

## What are We Investing In?



*This article was provided by a Bright Hope World donor who wishes to remain anonymous.*

Isaiah 58:10-11 says, “If you spend yourselves in behalf of the hungry and satisfy the needs of the oppressed, then your light will rise in the darkness and your night will become like the noonday. The Lord will guide you always; he will satisfy your needs in a sun-scorched land and will strengthen your frame”.

I recently visited Africa with Bright Hope World. A couple of days after returning, I reflected on being exposed to the reality of how the majority of the world lives – a hand to mouth existence, often not knowing where their next meal is coming from. Being in that situation, I was confronted with the reality that I had so much compared to the little they had, yet spiritually it was the opposite – I had so little and they, in faith, had so much. The verses above were in my daily reading, and they suddenly meant so much more. Was I spending my life on myself or on behalf of those who are poor and oppressed?

My wife and I have been supporting Bright Hope World partners in a very small way for many years, but have felt challenged to step up and volunteer as potential field facilitators – to commit to supporting partners who are called to serve God in their countries. However, I sometimes feel that we – their Christian brothers and sisters in the West - have forgotten them. I sometimes feel like we find it easier to spend hundreds of thousands on buildings and salaries, than to spend funds on missions. Have we forgotten the heart of God for the poor?

God is not trying to make our lives miserable by asking us to give to the poor, on the contrary, He is inviting us to invest in His Kingdom and the return on that investment will not only reward us now in this life, but for eternity.

What are we investing in? What kind of returns are we receiving on that investment? In the words of Jim Elliot ‘he is no fool who gives what he cannot keep, to gain what he cannot lose’.

When Jesus invited the rich young ruler to ‘go sell his possessions and give to the poor’, it wasn’t to punish Him for being rich, or to take away his joy. No, Jesus was inviting him to give his riches up in order to receive something that was worth so much more and rewards that would last forever. He was inviting Him to invest His treasure in Heaven. Think about that for a moment, ‘treasure in Heaven’ – it’s an everlasting treasure.

Where our treasure is, so will our heart be also.

I am so glad that the Lord challenged us that day about joining in His work through Bright Hope World. We have been so blessed to be partnering with them. How about you? Are you prepared to step up and support what God is doing around the world?

### Bright Hope News

At the time of writing, the area around Nelson – and particularly Wakefield – is caught in devastating wildfires. This is doubly sad for us as we have a number of team members based there, and we have only recently returned from our annual team retreat in Wakefield.

We are praying for all those caught in such an awful situation.

This year was the fifth year we have had our retreat at Bridge Valley Adventure Centre, and it is such a refreshing time for the team and an opportunity to encourage and strategise.

One development that came out of this was a brand new and redesigned format for Bright Hope World regional ‘summits’.

This year we are beginning a new process for Bright Hope World ‘Global Updates’ in which we will – over 90 minutes – give an overview of what we and our partners and – most importantly – God is doing around the world.

Our plan is to do these every year in nine different locations – Auckland, Waikato, Bay of Plenty, Waipukurau/Hawkes Bay, Manawatu, Wellington, Nelson, Christchurch and Southland. We will refresh the content each year with new stories, developments and trends.

Stay tuned for dates and locations to come shortly and see you there!

## Life Change Story – Cairo, Egypt



With the assistance and support of the NCEC Poverty Relief Programme in Cairo, Egypt, 'A' and his wife make women's garments for sale. They have had a number of loans to initiate and grow their business and are very happy to have been given such opportunities.

Their business is in the middle of a huge, permanent market with hundreds of shops selling garments. They make about 100 garments each week and sell them wholesale, making no more than US\$1/garment.

However, with the income earned they have been able to purchase the apartment they work out of and they are incredibly proud of what they have achieved. A and his wife have two children and are able to provide for their family through this small business.

'B' lives in a small apartment with her husband and three boys aged 14, 12 and 10. She is a Jordanian married to an Egyptian. Her husband works as a driver but gets very little income on a daily basis and doesn't get work every day.

B secured a EGP4,000 loan (around US\$200) and purchased an electric sewing machine. She uses the sewing machine to make clothes both for her family and for others as well for a profit. Once the loan is paid, the business will provide a very good supplement to their income.

Both A and B are very happy.

Accessing these loans has meant their children are able to go to school, they are eating more regularly and do not get sick as often. In addition, they can see a way out of their circumstances over time.

Read more about NCEC Poverty Relief (EGY03) at:

<http://www.brighthopeworld.com/partnerships.asp?pid=352>.

### Prayer and Praise

1. Pray for all of us within the body of Christ – that we would remain committed to the poor and give of ourselves in their service.
2. Praise for the lives that are being transformed and families being given dignity and hope by the loan programme in Egypt.
3. Praise for an incredibly encouraging time when the BHW team gathered for a weekend together in late January in Nelson.
4. Pray for our new Bright Hope World Global Updates – especially that we would engage and encourage our supporters around the country.
5. Pray for the people of the Wakefield and Pigeon Valley areas that the fires will be swiftly brought under control.



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