

The Problem with Good Intentions



We recently ran a post on our Facebook site about the new 'Band Aid' song release. If you're not familiar with it, this is a remake of the 'Feed the World' song that was released 30 years ago. This time it's a fresh batch of pop stars asking if Africa 'knows it's Christmas time'.

One of the singers approached to participate (a rapper from Ghana) declined Sir Bob Geldof, the organiser of the appeal, saying that he was 'shocked and appalled' by the song lyrics. He added "...my objection to the project goes beyond the offensive lyrics. I, like many others, am sick of the whole concept of Africa – a resource-rich continent with unbridled potential – always being seen as diseased, infested and poverty-stricken. In fact, seven out of 10 of the world's fastest growing economies are in Africa."

Increasingly, such well-intentioned but possibly misguided attempts to 'save the poor' have come under fire. But is that fair? One assumes that these endeavours come from 'a good place' and the initiators of such efforts are trying to do 'the right thing'. Is it not a bit mean-spirited to criticise or endeavour to gently divert those whose efforts may not be quite as useful as they appear to be?

It all depends, I would suggest, on whose needs should prevail in this equation. If we genuinely want to help the poor, then their needs must come first. If we are simply trying to feel good about ourselves or advance some other agenda, then that's a different story.

And can we be honest enough to acknowledge that many 'projects' or 'appeals' to help the poor are really focused on making the giver (rather than the recipient) feel good? Especially around Christmas, can we pause and admit that not everything done in the name of the poor is actually that beneficial to them in the long run?

I would not seek to discourage anybody from giving to the developing world, especially given the growing trend for giving to be focused locally, but I would strongly encourage us all to stop and ask ourselves whether what we are doing to help the poor really works. If you don't know, make some enquiries. At least ask the question. They deserve that.

Because at Christmas, of all times, we owe something to our brothers and sisters around the world who are in more difficult circumstances than us. And it's not just money, or a goat or a gift box. We owe them respect, and we owe them love. We can best show both by ensuring that whatever assistance we give is on their terms and focused on their needs. Good intentions are just not enough.

Fraser Scott
Executive Director

Bright Hope News

The team will be getting together in January for our annual Team Summit, where we discuss strategy and challenges for the New Year. One of the topics of discussion will be our increasing focus on the Middle East.

Bright Hope World's Field Director Kevin Honore is currently in Egypt meeting with a number of new potential partners.

This exploratory trip is one of a number we will be doing over the next few years to build stronger relationships in this part of the world.

Our reason for focusing on the Middle East is twofold: firstly there is a huge concentration of very poor people in the Middle East, and we are very keen to partner with them and to explore new ideas to alleviate this poverty.

Secondly, we see the church being somewhat under siege in the Middle East and we want to support our brothers and sisters and also partner with local churches that are reaching out into their communities.

We would greatly appreciate your prayers as we move into this new area, particularly as it presents a number of new physical and spiritual challenges to us.

Finally, we would like to wish all of you a very blessed Christmas and thank you so much for your support in 2014!

Life Change Story – Fountain of Hope in Zimbabwe



Recently John Vlaming, Bright Hope World's Agricultural Director, visited Fountain of Hope Foundation, our partner in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe to see the impact they are having in the community there. It was truly amazing. This is a semi-arid area of Zimbabwe and many people believe that no maize can grow there. But what John saw was very different indeed.

A church has been planted and is thriving. Through this church the principles of Foundations for Farming have been taught with remarkable success. The community has repaired two derelict dams (using just buckets, wheelbarrows and a lot of sweat) from which they now water their gardens by carrying buckets. Thriving gardens are kept and there is talking and laughter as rows of people carry their 20 litre buckets on their heads. Rekindled hope is such a powerful force.

One young couple John visited had dug potholes in half a hectare of very rocky dry ground, ready for the little rain that falls here. Their yields are obviously not high but they now have enough to eat. A man with better soil grew the equivalent of 10 tonnes per hectare! This man is 84 years old and managed to change the way he looks at farming completely a couple of years ago when exposed to Foundations for Farming.

When talking with our Bright Hope World partner about what makes this partnership so successful they said that the main thing is the Gospel taking hold of people. On top of this they have not been corrupted through NGOs giving hand outs. Another major factor was that our partner initially communicated with tribal leaders and worked for years on establishing relationships before attempting to teach new farming techniques. Trust needed to be built first. In the end the community came with the ideas and our partner just helped them achieve them. This truly is a great success story!

For more information on Fountain of Hope see <http://www.brighthopeworld.com/partnerships.asp?pid=216>

Prayer and Praise

1. Praise for the numerous lives that have been transformed through the work of Fountain of Hope Foundation in Zimbabwe
2. Kevin Honore is currently in Egypt investigating new opportunities there. Pray for safety for him and for wisdom concerning the possibility of us partnering with people there (a new area for Bright Hope World)
3. Pray for all our partners over the upcoming Christmas period which often can add a lot of extra stress and pressure to already difficult situations

Bright Hope World Office Christmas Closure Dates

The Bright Hope World office will be closed from midday on the 24th December, 2014 and will reopen Monday the 5th of January, 2015.

The last La Mai coffee orders for 2014 will need to be in by Monday the 15th of December, 2014. Normal coffee ordering will resume on the 5th of January, 2015.



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