

A Brief History of the Founding of *Hope for Rural Children and Orphans (HORCO)*



Hearing the Cry of the Poor

*A Journey to
Brokenness*

Bob Kline



Dedicated to the memory of

Emnet Yemane
(2002 - 2007)



Yemane Family
Getachew, Fikir (twin), Membere, Emnet (twin)

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, February, 2007

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A Journey to Brokenness – Bob Kline

“We may read each morning about human tragedies. But how often do we truly hear such people’s voices, or try with full force and determination to help? This I pledge to do.” Ban Ki-Moon

(“Wisdom of the ‘soft ear’ guides new UN leader”, London Free Press, June 2, 2007)

“If a man does not hear the cry of the poor, he himself will not be heard when he cries out.”
Proverbs 21: 13

Chapter 1. Preparation

During the summer of 2005, I made a decision that started me on a journey that will likely continue for the rest of my life. I’m not sure where it will take me, but I do know that it has already changed the way I look at the world and the way I live my life as a Christ-follower in the world. God has taught me lessons about poverty that I hope I will never forget.

A number of years ago I was challenged by some books dealing with the social responsibility of Christ-followers. For much of my walk as a maturing Christian, I had heard, read, and studied about being a witness for Jesus in a spiritual context. There is no doubt that this is an essential part of being a disciple of Christ. However, several authors I respected pointed out that being a disciple of Christ carries a biblical-mandated social responsibility as well, e.g. looking after orphans and widows, caring for the poor and oppressed, and working against injustice. A balanced Christ-follower will understand the importance of both evangelism and social action as dual priorities of holistic or integral ministry. Since that time, in addition to involvement and support of church ministries, I have supported various types of evangelistic and social ministries outside the church.

However, two years ago, being retired and on a one-year sabbatical from service in a leadership role in our church, I had extra time in which I wanted to do something different – something that would stretch me and renew my spiritual batteries. I decided to do a more in depth study of world poverty: what are the facts and statistics in 2005, what are various secular and Christian organizations doing, what resources can I find on the internet, and most importantly, what does the Bible have to say about our responsibility to the poor and the oppressed? I was quickly overwhelmed with information – not surprising in this age of information! But the really overwhelming information came from God’s Word – my eyes were opened to the many hundreds of verses in the Bible that speak about God’s care for the poor and oppressed, and His expectation that we would care too.

It occurred to me early on in my preliminary studies that it might be helpful for me to put together a 6-week course on this topic for our adult elective program at church. That helped me to focus on 6 manageable topics and the resources related to those topics. Ron Sider’s classic book (see references) helped immensely with this and I thank him for all that he has done both as an author and a practitioner of what he preaches to bring this whole issue to the table. The following are the topics I studied in detail with the help of Sider’s book and other resources: *Poverty in our world, God cares about justice for the poor and oppressed (2 sessions)*, *Biblical approach for understanding our responsibility as*

Christ-followers, Becoming part of the solution (2 sessions). I wanted our class not only to be informed about issues of poverty and injustice, but also to understand God's concern, and what we can do as individuals and as churches.

I completed the study in September and the course (*World Poverty – Can It Be Broken? Subtitle: Can We Be Broken?*) was offered in October/November. It was not a popular choice among the people who were taking electives, but for those who dared to investigate something different, I believe it was a positive, powerful experience.

“Command [those who are rich in this present world] to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share.” James 6: 18

There were many times we wept as we read what God had to say, and realized that when we read about “those who are rich in this world”, God was speaking about us. The extent and depth of world poverty is appalling – especially when viewed from the wealth and spending habits of the USA and Canada. I (the class) was gradually being moved toward brokenness and commitment to wanting to do something – it was evident as we discussed these things and prayed together at the end of each session.

For two weeks after the class had ended, I was wondering what I was going to do with all this new knowledge and responsibility. I felt burdened. I couldn't just put all this stuff on the shelf where all the other courses are that I have taught over the years: “There, that was good – I learned something and people enjoyed the course.” I kept asking if God could use me in this vast arena of human suffering and injustice? What could I do as an individual? I'm a retired university professor. I could teach this course to other people. That was a good idea – and I am still open to doing that if I can find someone to listen! I could also increase my financial contributions to reliable relief and development agencies. To do this better I can change my lifestyle – we talked about that in the course. That's a good idea and well worth doing, but *“Is there something else, Lord?”* I asked frequently in prayer. I have time, administrative skills, good health and some resources.

Chapter 2. Answered Prayer

“If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you.” John 15:7

It wasn't much later that an Ethiopian friend of mine phoned and asked if we could meet. We had known each other for about 2 years primarily because he brought his children to our summer church camp. We struck up a friendship and on several occasions got together for prayer for our respective churches. Dagim is a godly man who was an evangelist in Ethiopia prior to being asked to leave the country by a government unfriendly to evangelical Christians. He came to Canada in 1993. In June of 2005, he returned to Ethiopia to visit a number of the churches he had planted throughout the country during his years as an evangelist. He was stunned by the poverty he saw. His time in the affluent West had sensitized him to the unspeakable poverty in which the majority of the Ethiopian people live. When he was living and working there, he saw the spiritual poverty but was blind to the physical poverty. Now, with senses conditioned by 10 years of exposure to the Western World, he saw it, he smelled it, he experienced it as never before. He was broken and cried out to God, asking Him, *“What can I do to help my people?”*

God answered his prayer before he left Addis Ababa, as Dagim soon met Getachew, president of an Ethiopian NGO involved in development work. *Hope for Rural Children & Orphans (HORCO)* is a Christian-based Ethiopian charity providing schools, potable water, diversified agriculture, environmental protection, HIV/AIDS information, and support for orphans and vulnerable children in rural communities in central Ethiopia. They have been operating since 1995, primarily funded by grants from foreign embassies including Canada, USA, Japan, and several Scandinavian countries.

In a short time Dagim and Getachew developed a strong bond of Christian fellowship and a shared-burden for helping the poor people in their country. They decided that they would try to form a Canadian charity to help support the work of HORCO. Dagim returned to London and began to pray that God would lead him to a few Christ-followers who had a heart for the poor and an interest in being involved in developing a charitable organization in Canada to partner with HORCO Ethiopia. I had talked several times with Dagim on his return from Ethiopia but he never mentioned his vision to establish a new charity for Ethiopia – primarily because he did not know that God had given me a burden for the poor!

As a “closer” for my class on world poverty at the church, I had invited Dagim to come and speak to the class about the poverty he saw on his recent trip to Ethiopia. He brought a friend along who was visiting him from Ethiopia. Yes, it was Getachew! We had a good discussion with Dagim, and Getachew described his experience with development projects. It was a good way to close the class with some first-hand reports from a country that by any measure is among the 3 to 5 poorest countries in the world. I and the class members were moved by what we heard. From Dagim’s perspective it was a very exciting evening because he discovered that I had an interest in poverty!

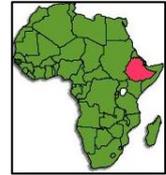
And thus it was that not long after the class ended, God answered my prayer. I found myself sitting with Dagim and Getachew, hearing their vision and praying together for God’s leading for me as to whether or not I should consider becoming a Board Member for a new Ontario Corporation that Getachew and some friends in Toronto had already established. It was called *Hope for Rural Children & Orphans (HORCO)*! I left there very excited and humbled, amazed with what appeared to be a direct answer to my prayer for an opportunity to be involved in helping poor people in a very needy country. I talked with my wife, Linda, and some others about this, prayed for clear direction from God, and in a few days responded to Dagim and Getachew with an enthusiastic “yes”. Although I was enthusiastic I was very apprehensive. For the last 30 years I taught Physiology and ran a research lab – what did I know about setting up a Canadian charity and raising money for a foreign development organization? For that matter, what did any of the newly recruited Board Members know? I later discovered that Ethiopians have tremendous respect for Canadians and they believe that all Canadians can do anything, especially a “professor”!

So began my involvement with “HORCO Canada”, with much encouragement and prayer support from Dagim. In December 2005, we had our inaugural meeting of the Board. As Secretary/Treasurer (and a retired member of the Board), I became pretty much responsible for the day-to-day operation of HORCO. I really felt called to this, and wanted to commit time and resources to get this going. I soon found there was a lot more to do in getting HORCO organized before we actually started to do something! The learning curve was steep for most of 2006, as we sought legal help to make sure we were on the right track in our relationship with HORCO Ethiopia. It is not a simple matter these days, since “911”, to establish a registered charity whose sole purpose is to send money overseas to a relatively unknown NGO operating in a developing country! The Canadian Government is

suspicious of such operations and links, and with good reason. Unfortunately this has been a long process that is still not settled as I write this in the spring of 2007! [Note: HORCO Canada became a registered Canadian Charity in June, 2008.]

Chapter 3. Ethiopia

It was spring of 2006 that I began to think about a trip to Ethiopia. I reasoned that if I really wanted to be able to present the needs of the country and its people to potential donors here in Canada, then I would have to go there to see firsthand what those needs were. In addition, since HORCO Ethiopia was to be our sole partner in implementing the development work we would be supporting, I felt the need to meet the HORCO staff and see their work in the field. I had to have confidence in them and their work in order to have confidence to ask for significant donations. This would eventually be important also for future grant applications to the Canadian Government. HORCO Ethiopia had to be a trustworthy organization with a good track record and a good reputation among the people they worked with and other NGOs.



I shared this idea with other Board Members, especially Dagim, since if I went, I wanted him to go along as our guide. I also hoped that Linda would go along so that we could both experience this together. For me to go without her would mean I would likely have a life-changing experience that she would not be a part of. I didn't want that to be the case. Over time, with prayer and discussion, she eventually decided to join the team, feeling somewhat apprehensive but nevertheless led by God to do this. I was thrilled. Dagim was thrilled from the start, but having made the journey just a year earlier, he did not have the resources to go again so soon. I committed to providing full funding for him, not knowing that God would again provide in ways I had not expected. A few months before we actually made the trip, my brother and his wife asked about our plans, and if we needed any help. They totally surprised me. I told them about my commitment to Dagim and that I would gratefully accept anything they wished to provide. They gave me a US check which when converted to CDN dollars provided all but about \$25 of Dagim's roundtrip flight to Addis Ababa! (Thank you, Dick and Sharon.)

Our final "team" member for the trip was Chris Chadwick, a YFC staff member who was looking for African contacts to help with setting up summer missions trips for Canadian youth. After much reading and internet surfing we set a date for February, 2007. It was a good time of the year because it was the dry season and because it was a low time for tourism, i.e., lots of sun, fewer tourists, and lower prices! What Canadian would not want to go to a place that advertises "13 months of sunshine"? (The reason they have 13 months is because they use the Julian Calendar. That also means that the Ethiopian date is 7 years behind us – it is now still 1999! September 11th is their New Year, meaning that Ethiopians will be celebrating the arrival of the New Millennium at that time! They are not worried about any Y2K problems, but instead are planning a big party for the world! (www.ethiopia2000.com)



Our trip was truly bathed in prayer, not just by us, but by many family and friends who said they were praying for us. One in particular was Dagim's wife Denku. She was profoundly moved by our commitment to provide for Dagim's expenses. They invited Linda and me over to their house just a few days before we left on our journey. She shared with

tears what a blessing all of this was for her and Dagim, as he had been looking for a way to help his people for a number of years, and had never found something that he could do or a person who expressed an interest in doing something with him. This was a major burden for him. It turns out that not only was Dagim an answer to my prayer, but I was an answer to their prayers! Amazing how God works.

Our 2-week trip had three main objectives: 1) to see the people and the country that we have heard and read so much about in terms of poverty, 2) to get to know HORCO Ethiopia and see some of its project sites, and 3) to take a few days to visit some major tourist sites. The Ethiopian Ambassador to Canada challenged me not just to see the poverty but also to see some of the beauty and uniqueness of the country. I won't go into a lot of detail about our trip, because there is too much to say and without the photos that go with the story it is not very interesting. We did see poverty – everywhere. "Unspeakable poverty" is what Linda called it. I called it "biblical poverty", because some of the poor people we saw were as I imagined in Jesus' time: both young and old, dressed in rags, crippled with all kind of conditions, at times crawling after us for money. (I couldn't bring myself to take photographs of these people – they have so little dignity as it is.) I don't want to dwell on this, because although there is significant poverty by our standards wherever you looked (Addis Ababa has about 5 million people and 90% of the city is



classified as "slums"), the majority of the people are not destitute and reduced to begging. Granted, they don't have much, but we found people ready to smile and happy to welcome us. We did not have a sense of fear or uncomfortableness when walking in the city, except the kids who were always asking for money or trying to sell us

something were a bit unnerving! It was hard not to give them something. Actually we did when we could do it somewhat discretely, otherwise there would be a flock of them in no time! This aspect of the trip was emotionally draining, and it lasted for the whole time we were there. Objective 1 was accomplished.



I can't say enough about the HORCO people and others we met and spent time

with. Most if not all of them were Christians – many who came through the underground church when the Communists were in power. They still live in challenging conditions, yet they are joyful and hopeful – truly wonderful, generous and kind people who are committed to making a difference in their country. We learned a lot about them (and from them) regarding faith, prayer, sacrifice, commitment and fellowship. Many of them could easily

leave Ethiopia to go elsewhere, but they stay because that is where God wants them to be. The HORCO project sites we visited were a real blessing – the kids in the schools were amazing. They swarmed us in a friendly way and loved to see their pictures on the digital cameras we had. The teachers are highly committed but the teaching resources are pitiful, as are the classroom conditions, e.g. 75 (even 90 sometimes) kids per room with one teacher! It was hard to keep from weeping – lots of deep breaths and the excitement of the kids all around us kept us from breaking down.

A visit to a rural farm area where Getachew was born was unforgettable as we were invited into a farmer's "house". It was pretty primitive by our standards, but as a "wealthy"



farmer he did have a solar panel in the roof to generate enough power to light a new, energy-efficient fluorescent bulb 4 hours a night. We also saw potable water supplies provided by HORCO and new agricultural crops being introduced. All-in-all, our time with HORCO was well spent. We laughed, we cried, we were humbled, we prayed, and we actually took a 4-wheel drive off the road (if you

can call the road a road!). I have no problem being enthusiastic about raising money to support development projects of these amazing people. Objective 2 was accomplished.

For three days during the 2nd week we did some sight-seeing. Ethiopia has some amazing historical sites, and we were able to visit two of these by using Ethiopian Airlines rather than trying to go overland. The City of Lalibela has “rock hewn” churches from the 12th century that have been designated by the UN as a World Heritage Site (<http://www.worldheritagesite.org/sites/lalibela.html>).

The trip was a bit costly by air, but we were not disappointed. Hidden among the poverty of the relatively small city are 11 “underground” churches literally hewn from the massive underground rock formations. Incredible. There is amazing biblical imagery in each church (similar to stained glass windows in European



Cathedrals) and the churches are still actively used by the Ethiopian Orthodox Church today. The next stop was Axum, an ancient capital city near the northern border, known for its amazing obelisks. We learned a lot of history about some early civilizations from exceptional guides, including stories about the Queen of Sheba, King Solomon, and the Ark of the Covenant. These two cities were an unforgettable side-bar to our original purpose for visiting

Ethiopia, and it was in Axum that I had an encounter with God to help me along the journey to “*hearing the cry of the poor*”.

Chapter 4. Understanding

I didn’t realize that God had yet another purpose for this trip: to move me toward a level of *brokenness* that comes from *understanding* what it is like for people who live in abject poverty. I had read about poverty and understood the complex causes of poverty. Now I had seen full-blown poverty of the type that is not caused by lifestyle choices – Ethiopians call it a curse on their country. I had seen about as much poverty as I could take in less than 2 weeks. Yes, I was emotionally moved and realized the injustice of it all. There was both a heart and a mind response. If I had not made a previous commitment to be involved through HORCO, I think I would have been overwhelmed with guilt and feelings of helplessness. However, I was resolved to do what I could do to make a small difference. But there was something deeper I needed – a sense of really feeling the plight of these people and having a partial understanding of what it means to live in poverty. Only then could I be broken over world poverty, broken before God, and really “*hear the cry of the poor*”.

To help me along this journey to brokenness, God used the trip to Ethiopia in two ways: 1) to show me what poverty looks like and smells like, and 2) to give me a gentle but important lesson of what it is like to live in poverty. The former was accomplished as described above. The latter was accomplished by the still small voice of God, and some pesky mosquitos. I wasn’t led to live out in the streets for a couple days without food, but rather God dealt more gently with me when He spoke to me the night we stayed in Axum. It seems that there were a number of things I had experienced while in Ethiopia that had meaning beyond the experience itself. I quote from my journal entries:



Monday pm, Feb. 19

“All of us were now exhausted.[We had had a full day touring Axum, which was detailed in the rest of the journal entry.] After dinner we hit the sack, after I first killed 6 mosquitoes in the room. Now for a good night’s rest. Tiring, amazing day. There is much the world does not know about Ethiopia.”

Tuesday am, Feb. 20

“Just came through the last 10 hours of both the worst night and the best night of the trip. It was the worst as there were more than 6 mosquitoes in the room when we went to bed! [we were not in a malaria area thankfully]. There were more! It’s not that we were overwhelmed with them, but rather they came at me one-at-a-time for what seemed to be half the night. Honestly, with the lights out and lying in bed, within 5 minutes there was the dreaded buzz in my ear. Springing out of bed and flicking on the bed light I could see where it had landed, then smash. Victory! Back to bed feeling satisfied, then... buzz. This went on for several hours and Linda seemed to be sleeping through it all. It was me they were targeting. [I also found out later that Dagim had no mosquitoes in his room, although Chris did have some.] Finally, at some point, I was so tired I just resigned myself to the fact that there was nothing I could do. I wrapped the sheet over as much of my head as possible and tried to go to sleep. I kept one hand over my head under the sheet to swat at the mosquitoes as the little buzzing appeared. There may have been a lot or just a few – I didn’t care anymore – but I was not going to be bitten by having exposed body parts. It was a restless sleep. (I found out later that Linda slept that way too after I stopped being the focus of the attacks.)

The best part of the night began sometime before daybreak – God spoke to me. It was an incredible eye-opening experience of what has been going on the past several days. I will never forget it. I wept as I began to understand. In the last few days God in His mercy and grace has been gently pushing me to a deeper understanding of what it means to be poor. As one who is “rich in this world”, I have never really experienced poverty.”

Before I continue with the story, I want to make it clear that my experiences were but a slight aggravation to my normal lifestyle. I am even embarrassed to say they were images of what it is to live in poverty. Nevertheless, this is what God used to show me. I don’t claim that I actually experienced poverty, but rather that these situations helped me to better understand and to have more empathy than I had previously for those who do live in poverty. Remember this is a journey – I have not yet arrived - and maybe I never will.

“Can overfed, comfortably clothed, and luxuriously housed persons understand poverty?” Ron Sider

I continue with the Tuesday’s journaling:

“God said I have given you the following experiences as gentle yet specific images of what it is like to live in poverty.”

Your persistent cough you have had since you got here is to represent chronic illness that afflicts many in poverty. This is life. [For the poor in Ethiopia there is little

health care. We saw places that advertised 'high level health care' – i.e., not for the poor.]

Your sudden laryngitis that appeared Saturday morning and is just now phasing out [actually I still have a bit of it] is to remind you that the poor have no voice. Few speak for the poor and the poor themselves are heard by few. So many other voices crowd out the discussion. Prov. 21: 13 – 'If a man does not hear the cry of the poor, he himself will not be heard when he cries out.' [I wonder if this applies to our prayers to God? Could my neglect of the poor be hindering my prayers? Could neglect of the poor be hindering the prayers of the churches in the West?]

At hotels in Lalibela and Axum we experienced no water or no hot water at times. It's possible to just write this off as 'TIA' [read 'this is Africa'] - an annoyance you have to put up with, but not live with. God said this is an object lesson for you who never lack anything. The poor you have seen in Ethiopia have restricted access to potable water and many/most would have no access to hot water unless it is heated over a fire. You and your family take for granted an unlimited access to clean water, hot and cold, as a right-of-life in Canada. The poor may have to spend a significant part of each day carrying jugs to provide limited water, sometimes of questionable quality, for their families. [actually women and children are given this task]. Don't take my good gifts to you for granted.

Finally, the mosquitoes! There are two things here:

The mosquitoes are real – the poor live with them every night. They have little protection from nature. Even if they do have mosquito netting, the 'mosquito hum' around the netting is incessant – until morning when they go to sleep and you have to get up and go to work (if you have work). [I have read that one child dies of malaria every minute somewhere in the world. I often wonder if we had malaria in North America if we would have invested more in research, as we did with AIDS once we were affected by it too. But that is yet another lesson to be learned about the poor – few really care, and there is no money to be made there.]

There is a far deeper image in this mosquito thing that I want you to understand. Although the poor may struggle and struggle against odds to survive, at some point there is just a giving up. There is nothing that can be done except absorb the pain. This is a loss of hope. If you had enough courage to look into the eyes of some of the poor people you have seen on this trip, you would see it. When there is a loss of hope it is over. [I believe this is why poor people have a special place in the heart of God – He offers hope, and they, more than rich folks, realize their need for hope and are eager to accept what He offers. It is not a crutch or a hand-out, but life.]

Thus ended my encounter with God. And so I said, "What do you want me to do with this?" He said, "Share it as part of your Ethiopian experience – help people to hear the cry of the poor."

Chapter 5. Brokenness

You could say that I am over spiritualizing a dream I had. These were just annoyances that anybody else could have and not think anything of it. "TIA!" I maintain it was the voice of God, spoken for a purpose. I am broken before God as I realize that

“there but for the grace of God am I”. I am broken before God as I realize that sins of omissions include having abundant resources and failing to provide for the poor and oppressed – ignoring them in their desperate situation. I am broken before God as I realize that sins of commission include my lifestyle choices that can have a far-reaching negative impact on the poor and oppressed, i.e., I am part of the problem. I am broken before God as I realize that I have not had a heart for the poor and oppressed for most of my life. There is a mindset of selfishness that we in the West, Christians included, have had as God has prospered us. We may be truly thankful for the blessings, but in our “blindness,” “deafness,” apathy, or indifference, fail to share the blessings with others.

All of these things are against the biblical mandates to be generous, to look after orphans and widows, to minister to the poor and oppressed, and to work against injustice. We ask God why suffering exists, and He responds, *“Because you don’t care.”* Brokenness is coming to a knowledge that I have failed to love my neighbor as myself, and in failing that, I have failed to love God with all my heart, and all my soul, and all my mind, and all my strength. Brokenness is coming to God to confess this sin and ask for strength to change, because I now understand.... I have studied God’s Word, I have seen the plight of poor people created in the image of God, I have heard from the Spirit of God, and I am beginning to *“hear the cry of the poor”*.

God gave me one final reminder of the plight of people who live in poverty – it was a difficult one, and it was definitely not a dream. About two months after returning from Ethiopia I received an email from Getachew (President of HORCO Ethiopia) asking for prayer for his 5 year-old daughter, Emnet, who seemed to have developed signs and symptoms of leukemia. Because a proper test for leukemia could not be obtained in Addis Ababa, they borrowed a considerable sum of money to have the test done in Bangkok, Thailand. It was positive, they returned home and she was dead in two weeks because they had no prospect for treatment. She never received the “teddy bear” we sent her. If the little girl had been in Canada she likely would have had an 85% chance of survival, and the initial treatment and long-term follow-up would have been provided by government resources. I wonder how many times this scenario is repeated on a daily basis in countries where health care is almost non-existent for most of the people.

Epilogue

Poverty is a complex issue - there is no simple definition of what it means to be poor, and there is no single reason why a person is poor. Generally, “being poor” is to be economically disadvantaged, but this has a whole range of meanings and causes.

“Poverty is not the absence of material goods but the lack of power to change one’s position.” Dr. John Volmink

When the Bible speaks of “the poor” (not in the context of those who are spiritually poor), it is referring primarily to those who are economically impoverished by calamity or exploitation (oppression), although it also recognizes that poverty can result from poor lifestyle choices.

I believe that many people are indifferent to the cry of the poor because they believe that poverty, especially in Western countries, is due to a large extent to bad lifestyle choices of individuals or families. (There is some truth to this way of thinking, although the poor in Canada are increasingly made up of recent immigrants who have trouble finding work or adapting to our culture.) Sometimes it is hard to be sympathetic or

empathetic with this type of poverty, and thus relief of poverty in general is not something we feel overly compelled to be involved in. In fact some have suggested that a Holy Spirit induced transformation of the mind is the only long-term solution to lifestyle-related poverty.

The unspeakable, wide-spread poverty we saw in Ethiopia, which is multiplied many times over in developing countries throughout the world, is not a lifestyle-induced poverty - unless of course we realize that it is our lifestyle that contributes to keeping those people in poverty! Did you know that Canadians spent over \$15 **billion** last year in gambling? That figure is twice the dollars given to charities! To put this in context, HORCO Canada provided school supplies and uniforms for 250 Ethiopian children who lost everything in flooding and mud slides in 2007. Total cost: \$5,000; that is just \$20 per child!

So, what can I do? What can you do? For the poverty found in developing countries it is primarily a question of resources and choices. We have the resources and the choices – they don't. (Actually, the poor do have resources, they just need help discovering them and using them.) How we in the West choose as individuals to use our resources is one of the keys to unlocking the grip of poverty.

“One of the most astounding things about the affluent minority is that we honestly think we have barely enough to survive in modest comfort.” Ron Sider

Perhaps we need a spiritual transformation of the mind!

Some Food for Thought

For additional reading, I strongly recommend Ron Sider's, *“Rich Christians in a Age of Hunger – moving from affluence to generosity”*, W Publishing Group, 1997. The poverty statistics in this book are now dated, but Sider's treatment of the question, *“Does God care for the poor?”* and his challenges for the Christian community are powerful and timeless.

There are many web sites that provide information about world poverty and how you can be involved. Some Christian-based sites:

Canadian Food for the Hungry (www.cfh.ca)
Compassion Canada (www.compassion.ca)
World Vision Canada (www.worldvision.ca)
Micah Challenge (www.micahchallenge.ca)

Other sites:

www.one.org,
www.makepovertyhistory.ca
www.un.org/millenniumgoals

If you are interested in talking with me about how you might be involved with HORCO Canada, you can contact me at bob@horco.ca or 519-649-0271. We are currently investigating possibilities for our first project which is to provide improved access to potable water and sanitation for communities living about 85 km E of Addis Ababa. In this region the daily trek for potable water is 15-20 km, a task which falls upon mainly the women and children. Potable water sources will be provided by “protecting” natural springs

which surface in this area. Sanitation will be improved by constructing pit latrines. Both of these approaches have been used successfully in this region by HORCO Ethiopia. The communities involved have asked HORCO Ethiopia for help, and they themselves will be providing unskilled labor and wood materials, and upon completion, several members of the community will be trained by professional water technicians to maintain the facilities. Details of the project and how to get involved are available at www.horco.ca.



June, 2007



Bob with a young boy from Getachew's home village.

Updates

1. After receiving charitable status in June, 2008, we began raising funds for our first water/sanitation project to be implemented in 2009. Numerous delays were encountered due to a prolonged rainy season and impassable roads, over 8 months of no activity as a result of new NGO legislation passed by the Ethiopian Government, and a growing inflation rate which reached >40%. In addition, our affiliated NGO had to reorganize because of the legislation, resulting in loss of resources and personnel. They are now known as *Hope for Rural Children*, with a new Executive Director, Dr. Getenesh Sintayehu, who has a PhD in Agricultural Economics. She is very well qualified to run the NGO, she interacts well with rural communities, and she has a wonderful passion for the children.



2. We did finally complete our first water/sanitation project the summer of 2010, in collaboration with the Community of Lem Lem in the Gimbichu District. In May, 400 families (about 2,400 adults and children) began to access the facilities. We are grateful for our supporters who helped us raise the \$26,000 required to protect 3 springs, build a large reservoir, washing tables and a community pit latrine.



3. The summer of 2011, again in partnership with Dr. Getenesh, we helped the Dire Kebele Community construct their own water facility. District Water Officials said it was a model facility for other communities in this area where natural springs are abundant.



4. Chris, our YFC travelling companion to Ethiopia in 2007, returned from taking his first short-term missions team to Botswana in 2011! The initial contacts he made in Ethiopia, and in subsequent visits to Kenya and South Africa, have opened the doors wide for him to partner with YFC groups in several African countries.

5. I refined and expanded the poverty course, and taught it in 6 area churches. Hopefully more and more people will be “hearing the cry of the poor”.

6. Dagim, Chris and I again visited Ethiopia in April of 2012. Our 3rd project is underway in partnership with another NGO, the Ethiopian Kale Heywet Church Development Office. In this facility we are linking a large reservoir to a Government water pipeline thereby providing unlimited water supply 24/7 for several villages in the area.



June, 2012