AFRICA COMMUNITY TRANSFORMATION SERVICES, INC.

SPRING 2017 NEWSLETTER

Greetings from ACTS U.S. Board of Directors and your partners engaged in serving children and communities in Ethiopia.

Normally the newsletter that we publish at this time of year is full of information recounting a recent trip to visit the schools and villages. For the past few years in the springtime, we have been able to take some teenagers, young adults, and others to introduce them to the Kingdom work that is being done in Ethiopia. Unfortunately, this year, we were unable to make such a trip. Only days after our last trip ended in early October of 2016, massive violence broke out across the country centered on protests against the government. A six month State of Emergency was declared. As it was about to expire, the government extended it for an additional four months. This declaration gives the authorities the right to control communications and they do so by virtually shutting down the internet and restricting cellular telephone service. They also expel foreign journalists so as to control reporting both to the natives and to the outside world.

When situations like this happen, the U.S. State Department issues a travel warning. Three days prior to our October departure for home, we got a text from the State Department advising us to have a bag packed and a plan to either get to the embassy or on an airplane out of the country as the environment was showing signs of instability. At the time, we thought little of it. Today, however, it is unlikely that we would be able to receive such a text even if it were sent. Therefore, the State Department is strongly advising against travel to Ethiopia especially if plans are to leave the capital and venture into the rural areas (think ACTS schools!). As the initial unrest centered on foreign investment and land ownership, foreigners, such as ourselves, are deemed as likely targets. All that being said, we decided that it would be unwise to journey there at this time.

But that doesn’t mean that we have nothing to report. To the contrary, God has been working though ACTS in new and expanded ways. When ACTS was first conceived, the end goal was never to just be feeding and educating children. By caring for the kids, showing and sharing Jesus’s love for them, we felt that trust would be built within the communities in which we work. Doors for sharing the Gospel would be opened. Through God’s grace this is happening more and more.

The church that ACTS was instrumental in planting in Woja continues to grow and to thrive. Somewhat ironically, they meet in a stable. It is now being outgrown. Woudineh, our in country director and Fresno Pacific trained pastor, visits and preaches as a guest pastor. Through the book writing work that Bill did in Elsa’s home of Enseno, the area Evangelical Fellowship of pastors became aware of ACTS. They have recently reached out to ACTS and asked for training for the area pastors. Woudineh has already taken the initiative to provide pastor and church planter training in other rural parts around the schools knowing that the greater the number of trained Christian leaders that exist in the community, the greater the number of role models ACTS children will have. Plans are moving forward for involvement in a new school start up in Olgocho. ACTS has been assisting in compensating the teachers in this school which is being run by a young Christian man who converted from Islam several years ago. In a town of about 2,700 which serves an area with about 25,000, there are only sixty Christians.

If this young man demonstrates good stewardship with the funds ACTS provides and develops a sound plan to move forward, ACTS will become more engaged in the efforts for the next school year. Of course, we are trusting God to provide the additional child sponsors that such growth will require.

Here in the USA, challenges and opportunities continue to present themselves. After waiting several months for pictures of the new kids and not receiving them, Karen has gone forward with preparing a mailing of the existing photos that we do have to update our child sponsors. With the help of Erika, our new, mission minded assistant, this tedious, but joyful, task is almost complete.

Mary Bergdahl, who has been handling all of ACTS’ financial transactions for the past several years, has decided to relinquish those duties. She has served faithfully and cheerfully and we only released her when she agreed to continue to attend the Board meetings with her Board member husband, Dave, as we have found her input to be so valuable. We are thankful to God for Mary’s years of service to ACTS.

By God’s grace, a young man named Zack Curtis whose accountant father has agreed to provide oversight, will step in to Mary’s role. Zack traveled with us to Ethiopia a few years ago and in recent months has repeatedly reached out to ACTS expressing his desire to assist the ministry in any way that he can. Having just scored a perfect score on the math portion of the PSAT, having a little sister from Ethiopia, and possessing a burning desire to travel again with the ministry, make him the perfect choice to fill this role. Welcome Erika and Zack!

We continue to thank you and lift you in prayer for your support of the ACTS ministry. With the civil war in South Sudan and the famine in Somalia, Ethiopia sits is a desperate part of the world. Food supply and cost are becoming a greater and greater concern and your assistance insures that at least on one tiny speck of the globe, children are being well cared for.

In our recent NGO filing with the government, we got approval to import a vehicle for our work while forgoing the 100-200% duty normally charged. We are in need of either an extended cab pick-up truck or an SUV to be used to transport food and other supplies to our rural schools. If you are aware of a farmer turning over his fleet or someone who is replacing their personal vehicle or a car dealer with excess inventory who would be interested in donating to ACTS, please let us know. As the civil war rages on one side of Ethiopia in South Sudan and famine ravishes Somalia as mentioned above, food costs for ACTS are rising. The ability to increase the radius from which we purchase goods will help us combat these rising prices.

Remember to find a copy of the book, Tell The Whole World That I Am Real, shop at [http://smile.amazon.com/ch/35-2390703](https://smile.amazon.com/gp/r.html?R=18T6XHDCG1P2K&C=1GAY0J721E4O0&H=LVK4PB004FDBNIAGEBDJNFWPTEMA&T=C&U=http%3A%2F%2Fsmile.amazon.com%2Fch%2F35-2390703%3Fref_%3Dpe_732550_140418350) select Africa Community Transformation Services, Fresno, California and ACTS receives a small percentage of your purchase at no cost to you.

[www.actskids.org](http://www.actskids.org)

*“May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in Him, so that you may*

*overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit” Romans 15:13*