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### **Poverty in Ethiopia: Our Call to Action**

The universal saying, “Give a man a fish and feed him for a day, but teach a man to fish and feed him for a lifetime!” actually means something! This is common sense which is easily overlooked from time to time. On a global level relating to famine, malnourishment, and national depravity, such ignorance cannot be allowed. Due to this situation, many third world countries are still being victimized of many of these crude killers. Back in the 1980’s, Ethiopia was at the center of one of the worst famines our world has ever seen. Knowing this, people sprang into action, having fundraisers and doing concerts. Those money raising ideas were great, so why is Ethiopia still struggling as a nation today? It is because problems in the 80’s and 90’s were not permanently fixed! Temporary solutions are definitely not a sustainable way to help in the forward progression of a nation. Those fundraisers made a set amount of money; eventually that money pile dwindles down and becomes nothing. Water scarcity and droughts are still prominent in this near desolate wasteland. Over 80 percent of Ethiopia’s 77 million total population, live below the poverty line, and over 10 million already in starvation. Global price increases on food and failed seasonal rain, have left this already suffering nation on the brink of another major famine yet again, leaving millions expected to need emergency care and aid in pursuing months. In fact, this year, corn prices have reached as high as \$3.70-\$3.85 per bushel, worldwide. But even with corn prices rising, growth is still an issue due to water shortages. With many horrendous factors weighing down on this country, it is time America and many other nations confront this problem and take action to find a sustainable permanent solution.

Living in the United States, many of us do not realize, or cannot imagine the idea of incomplete, unstable, and poor countries, because life here is so incredible. Luckily, great organizations such as Merlin and the Heifer International Project are working to let countries such as Ethiopia have the same humane rights we do. This past year at the 85<sup>th</sup> National FFA Convention and Expo, many members were involved in food packaging that sent packed lunches off to Haiti. I think this should be done for Ethiopians. Though it is not a concrete solution and is temporary, it allows time for us to come up with better solid solutions to the water depravity situation. It also gives Ethiopians hope knowing that they can have a meal every day and not have to be so scared that they may come home to yet another day without food to eat or go on yet another nutrition less day while working. But on the note of great organizations such as Merlin, their main goal is health assistance and national cleanliness in accordance with diseases common in that country. Preventable diseases easily account for at least 60 percent of national health issues and fatalities in this country. Even if water is somehow sustained in this nation, if disease takes these peoples’ lives, then who will consume it? Overall, meaning that our work will have been for nothing in the long run. First we have to maintain and balance water cleanliness which can help reduce illnesses, diseases, improve agricultural growth, and even improve self hygiene. In fact the Ethiopian President, Girma Wolde Giorgis, has made an initiative to reduce malaria mortality in Ethiopia by over 50 percent with a three year plan with the aid of G.F.A.T.M. (Global Funds to help fight Aids, Tuberculosis, and Malaria). This aims at the following nationwide actions: 90 percent of all households own and insecticide net (I.T.N.s), 85 percent of all children under the age of five required to sleep under an I.T.N., along with pregnant women, dwellings in

geographic areas for indoor residual spraying is sprayed and decontaminated, and that 85 percent of government health facilities have available treatment for such illnesses. If a developing country can do this much on their own, it is time we step in and help them. With a common goal set ahead, now is the time to help Ethiopia in establishing cleaner and better protected societies throughout their country.

The Tulu family of seven is a prime example of struggling in Ethiopia's economy. The Tulu family owns very little land and their main occupation is farming. Though they do everything they can to keep themselves able to survive, poverty seems to be weighing them down very heavily. With only one cow, a few roosters and chickens, and a goat the Tulu's seem to leave their dependency each day on their animals. Every single day, the oldest son Teshome, 18, walks almost the length of 4 football fields to get to the local well. He can only carry two buckets full of water for his entire family. On average he does this about six to seven times a day. This water is made to last his entire family, along with all of their animals, and help to water their land to help ensure its possible production of crops. With very dry and arid climates in Ethiopia, there are some days that their family well will be dry or have an insufficient amount of water to supply for the family. If clean irrigation systems were supplied to these poor families, then Teshome would not have to walk hours each day just to ensure his family's needs are met. Their land would become fertile, his family would not thirst any longer, and neither will their animals. With many foundations and maybe student bound help organizations, then families like the Tulu's wouldn't have to suffer and worry whether or not they will have water each and every day.

With the idea and action to make a disease minimum Ethiopia at hand, it is time for focusing on famine and malnourishment. Since at least 1980, Ethiopia has been struck with on and off famishment. Since 2003, their government had provided roughly 4.5 million people with emergency food assistance, knowing that their work is barely scraping the surface of their food problems. Now is the time allied first world and second world countries step in to help provide support. Since we have sustainable agriculture, agriculture relates practices, and a great economy in comparison to others. The United States of America and others have the ability to make a huge impact on developing third world countries such as Ethiopia. With a dry, arid climate, crop production and efficiency are incredibly low due to Ethiopian lands not being farmable and extreme water shortages. So what is a solution that fixes this situation since we are unable to fix an area's climate because it is intangible? The real problem is being overlooked. Even if seeds and techniques are being developed in Ethiopia to help growth, plants still need water to grow. Most water in Ethiopia is withdrawn by families using buckets, for a personal well that has to be walked to and from their domain. A few buckets of water are not nearly enough for a family to survive off of every other day, because some days the wells even dry up. If water irrigation systems not only clean, but distribute water to families and others in Ethiopia, then why have people not stepped in to do such a thing? With this frequent source of clean water, it not only gives family drinking water or bathing water, but it allows water to nourish their plants or seeds to be harvested for a frequent source of meals. Though Genetically Modified Organisms could also help, it would be useless without water to help their growth. The main problem has to be overcome first which is national water shortages. With water sources able to enrich lands of crops, it allows a maintainable source of food for Ethiopians in crop production and efficiency allowing a harvest time that is suitable for climates in that area. Some of the most common genetically modified organisms exported from the United States are corn, barley, wheat, rice, and other grains. This is a source of nutrition and hydration that literally means the world to a small poverty struck family; it gives them hope, joy, and statistically a longer life expectancy than Ethiopia's average 41 years. But with all the resources being sent to help Ethiopia, makes one think that we as humans can help as

well. College students looking for international travel ant to help others could apply to be sent to Ethiopia to help in its success, depending on what their major is. With more help alongside of foundations and grants, Ethiopia could be improving economically significantly in the next few years.

Take note that America and many other enhanced countries were based off of agrarian societies. Thomas Jefferson once said that sticking to ideas and practices we are familiar with, will allow us to grow and prosper in that region, only allowing room for further expansion. Agriculture helped our societies and many others grow and develop as a whole, pushing our great nation to where it stands today. So by passing down this knowledge and these practices we are familiarized with to Ethiopia, it will furthermore allow their potentially great nation to grow, prosper, and develop as a whole such as many of us already have. "Agriculture not only gives riches to a nation, but the only riches she can call her own." A noteworthy quote such as this, said by Samuel Johnson, and English author, is one that lives on throughout the ages. The veracity of this quote is not only evident in our nation but in many others as well! By answering this call to action, we can not only end water shortages in Ethiopia, but its nationwide poverty as well. Now it is time that Ethiopia can prosper throughout the ages as a whole, and become a rich, stable, and complete country, finally.

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