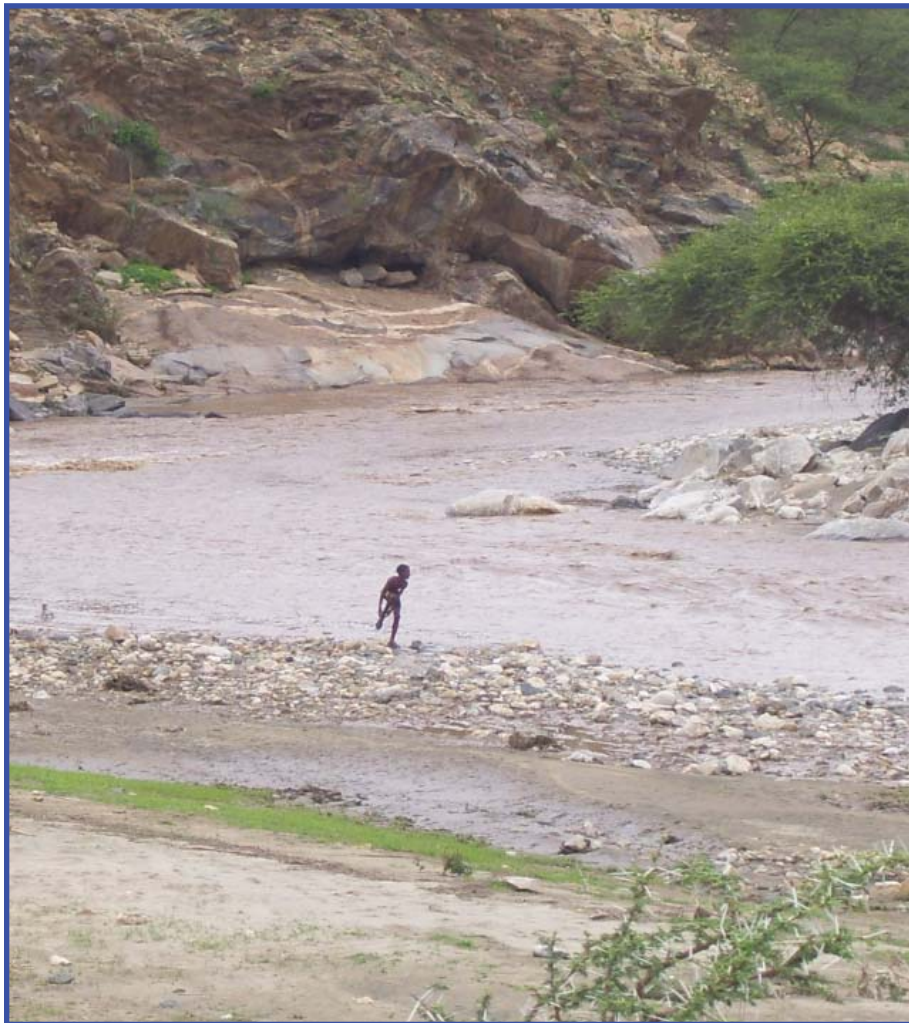


HANTI SIDRA ONE GLOBAL FAMILY

REPORT FROM ERITREA 2010



**Without enough water
Eritreans can't survive**

Eritrea got rain, but was it enough?

WHEN I visited Eritrea in August 2009, I was greeted by an unusual, but welcome, sight--rain, lots of it. In the capital city of Asmara, located on the central highlands some 2,400 metres above sea level, there were torrential downpours almost every day of my stay.

Even in Hagaz, heading down onto the arid western lowlands, I experienced a thunderstorm--the first time for me in that place. For more than an hour the rain came down so heavily that visibility was reduced practically to zero.

Since Eritrea is one of the hottest and driest countries on Earth, the August rains--among the heaviest in years--were greeted with joy by long-suffering Eritreans. But, as always, the joy was tempered by caution. The springtime short rains had been inadequate or completely absent. The longer summer rains started late. Would they end early?

For Eritrea, dependent for food mostly on rain-fed crops grown by peasant farmers in much the same way as they did a millennium ago,

rain is crucial to survival. But the rains are fickle. Eritrea may go for years on end with virtually no rain at all. Then there may be heavy rains, but only in certain regions.

Hanti Sidra One Global Family has tried to support efforts to stabilize and extend the water supply and to mitigate the impact of food shortages and drought on the most vulnerable of Eritreans. On the following pages, we look at what kind of year 2009 was for rainfall and food production in Eritrea. We also look at efforts to help young children suffering from malnutrition as a result of food shortages.

In addition, we pay tribute to a good friend of ours, hydrogeologist Tesfaldet Andemariam, a true Eritrean hero who died tragically in 2009 while he was working on a water project. ◆

Dennis Schroeder

COVER PICTURE: A boy frolics in the waters of Eritrea's Anseba River which is normally dry most of the year.

Where your contributions go

We began our existence, under the name ERRA-BC, supporting work in Eritrea. That continues to be our primary focus. However, as our present name suggests, we are part of a global family. We try to find people who are doing good work in a country, then support them so they can do more of that good work. Our funding for the Sudan projects (page 10) comes from donors who have specifically designated that their contributions be used in Sudan, plus funds from our Reserves for Future Projects (see back page) which can be used in any country. Funds from all other donations and fundraisers continue to support work in Eritrea, as in the past. ◆

Who we are; what we are trying to do

It all started in 1992, when we, Stephanie and Dennis Schroeder, left our comfortable home and three young daughters in Sidney, BC to visit Eritrea, a land devastated by three decades of war and frequent droughts. Fighting had ended just a few months before we arrived there.

Our initial search was for a small orphanage where we could sponsor all of the children. We found it at St. Joseph's School in Keren. We also found Canadians who shared our interest in developing friendships with Eritreans and assisting them in their struggle to create better lives for themselves and their children.

Our group began as the B.C. branch of the *Eritrean Relief Association in Canada* in 1992. Two years later, after Eritrea had become independent, that organization was dissolved. We reorganized as the *Eritrean Relief and Rehabilitation Association of British Columbia (ERRA-BC)*, a non-



Supporters at a fundraiser at Saanich Peninsula Parish, Sidney.

profit society incorporated in B.C. and registered with the Canada Revenue Agency as a charitable organization. In 2008, we changed our name to *Hanti Sidra One Global Family*.

During our 18 years of operation, we have spent almost \$800,000 (see back page) on a variety of projects in Eritrea and elsewhere in the Horn of Africa. Some of those projects are described on these pages.

All of the above mentioned funds have been contributed by people who believe in the value of the work being done. None is from governments. And all of it goes directly to those doing the work in Africa--none is used for salaries or administration.

We continue to visit Eritrea each year to strengthen our ties of friendship and to observe the programs and projects we are supporting.

In Canada, we have been blessed to have loyal and committed support from many people. They volunteer their time and talents for fundraisers; they make generous financial contributions; they hold prayer sessions in times of crisis. Thank you; this work would not have been possible without your support. ♦

HANTI SIDRA ONE GLOBAL FAMILY

Board of Directors

Ghebremedhin Abbai
Gary Koett
Lynn Koett
Patricia Gale-MacDonald
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Stephanie Schroeder

Active Volunteers

Dozens

Contributors

Hundreds

The loss of a great Eritrean friend

IN early October 2009, our very good friend Tesfaldet Andemariam died tragically in Eritrea. He left his wife and three young children.

Tesfaldet was one of very few hydrogeologists in Eritrea. He had an absolute passion for geology and loved to expound at considerable length on the complexities of land contours and rock formations to sometimes befuddled audiences. We sent him numerous books and manuals to help him stay up to date in his geological studies.

Out in the field he was completely in his element, often camping on-site while he conducted his surveys. Dennis had the privilege of spending a few days with him in 2006 while he enthusiastically climbed up and down mountains and followed the course of various riverbeds.

Apart from his work with the government's geology department, Tesfaldet also did work for private organizations, finding the best location for

boreholes and even for the underground dam at Hagaz. *Hanti Sidra One Global Family* purchased some sophisticated equipment called a Scintrex automated resistivity imaging system, used to study rock formations and locate

underground water.

Tesfaldet used this equipment on several occasions.

When he died Tesfaldet was doing contract work for an Australian mining company in a gold field in the northern part of Eritrea. While travelling from Keren to the gold field, he and two mine workers were "executed" by terrorists.

Tesfaldet Andemariam was a true hero that Eritrea could ill afford to lose. We were privileged to have him as a friend and will miss him deeply.

We would like to honor Tesfaldet's life and work with a special gesture.

One possibility would be a scholarship for a young Eritrean interested in a career in hydrogeology. We invite your comments. ♦



While Tesfaldet could use sophisticated equipment to find underground water, he also enjoyed dousing the old-fashioned way.

Feeding program saves children`s lives

THE consequences of food shortages in Eritrea are devastating but avoidable, especially with young children. According to the World Health Organization (WHO) there are more than 50 million malnourished children under the age of five in poor countries. The death rate among severely malnourished children is 30-50%, but with proper treatment it can be cut to less than 5%.

Malnourishment is determined by measuring the height and weight of a child, then comparing it with a chart showing the median weight for a particular height. So for example, the median weight for a girl 90 cm (3 feet) tall is 12.0 kilos (28.4 pounds). Age doesn't matter. Any weight at that height down to 90% of the median (11.8 kilos) would be considered in the normal range. A child whose weight is below 70% of the median (9.5 kilos) is defined by WHO as severely malnourished.

In Eritrea, more than 80% of the people rely exclusively on rain-fed agriculture and pastoral activities for food. There are food shortages almost every year (see page 6). In a good year, the country may produce 60% of its domestic needs; in a bad year 25%. A recent survey found that two-thirds of Eritreans do not get enough food calories and 37% live below the poverty line.

In the most affected areas of Eritrea, more than 20% of all children under 5 are malnourished. These children suffer--and die--from diarrhoea, dehydration, shock, anaemia, and other complications. Special care is needed in treatment of severely malnourished children because of the profound physi-



Families receive DMK from a Santa Anna sister.

ological and metabolic changes that take place in their bodies.

The Daughters of Santa Anna, an Eritrean Catholic order, have a program to provide supplementary food for children under the age of 5 at six of their village clinics. They began in 2009 with 420 malnourished children. Each child was supplied with a ration of 6 kilos of DMK for three months. Their weight was monitored during that time. DMK is an Eritrean-made formula containing cereals, legumes, oils and fats in powder form. Water is added to make a nutritious porridge.

At the end of three months, more than 50% of children had their weight increase up to the normal range. Some severely malnourished children were referred to therapeutic feeding centres. Only one child died.

The Santa Anna Sisters are continuing the program and we are supporting them. In December 2009, we sold enough "Gift of Nutrition" cards to purchase 1,000 kilos of DMK, enough to meet the needs of one village clinic for more than a month. ◆

Eritrea's annual struggle to grow food:

ERITREA is called a “drought-prone” country. That means there is almost always a desperate shortage of water. There is only one perennial river; the others are dry most of the year, or all year if there is no rain.

Average annual rainfall varies from 50-100 cm in the central highlands and southwest lowlands to 0-50 cm in most of the rest of the country. By comparison, most of Vancouver Island averages 200-300 cm per year, with the west coast getting up to 400 cm and “dry” Victoria getting 60-65 cm.

The main difference is that Vancouver usually gets long steady rainfalls that soak the topsoil and penetrate below. In Eritrea, rainfall is usually brief and very heavy, sometimes washing away topsoil and destroying simple mud and stone houses.

Most of Eritrea has two rainy seasons. The main season, called *kremti*, lasts from June to September. The lesser season, called *azmera*, is from March to May. Along the Red Sea coast, the *bahri* rains usually begin in October. Long cycle crops are usually planted in March-April, during the *azmera* rains.

Short cycle crops are planted in July, just as the *kremti* rains are beginning.

In 2009, the *azmera* rains were fairly good in the central highlands. But they were very poor or non-existent in the Gash Barka region of western Eritrea. Crops that were planted withered and died. Unfortunately that region accounts for about two thirds of all cereal production in the country.

The *kremti* rains started a bit later than usual, so some farmers delayed planting the short cycle crops. Then in August there were heavy rains almost everywhere in the country, followed by an early end to the *kremti* rains.

Because of the late start and the uneven rainfall, the forecast cereal production for 2009 was about 5.5% below 2008 and also below 2007. Domestic availability of cereals was 245,000 tonnes, while the country needs 574,000 tonnes. So 329,000 more tonnes were needed. Eritrea receives no food aid so everything is imported commercially, then sold to people in the markets. The cost of this imported food jumped enormously. For example, the retail price of sorghum shot up from about \$1.25 per



Workers at a village nursery prepare seedlings to be transplanted into the fields. This is one way of improving their chances of having a good crop.

they need enough rain at the right time



Water in this riverbed at Hagaz filters through the sand to form an underground aquifer.

kilo in July 2008 to more than \$2.00 per kilo early in 2009. Most people cannot afford these prices so they frequently go hungry. Young children and the elderly are the first to suffer.

What can be done to increase domestic food production? One step would be to release the large number of young men (estimated at as many as 500,000 in a small country with just over three million total population) who are still in military service preparing for another possible war with Ethiopia. It is now nearly a decade since a peace agreement was signed following the border war between the two countries but tensions remain.

Beyond that, measures are being taken to catch and preserve rainwater so it is available when it is needed for agricultural use, not just for a couple of months during the rainy season.

Many small earth dams are being built in villages throughout the country. There is also interest in developing spate irrigation, the building of tempo-

rary barriers to block floodwaters on dry river beds (*wadis*) and divert the water onto fields.

In addition, Hagaz Agro-Technical School, which *Hanti Sidra One Global Family* has supported for nearly 10 years, completed an underground dam in 2007. A percentage of floodwater on a *wadi* percolates through the sand. It is trapped by an underground concrete barrier that extends down to bedrock. The trapped water eventually creates an artificial aquifer that can be accessed from wells.

This takes time and adequate rain; during the 2008 dry season the wells at Hagaz dried up. In 2009, with heavy *kremti* rains, there is hope that wells will still have water in the dry season.

Because water and food are the most basic human needs, we cannot ignore these needs so long as they are not being met. *Hanti Sidra One Global Family* continues to support small-scale projects to get water and increase food production. When there isn't enough food, we support our friends who are trying to help the poorest of the poor to survive. ♦

A village pond created by a small earth dam.



Our global family: now in Canada too

IN August 2009, our One Family group of war orphans got together in Asmara for what has become an annual tradition--a family reunion. This time, including children, there were nearly 40 present. Over a meal in a local restaurant, they renewed acquaintances and got caught up on news about each other--because of their work assignments

in different parts of the country and travel restrictions they don't often get to see each other. While most of the 80 orphans, now in their late 20s and early 30s, are living in various parts of Eritrea, about 15 are now outside the country. They live in such varied places as Japan, Dubai, Sudan, Ethiopia, Germany, Norway, Britain and the U.S.

As of December 1, 2009, there are also two members of One Family living in Canada. Twins Fethi and Ghinbar Ghebremeskel, now 30, spent the past seven years in UNHCR refugee camps in Ethiopia. At one time they had a chance to be admitted to Australia, but that fell through when that country gave priority to refugees from the Indian Ocean tsunami.

Because of the long time the twins

had spent in the camp and the bleak prospects of their getting out, Stephanie and Dennis decided to sponsor them to come to Canada. That process took

three years. After less than a month in Canada, the twins were living in their own apartment in Sidney, BC, supplied with furniture, appliances, dishes, bedding, etc. donated by generous members of Saanich

Peninsula Parish and others in Sidney and Victoria. They also had jobs and were attending classes at the Victoria Immigrant and Refugee Centre and the Victoria Intercultural Association.

The twins celebrated their first Christmas in Canada with the Schroeder family and also were able to meet many of the people who had been supporting them since they were children in the orphanage in Keren, Eritrea.

There are now six members of One Family living in North America. Soon after the twins arrived in Sidney, one of them, Adhanom Mebrahtu, now an electrical engineering student at Seattle University, came across to visit them.

Before long we may have a family reunion of the North American chapter of One Family. ♦



Ghinbar (second left) and Fethi are greeted at Victoria Airport by Jessica and Sarah Schroeder, and Hanti Sidra One Global Family board president Ghebremedhin Abbai (centre).

Hagaz products for sale

Hagaz Agro-Technical School has gone through numerous changes in its decade of existence. In 2009 it had about 300 students, all in a one-year program.

We are supporting two efforts of Brother Tinsiew, the school's development director. One is the implementation of a financial and management plan.

The second is a retail shop and restaurant on the highway at the school gate. Produce from the school will be sold there. ♦

Brother Ghebreyesus Habte (wearing glasses) joins workers at Hagaz in the production of jam from a cactus plant called *beles*.



Food needs in villages

Sister Pasqualina continues to work at the Feledareb clinic. She reported that food shortages remain a big problem in the dry area. With our support she was able to buy grain and pay school fees for 57 particularly needy families in surrounding villages. She worried that many poor people would not survive if there was not a harvest.

Slow progress for library

Sister Letteberhan, headmistress at Santa Anna School in Keren, has a dream for her school. There is a verandah that surrounds most of the main school building. She would like to close in part of it and create a library for the school.

Apart from books, the library would have study carrels, a language learning centre and possibly computers. It's a long-term dream because resources are scarce. We have agreed to help Letteberhan a bit at a time to realize her dream. ♦



Where she is standing, Letterberhan dreams there will be shelves filled with books.

Sisters abroad

We did not see Sister Thomas in 2009 because she was home in Scotland. She has returned to Afabet. Sister Angelica continues to work in the Capuchin Sisters' world headquarters in Italy. ♦

A well, a clinic, water filters--all in one year

IN 2009, we began to support several small projects in South Sudan, a semi-autonomous region that signed a peace agreement with the Khartoum-based government in 2005 after decades of war. Our contact there is William Kolong Pioth, a Sudanese Canadian from Vancouver with a strong commitment to help his people both in Canada and South Sudan. William is one of the Lost Boys of Sudan, made famous by numerous films, documentaries and a best selling book called *What Is the What*. The book is based on the experiences of another Lost Boy, William's friend Valentino Achak Deng. Achak is using proceeds from the book to build a secondary school in his home village of Marial Bai, also William's home.

During the year, we supported projects to install a well and build a clinic in Marial Bai. By the end of 2009, a doctor and other staff had been hired,

Trainees remove a water filter from the mold.



Dr. Simon Kuot and staff of our new clinic unpack medical supplies from Canada.

and we had sent medical kits filled with drugs and supplies. Early in 2010 the clinic will begin operation.

Another project is the manufacture and distribution of biosand water filters. These low-cost filters are easy to build and maintain and are intended to be used in homes to provide villagers with safe drinking and cooking water.

In May we sent three trainees to a facility in Kampala, Uganda, to learn how to build and install the filters. We also purchased two steel molds and various tools for our own production centre in South Sudan. In September, we sponsored two training workshops in Aweil, a large town. Conducted by experts from Canada and Zambia, a workshop on building biosand filters was attended by 17 participants. The second workshop, attended by 46 participants, focused on hygiene and sanitation. The filter project is set to begin production early in 2010.

During the year, William spent eight months working on these projects. Dennis visited in February and again in August, after visiting Eritrea. ♦

ABOUT ERITREA

MODERN Eritrea was born in the 1890s as an Italian colony. The Italians attempted to invade Abyssinia (now Ethiopia) from there in 1896, but were defeated. However, the Italian dictator Mussolini got revenge in 1935, invading Ethiopia and forcing Emperor Haile Selassie to flee. In 1941, Italy was defeated by the Allies. Haile Selassie was restored to power in Ethiopia and Eritrea became a United Nations mandate administered by Britain.

In 1952, the UN federated Eritrea with Ethiopia, a move that was very unpopular with most Eritreans. In 1962, Haile Selassie annexed Eritrea, ending the federation. Meanwhile the Eritreans had launched an armed liberation struggle that lasted for the next 30 years.

Eritrea won its freedom in 1991 and, after a UN supervised referendum, declared independence on May 24, 1993.

For several years after independence, conditions improved in

Eritrea. Schools, hospitals, clinics, roads and homes were built, and agricultural and industrial production increased. The economy grew by about 6-7% per year.

But by 1997, relations with Ethiopia were deteriorating for a variety of reasons. A vicious border war broke out in May 1998 and lasted for two years. Up to 100,000 people died and more than a million were displaced. After December 2000 UN peacekeepers patrolled a 25-km wide buffer zone between the countries. But the UN has withdrawn, none of the issues that caused the war have been resolved and the level of tension remains high.

The Eritrean economy has been in decline since the border war. Exports of gold, expected to begin in 2010, may help. Most young people are still in the armed forces or compulsory national service. Drought and diseases constantly stalk people still not recovered from the war. ♦

ERITREA AT A GLANCE

Location: Northeastern Africa.

Boundaries: Red Sea to the east, Sudan to the northwest, Ethiopia to the south, Djibouti to the southeast.

Total land area: 124,320 sq. km., about the size of England.

Coastline: 1,094 km. along Red Sea.

Climate: Hot and dry, especially in lowland areas. Frequent droughts.

Population: About 3.2 million, 75% in rural areas. Many others abroad.

Religions: Most Orthodox Christian or Muslim. Some Catholics, Protestants, animists.

Languages: Tigrinya and Tigre (80%), and 7 other minorities.



How your contributions were used

ACCUMULATED REVENUES, EXPENDITURES & RESERVES SINCE OUR ESTABLISHMENT IN 1992 (\$C)

	2009	1992-2009
REVENUE		
Fundraisers	3,256.37	74,060.02
Charitable donations	64,287.37	603,687.21
Charitable bequests	402.53	207,914.71
Gifts from organizations	10,974.00	117,743.85
Interest/other	8,079.76	70,272.44
TOTAL	87,000.03	1,073,678.23
EXPENDITURES		
Eritrea		
One Family orphans	7,510.49	216,502.32
Schools	18,308.00	159,505.62
Kindergartens	4,481.00	38,342.03
Study centres/Students	3,734.00	50,650.35
Water development	-----	27,392.46
Afabet Comboni Community	9,706.00	65,094.30
Poor families/refugees/women	10,453.00	68,556.35
Clinics	7,466.00	31,566.00
Container shipments	-----	18,323.50
South Sudan		
Water development	55,572.05	68,980.82
Clinic	23,919.64	32,725.38
Promotions/Administration	789.60	9,513.03
TOTAL	141,939.78	787,152.16
RESERVES--FUTURE PROJECTS	(54,939.75)	286,526.07

JOIN THE FAMILY!

*If you would like to support the good work being done in Eritrea,
send a cheque for any amount to:*

HANTI SIDRA ONE GLOBAL FAMILY
PO Box 20004
Sidney, BC V8L 5C9

*Please make your cheque out to **HANTI SIDRA FUND**. An official tax
receipt will be issued for any donation of \$20.00 or more.*