

"Pure and undefiled religion in the sight of God the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their distress." James 1:27a

Orphan Care Ethiopia (OCE) is a volunteer lead ministry at MBC which disciples and equips Ethiopian partner churches to meet the physical, emotional, and spiritual needs of vulnerable children in their communities and local orphanages. Ministry includes tutoring, mentoring, medical care, transition services, support for special needs children, infrastructure work, pen pals, training, caregiver support, and future ministry to the unreached. Our support teams here at MBC need your skills to help us coordinate, design, plan, and support our Ethiopian church volunteers, and to start a program to reach the unreached.

#### THE ORPHAN CRISIS: DID YOU KNOW?

- According to a UNICEF report published in 2014, nearly five million children and teens in Ethiopia are considered orphans ([Huffington Post](#)). The high number of orphaned children in Ethiopia is often attributed to poverty, the HIV/AIDS epidemic, and the lack of empowerment programs for women.
- Many of these orphaned children and teens live on the streets, are trapped in child labor or sex trafficking rings, and/or live in ill-equipped orphanages.
- International adoption has been a viable way to place some orphaned children in permanent homes. However, in January 2018, the Ethiopian Parliament banned adoptions by foreigners ([NPR](#)). Also, due to the lack of international funding, many private orphanages have ceased operations, and the number of children now needing care has put an immense strain on the remaining orphanages.

#### MBC IN ACTION

In the midst of this crisis, McLean Bible Church jumped in to help find a local solution. Please scroll down to see what happened and to see how subsequent trips and resources are continuing to make an impact. This love put to action started our Ethiopian Care Ministry (OCE) here at MBC.

Ashiny Family Adoption Story: One of our very own MBC families, Dr. Ashiny and his wife Naomi Haile, have committed to fulfilling the call to care for the most vulnerable. This couple has taken part in numerous efforts to help orphans in Ethiopia to prevent orphanages from shutting down, to improve conditions in existing government orphanages, and to resource and train local churches to involve themselves in orphan care. After the July 2018 trip they helped create the Orphan Care Ministry here at MBC. But before this all began, this family obeyed the command to care for orphans not only in the ways mentioned above, but also literally through adoption. Find out more by watching [this short VIDEO](#).

#### WHY ORPHAN CARE ETHIOPIA (OCE)?

The Bible tells us that "pure and undefiled religion before God the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their distress..." ([James 1:27a](#)). MBC launched Orphan Care Ethiopia (OCE) because the church could not stand by idly after witnessing the dire physical, spiritual, and emotional needs of these children in Ethiopia. Moreover, MBC believed the local church could be a solution to the orphan crisis.

Through OCE, MBC has developed a plan to mobilize and equip Ethiopian pastors, volunteers, and ministry partners to provide for the physical and spiritual needs of these vulnerable children. We pray this leads to the Gospel being spread and lives being transformed throughout Ethiopia.

#### THE OCE PLAN

- To mobilize, train, and support local churches in Ethiopia who seek to launch orphan care ministries. To date, OCE has mobilized over 130 churches to participate in the orphan care movement.
- To develop and implement volunteer-based programs in Ethiopia to support vulnerable children living in orphanages, on the street, and in the community. These programs include tutoring, mentoring, medical care, transition services, support for children with special needs, infrastructure work, pen pals, training, and caregiver support.
- To connect and support the network of non-government organizations and ministry partners who are also addressing the orphan care crisis in Ethiopia.

- To advocate for and raise awareness of the needs of vulnerable children in Ethiopia and to support domestic adoption and foster care through the local church.
- To meet the “gap” needs of children in orphanages in Ethiopia (e.g., provide financial support to assist with staffing, supplies, and infrastructure; offer training assistance).

#### HOW YOU CAN PARTICIPATE

1. PRAY: Please pray that (1) we will one day see an orphan-free Ethiopia through the equipping of the local church; (2) the church may rise to the Gospel challenge and care for its orphaned children in the name of Christ; (3) local adoption and foster care are promoted and accepted; and (4) through OCE’s vision, we can help reduce child mortality and the inherent suffering of orphans of all ages.
2. GIVE: All MBC congregants are invited to take part in the wide variety of ongoing projects in Ethiopia by giving to our Ethiopia Partnership fund. All contributions to this fund will be used to further all ongoing projects in Ethiopia. [Donate here.](#)
3. SERVE LOCALLY: Sign up to volunteer with OCE-DC. We need volunteers to encourage and support our staff and volunteers in Ethiopia as they mobilize Ethiopian churches and implement programs such as mentoring, tutoring, and medical care for vulnerable children. We also need volunteers to assist with OCE’s operations (e.g., communications, fundraising) and raise general awareness about the orphan crisis in Ethiopia. To learn more about OCE volunteer opportunities, contact [orphancareethiopia@mcleanbible.org](mailto:orphancareethiopia@mcleanbible.org)
4. GO: Join us on an upcoming short-term mission trip to Ethiopia! The July 2018 mission trip was a tremendous success and laid the foundation for OCE’s work on behalf of vulnerable children. However, to effect lasting change, we need individuals like you to travel with us this year to support the work of our staff, volunteers, and ministry partners on the ground. Specifically, between now and July, we are working with 145 churches in Ethiopia to launch orphan care ministries. During the July 2019 trip, we came alongside those churches to help them learn to better serve the vulnerable children in their communities. Please prayerfully consider how God may be calling you to use your gifts and talents to be part of the solution to the orphan crisis in Ethiopia.

#### MBC’S EARLY WORK IN ETHIOPIA

MBC’s orphan ministry began in mid-2016 when MBC provided financial assistance to a private orphanage on the verge of shutting down. The orphanage served 75 children, and more than one-third of the population were children with special needs. With MBC’s assistance, the orphanage was able to continue operating and the children were not displaced.

In September 2017, a small team of MBC pastors visited another orphanage in Ethiopia. After seeing the need, MBC provided the orphanage with financial support to paint the children’s rooms and cribs, build an indoor playroom, make repairs, hire additional staff, and train caregivers. Subsequent MBC teams traveled to Ethiopia to serve in this orphanage and three others.

In July 2018, 206 individuals from McLean Bible Church participated in a short-term mission trip to Ethiopia. Trip participants were divided into both “general teams” that focused on evangelism, pastoral training, and church planting with our ministry partners and “specialized teams” that focused on needs such as orphan care, medical support, English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) classes, and special needs training.

#### Trip Highlights from MBC team members:

- Performed 1600 medical examinations and 18 surgeries for children in orphanages and individuals in the community
- Spent time caring for the physical and spiritual needs of children and teens in orphanages through direct service work
- Developed and implemented a mentoring program that matched teen girls in an orphanage with “spiritual mothers” from local churches.
- Launched a pilot transition program for vulnerable teens that provides the teens with job training, life skills training, and other physical and spiritual support
- Provided special needs training to orphanage staff and therapeutic services to children with special needs
- Completed infrastructure projects
- Provided tokens of appreciation to orphanage caregivers