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# BLESSING THE CHILDREN POST



## Caring for the Orphans & Widows

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## PRAISE REPORT: GET UP & WALK!

God works in many different ways. We can always see His powerful hand in action. Yet the amazing thing about the way that God works is not his ability to do things but it is the fact that he chooses to work through us, even though all of our faults and failures. In the past God used people to perform miracles and wonders. And as one family witnessed today, that same God is still working through His people.

That person is Tigist; a BCI social worker who knew Abel and his family for quite a while.

In the meantime, out of millions of orphaned and needy children in the world, one family in the United States wanted to sponsor a child specifically under Blessing the Children in the small town of Debre Zeyit, Ethiopia. Amazingly enough, the sponsor requested a boy who is 3-4 years old.

When Tigist heard about such an opportunity she knew that God had prepared it for Abel. It was God's divine plan to work through that specific family to bring happiness and a solution to Abel and his family who had felt hopeless for so long.

Since then Abel has joined the BCI family and has begun receiving support. He has seen the best doctors in Ethiopia and his MRI shows perfect spine and legs. The only thing that he needed was vitamins and minerals and God provided those through his sponsor, who not only provides his monthly support but has also generously supplied additional vitamins.

In addition to the vitamins, which need to be refrigerated, God has provided for Abel through a BCI missionary who bought a refrigerator for the family. The missionary also purchased a month's supply of nutritious food for little Abel.

Currently Abel is getting stronger by the day and we believe he will be walking soon, much to the joy of his mother. We praise God for what he has done for this family. Indeed God can work in many different ways. He can use simple words like "Get up and walk!" or he can use good Samaritans like Abel's sponsor and BCI missionaries. He can always make a way.



This story is about Abel Hagos, a three year old boy who lives with his mother and two of his sisters in a tiny rented house. Just like any other three year old boy, Abel is very energetic and loves to play games and laugh. But this is where Abel's similarity to other three year old's ends. Abel has been diagnosed with Rickets, which is described as a softening of the bones predominantly caused by Vitamin D deficiency, potentially leading to fractures and

deformity. Rickets is also among the most frequent childhood diseases in many developing countries. Because of this disease, Abel has never been able to walk, even though his twin sister is able to.

This disease has been heartbreaking for Abel's mother because children are meant to grow and develop, to have their first steps. But those first steps have never come for Abel. Abel's mother, as much as she would have loved to see her only son walk, had very little resources to find a solution for her son's disease. However, as any loving mother would do, she spent all that she had on treatments, although none of them had any effect. But what is impossible for men is always possible for God. One person believed just that; that God can provide for little Abel.



**KEITH V. STRAWN**  
FOUNDER & PRESIDENT

Dear friends,

Please join us in this edition of the Post for a story about how the unseen heroes of Blessing the Children are being honored! On the cover you'll find a praise report about Abel Hagos, a little boy with a big need.

Inside you will also find the conclusion of a mission trip experience from a past team member and this edition's highlights feature pictures of the The BCI Academy's new basketball court!

Thank you for your support and continued prayers. Because of you, we are touching lives in Ethiopia.

Abundant blessings,

## UNSEEN HEROES

When most missionaries come to serve with Blessing the Children they focus all of their attention and effort on the children in the program. This is a great opportunity for the children to be exposed to people from different cultures. These missionaries often bless the children by bringing clothes, shoes, toys, and health supplies. The missionaries also purchase items for the children such as beds, mattresses, and blankets while they are here. We also have had missionaries prepare programs for the children such as VBS and drama camps.

But recently, we had a group of people that wanted to not only bless the children while they were here but one of their major goals was to bless the mothers and guardians of the program children. This team from Faith Community Baptist Church in Alberta, Canada came with a plan to hold an event for the unseen heroes of the BCI program.



Many of the guardians in the BCI program are making sacrifices for their family to raise other people's children. These women have taken in neighbors, extended family members, and even strangers that have needed a place to live. They are truly living out Matthew 25 where God says we are to take care of these least of these.

This is also what the team from Canada did. They picked out a group of poor women in Debre Zeit, Ethiopia that society has called the least of these and they decided to serve them.

They planned an event that they only invited the mothers and guardians to attend. This was a day that much planning and prayer went into. They had a huge support system backing them from their church and community in Canada. Much prayer went into this event.

The day started with all of the women gathered together singing praises to our Lord. Next, Rachel Hildebrand (pastor's wife of Faith Community Baptist Church) shared a message titled "What do you need God to do for you?" She talked about how everyone, rich or poor, needs something from God. We are all the same to the core in that we all need something from Him. It may be material needs, salvation, physical healing, emotional support, or any number of things. An invitation was given for the women to be able to come forth and receive prayer for the things that they needed in their life. One of the BCI moms came forward and accepted Jesus as her Savior!!

After Rachel's talk the women were divided into groups of

four. There were four "stations" that the women cycled through. The "stations" were: a talk on personal hygiene, a talk on nutrition, a talk on menstrual hygiene, and a "spa" station where they could get manicures.

The women were then fed lunch and were given an opportunity to socialize. But that wasn't all. The team from Canada had a gift bag for each lady, that were full of toiletries. The women had a great time opening everything. They were smelling things and trying on lotions and finger nail polish. Each gift bag had a surprise gift in it. Each bag contained a business card for Blessing the Children Canada (BCC). The ladies were instructed to take the business card to a local shop that we partner with. When they did this they were able to exchange the business card for a new bra and a new pair of underwear. The women were so excited about this!

This was such a successful event for our ladies. They were so surprised and touched that a group all the way from Canada would think about them in this way. Many of the women remarked that all of the programs up until now have been geared towards the children but they were so happy that someone thought of them and allowed them to have this special day.

This was such a special day. We pray that this day encouraged our moms and allowed them to see how important their roles are. We also pray that the women remember this day and know that their efforts and sacrifices do not go unnoticed. The Bible says we are to give honor where honor is due and we are so grateful that this group thought to honor our ladies.



## A BLESSING TO BEREKET CONTINUED...

A MISSION TRIP EXPERIENCE BY SUSAN S.

*Continued from July's newsletter, this is the conclusion of an article written by a past team member about her very memorable trip to Ethiopia with Blessing the Children.*

Friday morning dawned clear and full of anticipation. The time was filled with washing and drying my own bed sheets and picking out some of my own clothes to give to Emebeat. A quick trip to town was made to buy a mattress, blanket, floor mat and other necessities.



Finally we were on our way to pick up Emebeat. She had her few belongings neatly packed up and swiftly loaded. A small crowd of women had gathered to say goodbye to Bereket and her mom.

I caught glimpses of some of the ladies faces, their eyes were

laced with happiness yet displaying a deep longing for freedom. I once again began to weep in my own inability to rescue them all. How could I only take one? I wanted to gather them all up and help them to freedom. But instead I held tightly to the small girl-child that was safe in my arms and thanked God that at least this tiny life would be eternally impacted that day. Another stop was made for coffee, sugar, lentils, spices and a wispy broom and then we were off to their new home. The air was alive with life and hope and laughter! Even the Bajaj driver seemed intrigued and eagerly helped to unload the mattress and small mound of bins and washtubs. Emebeat and I quickly got to work unrolling the mat and fixing the bed. How was it possible that a small mud hut could feel like a mansion? *It did.*

As dusk began falling on the courtyard we prepared to leave, waving goodbye with the promise to return soon for coffee!

In the meantime Randy decided to surprise Emebeat and build her a bed frame. The next few days he worked on constructing it. On the day we scheduled to have coffee with Emebeat in her new home we added the finishing touches of stain to the bed frame. We added a personalized note written in Amharic on the interior boards.

We arrived at their home and found Bereket smiling at the gate! I was in awe at the change in both of them. They were both clean, fresh and glowing with joy! My heart was so so happy. Emebeat seemed thrilled with the bed frame and was nearly giddy as she began roasting coffee beans.

I sat there not only drinking in the rich, sweet coffee but also the amazing changes in the two beautiful faces in front of me. Faces that initially were expressionless were now overflowing with giggles and fun! Bereket scampered about and played happily on the bright yellow mat. She even threw a small temper tantrum when forbidden to touch something, even in that moment my heart soared because before me was an entirely changed girl. In place of the blank robotic face were the natural emotions and expressions of a normal child. Their surroundings had gone from bleak to bright and suddenly their future was full of a splash of normal and a whole lot of HOPE.

In the middle of so much desperate need, God broke through the darkness and shone his light into a wounded heart and allowed us the honor of being his vessels to set in motion the change of a lifetime. The joy of walking through the door of opportunity God opened before us. The chance to pour love into a woman who was lost in a world of mere survival and sin.

The incredible privilege of embracing the heart of a child and truly being a "Blessing" to Bereket!



## HIGHLIGHTS

BCI ACADEMY AWARDS FOR ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

