

# AGRICULTURAL EVANGELISM

*"Blessed is he that considereth the poor"*



Ethiopia Story • Nagaland Update July 2006

Bangladesh • Guatemala • Haiti • India • Moldova • Nepal • Niger • Philippines • Rwanda • Senegal • Thailand • Vietnam

## Dear Friends in Jesus!

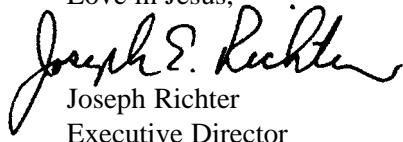
**S**O MUCH IS HAPPENING AROUND THIS world that we sometimes forget the wonderful things happening in heaven. One thing we can be sure of is that no detail of our life is ever missed by God. Our tears are recorded, our prayers ascend as incense, and even our deeds are remembered. In particular, how we respond to the poor of God's kingdom is of the utmost importance to God. Why? I ponder this truth often. My conclusion includes many facets.

We know that God loves all of us, rich or poor. Yet his eyes are especially on the poor, the defenseless; he hears their cry. In fact, as we well know *"pure religion"* is defined for us in the Bible as *"To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction..."* Furthermore, and maybe even more importantly, is the fact that the poor and their poverty reveal the true issues of our heart! Confronted with poverty, we must make many heart revealing choices. Visit or ignore? Help or withhold help? Identify with or avoid? Love or reject? Show compassion or hardness? Lend or withhold help? Choices must be made! We can not remain neutral. Our choices reveal who we really are, and whether we practice *"pure religion"* or something much less.

You are reading this newsletter because you have made a choice to *"consider the poor"*. You may know others that have a similar heart. Please, do what you can to introduce them to FARMS International. FARMS is an opportunity for you to *"do good"* to the poor. The more our FARMS's family grows, the more we can help those that have real needs.

This newsletter includes an illuminating article titled, **"Two Cows"**, written by Emebet Davies, our Staff Accountant, who grew up under communism in Ethiopia. In addition we included a pictorial update on our new loan program in Nagaland, India. I trust you will enjoy these articles. Then when you are done, please share this newsletter with a like minded friend. This will be a great help.

Love in Jesus,

  
Joseph Richter  
Executive Director

**A**s we noted in our last newsletter, Emebet Davies recently joined FARMS as our Staff Accountant. She grew up in Ethiopia and brings a fresh and personal perspective to our understanding of the life of the poor. Emebet's family was fairly well off until the Marxist regime of Mengistu seized power in 1974. She was only five years old when everything changed for their family. They went from abundance, to poverty overnight. How her family coped and even prospered, illustrates how effective small loans are in helping families work their way out of poverty. I trust you will be blessed by her article, *"Two Cows"*.

## Two Cows: by Emebet Davies

**I** REMEMBER THE DAY AFTER THAT FATEFUL day. I was 5 years old and I was humming along with a song on the radio. It was a communist revolutionary theme song. It was a catchy tune with a marching beat and I was moving my right arm along with the beat the way I had seen people do it on TV. My grandmother got up and purposefully walked to the radio, and turned it off. I began protesting, but right away, I realized something was very wrong as I took one look at her face.

Those days, both my grandmother and my mother had a shaken look on their faces. They talked in whispers and hushed voices. Every time I walked in, they became quiet. They held my hand tight when we walked outside, and I sensed a protectiveness that was filled with anxiety. We saw young men lying dead on the streets. We had

strange people visiting our house; men with Kalashnikovs rifles. I was confused at why my mom had to open her closets and show them her private belongings.

This all began happening after the DERG, a socialist revo-

*(Continued on next page)*



*Emebet's grandmother, Belaynesh (L) and mother, Maaza (R)*



lutionary junta, overthrew the monarchical government of King Haile Selassie. They immediately declared the cessation of private ownership of land and houses.

**"Land to the people!"** was the slogan that was shouted. Thus, all the property my grandmother owned was taken away. Stones rained on our house, neighbors laughed and jeered at our unfortunate fate.

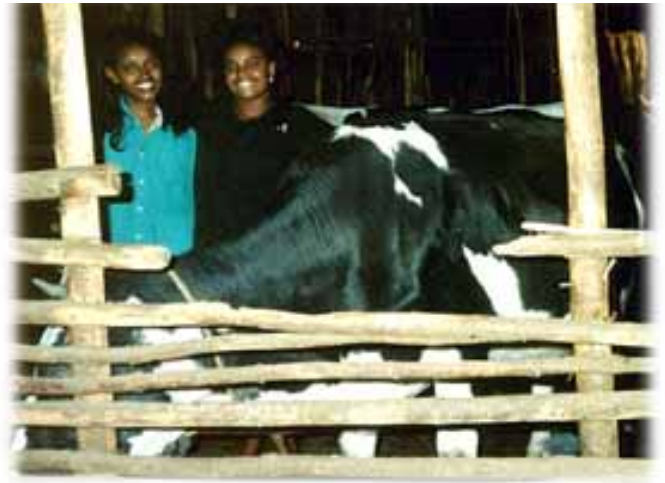
Surviving all of what was happening was a priority, but the grim question was "What now?" It was shocking, horrifying and at the same time very humbling! Everything looked dark and grim. My parents did not know what to do next. What to feed the three of us children; my sisters were only 18 and 6 months old. My family had no one to turn to; no friends or relatives, it all became so very strange. It seemed deeply hopeless.

What happened to my family was sudden and shocking. It was a change from having all one day to having none the next. Although, having nothing was old news where I grew up; most families were faced with that grim reality everyday of their lives. It was not shocking to them at all. Communist rule or not, it was a way of life.

**For us, our life changed drastically.** The next 14 years, I routinely heard my grandma getting up at 4:00AM to start her day. I never remember a morning she stayed late in bed. There was the milking of the cows, making of yogurt, butter, and cheese, as well as getting the fresh milk ready for sale by 6:00AM. In addition, there was the putrid daily task of preparing cow dung patties for fuel purposes. In the beginning, my grandmother did it all by herself with a supernatural determination. Her feet cracked, her hands became rough, the smell of cow lingered on her clothes, and her beautiful face was disheveled and sunburned due to the merciless sun. Later on, we were able to hire some help, but she still worked harder than any of the helpers.

Now, as I look back 30 years later, both my sisters and I have graduated from college, we have pursued our dreams in marriage and careers, and now have families of our own. Our grandmother and mother wanted that for us and they dedicated their lives so that ours would be better than theirs.

How did they do it, when everything had been taken from them? Well, my mother sold her dear Fiat 127 automobile, and with the money purchased two milking cows. With them they started a dairy business. Those two cows enabled them to feed us three children, to buy our clothes and to pay for our schooling. Those two cows became 4, then 8, and then 16! That small beginning, a humble dairy farm, became the solution to meeting our needs.



*Emebet (R) and friend at their family dairy farm (1991)*

I remember as a child the good times we had gathering and having dinner. Sometimes, the topic of the good old times was raised and laughter roared in our house. Then there was the fleeting sadness that swept our faces as we remembered the hard times when our friends, relatives, and neighbors turned their backs on us when we needed them most. The thought often came, that it would have been nice if somebody had helped us, especially when we were shamed, not knowing what tomorrow would bring. What would we have done if we did not have enough money to buy the two cows?

Now, as I work for FARMS, I think of the prospect of a family facing such a situation. Facing endless poverty, but not knowing what to do. Facing hopelessness, but not knowing where to turn. It takes spiritual strength to carry the burden of hard times. Yes, their strength comes from knowing Jesus and loving him. Yet, their needs force them to stretch out their hands to Him with expectation. Many times, Jesus uses a willing brother or sister who overflows with his love to share his word and plant the seeds of hope.

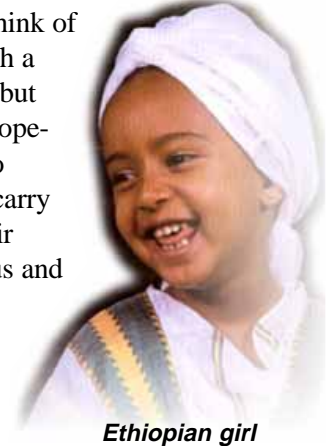
It encourages me to think that we at FARMS might be able to help struggling Christians spiritually and economically; enabling them to raise their children with dignity, providing adequately for their food, clothing and schooling. Maybe, some we help will someday want to work for a program like FARMS. Maybe, they will grow and support their local FARMS program, bringing glory to the kingdom of God.

Maybe, they will grow and tell others about the love of Jesus. Is not that what we are commissioned to do?

Thank you for taking your commission seriously and partnering with FARMS.



◀ *Emebet's son, Gabe (7), in Ethiopian dress*



*Ethiopian girl*



## Nagaland, India: Pictorial Update:

**N**AGALAND IS ONE OF INDIA'S NORTHEAST "BORDER STATES." It is the most Christian state in all of India. Surrounded by countries and states that need the Gospel, Nagaland is in a unique position to reach these areas and beyond. These facts make Nagaland an ideal setting for FARMS. It is our hope that as our loan program grows, that many churches will be better situated to support cross cultural missions. This is going "full circle" in missions!

Our initial program report details a great variety of projects and also a desire on the part of families to faithfully tithe out of their project profits. It is our prayer that this program will grow so that many families can be helped in this unique area of the world. **If you or your church would like to have a part in supporting this work, please feel free to contact us.**



**Mr. Ramngelilak with bullocks:**

Before I used to hire bullocks from others, but now I am happy that I could plow and do the works with my own. I just sowed three mustard seed fields, and I am expecting a good harvest. [This past April he was able to harvest and give his first tithe.]



**Mr. Akwang next to his newly dug fish pond:**

I am very grateful for FARMS and Christian Families Helping Hands loan committee for making the dream of a large fish pond possible. Now I have a bright hope. I haven't given my tithe as yet, but pray and hope that I will be able to help my church in the near future.



**Mrs. Alamle in her garment shop**

I am widowed and have one daughter and one son still at home. I am very much grateful to FARMS for helping me improve my business. I was able to expand my business and my profit. I give my tithe regularly to my church.



**Mrs. Asoile with samples of her weaving**

I am very grateful to FARMS. My husband is an evangelist, but his monthly salary did not meet our daily needs. Now we are out of financial problems. Four people weave with me, and we can complete one shawl in two weeks. Each can be sold for \$22.00 to \$39.00. Now we are able to pay off our children's tuition fees and tithe to our church much more than before.



**Mr. Namchi and his wife**

They are both very happy to be able to start their garment shop. We are making a profit and are now able to support our children in school. We tithe regularly to our church. We hope to be able to loan again to expand our business.



**Mrs. Thekrumenuo in front of her grocery store**

I was a teacher at a mission school, but decided to go into business. I feel I can witness through my store. I am happy for the help from FARMS to start my store.



**Mrs. Bangko next to her piggery**

I purchased two female pigs. They have each given birth, for a total of 15 piglets. After two months I will sell them for \$26.00 each. Some will be kept for brood stock. I am very happy that FARMS made me able to enhance my income. My tithe will be made at the sale of my piglets.



**Mrs. Idwabale weaving bamboo wall mats for a new house.**

The home I am building is to rent to others. This home will have six rooms and the monthly rent should be around \$21.00 per month. (Her loan would be fully paid in a little over a year.)



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## Memorial Day Commemorative

### Howard R. Irwin (91)

Howard R. Irwin, US Army Major (ret,d), was interred at Arlington National Cemetery with full military honors in January 2005. He served in WWII in the South Pacific.

He is survived by his wife and two children.

In 1965 he met Reverend Gareth Miller [founder of FARMS International] at New Jersey Southern Baptist Church, where his family belonged and worshipped, and they became fast friends.

When Reverend Miller shared his vision and ideas about FARMS International, Mr. Irwin was sold on the concept and supported the mission from the beginning.

We thank God for those who serve our country so that we may live in freedom.



*Howard Irwin,  
WWII Photo*

## Memorial & Honor Gifts

### Gifts in Honor of:

Gary Wiebe  
Betty Mergler  
Ray and Ann Ellison  
Jim and Kathy Badgley

### Given By:

Milo and Deloris Pitkin  
Mr. and Mrs. Robert G. Barr

### Memorial Gifts In Memory of:

Frank McLaughlin  
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Nathan and Belene McLaughlin  
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### Howard Irwin Memorial

By Mrs. Jimmie Sue Irwin  
Nagaland Program

### Gareth Miller Fund

by Michael and Grace Sposato

### Moving or a change of address?

Please send us your new address. If you want to be removed from our mailing list, please let us know.



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FARMS is able to accept credit card donations on our web site or by telephone. We trust this new service is of help to you.

**NEW!**