our car broke down more than once, but we were still able to accomplish all that we had set out to do, plus more. He is definitely in charge, and we were able to experience His faithful protection the entire trip.

In the verse at the bottom of this page, Paul was writing a letter to the church in Ephesus saying, "God placed all things under His feet and appointed Him to be head over everything for the church." We carried Jesus with us everywhere we went. and we knew that He was with us and that everything was under His feet. Words can't express how thankful I am for those who were praying for us every day we were there. God hears the prayers of His people. Praise God!

And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way. Ephesians 1:22-23



## Hand of Hope Children's Program—Ethiopia

God continues to bless the Hand of Hope Children's Program. Nearly 50 children are supported through this program. Volunteer coordinator, Bake Chenfo, continues to be the backbone of this ministry. He conducts regular follow-up meetings with the children and their caretakers and ensures that the children's needs are being met. Bake makes sure that the children attend school and encourages them to work hard. In addition to the regular follow-up of children in the HOH program, Bake keeps an eye out for possible candidates to be added to the program.

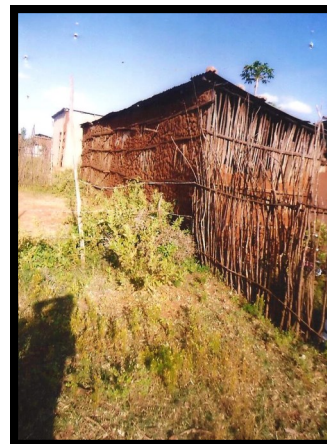
*Interested in sponsoring a child? \$350 will sponsor a child for 1 year.*

*For information please email [handofhopeministries@gmail.com](mailto:handofhopeministries@gmail.com).*

### Meseret Children's Home Repair Project

The Meseret siblings joined the Hand of Hope family in 2010, shortly after their mother passed away. Since then, they have been living in the house their mother left them. The house has suffered rain and wind damage and is in desperate need of repairs. Every time it rains, water floods the home. The siding is beginning to crack and they are in need of a fence behind their house to mark off their property.

HOH would like to raise the funds needed to make the necessary repairs to the Meseret home. The amount needed to repair their home is \$750.



## Hand of Hope Children's Program — Kenya

Hand of Hope Ministries has been supporting 15 children in Kenya through the Hand of Hope Children's Program. The financial support enables these children to receive an education and have enough food to eat and enough clothes to wear. All of the children in the program have lost at least one parent and many have lost both. The 15 children currently in this program are located in four different areas of Kenya: Moyale, Marsabit, Sololo and Isiolo. In May 2013, three representatives from HOH (Sam Dersu, Wade Jones, and Randy Wright) went to Kenya to visit with each of the children and their caregivers.



**Sam Dersu with Daki Roba in Marsabit.**

The team started with visiting two children in Moyale and from there traveled south to Sololo, where they shared lunch with four of the children and their caregivers. Four HOH children and their caregivers were waiting on the team in Marsabit and were happy to meet Sam, Wade and Randy and share a meal with them. Continuing on to Isiolo, the team was able to spend time with five HOH children and their caregivers.

The children and their caregivers enjoyed their time with the HOH team. The caregivers were able to openly share the challenges they face as they try to take care of these children. Many of the caregivers already have children of their own, and it is difficult to bring additional children into their homes. It is a financial strain on the families to provide two meals a day for their own children, let alone provide for the orphans they have brought into their homes. The caregivers are thankful for the support coming in from HOH. Although it doesn't eliminate their burden, it makes a significant difference.



**Caregivers in Moyale, Kenya**



**L-R: Wade Jones, Dida, and Randy Wright**



**Lunch with the orphans and caregivers in Isiolo.**



*- Contributed by Hassan Bagaja. Hassan serves as the Volunteer Coordinator for Hand of Hope Ministries in*

\$350 will fully sponsor one child for one year. HOHM is trusting God to provide sponsors for these children.

Initially, funds have been committed from the General Fund to sponsor 15 children. Our prayer is that God will provide sponsors to help off-set these expenses, which will then free up funds to support additional children.

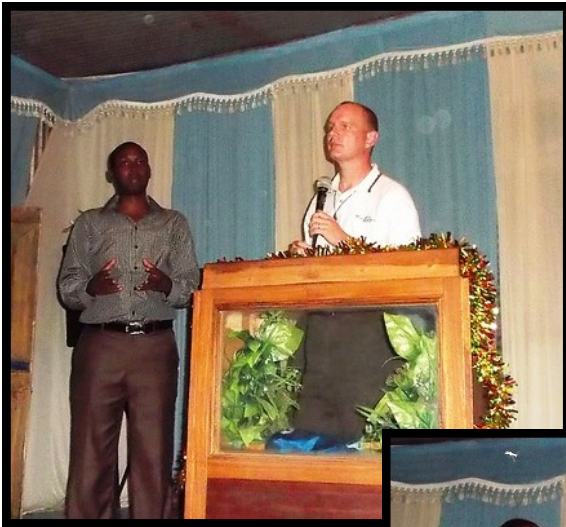


## Building Relationships in Kenya

This past May, Sam Dersu, together with Randy Wright and Wade Jones travelled to Isiolo, Kenya, on behalf of Hand of Hope Ministries. Over the past year, HOH has been looking into the possibility of forming a long-term relationship with Christ Community Church (CCC) in Isiolo, Kenya, to reach the Borana Oromo of Kenya for Christ. The team was able to meet with elders at CCC and gain a better understanding of their vision for evangelism in the area.

Randy Wright and Wade Jones were given the opportunity to share with members of CCC. Randy spoke on the Power of Prayer and Wade spoke on Repentance. The team enjoyed a time of prayer and fellowship with the CCC elders after which the elders presented each of the HOH team members with gifts not only for them, but for their wives as well.

Pray for the elders in Isiolo, as they lead the church and seek to hear God's voice and sense His leading in all that they do.

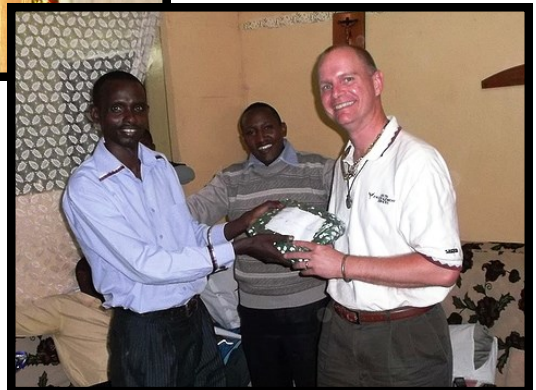


Wade Jones (above) and Randy Wright (right) sharing in the Isiolo church.

Below, elders from the Isiolo church presented Randy Wright with a traditional Kenyan Borana scarf.



Elders from the Isiolo church present Sam Dersu (above) and Wade Jones (below) with gifts for their wives.



## Hand of Hope Ministries

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(formerly Gospel For All)  
P.O. Box 293341  
Nashville, TN 37229

## Short-term Mission Trip: ET2014

HOH is organizing a two-week mission trip to Ethiopia for the summer of 2014. Please pray for team members as they will be required to raise \$4,000 to cover their expenses for the trip. We are praying for God to assemble 15 to 20 individuals to be a part of this trip.

What will the team be involved with?

- **Vacation Bible School:** The team will hold a 3~4 day VBS for the children in Mega, Ethiopia. We expect to have anywhere from 150 to 200 children. There is a possibility of holding a 'mini' one-day VBS in a couple of the surrounding villages.
- **Encourage Evangelists:** There will be opportunities for team members to meet and encourage evangelists that are currently supported by HOH. Some of our men will be conducting a 3-day seminar for the evangelists with the goal to better equip them to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ.
- **Meet the Hand of Hope Orphans:** HOH currently sponsors 65 children. There will be an opportunity to meet some of these children, share a meal with them, pray for them, and just love on them!!
- **Church Building Project:** We hope to help build a church in the Yavello area, where two of our evangelists are working. Whether we will be able to do this or not depends on the team that is ultimately assembled for this mission trip.
- **Youth Rally:** We are hoping for an opportunity to conduct a youth rally in Yavello for young people in the area.

## Prayer & Praise

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### Pray for....

- protection over the evangelists as they share God's Word throughout the countryside of southern Ethiopia.
- additional prayer and financial supporters.
- volunteers to come forward both in the USA and in Ethiopia to help with the many organizational and administrative needs of this ministry.
- plans that are currently underway for the 2014 Mission Trip. Pray that God would bring the team members together that need to go on this trip and that necessary funds would come in for team members.

### Praise God for....

- His protection over the team of men who travelled to Ethiopia and Kenya in May.
- doors that have opened up for ministry in Kenya.
- His continued provision for this ministry.
- churches in Mega, Hidilola, Yavello, Teltelle, Moyale and Hawassa who partner with Hand of Hope Ministries.
- the faithful prayer and financial support for this ministry.
- the souls that are coming into the Kingdom.