

Quarterly Newsletter
Winter 2011

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Thirty, Sixty or Even a Hundred Fold!

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From Tears of Sadness to Tears of Joy

ZOE Ministry's trained staff of social workers help orphans cope with past trauma and suffering.

RWANDA

- National capital
- Province capital
- Town, village
- ✈ Airport, airstrip
- International boundary
- Road
- Track



ZOE Ministry
Empowering Orphans in Africa

A Little Complication

CAN BE A GOOD THING

ZOE Ministry's primary goal is to empower African orphans so they may grow into the men and women God would have them be. Beyond empowerment work, ZOE has a second goal: to elevate the conversation about missions to make it a little more, well, complicated.

The U.S. leads the world in innovative business practices. We have a strong entrepreneurial culture where customer needs are identified and products and services are tailored to fit those needs. For example, the company Xerox does not say it provides copying services, but rather business solutions. Instead of providing one answer for all customers, they consider each of the varying needs of a diverse customer base, offering a range of products and services. We can be very sophisticated about our business

practices. Why then do we tend to take a very different approach with missions?

Too often our thinking about missions is not as robust as it could be. We tend to oversimplify the solutions we offer, but poverty, especially for young orphans, is a multifaceted problem. When only one aspect of the suffering of an orphan is addressed, invariably the remaining issues will continue to hold that orphan in poverty. It is obvious to all of us that the hungry need food – so feeding a hungry orphan through a relief program seems a sensible way to reach out to that child. Early in ZOE's endeavors with orphans, we set up a feeding station in a slum in Africa that provided one meal a day to orphans and vulnerable children. Though our efforts were well-intentioned, we created a dependency in that community. Our relief efforts

never gave way to a more lasting solution. Since initiating the Orphan Empowerment Program, we have seen orphans provide more than two meals a day for themselves, only one month after starting an income-generating activity.

If orphans do not possess the skills, resources or income to obtain their own food, they have only learned to wait for the next handout. Moving from depending on handouts in Africa to better resourced handouts from the United States is not the best a poverty-

Victor, an orphan empowered through ZOE's program, smiles as he shows his milk-selling business to a visiting mission team. You can read more about Victor in this issue. Photo by Mark Lindsey, taken in August 2011 in Rwanda.

stricken child should hope for. When aid agencies encounter financial difficulties or change priorities, sometimes that child's next meal never comes, leaving him or her more vulnerable than before.

ZOE Ministry's empowerment model strives to be comprehensive. In three years, orphans graduate from ZOE's program with a robust support system in place, leaving the cycle of poverty behind. They have thriving businesses, small and large, based on their community's needs. They receive specialized training, giving them skills to provide food, clothing, and pay school expenses for their younger siblings. Most importantly, these orphans know they are loved by God, and have a social community for emotional, physical and financial support. They become respected members of their community, and many times they reach out to improve the lives of those around them who are still suffering. They no longer beg, but instead help others to experience the abundant life God envisions for them.

Instead of giving these children food, ZOE helps them to grow their own food. Instead of giving them money, ZOE provides them with micro-grants for small businesses. Instead of allowing them to see a doctor once, ZOE enrolls them in local health insurance programs and provides training on good health and hygiene practices, including HIV/AIDS prevention. These small investments in the lives of children produce many times the original inputs. Most importantly, they will never need charity again.

It is time that we give our best to thinking about how we go about caring for God's impoverished children. Let us move beyond simple charity, and think instead about long-term solutions. Let us move beyond thinking the poor are unable to help themselves and instead form true partnerships with them. Let us move beyond approaches that address only one aspect of what holds people in systemic poverty to holistic approaches that truly offer freedom and hope.

If you would like to elevate the conversation about missions in your church or organization to a better, more complicated dialogue, please contact Gaston Warner at gaston@zoeministry.org or at 919.414.4167.



ZOE Ministry's Orphan Empowerment Program is comprehensive in its approach, addressing six main areas: food security, health and hygiene, business and vocational training, faith in Jesus Christ, providing homes, and building community.

WHEN HELPING HURTS:

An Essential Read about a Better Approach to Missions

by Gaston Warner, Director of Church Relations and Strategic Planning

ZOE Ministry's own learning curve concerning how to engage in missions has been steep, and much of what we have discovered has been through the grace of God. I recently spoke with a mission pastor about the lessons his church learned about engaging in more effective missions. He referred to the mistakes they made as "paying their dumb tax." Luckily, there are an increasing number of books that speak directly to what we have had to learn through experience – that not all missions are created equally. Some missions bring glimpses of the kingdom of God to earth; others make the people doing the missions feel good about themselves, but bring very little long-term benefit to those being served; others do actual, if unintentional, harm.

One of the best new books on Christian mission available today is "When Helping Hurts: How to Alleviate Poverty without Hurting the Poor and Yourself," by Steve Corbett and Brian Fikkert. This is a great book for any mission committee or Sunday School class thinking deeply about doing missions well.

Steve Corbett and Brian Fikkert write from their own background as evangelical Christians engaging in social action. They share profound insights gathered from a lifetime of engagement in this work. They first lay out the biblical mandate for Christians to work toward alleviating poverty. "Simply stated, Jesus

preached the good news of the kingdom in word and deed, so the church must do the same," they write.

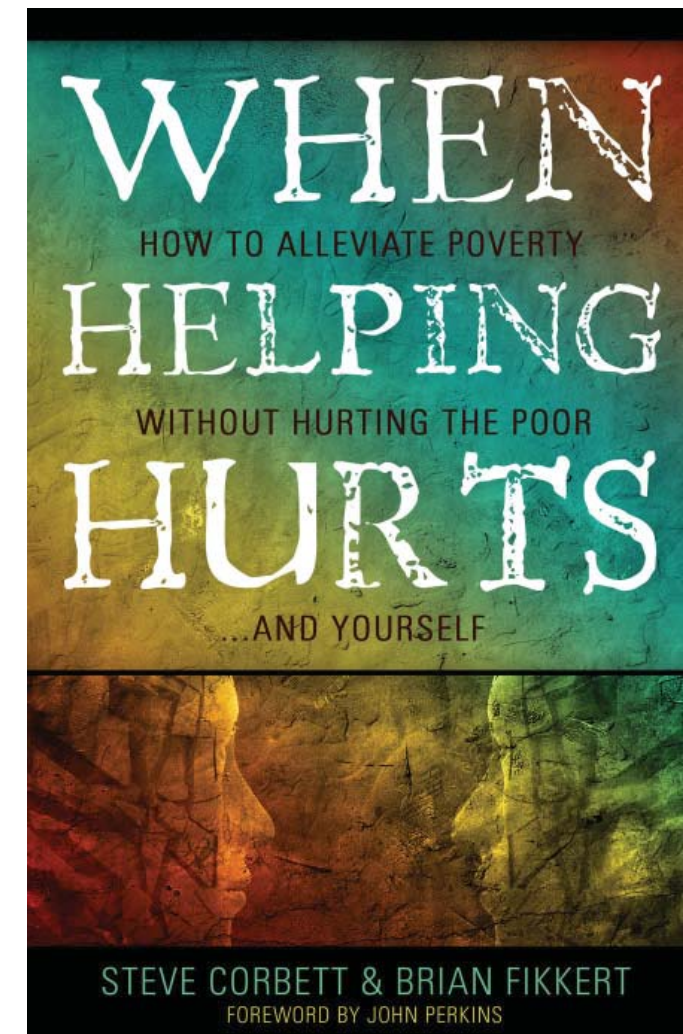
For many years, western Christian ideas about what engaging in missions to the poor meant were anemic at best and

OUR CONCERN IS NOT JUST THAT THESE METHODS ARE WASTING HUMAN, SPIRITUAL, FINANCIAL, AND ORGANIZATIONAL RESOURCES BUT THAT THESE METHODS ARE ACTUALLY EXACERBATING THE VERY PROBLEMS THEY ARE TRYING TO SOLVE.

harmful at worst. Some missions have broken from this model, but most have not. Fikkert talks about this situation in ways that illuminate the problem and the possibility for something better. He writes, "many observers, including Steve and I, believe that when North American Christians do attempt to alleviate poverty, the methods used often do considerable harm to both the materially poor and the materially non-poor. Our concern is not just that these methods are wasting human, spiritual, financial, and organizational resources but that these methods are actually exacerbating the very problems they are trying to solve."

Corbett and Fikkert go beyond telling Christians what they already know, and press forward to how churches can do better. "When Helping Hurts" begins to reframe the conversation. They discuss the very nature of poverty, the challenges of short-term missions, and how to use abundant resources well. They also address the local vs. international argument, and discuss other issues in ways that are profound and easy to understand.

I was able to spend time discussing this book in the context of ZOE's model with Brian Corbett. This book gives voice to exactly the kind of ministry that ZOE is attempting to carry out. Books like this, and the ministries that take these issues seriously, make us hopeful for the future of Christian mission.



HOPE WALK 2012

Empowering orphans, walking for orphans, in Africa.

WHAT is the Hope Walk?

The **Hope Walk** is a 5k fundraising walk by empowered African orphans to help other orphans in Africa suffering from hunger, disease, isolation and homelessness. Orphans in Kenya, who have broken free from a life of poverty through ZOE Ministry's Orphan Empowerment Program, walk to raise funds and awareness for the many more orphans in Africa who remain vulnerable.

WHEN is the Hope Walk?

The 2012 Hope Walk will be held on **Saturday morning, February 11, 2012.**

HOW can I participate?

Across America, we encourage youth groups to participate in a **fundraiser of their choice** to sponsor the African walkers. Then, on the morning of February 11, a **live video chat between Kenya and the US** will be held, allowing participating youth to meet and have a time of sharing and worship with the orphans that they sponsored. **Register online to participate** at www.zoeministry.org, under "Church Resources" and "Hope Walk."



Thirty, Sixty, or Even a Hundred Fold!

by Greg Jenks, Executive Director

One of the unique features of ZOE Ministry's Orphan Empowerment Program is the fruit that takes place after the seeds have been sown in the lives of orphans. The return-on-investment in terms of spiritual, economic and emotional growth is stunning.

One young girl described to me how **Damaris**, an orphan in Kenya, led her to faith in Jesus. Damaris used to struggle

with all the suffering, shame and stigma associated with being an orphan. At a particularly hopeless time in her life, Damaris' grandmother encouraged her to trust in God. "Who is this God you speak of?" Damaris responded in disbelief.

Since joining ZOE Ministry, Damaris has emerged as a prominent member of her community. She has a successful tailoring shop and has come to love and trust God. Her dream is to help others

in her community know the God she now serves. She teaches Sunday School, sings in the choir, reaches out to the elderly, and talks with her peers about the love of Jesus. Like many of ZOE's orphans, she is a disciple who makes disciples.

Ezekiel, a Rwandan orphan, lived on the streets for a number of years after his parents died. Ezekiel said that he once promised God that if God would provide a home for him, he would never turn away anyone who needed a place to live. In April of 2010, ZOE Ministry provided Ezekiel and his three siblings with their own home.

After receiving this home, his first act was to return to the city and find a homeless boy with whom he had become friends while living on the streets. Ezekiel invited this boy and his siblings into his home. Since then, Ezekiel has hosted five separate child-led families in his home. Additionally, he has organized orphans in his Working Group and others in his community to build homes for 11 other orphaned families.

Victor, a 17-year-old boy from Rwanda, was left to care for three younger siblings ages 12, 11, and 9, after losing both of his parents. Poverty and hunger

eventually drove Victor to live on the streets. He would transport items for people in exchange for just enough money to buy food.

At times, when no work was available, he was forced to steal food from fields in order to survive. Once, he was caught and sentenced to two months in prison. When he was released from prison, Victor discovered that his siblings had been kicked out of the home in which they had been living, and were on the streets. During that dark time, he found shelter sleeping with cows owned by a family in the community.

Victor's life began to change the day he joined ZOE Ministry's Empowerment Program. His Working Group helped build him a home with supplies ZOE provided. With great joy, he was able to bring his siblings home to live with him. He began farming, and received a goat from ZOE that provided his family with milk. The goat soon reproduced, allowing him to sell the offspring for extra income.

Victor also received a micro-grant of \$17 to start a business trading milk. Every day he collects milk from members of his community, straps the jugs onto his bicycle and transports the milk to the nearest city. Once there, he can sell it for a higher price. Victor now makes \$17 per week with this one business. The initial \$17 investment from ZOE will yield over \$800 in the very first year. He is now able to meet all the financial needs



Victor rides his bike, which is full of jugs of milk to sell in the local market.

of his family. As this business continues to grow, the profits will allow Victor to fulfill his dream of owning a big shop that sells a large variety of items.

In these destitute orphans of Africa, ZOE Ministry has found lives receptive to the seed of the Gospel. As ZOE has reached out to them, Mark 4:20 comes alive. It no longer surprises us to see our investment in their lives multiply. I guess it should



Ezekiel and his family stand in front of their home.

not surprise us. After all, it was Jesus who promised returns on our faithfulness, yielding "thirty, sixty, or even a hundred times what was sown."



Damaris, right, shares a Bible passage with a peer in front of her shop in Kenya.

"Others, like seed sown on good soil, hear the word, accept it, and produce a crop – thirty, sixty or even a hundred times what was sown." – Mark 4:20



FROM TEARS OF SADNESS TO TEARS OF JOY: *Helping Orphans Overcome Lives of Suffering*

by Mandie Sellars, Director of Communications and Annual Fund

The orphans and vulnerable children with whom ZOE Ministry works have experienced unimaginable pain and suffering in their short lives. They have lost their parents to HIV/AIDS, disease, or violence. They are frequently thrust into the role of caregiver for their younger siblings at ages when most of us were in school, enjoying our childhood. Long, miserable days of manual labor, begging for food, or even stealing when starvation is near take their toll on these children. Try as they might, they watch their loved ones slide into poverty, dropping out of school, contracting illnesses, and going hungry.



Vestine makes sorghum drink to sell.

Orphans who survive these experiences often suffer from emotional problems such as depression and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). The first step towards addressing these issues is the support of the orphan's Working Group. Much like group therapy, these children share their life stories with one another in their first meeting. For the first time, many of these orphans realize they are not alone in their struggles. Immediately, the Working Group becomes a very important emotional and social support for them.

Also at this first meeting of the Working Group, ZOE Ministry's staff members guide the gathered orphans through a process called DREAM. They hand out large pieces of paper and pens, and ask the children to either draw or write the answers to the following questions:

1. What is something that has happened in your life that made you feel sad?
2. What makes you happy as you walk around the community?
3. What are things in the community which happen to you that you do not like?
4. What is it that you dream of when you imagine your future?
5. When you envision your future, what must you do every day so you can achieve these things?

The answers to the first and third question are especially important in helping ZOE identify children who have experienced trauma, violence, loss, or abuse. Children will often depict the death of their parents in response to what has made them sad. The answers they provide about things happening in their



Once suffering from severe emotional problems, Vestine beams proudly, now able to provide for her family.

community that they do not like can alert ZOE's staff to abusive, exploitative, or even dangerous situations these children may be exposed to. If an orphan is in an abusive situation, interventions are made to provide a safe place for that child and his or her siblings.

On occasion, orphans can be so traumatized that it hinders their ability to participate fully in ZOE's Orphan Empowerment Program. Vestine, 19, lost her parents 11 years ago, leaving her to provide for her three younger siblings. The responsibility of providing for her family at the young age of eight old put a tremendous burden on her. Vestine's life was full of hunger, isolation and suffering. When she was 10 years old and already suffering from deep poverty, she faced even more challenges when sev-

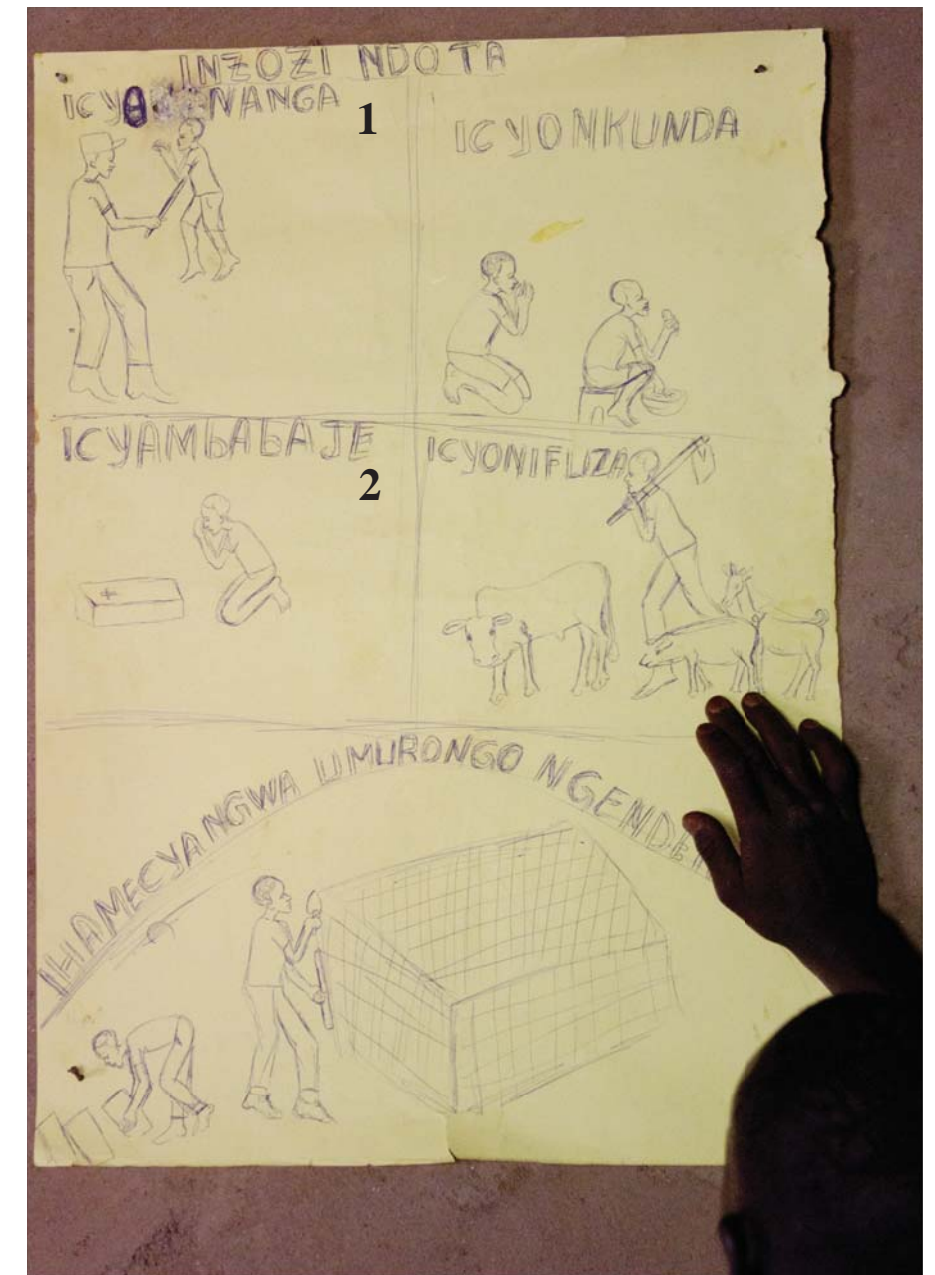
eral adult relatives died, leaving her to care for two cousins. She became completely overwhelmed, and without any capacity to provide for these additions to her family, one of her cousins died of disease and starvation.

Out of desperation, Vestine tried to reach out to her extended family. She and her siblings and cousin were so hungry they were eating the leaves off of bean plants, which are normally reserved for feeding goats. She would ask relatives for their leaves, but they laughed at her, calling her a goat. When she asked an uncle if she could pick the leaves in his bean field, he replied, "I have children to provide for. How can I take care of a goat?" This mocking rejection left her despondent and hopeless.

Somehow Vestine and her family continued to eke out a meager existence. They were barely surviving when she joined ZOE's Orphan Empowerment Program earlier this year. She joined a Working Group, and was trained on farming, animal husbandry, health and hygiene, small business management, and other topics. However, Vestine continued to struggle with her past experience, and severe emotional trauma cast a long shadow on her road out of poverty.

Because the challenges faced by orphans can be so great, ZOE has incorporated group sessions specifically for trauma healing and psychosocial counseling into the Orphan Empowerment Program. For severe cases like Vestine's, sessions like these were essential to her recovery.

After reaching a place of self-acceptance and peace, Vestine was able to use the skills she had learned to provide for her family. With the support of ZOE, she now runs two small businesses: selling non-alcoholic sorghum drink and raising and selling goats. Her family eats well, and her siblings and cousin are now enrolled in school. She has even become an employer in her community,



Above is a DREAM document drawn by an orphan on the wall of his home. These documents help ZOE staff learn about the orphans they are working with, identifying past and current sources of trauma in their lives.

Panel #1 depicts a boy being beaten with a stick for stealing food. Panel #2 shows him mourning the loss of his parents, symbolized by the coffin.

paying fair wages to several neighbors to work in her fields.

Helping orphans such as Vestine requires a comprehensive approach that addresses all the areas of their lives where they face challenges. The orphans in ZOE's Orphan Empowerment Program are all survivors of extremely difficult

situations. Addressing the emotional problems they are suffering from, even as their lives begin to change, is essential. Only when their whole self – physical, spiritual, and emotional – is healed, can they blossom into the young men and women God wants them to be.

ZOE Ministry

Empowering Orphans in Africa

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ZOE Ministry Christmas Animals

Animals are essential to empowering African orphans to journey out of poverty. Honor your family, friends and colleagues this Christmas with a gift that transforms an orphan's life. When you place your order online or by mail, ZOE Ministry will send you an *ornament-style gift card* of the animals ordered that you can give to represent your gift.

One Cow	\$400
One Goat	\$60
One Pig	\$50
Group of Four Rabbits	\$20
One Chicken	\$10

To order online, visit www.zoeministry.org/donate

(Be sure to select the Christmas Animals designation, and include amount of each animal ordered in the comments section.)

To order by mail, make checks payable to ZOE Ministry and send to:
ZOE Ministry 700 Waterfield Ridge Place Garner, NC 27529

(Be sure to include the amount of each animal ordered.)

ZOE Ministry is a 501(c)(3) through the NCCUMC, and all Christmas Animals donations are tax-deductible. Our promise: ZOE Ministry uses your generous donations in the most effective way. To help the largest number of orphans, ZOE does not expend funds to track individual gift animals. All donations are used in the most appropriate manner to empower orphans to provide for themselves.

