

2-2009

All in the family of God

Liberty University

Follow this and additional works at: http://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/lj_2009_feb

Recommended Citation

Liberty University, "All in the family of God" (2009). *February/March 2009*. Paper 1.
http://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/lj_2009_feb/1

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the 2009 at DigitalCommons@Liberty University. It has been accepted for inclusion in February/March 2009 by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@Liberty University. For more information, please contact scholarlycommunication@liberty.edu.



All in the family of God

February 01, 2009 | Johnnie Moore

ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA — One year ago Aschalew, Genet and Yesalemush Kinfe were three of the Developing World’s 143 million orphaned and abandoned children. These Ethiopian siblings had been housed for seven years in two separate orphanages after the tragic death of their father, and the ensuing reality that their poor, blind mother was incapable of caring for them.

Aschalew, the 17-year-old brother of Genet, 15, and Yesalemush, 14, was settling into a harsh reality. He and his sisters would soon be past adoption age, and they would be forced to fend for themselves in the crowded alleyways of Addis Ababa, the fourth-largest city in Africa.

After many years of praying for a family, it was time for “plan B.”

Aschalew, trying his hardest as the big brother to help his sisters see hope in the future, was studying hard for the Ethiopian national exams. Unfortunately, he rarely saw his sisters, who were housed in another orphanage. Often Aschalew would try to allay his worry for Genet and Yesalemush through his evening prayers.

While the pages of Ethiopian history are filled with stories of old world glory from ancient cities like Gondar and Aksum, the nation — said to be birthed from progeny of King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba — is much different now.

Around 40 percent of the population of Ethiopia lives in abject poverty, largely the result of almost 20 years of a brutal socialist regime. Nearly every street in Ethiopia is sandwiched in by

roadside shanties with people begging and pleading for enough money to feed their children for one more day.

This is the fate of many of Ethiopia's orphans and was the worst fear of the Kinfe siblings.

Enter Liberty University

Half the world away, God was still working on "Kinfe plan A."

Liberty University was in the middle of Spiritual Emphasis Week, led by evangelist David Nasser. Thousands of students were piled into the Vines Center with open hearts, praying for the Lord to do something miraculous during this beginning-of-the-year revival.

Adoption documentary

 [View more photos from Johnnie's trip to Ethiopia with the Wolfe family](#)

Nasser was challenging the student body to match their actions with their confessions through a special offering that would be taken on the following evening, with all the money going toward changing the destiny of people for Christ around the globe.

Nasser showed a picture of three Ethiopian teenagers he had learned about through Scott Brown, the Executive Vice President of the Gladney Center for Adoption, and said that the money collected could be used to make a difference in these three orphans' lives. It could be used to move this sibling group from "unlikely to be adopted" to "likely to be adopted." All that would be left was to find a family.

The next night just over 4,000 Liberty students donated a staggering \$80,000.

Kristin Wolfe, an LU senior, was in the crowd during Nasser's presentation.

"When they showed the picture of the three kids, I said to myself, 'I have to call my family.'" Before the final "amen" Kristin had sent a text message to her mother in Michigan.

Kristin's parents, Randy and Kathy, had just visited an adoption agency two days earlier as the next step in a journey that had begun with a Thanksgiving conversation between Randy, Kathy, Kristin, Brad and Bonny about the prospect of the Wolfes adopting.

In a fantastic act of sovereignty, involving a family of five Michiganders, thousands of students in Virginia, and three unaware kids in Ethiopia, God was conspiring a miracle of reconciliation. It was Psalm 27:10 in action: "When your mother and father leave you, the Lord will take you up."

Ten months later I travelled to Ethiopia with the Wolfes to retrieve their three newly adopted children, an adoption fully funded by the student body of Liberty University, and I watched the miracle.

Students bent upon changing the world



In only one year after their initial Thanksgiving adoption conversation the Wolfes had to buy a larger dining table for Thanksgiving 2008. The five-member “Wolfepack,” as they call themselves, had become “eight” thanks to the generosity of Liberty’s students.

“It’s interesting how many times we’ve been asked, ‘Is it overwhelming that you’re adopting three kids? Is it overwhelming that they’re from Ethiopia, they’re learning English, they’re teenagers, you already have these three kids, they’re all gonna be in college?’” said Randy. “And really, none of that is terribly overwhelming for us. What has overwhelmed us is that these [Liberty] kids did what they did.”

Liberty helps secure their future

So that the “university might match the generosity of its students,” Chancellor Jerry Falwell, Jr. has offered fulltuition scholarships to each of the Kinfе siblings should they choose to attend Liberty University.

Aschalew, a studious devourer of books, received high scores on the Ethiopian national exams, which makes it no surprise that he read for nearly the entire 16-hour flight to the United States.

“After he read each of the magazines on the airplane, he started reading the air sickness bag, then the safety instructions, so we finally let him borrow a book,” recalls his brother, Brad.

When Randy told Aschalew of his scholarship to Liberty University, his face was painted with a cheekto- cheek smile as he said, “Does that mean I get to read books?”

Randy Wolfe placed his hand on the shoulder of his African son and said, “Liberty University is the college where Kristin and Brad go to school. Chancellor Falwell has granted you, Genet, and Yesalemush the ability to come to school to learn as much as you want. You’ll have books and whole libraries. You’ll have teachers and professors. Whenever you’re ready, it’s available to you, as much learning and as much study as you want.”

Aschalew cried.

It's just the beginning



Later on, I was sitting with the three kids in the living room of the Ethiopian Guest Home, and I asked each of them about what they were feeling and thinking about their new family.

Genet fought through her broken English to say, “We love them, and we’re happy that we’re going to be their family.”

Aschalew said in better English, “I love them. They are a wonderful family, and words cannot express what they have done for us.”

Yesalemush said something I’ll never forget: “I’m so happy ... I am praying that my friends in the orphanage to also have a family.”

Genet chimed right in, “Can we find family for our other friends?”

Through the beginning of tears I replied, “We will try.”

One week later I read an Associated Press article citing the State Department’s latest adoption statistics: “The number of foreign children being adopted fell 12 percent in the past year, reaching the lowest level since 1999.”

I thought, while we can't solve all the world's problems and save all the world's children, we must do something. This time, we changed the lives of three.

Hopefully, this is just the beginning.