



the Perennial Path

Seeding Change in Orphans' Lives Worldwide

Journey to Ethiopia

Representatives of Brittany's Hope Travel to Injibara, Ethiopia

by Dr. Bradley Davidson, Board Member

I had no idea how difficult it would be to write about our trip to Ethiopia. So much happened in those five days!

The name "Ethiopia" conjures a number of images: the amazing speed and endurance of East Africa's marathon runners, the grand nostalgia of the Queen of Sheba and King Solomon, rock-hewn Coptic Churches, war and border disputes with Eritrea and Somalia, the desperate famine of the mid 1980's, and extreme poverty. Ethiopia is considered to be the oldest independent country in sub-Saharan Africa, the birthplace of coffee and the final resting place of the Ark of the Covenant.

13% of all children in Ethiopia are orphaned.

Despite its rich history, Ethiopia is ranked 169th out of 177 countries on the United Nations' Human Development Index, which measures areas of life expectancy, literacy, education, and standards of living. Disease has taken a tremendous toll on the country—often due to preventable diseases such as malaria because of the lack of public health measures and treatment. By the year 2000, 25% of the 12 million children orphaned by HIV in sub-Saharan Africa lived in Ethiopia and Nigeria. Now, though the prevalence of HIV in the adult population has diminished—largely due to death within the infected population—Ethiopia is home to 4.6 million orphans. In fact, 13% of all of the children in Ethiopia are orphaned, either by disease, poverty, or armed conflict.



When Father George Grima invited Brittany's Hope to join him in his work in Africa, we jumped at the opportunity to visit his projects in Addis Ababa and northwestern Ethiopia. We hoped to gain a deeper understanding of the overwhelming need for the humanitarian efforts taking place there.

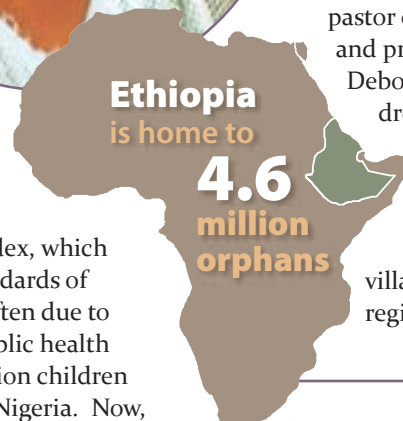
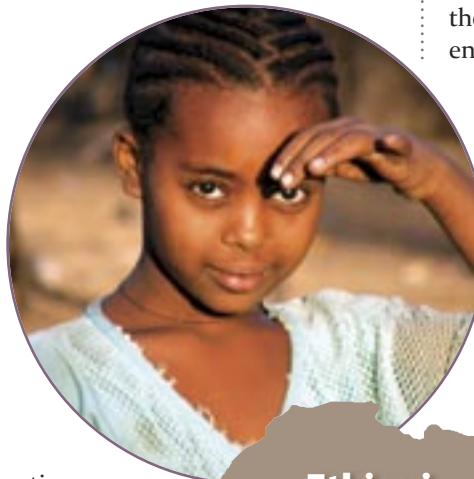
Once a confidant and friend of Mother Teresa, Father Grima has a long history of humanitarian work

in South America and Africa. His conversations with David and Candace Abel led to an invitation to visit, and an opportunity to impact the lives of many orphans and an entire community within Ethiopia.

We arrived at the airport in Addis Ababa late on March 2, where we were met by Father George. After spending the night at a nearby orphanage, we returned to the airport to board a plane to the city of Bahir Dar in the northern region of Ethiopia. There we met with Fr. Abebe Teklemariam, the associate pastor of the local parish and principal of the Blessed Deborah Michael School. He drove us to Injibara, two hours south of Bahir Dar where we met with Injibara officials.

Injibara, a small village and surrounding region, is home to nearly

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Turn to page 4 to read the inspirational stories of Brad Davidson, David Abel, and Nate Abel's experiences in Ethiopia.



Singing and clapping are part of the lessons in Ethiopian classrooms. Visit www.BrittanyHope.org to view a video of the trip to Ethiopia.

30,000 people. Their average yearly income totals about \$600. Injibara has no church or community center, and no medical care, except what is provided by traditional witch doctors. Each year, approximately 60-90 children are found abandoned, often on the banks of a nearby small river. The children are usually transported to orphanages about 7 hours south of Injibara.

Each year, approximately 60 to 90 children are found abandoned, usually on the banks of the small river that flows through town.

Ethiopia, like most of its neighbors, has an admirable tradition of *gudifecha*, the practice in which family or neighbors open their homes to orphaned children. Unfortunately, this practice has been crippled due to widespread deaths and extreme poverty. Institutional care of parentless children is often considered a last resort, a measure only to be taken while alternative, community-based programs are built.

In Injibara, we met with community leaders and government officials to discuss establishing a center for orphan care within the village. They were so receptive to the idea that several plots of land were offered free of charge for the project.

As the discussion went on, our

hosts were so pleased at the prospect of working with Brittany's Hope that their excitement became contagious. More and more smiling officials were brought into the room and pictures were taken. Plans were made to meet with a builder within the week to discuss the specifics of the arrangement, which was sealed with a traditional Ethiopian coffee ceremony.

The issues facing the orphans and vulnerable children of Ethiopia are the same issues facing the rest of their society: the need for clean water, sanitation, medical care, proper nutrition, education, vocational training, and jobs. Brittany's Hope will strive to meet the challenges in Injibara. Within days of our return to the US, the Brittany's Hope board of directors met and unanimously voted to fund Phase I of the project. Brittany's Hope Ethiopia will soon become a reality!



Help us build a future for the orphans of Ethiopia!

100% of your donations will be used for the projects at Injibara. For more information, contact us at 717.367.9614, email Joanne Martin, Director of Development at martinj@brittanyshope.org, send a check to 1160 North Market Street, Elizabethtown, PA, 17022, or donate online at www.BrittanyHope.org



Father George says, "I see the face of Christ in every child. These children give me the chance to meet Christ every day."



These children survive despite the absence of any reliable medical care or safe drinking water.



A young Ethiopian woman carries her infant in a sling on her back.



Older children often care for younger ones.



PHASE I PROJECTS (approved by Brittany's Hope Board of Directors)

- Procure land.
- Construct fencing, children's home with dormitories, classrooms, kitchen, and dining area, sister's residence, sanitary and laundry facilities, guard house, and playground.
- Set up a water purification system for orphanage and community.
- Plant fruit-bearing trees, banana plants, and large garden area as a self-sustaining food source.

PHASE II PROJECTS

- Construction of medical clinic for orphanage and village.
- Build worship facility/church.
- Purchase animals. Construct corrals, animal pens, and outbuildings.

PHASE III PROJECTS

- Build guest house with bedrooms, sanitary facilities, and common meeting area.
- Enlarge children's home and build additional classrooms.

PHASE IV PROJECTS

- Build vocational center to teach children trades such as sewing, carpentry, and machine work.
- Set up athletic field for play activities and exercise.



Experiences in Ethiopia

Reflections about our journeys in Northeast Africa

by Dr. Bradley Davidson, Board Member

David Abel, Nate Abel and I were privileged to accompany Father George Grima as he visited his ongoing work in Mandura, approximately 3 hours West of Injibara. Three years ago, Father George established an outreach to the Gumuz people there.

We visited a number of Gumuz villages during our three day stay, touring homes and kindergarten classes, playing with children, viewing sites of new well construction, and even attending a catechism class. We were invited to join the community's singing and dancing in their courtyard area. It was surreal and spiritual. The horizon took on an orange hue and was dotted with the central fires from other villages in the distance. The stars were brilliant. We danced with our new friends (fortunately for me, it was dark!), and sang songs—an unbelievable experience!

After visiting a kindergarten and being serenaded by the students, we walked through their village. A woman learned that I was a physician and led me to see her 20 year old daughter, Feeshi, who was in labor. The village midwife had determined this pregnancy was a breech presentation. Feeshi had been laboring for hours and was not permitted in the living quarters

due to the amount of blood she was losing. She was made to labor outside in a small corral. The mother begged me to help her daughter. I was worried; the last child I delivered is now in high school, and I had no experience in delivering a child with a breech presentation! When I examined Feeshi's abdomen, there was clearly a head where there should have been a bottom. After several failed attempts to move the child into position, I didn't know what to do.

We discussed transporting Feeshi to the nearest hospital, which was hours away by truck, but were told that the last time a patient had been transported there no medical personnel were present! However, given the desperate seriousness of the situation, we chose to make the trip.

Nine people crammed into our SUV. We bounced over miles of potholed dusty roads until we finally arrived at the "hospital." There were holes in the walls and poorly equipped rooms. I stood by while a physician examined Feeshi, then returned to where our party waited. "You're not going to believe this," I said, "The baby turned while we drove here, and is now properly engaged!" I'll never forget David's open-mouthed amazement and Father George saying, "you've just witnessed a miracle."

Later, Father George introduced us to Asalfaus Aberra, a 14 year old boy who had spent the last 6 years as an orphan on the hospital campus, surviving on the charity of the local parish. He was orphaned after his mother died during surgery. Asalfaus was afflicted with a deforming spinal disease that painfully contorted his back. I suspected spinal tuberculosis.



A catechism class in a Gumuz village.

David, Nate and I resolved to help Asalfaus and the other orphans from the parish by advocating for their adoption or by raising sponsorship funding. We had their documents translated, and they were interviewed and photographed. I wanted to arrange medical care for Asalfaus, perhaps in the United States.

The following day, we made the return trip to Bahir Dar to fly back to Addis Ababa. Boarding late, I found the only empty seat at the back of the plane.

I introduced myself to the man next to me and asked where he was from. He said he had lived in Addis Ababa for 22 years and was a physician. "What type of medicine are you doing?" I asked. "I specialize in cancer, heart disease, and spinal tuberculosis," he answered. I told him about Asalfaus, and he exclaimed, "How ironic that you sat next to me! I'm the only physician in Ethiopia who can take care of that boy. I'll fund his medical treatment, take care of his surgery, and cover his education and expenses if needed."

After our experiences in Ethiopia, it is difficult to believe in random coincidence. There are extraordinary miracles occurring in Africa. I think perhaps the helplessness of extreme poverty liberates God to work in powerful ways.

In Henry Blackaby's *Experiencing God: Knowing and Doing the Will of God*, he states that "God invites you to become involved with Him in His work," It is evident to me that God is at work in Ethiopia, and on behalf of Brittany's Hope Foundation, I invite you to join us there!



Feeshi, a young woman in labor, is helped to the SUV to be transported to the nearest hospital.

Brittany's Buds

Featured Granted Children Waiting for their Forever Families

We are featuring children whose grants will soon expire. You can view all of our available granted children at www.Brittany'sHope.org/waiting.html.



Born in Eastern Europe in 2004, this smiling boy has been diagnosed with Cerebral Palsy, vision problems, and developmental delays. Your love will change his life forever.

Region: Eastern Europe; **Agency:** Bethany Christian Services; **Contact:** Janie Van Dyke, 1-800-652-7082; **Grant:** \$5,000, additional grant available.

A great joy is coming.



This fluffy-haired infant boy, born in February 2007, has Down Syndrome. With your love and resources, he can reach his full potential.

Region: Asia; **Agency:** Bethany Christian Services; **Contact:** Janie Van Dyke, 1-800-652-7082; **Grant:** \$5,000, additional grant available.



This pretty little girl came into care shortly after her birth in October 2003. At 4 months old, doctors determined that she had congenital blindness and optic atrophy. This little girl will do well with a loving family who can provide for her specialized needs.

Region: SE Asia; **Agency:** Wide Horizons for Children; **Contact:** Amanda Halpern, 781-419-0371; **Grant:** \$5,000.



These adorable sisters were born in 12/94 & 2/97. The oldest enjoys basketball, and her favorite subject is Math. She's had learning difficulties but is committed to improving her grades. The younger sister also enjoys her Math classes, does well in school, and loves soccer. They are affectionate and loving children.

Region: Latin America; **Agency:** Children's Home Society & Family Services; **Contact:** Lisa Trinh, 651-255-2252; **Grant:** \$7,500.

Love Through Action

by Candace Abel BSW, Executive Director

Did you know 143 million children are abandoned, living in orphanages, foster care, on the streets and in child-headed households? (UNICEF; *Children on the Brink* 2004) Our world is facing an orphan crisis caused by war, poverty, and disease. These lost children are victims of injustices and predators, caught in an endless cycle of pain and hopelessness. Brittany's Hope Foundation heeds the Apostle John's words, "Let us not love with words only... but with actions" by responding to this Orphan Crisis through action, both reactively and proactively.

As a supporter you are aware of grants we place on children who wait for families; this program is still our primary focus. However, adoption is changing dramatically. Many countries are encouraging their people to adopt domestically; clearly this is a positive change, but it also impacts the children available for international adoption. The implementation of the Hague Adoption Convention, a multilateral treaty designed to limit corruption, has also placed burdens on impoverished countries with unstable governments. This means fewer children will have the life-changing opportunity of a loving home; for many adoption will never be a reality.

Because so many children will never find homes, our Humanitarian Programs react to the crisis. We are increasing our outreach projects such as nutritional and medical interventions programs, sponsorship opportunities, and our Brittany's Cribs Project. We are proactively targeting poverty and disease; this issue details two of our most significant projects: an orphan care village we are building in Ethiopia, and the House of Love center we are renovating in Vietnam. We hope you enjoy discovering these projects that embody love through action.

Life with Andrei

Adopting an Older Child: Tears of Joy and Frustration

by Laurel and Donald Nagle, Parents of Andrei, Adopted in 2005

It has been three years since Across the World Adoptions showed us Andrei's photo in the Brittany's Hope newsletter. Our journey with him has been an amazing, deeply emotional, and frequently trying experience.

In 2000, we started exploring international adoption, and by 2004 had decided to adopt two girls from Smolensk. Our son Clayton, then 9 years old, was very supportive. He wanted siblings as much as we wanted more children. That fall, adoptions came to a halt in regions of Russia. It was during this delay that we learned of Andrei. There was something in his tiny, smiling face that made us certain that Andrei belonged in our family.

While adoptions had stalled in other areas of Russia, the region where Andrei lived was open. We were invited for our first visit only two months after learning about him. After a 15-hour train ride from Moscow, we met Andrei, his social worker, and an interpreter. What a shock to see such a tiny, frail boy! He was shy and nervous. As Clayton and Andrei played together, we caught glimpses of

his personality when he forgot we were there. A few days later, we had to leave but hoped we would return soon to finalize the adoption.

It was another three months until our court date. During the court session, Andrei sobbed. The judge was very kind and asked him if he wanted to be adopted. He nodded his head "yes" through the tears. By then, I was crying too. A few hours later, we were back in our hotel with Andrei, which was scary for all of us. After three days in Moscow, we returned home.

Things moved quickly after that. The best thing we did was to find someone nearby who spoke Russian. We were in contact with her daily for the first several weeks. Andrei had been in an orphanage since he was three, and he hadn't learned how to manage frustration or anger. He had no self-esteem and thought he was worthless. He couldn't believe that we would care for him always. He spent the first several months at two extremes — either struggling mightily against us or trying immensely to please us.

Over the past 2½ years, Andrei has come to understand what it means to be part of a family. We found a Russian psychologist who works with adopted children. Through therapy, she has helped him build a new identity while valuing his past. She has also helped him to understand much of what happened to him in the orphanage and to accept that he is a good boy. He was cheated of a loving, secure early



Andrei in 2004.

childhood. Whenever I watch Andrei playing, I am filled with joy for his happiness and sadness that he was deprived for so many years.

During the past year, he has discovered new talents. He is an extremely gifted artist. One day, he sat with me and after an hour of teaching him drawing technique, he was changed forever. Now he works with a Russian-American art teacher. This has been great for his self-esteem. He is physically coordinated, but is not interested in sports or being on teams. The threat of failure in competition or rejection from teammates is still too much for him.

I thought adopting an older child meant that they would be more self-sufficient, but that wasn't true. Yes, Andrei can dress himself and get something to eat. But he was missing years of love, understanding, and coaching on how to navigate life.

Sixteen months ago, we adopted one of the girls we met four years ago. Time is one thing we never have enough of, but our children are happy and healthy. The laughter and hugs now outweigh the tears of frustration. We are so thrilled and blessed with our family, and are thankful to Brittany's Hope for their role in making it possible.



The Nagles and their three beautiful children; Andrei is pictured in the center.



Four Days in Cam Ranh, Vietnam

Updates on the House of Love Project

by Candace Abel, BSW
Executive Director, Brittany's Hope

The day after the sisters of the House of Love picked us up at the Cam Ranh airport, we took the children to a new amusement park in Nha Trang. Following our joyful reunion filled with hugs and kisses, we entered the amusement park for a fun-filled day of adventure and a picnic lunch.

The next day, we arrived early at the House of Love to tour the recent improvements our funding has provided for the children and village community members. The nuns had purchased beds for the children, and added a bedroom and bathroom for guests and displaced families. There were new strollers for infants, and new playground equipment for older children. A new metal fence had been added to increase security.

Two new crucial improvements were a kitchen and dining room, and a water purification system to provide safe water for the community.

The kitchen replaced an old small inner cooking room and outdoor



New beds for the children.

lean-to. A new oven, refrigerator, and fresh tile counters and sinks provide increased sanitation and safe cooking areas for the nuns to efficiently prepare meals for the children.



Candace Abel and the children of the House of Love mug for the camera.

The water purification system replaced a polluted, hazardous cistern and provides safe water for the children and nuns, who in turn



The new kitchen is bright, clean, and spacious. We thank the generous donors who made the construction project possible.



A toast to clean water!

bottle and distribute it to the local community for free.

We also met with local officials to discuss plans for the future. Brittany's Hope will construct a new facility with dorms, classrooms, a medical clinic, and vocational training center. We look forward to continuing to improve the lives of these deserving children!

In January 2008, David, Candace, and Mai-Lynn Abel visited the House of Love orphanage. Candace's full report with information and photos can be read online at www.BrittanyHope.org, or you can request a full color printed newsletter by contacting us at 717.367.9614 or emailing info@brittanyshope.org.



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100% of your donations
are used to improve
the lives of abandoned
children worldwide.

The 2008 ^{Walk of} Love was a big success!

Thank you to everyone who supported the **2008 Walk of Love: Lifting Orphans' Voices Everywhere!** We had an amazing day of fun, exciting children's games, and a great DJ providing lively music. Families, friends, board members, E-town college

students, volunteers, and Brittany's Hope supporters joined together on May 4th to celebrate our mission of help and hope. Even Cylo, the *Lancaster Barnstormers'* mascot, entertained us with his energetic dance moves and funny antics. To date,

we have received over \$65,000 toward our 2008 Walk of Love Campaign; this total exceeds our initial goal by \$15,000! Your support enables us to love through action.

Thank you for caring enough to help change the lives of children in need.

