Mulufikir Story

My name is Mulu Chekol from Addis Abeba, Ethiopia. I was born in 1955 with many siblings.   
  
I am Ethiopian and I have 5 own biological children. They all are adults now. I have been called ’mother’ by many other children too that I have had a chance to meet and get to know. I used to have my own business with my husband running a restaurant and a shop.   
  
 I love my country and people from the bottom of my heart. I can see suffering every day and that is touching my heart and I am trying to do my best to help people who are the most vulnerable ones. That is why I want to help especially poor children and women. I think this is the very good sustainable development.  I have worked with poor and needy people since 1998.  
  
But what makes me do this voluntary work? Let me tell you my story.

I believe that we all have a purpose and a special calling for our lives to make this world better place to live by helping, loving, caring and sharing.  I also think that if you really listen to your heart and inner self, you will also find it, if not yet. I have seen miracles to happen in my life and in many people´s lives too. Why do I believe so? I am Christian and I trust that God is leading us to reach others, because God Himself is Love. God changed my life for good when I finally said ’Yes’ to Jesus and accepted Him into my life in 1991. After that decision to follow my heart and God´s plan, I literally lost everything, except Jesus,  who was with me faithfully. So it was not easy for me at all. First of all my husband wanted me to get out from my own house. I had to leave my children, husband, house and job, but God had a big picture of my life and a surprising road to walk with Him. God was teaching me through hunger, suffering, being homeless without my dear family and any money. God is a good teacher. Now I know it. I had lots of questions for God. Why? I wanted to be with my children, but I could not. My family thought that I changed my religion, but I only received Jesus in my life which means that I have a personal relationship with Him and I can talk with Him all the time. He is the one that has always stood and been there for me after all difficulties.

My totally new life continued and I saw so many poor and sick people in the streets crying and begging without clothes, God changed my thinking. Before that  I didn´t see or I didn´t care about poor people and their pain. God opened my eyes and I started to see people around me.  My heart cried especially for poor women and children. First I started to pray that God would send some rich people to help them, not me, but God had another plan. He did not answer my prayers in a way I expected. He is a wise teacher. He wanted me to show His love for them and help them. I didn´t have anything to give. God told me: Give your love! Give yourself!” As God has Himself loved us first And His love is beyond our understanding!

God gave me love (’Fikir’ in Amharic language) for people to practice His love through me. He wanted to teach and test me. I saw one old man sitting on the street. He was dirty and smelly. God told me to wash him. I was shocked. It was not easy task for me and I was afraid. How can I was a man? In our culture it is impossible. But I obeyed the gentle inner voice that spoke to me. Everyone could see me washing him and they knew I was not his relative. He was touched by this kindness. He had been living in the street for many years. He was hiding himself and never seen the kindness from anyone. God gave me a gift of love: His love through me pouring into others and I only see people as beautiful and precious as God sees them. I was amazed as well. When I was serving and washing him, I did not smell anything. Naturally I can smell everything, but when I am working, I lose my sense of smell, so I can serve people. It happens with everyone I serve. I thank God for this gift.

Later God wanted me to eat with beggars on the street. Before I received Jesus into my life as my Saviour, I did not want to see or touch beggars. I was too proud and blind for their situation. One day I saw one woman with five children living on the streets. One child, called Etaferaw, about 10 years old, was silent and did not beg like her other sisters. So I asked her mother about her. Mother told me, that she doesn’t speak or see and she doesn’t know anything because of her mind. God loved that poor girl and wanted to have better life for her. I asked her mother, if I can take care of her. She was happy to give her child away, because she thought that she cannot beg for her and it was easier to get rid of her. So I took her to my sister´s house, where I was living. Etaferaw has been living with me now for the last ten years. I don’t have much to give her, except my love. We pray together and see little miracles happen every day! Now she goes to government school, which is free to her. She can speak, hear, see, help in the housework etc. She loves to pray and sing. Now she is helping us with children in a day nursery. She is like my own daughter.

What happened to my own children that I had to leave? I took some years, before I got my children back. They also share my vision! God answered my prayers again!

How it all started in the very beginning?  I heard HIV/AIDS radio-program. Kerttu, a missionary worker from Finland, was telling about her work with HIV-positive women. She told about the love that can change lives! It encouraged me do something too. I started to have prayer meetings with my friends. Later on I had a chance to meet Kerttu and these HIV-positive women. I learned a lot about love. I was amazed how much she had been giving her time for people who were suffering and people that others turned their back to these poor young women. I thought, if God has sent somebody from foreign country to help our people, I must do the same!  I decided to obey God fully, whatever He wants me to do for His people.

I started my work from my neighbours. It was not easy, because they thought that I have lots of money. Also my own relatives thought I was mad! Why do you suffer and help poor neighbours, when you don’t have anything for yourself? This was the question I often heard. But I have God and God is rich, I answered! He has all. He knows exactly what He does and who are needy. I don’t know. In Ethiopia, there are lots of poor people and lots of problems. God always sends me to the broken hearts and helpless people in right time. God puts some people in my heart and touch my heart deeply. Then when I see the problem of those people, I am always surprised about God´s love and care for those helpless people that no one else seems to see, nor care.

I have shared my vision with some people, and they have continued sharing it with other people telling about how lives can change, not only physically, but mentally, touching their souls. This is the way to let real stories to be told as an encouragement. It is never too late to help someone around us, even with just little things, like smiling, noticing and giving some time. I have felt the pain of these people of feeling being totally invisible to others. Now I have many friends who know about this work and want to help the way they can. Some teach the children, some help by giving clothes, some have built mud houses, some give the money for medicine, school fees, house rents, food, milk etc. Friends give what they have; time, money, support or knowledge. During these many years we have been able to help more than 200 people. At the moment we are helping about 100 women and children. God has been faithful and He loves every single individual with the same amount of love. When I started this voluntary work, I was alone. But thank God, I have received a lot of good friends via the work and I can count on them and God that He can bring more people with good heart! Giving is receiving!

STORIES BEHIND FACES

Let me tell you about some of the people I have had a privilege to meet during my journey of learning more about God´s love.

I met Deresa living in the street of Addis Ababa in 2010. He was paralysed and he had tuberculosis. I asked him, if I can help and care about him. He was surprised and happy. I met him daily for six months. I washed him, gave him food, took his waste and talked to him. He could not even go to toilet by himself.  After six months he accepted me to be his ’mother'. So I took him to my house. I continued to care for him. He was living in my back yard in tin roof house for two years. Now he can walk and work. He got a medicine from hospital. Now he is a very happy man. He loves God, he writes poems and worship songs.

Hanna is one of my children from the street. She was living in the streets for about 6 years. She came from north Ethiopia to Addis Abeba, because her father and mother divorced. We got her out from the streets finding her small rented room to live. After that I asked my friend, if she can work with her. So she got a job and started to help herself. She fell in love with a good man. She got pregnant. One day she was working on the sixth floor and there was an accident: she fell down about 25 meters. She survived, God saved her. Only her leg got broken. The unborn baby was not hurt. Hanna is happily married with 3 children.

Betelehem E. used to live in the streets. She is from northern Ethtiopia. She has nine siblings. Her parents were very poor and they did not have money to support their children. They could not go to school. Betelehem´s aunt promised to take care of her and took her about 500 kilometers from home. She lived with them and went to school. After two years they took her out from school (she finished 5 th grade). She suffered a lot, because she had to clean the house, wash clothes, and make food. She was working like a slave. Later neighbour asked Betelehem to work for them and at the same time she could go to school. She moved to her house, she got about 20 birr (1€) /month for salary and she was happy to return back to school. She finished grade 8. But then the son of the house raped her, and when she got pregnant, they threw her away. She tried to have an abortion by traditional medicine. She became very sick from the medicine and she lost the baby. When she did not have any other choice, she started to live on the streets and beg. Later on she came to Addis Abeba. She wanted to work, but nobody wanted her, because she did not have any reference. She could not go back to her family, because they did not want her any more. I met Betelehem living on the street in 2002. She was very sick, rude and bitter. When I tried to talk to her, she just said: “What do you want?” I was a bit afraid, but I answered: “I want to help you”. She was silent and looked at me with surprised face. I started to talk to her, sat on the street with her. She told me, that she knew some Christian people. She tested me in some ways, but I kept coming to her every day. After two months we went to a clinic. She was HIV-positive. Later we helped her to get a room to rent, she got a job and her life started to change. Now she is married with lovely Christian man. They have one child together, and also Betelehem’s first child is living with them.

Meseret B. lost her house in flood, in rainy season some years ago. Her house was completely destroyed. All four children ran to higher place and got saved. After losing her house, they stayed with different people, who helped them to sleep in their houses at night. They suffered a lot. Her husband left her and children. I heard about Meseret from neighbour, because they stayed near my house. I met them. God wanted to test me again. They still had their place, but no money to build new house. Later I went with Meseret to our local public office (Addis Ketama). I had 70 birr in my hand and a lot of faith. I paid 50 Birr for the permission to build new house. After praying one week, one of my friend called me from England and told, that he wants to send some money. I was surprised again about God´s timing and faithfulness. I just want to Glorify His Name. We finished the house in four months. Meseret and her children moved to the new house. Children can go to school and also neighbours are happy. Two of her children have graduated from the university. I believe that if you do not have basic needs and chelter/house, your talent is buried and you live in the dark and shame. You do not have confidence.

Mame finished her high school 2007. Her father was dead and mother had many children. Mame was oldest of them. So she started to help her mother by getting a job as a housemaid. Owner of the house raped her and she got a baby and lost her job. After that her only solution was to marry young man she met later. But life was not easy. He was an alcoholic and she was beaten by her husband all the time. She got another baby and another problem. Later she left her husband. We counseled her and we helped in many ways. We also helped her to go to school, learn 'Food Preparation'. She got her diploma/certification and she was working and helping herself and her children. After that she went to private medical school to become a nurse. She works as a nurse now.

There are many Betelehems, Hannas, Deresas, etc, whom I have met during these years. God has been faithful and I have witnessed, how many lives have been changed by love. Their problem is my problem! I am so glad that God taught me to love the broken ones and love can truly conquer everything! Everyone gets touched by love. You and me, all together, can make a better world by taking the first step in believing, loving and caring. If we all could stop and see one person in need and help, what a wonderful change we could see in this big world!

Be blessed and a blessing!

If you want to share my vision, I am happy. **My vision is to reach people through love.** Love always wins. The language of love is international. It´s God´s own language. Jesus told us: *“I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you!”  (John 15: 11-12)*

With much love,

Yours,

Mulu Chekol