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**General Report from Zerihun**

Fri, Jul 24, 2020 3:35 pm

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To **Bob Owen** [bobfowen@aol.com](mailto:bobfowen@aol.com)

Dear brother Bob,

Love and greetings to you!

We always appreciate your active involvement in Ethiopian gospel work since 1999 till now. Although we miss you seeing physically, our hearths are always with you!

This note focuses on :

- A. Progress of Ethiopian gospel work and Status of Churches
- B. Ethiopian Preachers, their support and activities
- C. Economic and peace situation of the country
- D. Involvement of Ethiopian Churches and individuals in financing church and gospel work
- E. Corona virus pandemic and its effect in Ethiopia
- F. Some considerations and general support items for Ethiopian gospel work

### **A. Progress of Ethiopian gospel work and Status of Churches**

As you know, prior to 1999, all churches in Ethiopia were under the mission (Institutional churches). The mission organizations were Uptown Church of Christ (Bole Mission) and Church of Mission (Mekanisa mission). The Mekanisa mission was stronger than the Bole's. Now, the numerical growth of new testament churches by far exceeds the churches associated with Bole mission and a little less than that of Mekanisa mission.

By the time you made your first trip to Ethiopia with Melvin, Harry and James, the churches associated with Bole mission, including Bole Church of Christ which I used to be a preacher were 52. The congregations with Mekanisa mission were about 200.

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We were aware of new testament Christianity and its difference from the mission system after your gospel teaching trip to Ethiopia in March 1999, and then followed by good sound preachers and ladies like David, Steve Wilsher, Randy, Scott, Steve Patten, Curtis, Pat Underwood and several others.

That was historical turning time we always remember to the true gospel dispensation in Ethiopia. A bridging role of Dartha Star for its realization is also always recognized.

Among the 52 Bole mission associated churches, 45 had departed from the mission and associated us to work independently from 2000 - 2002. In addition, many new churches were established over the last 21 years. Now the number of New Testament Churches reached to 342 in Ethiopia. This is resulted due to:

- 1) the continual gospel trip, teaching and encouraging of you and several other American brethren
- 2) financial support through you and other American brethren for gospel preachers, preacher training session and other gospel causes
- 3) access of some sound biblical materials, that help biblical studies of Ethiopians. For instance, publication of early church book in Ethiopian languages and distributing for many users by your funding.
- 4) brotherly support and encouragement of you and many American brethren during extraordinary need. For instance, famine relief support for Ethiopians several years ago. We remember that you were number one in raising significant amount of funds.
- 5) efforts of many Ethiopian preachers and brethren in gospel work.

We are so grateful to you and others who are involved in Ethiopian gospel work in one way or the other. Glory to God for the out come.

How ever, as compared the country's area and population size, the out come so far is very minimal. It demands very hard and intensive strategic efforts to disseminate the true gospel of Jesus Christ and to stabilize the existing churches in the country.

Among the current Ethiopian churches, 94% are located in countryside (rural areas). About 6% are located in few cities and towns of Ethiopia. Large majority of Ethiopian churches are found in southern part of Ethiopia. Few are found in west and central part of Ethiopia. Town churches are small in number but relatively better in bible knowledge and doctrinal soundness as compared to most of the countryside ones. Most of the Ethiopian Churches have an average

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of 50 members. About 35 churches have an average of 100 members. Five countryside Churches have an average of 300 members. More than 45 are relatively new churches, which have 10-30 members. All town churches including Addis Ababa have low size of members (25-50). For instance, Kotebe church, which I am a preacher has 48 members with out children and some attendants. It is the first independent congregation, which has been instrumental for the spread of the gospel and establishment of many new testament churches in Addis Ababa and other areas of the country.

## **B. Ethiopian Preachers, their Support and activities**

There are about 290 preachers who are being supported by American churches and individuals. About 22 other than the the above are being supported by local churches. There are some active men in several churches who teach, preach and offer different church services in their part time by supporting them selves.

Among the supported preachers of Ethiopia, 70 are being supported through you. Of the 70 preachers, Markos, Demeke, Ermias, Tesfaye Deboch, Tadele Yakob, and Bekele Silase from Kembatta and Hadiya areas are among very devoted and faithful preachers who are striving in preaching work. Habte, Tsegaye Hakamo, Muneso, Dubale, Kassa and Mengistu from Sidama and Berhanu from Burayu are also among some active preachers. Besides teaching in their local congregations, several of them help and nurture other new churches and new preachers. I just some among supported through you. There many good and devoted preachers who supported from the sources of America other than you.

Generally, about 55 of the preachers whom you support are faithful and attempting to preach the gospel and to develop them selves as much as they can. About 15 are inactive ones, which need continues teaching and development. However, they are a little better among the members of the congregation they preach. They at least help some of preaching and teaching responsibility for the group they worship together.

Except the city or town preachers, all countryside preachers are mainly dependent on farm for the living need of their families and themselves. The support they get from abroad and local sources is very small but helpful for them to fulfill some of their needs and to devote part of their time in preaching work. Support from America is very help full for preaching work. We encourage American brethren to keep their support in the future too. But we are not encouraging Ethiopian preachers to depend only in American resource for

The first part of the report deals with the general situation of the country and the position of the various groups. It is a very interesting and well-written account of the country and its people. The author has done a great deal of research and has written a very interesting and well-written account of the country and its people. The author has done a great deal of research and has written a very interesting and well-written account of the country and its people.

The second part of the report deals with the economic situation of the country and the position of the various groups. It is a very interesting and well-written account of the country and its people. The author has done a great deal of research and has written a very interesting and well-written account of the country and its people.

The third part of the report deals with the social situation of the country and the position of the various groups. It is a very interesting and well-written account of the country and its people. The author has done a great deal of research and has written a very interesting and well-written account of the country and its people. The author has done a great deal of research and has written a very interesting and well-written account of the country and its people.

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their living need. We are inspired to see some preachers who devote enough time and energy in gospel work irrespective of the amount of support they get.

### **C. Economic and peace Situation of the country**

The country's economy showing some growth over time although it is steady. Inflation is highly growing from time to time. As agricultural and other sector of economy grows, Christians income also grows. That helps convicted Christians to increase their financial engagement in the gospel activities. If there is political stability and peace in the country, there will be good potential of development as a country and individuals.

Since march 2010 great over all reform has started in Ethiopia with good reform leadership. But in this transition time of certain changes, we faced unrest. Causes are: resistance from former leaders and protesting groups, evil and divisive work from some corrupted and networked mafia group, who have self centred political interest. They are harming our peace, stability, and unity in the country. As a result the country lost lots people and property. I hope the current condition gets better some time with the help of our Father in near future. That helps not only for stability, peace and economic betterment. But to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ and to prepare people for Eternal home. Although Ethiopians attempt to do what ever they can, our very low economic status does allow to cover most of gospel need funds and attain opportunities of it by our selves. That is why we usually request American Assistance.

### **D. Involvement of Ethiopian Churches and individuals in financing church and gospel work**

Although Ethiopia's economy is one of the least ones in the world, churches and individuals are attempting to take some financial responsibilities for the gospel cause. There is good progress both in attitude and engagement. Initially, about 18 years ago, their financial involvement was very low. Many were to think that Americans need to fulfill all needs of Ethiopian churches and gospel work. Through time, however, they learned that every one is responsible according to his/her ability in spite of poorness. Now, many Ethiopian churches and individuals are willingly to take care of several financial responsibilities according to their ability. Some of these involvements are: many countryside churches built their own church building with wood and mud. Many churches and some individuals are supporting some preachers other than supported by American churches and individuals.

Almost all churches are supporting their needy people in their congregation. Most of the churches are preparing gospel meetings by their own expenses.

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When training sessions of preachers and active men are held by Americans and Ethiopians, the trainees are covering some of their Expenses. Most of the town churches, which do not have their own meeting place paying some of their rent.

### **E. Corona virus pandemic and its Effect in Ethiopia**

As does in many countries of the world including America, it affected Ethiopia too in several ways. Its degree is increasing. Every day an average of 500 people are found to be infected out of an average of about 7000 tests every day. Average death number is about 8 every day. If more tests are it is predicted to be more. Also health institute studies predicted that the pandemic will increase more in the coming few months. We are not sure when and how it will be minimized or stopped. But we keep our prayer and rely in our gracious God.

Corona affected not only health the people. But also gospel work and church activities, economy, employment, social life, education and others. All town churches are worshipping at home with small groups since late march. That caused lack of teaching and preaching, brotherly interaction and encouragement, lack of proper complete worship in the Lord's day among several groups. Also church contribution is decreased. We don't have live media channels, and/ or on line technology to reach the groups with adequate services like many well organized religious groups are doing for their people.

However every church and its preachers did not forsake its members and attempting to make possible arrangements of worship and encouragement. For instance, Kotebe church members are worshipping in 7 groups at individual homes. I prepare bible study outline, short notes and discussion questions each week. This material is sent for all group members and facilitators ahead of time as a soft copy mainly through telegram and other application. Among 7 groups of kotebe, 4 groups, including our home group have capable facilitators. Three groups don't have capable facilities of lessons and worship. Some times, I visit, teach and encourage them. Because of physical distancing and prevention of pandemic, I usually use contract taxi and masks. Other than members of our congregation, some Christians and attends from other congregations who want our lessons are also using them. In addition to my self, other active me of our congregation like Ephrem, Addise, Tamirat and Haileab also share some encouraging messages through telegram.

The first part of the document discusses the importance of maintaining accurate records of all transactions and activities. It emphasizes that this is essential for ensuring transparency and accountability in the organization's operations.

Furthermore, it highlights the need for regular audits and reviews to identify any discrepancies or areas for improvement. This process helps in maintaining the integrity of the financial data and ensuring compliance with relevant regulations.

In addition, the document stresses the importance of clear communication and collaboration between all departments. This ensures that everyone is on the same page and working towards the same goals.

Overall, the document provides a comprehensive overview of the key principles and practices that underpin successful organizational management.

By following these guidelines, organizations can ensure that they are operating efficiently and effectively, while also maintaining the highest standards of ethical conduct.

The second part of the document focuses on the role of leadership in driving organizational success. It discusses the various qualities and skills that effective leaders possess, such as vision, communication, and decision-making.

It also explores the importance of setting a clear vision and mission for the organization, and how this can inspire and motivate employees to achieve their best work. Leaders are encouraged to be role models and to demonstrate the values and behaviors they expect from their team.

Moreover, the document emphasizes the need for leaders to be open to feedback and to encourage a culture of continuous learning and improvement. This helps in identifying areas for growth and innovation, and ensures that the organization remains competitive in a rapidly changing market.

In conclusion, the document provides a detailed analysis of the factors that contribute to organizational success. It offers practical advice and insights that can be applied by leaders and managers at all levels of the organization.

By embracing these principles and practices, organizations can create a positive and productive work environment, and achieve their long-term goals and objectives.

The final part of the document discusses the importance of maintaining a strong relationship with stakeholders, including customers, suppliers, and the community. It highlights the need for transparency and communication in all interactions.

Overall, the document provides a comprehensive framework for organizational success, covering all aspects of management, leadership, and stakeholder relations.

By following the guidelines outlined in this document, organizations can ensure that they are well-equipped to handle the challenges of the future and to achieve sustainable growth and success.

The document also emphasizes the importance of staying up-to-date with the latest trends and developments in the industry, and being proactive in identifying and addressing potential risks and opportunities.

In summary, the document provides a wealth of valuable information and insights that can help organizations of all sizes and industries to thrive in a competitive and dynamic market.

By implementing the strategies and practices discussed in this document, organizations can create a strong and resilient foundation for their future success.

Thank you for reading this document. We hope it has provided you with valuable insights and inspiration for your own organization.

Majority of the churches in the countryside have not stopped congregational meeting. They are worshipping together by making proper physical distancing. Some big sized congregations who have narrow meeting places are using open area in the compound of the church. Some times rain affects this arrangement. As we are informed church attendants generally decreased as compared to the normal time. But small group and private prayers and seeking for God is increased among all countryside and town people.

Despite certain restrictions of public interactions and movements, we are reports that about 16 were baptized in different regions of the countryside. It could be more. This is just what I am informed.

The virus also forced us to cancel some of our training and gospel trip schedules. More over, gospel trip of Bob's group ( Scott and Steve) which we always anticipate every year in late August is cancelled due to corona. Missing this feast of the word of God which boosts up plenty of preachers and leading men in Ethiopia has its negative effect on the development and encouragement of preachers.

Corona may kill flesh, but sin and disobedience of the gospel of Christ as well as spiritual starvation kill our soul. So, we will try to keep our bond with our God and brethren in any possible means.

Regarding its effect on economy and employment, several brethren in the town, specially those who have temporary work affected a lot since the introduction of the virus. They are facing shortage of food. Those who do not have their own house can't pay house rent. Individual Christians and the church are trying to help a little from what we have, but we hardly continue to do more if the pandemic and the current economic crisis stays long.

Countryside people are relatively better regarding economic problem and food shortage. Rain in most areas is adequate and timely. Crops, vegetables, and food items are in a good shape. Although locust swarm affected some areas, still now the areas where our brethren exist are not harmed much. Its hit was before crops were planted. More or less there is food for now, and people are not starved. In fact, the saints in two church of Wonji, Nazareth and in few areas are experiencing food shortage. If the climate keeps good and the current main crops are harvested safely in late fall, there will be no famine in the entire year.

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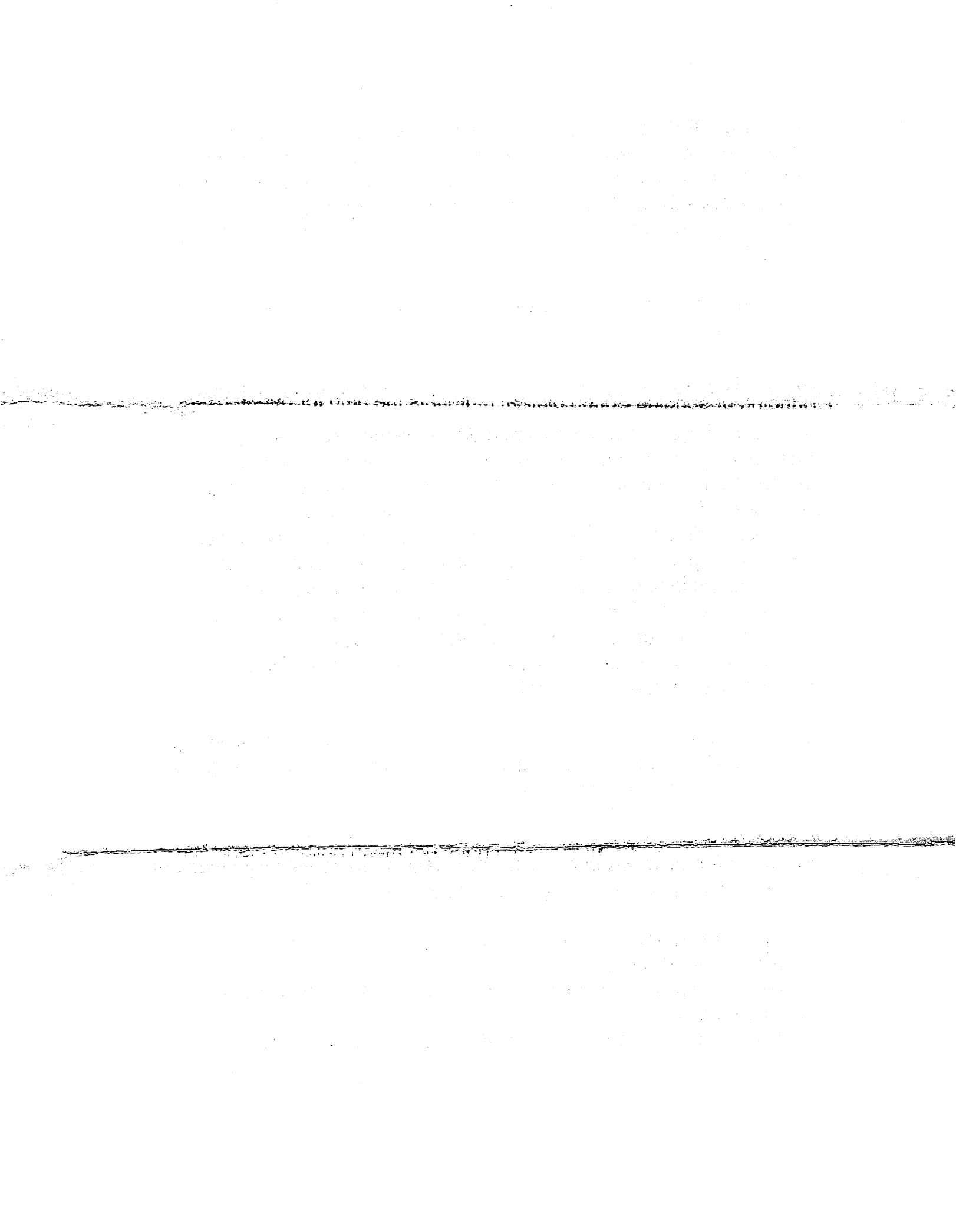
***"Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ Jesus that died, yea rather, that was raised from the dead, who is at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or anguish, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?" Romans 8:34-35***

## **F .Some considerations and general support items for Ethiopian gospel work**

The existing situation, hindering factors and drawbacks in Ethiopian gospel work and churches need the implementation of some additional new strategies and approaches with out neglecting the existing work in order to keep the gospel progress forward and for the growth of the church . Some focal work areas to be addressed from now onwards will be discussed in detail in another letter. Now am sharing general information. To attain opportunities and need, more cooperative hard work of Ethiopians and Americans need to be kept strongly. There are things that Ethiopians cannot attain with out the assistance of our American brethren. There are also some things that Americans can't accomplish with out Ethiopians. Boundary less gospel of Jesus Christ and doors opened in Ethiopia need active cooperation of Ethiopian and American individuals and churches.

Areas of support Ethiopians request from Americans are the following. Most of the items are already being supported by you and others. In all items of support, Ethiopians are involving more or less according to our ability. However, frankly speaking our financial capacity is very minimal to meet opportunities and needs of the gospel cause, even though we desire to offer beyond our capacity. That is why we continually plead our American brethren. Here are general list of items.

1. Continuous gospel teaching and training visit of some sound brethren of American to Ethiopia
2. Preachers support. Keeping to support the existing ones and some more as needed
3. Bible purchase for some who need to read and can't afford.



4.Support for the session of preachers and leading men. This is very essential to develop local preachers, leaders and strengthen local Churches.

5.Support for the teaching session of youth, especially college students and graduates. These people are very important for the sustainable growth and expansion of the gospel. It needs periodical session relevant for them. We are losing many of them and it is one focus group which we need to work with in addition to some efforts made by local churches.

6.Travel support for traveling preachers to encourage the existing churches and to spread the gospel in the areas where the true gospel is not reached.

7. Bringing or sending Sound biblical materials the help for our study as you usually do

8.Support for the publication of books and tracts in Amharic and Oromia language as you did so far. They can be translated materials, like early church or written ones in Ethiopian context by us using different references, like I try to do some. Few Ethiopians can do translating work of good materials and we can use them.

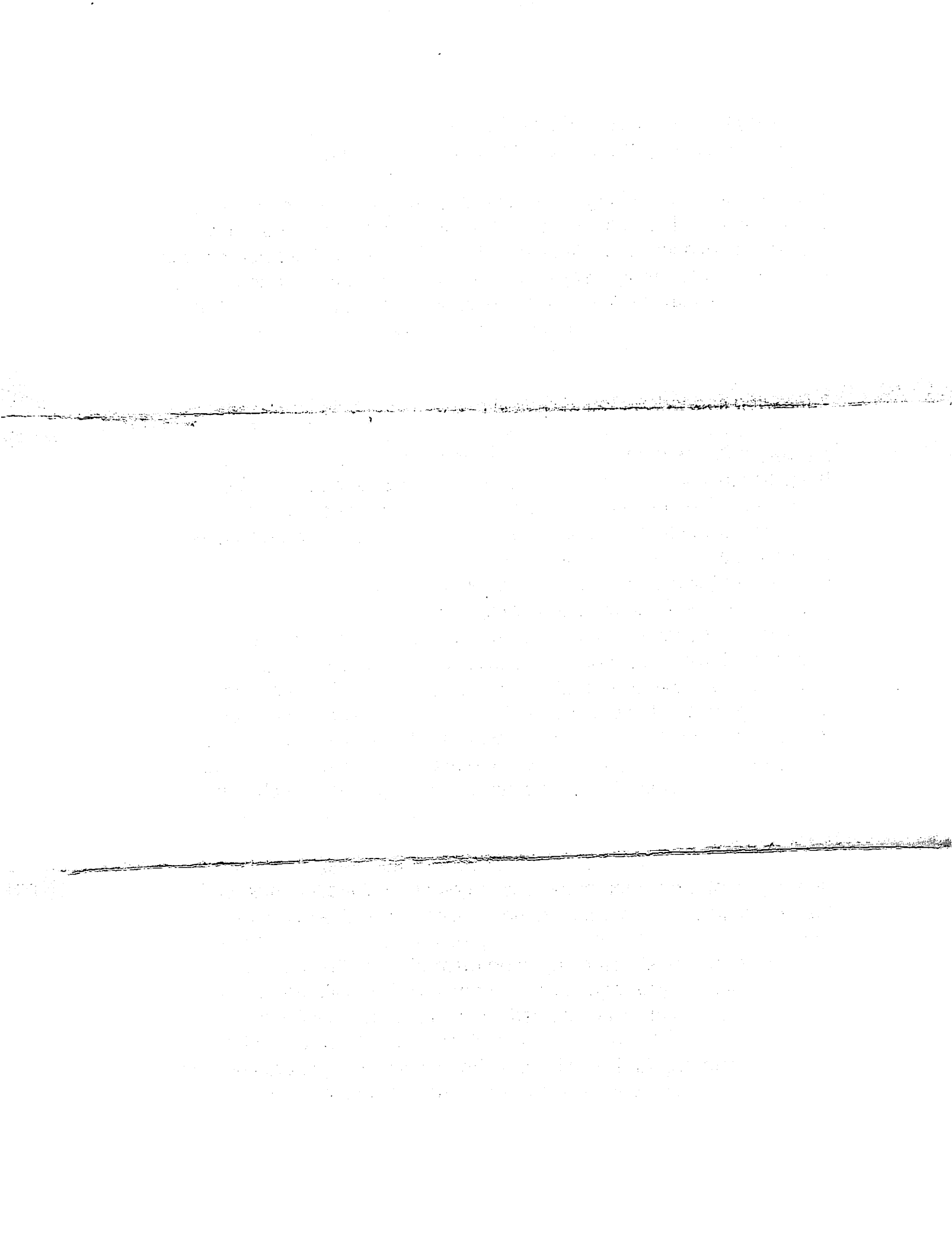
9.Equipment of copy, print or duplication machine.

10. Benovelence for some extra ordinary need

11.Church meeting house rent support for some town Churches.

12.Church building support for the Churches in some strategic cities.

Addis Ababa is the most strategic city as a capital of Ethiopia. People from all regions of the country live in it. It is also diplomatic center of Africa. More than 8 million people live in it. All religious groups have plenty of fancy meeting buildings in every corridor. In our sociocultural norm, the church cannot be considered or recognized as a church unless it has permanent meeting place. The church cannot be stable unless there is permanent meeting. This one of hindering factors for church growth in Addis Ababa. That does not mean building alone is a guarantee for the church growth. With good preaching, teaching and leadership its role to strengthen the local church and take out the gospel to different parts of the country is very essential. Kotebe and Safera congregations are still planning to be merged when the building it realized. Since a year ago, each member including children contributing the funds as we can. Since it needs a lot of money, we will never have building in Addis Ababa with out Americans help. It needs involvement of many brethren. And, we will never hope solid strong church with good size of members in Addis Ababa without having permanent church





building in a relatively good location, at least for that is accessible for transportation. It use is not just for meeting of congregation and attendants. It has multiple implications and value to promote and spread the truth. We desire to see this in your life time.

During this difficult time of corona pandemic, we don't want to press our American brethren to raise funds now for this project. But we request to think and pray about it and then to begin contribution as individual Christians when you are relieved from it.

Bob, we love and so appreciative for your tireless active involvement in Ethiopian gospel since 1999 till now. Involving Scott and Steve patten ahead of time in your trip and work to follow your foot steps and making smooth transition for the continuation of the work you starts show how wise and concerned you are for the continual expansion of Lord's kingdom in Ethiopia. We are also so appreciative to Janelle for that she has always been behind you in supporting your gospel efforts in Ethiopia.

In addition, we are so thankful to the Churches and individuals who donate funds to Ethiopian gospel work. We are witness for your stewardess and wise utilization of these funds, and we are so grateful for that too. Please keep doing your great great work of His cause till you are alive here and go to the everlasting home to live with our Father forever.

May God bless you and the family!  
May God bless America !

Your brother and friend in Him,  
Zerihun kebede

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