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Snapshots: Ethiopian doctor has faith to face severe problems

JOHN GRAP • THE ENQUIRER • AUGUST 2, 2009

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Two years ago, when I chronicled the work of two International Crisis Aid mission teams in Ethiopia, I had the privilege of meeting many great people. Among them was Dr. Henok Gebre Hiwot.

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An OB-GYN physician by training, in Ethiopia and Germany, the 46-year old directs ICA's medical operations in his native country. Prior to this he directed a project whose aim of which was to prevent the spread of the HIV-AIDS virus from mothers to children.

Dr. Henok lived and worked in Israel for 14 years, where he also met his wife Betty. They were married in Haifa on Mount Carmel in Israel, and they have four children: Hila, Chenniel, Sasson and Yael.

Recently I had an opportunity to visit with Dr. Henok during only his second visit ever to the United States. He provided me with an update on ICA's operations in Ethiopia.

The non-profit has opened an orphanage in Sebeta, a town just outside the capital city of Addis Abeba, for children who've lost their parents due to HIV-AIDS. Currently there are 20 children in the orphanage.

In the capital city, the organization continues to work with orphans and with women who have been rescued from prostitution. Forty-one girls and women are living in five homes that the organization supports. When they are rescued they need a lot of pastoral care and other help. "What we can't do for the girls the Holy Spirit takes care of the rest," he says.

In Angacha, a city the size of Kalamazoo, the government turned over a part-time clinic in the area to ICA last year. The clinic has been transformed to a full-time operation, staffed by a doctor, nurses, a midwife, and other staff. Where the clinic used to see treat five people a day the staff can now treat almost 120.

The clinic, the only medical facility in the area, provides service to almost 200,000.

Last year the rains failed in Angacha and Dr. Henok says he found approximately 4,000 malnourished children and families. This year the situation is better.

However, in the neighboring area of Katchabira, workers this year have found 1,900 severely malnourished children.



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Dr. Henok Gebre Hiwot of Addis Abeba, Ethiopia, relaxes in St. Louis. He is medical director for International Crisis Aid's operations in Ethiopia. (John Grap/The Enquirer)



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Dr. Henok Gebre Hiwot walks through a street in Angacha, Ethiopia. (John Grap/The Enquirer)

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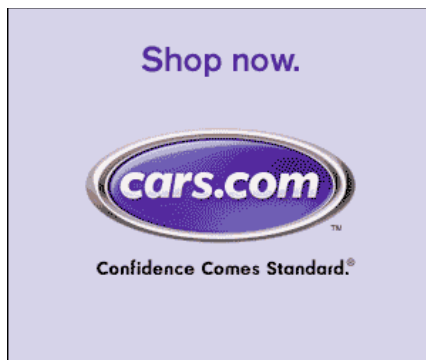
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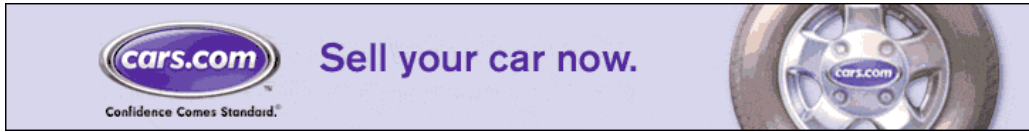
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