

## June 2004



**“When one thinks of Africa,  
one thinks of lions.”**

I have recently returned from Africa and yes, I did see lion. In fact, I got close enough to get this shot...almost too close! But it is not lions like this one that come to my mind when I think of Africa. It is another lion, referred to in Revelation 5:5, “The Lion of the Tribe of Judah”, the Lord Jesus Christ!

Yes, this trip was a life altering trip. I saw the power of the Lion. Accompanying me was a close friend, Jeff Faulkner, my sister, Gwen and her son, Jordan, and my own son, Kyle. Our lives have been changed by witnessing in a fresh way the pursuit of the Lion after the souls of men and women.

Our hearts were torn with despair as we saw and smelled the abject poverty in proportions that blow the western mind. Tears streamed as we absorbed the truth of the long and wide tentacles of the pandemic HIV-AIDS that squeeze the life not only of the adults but out of innocent children and babies. Where is the Lion?

In this context, we have seen the Lion roar and bring unimaginable deliverance. Thousands upon thousands have traded their spiritual poverty for the wealth of Christ, their weakness and impotence for Christ’s strength. The joy and hope of personally knowing the Lion that prevails was front and center in their journey. Wow, what a treasure to see the difference Christ is making in Ethiopia!

Gwen, in the land of her birth, gives a rare hug to a gorgeous HIV + orphan in Addis Ababa. Kyle and Jordan remain in Ethiopia until June 29<sup>th</sup> helping to install a solar powered water system and some intense construction. As a father, I was deeply moved to see Kyle's tenderness of heart as he interacted with those he grew up with. Instead of playing with his friends, I saw his heart wrenched by their needs and tough predicaments. He realized God had brought him there to make a difference and he was wide open and ready to do so.



Jeff was able to distribute much needed vehicle parts and medical supplies and share his testimony. The pinnacle experience for me was to open the Word and shared my heart with church leaders who represent 160 churches in the area we served in years ago.

Thanks for praying us through these meaningful days.

Grateful for the privilege of serving, Bill

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Greetings from the Hardings - Spring 2004

**A quick Harding update...**



**CHINA, April 12-25** I have returned from a life changing two weeks in China. First of all for you southerners...I have found that you can buy "Sweet Tea" in China! Y'all come down and have a sip! This man sells it! It was quite warm and we drank it where ever we went. Great stuff!

I traveled with Rev. Paul Edwards of Sun River Church in the Sacramento area. We were blown away by the teaming masses...1.4 billion...especially young people. What a thrill to see our people have such an impact for what really counts for eternity. The opportunities for service are vast in almost any sector. Our visits with the leaders of both the "registered" and "unregistered" congregations were enlightening, educational and highly motivational. There are only 18 seminaries on the mainland serving over a billion people. The president of the China Graduate School of Theology in Hong Kong stated that the greatest need is for church leadership development. This need is what I witnessed with the church in Ethiopia as the church exploded with many thousands a month coming to faith in Christ. I have been privileged to see first hand what God is doing in that ancient land and have a fresh zeal to motivate and mobilize others to that part of the world.

**April 26- May 4, "Jammin' in Jamaica"** For the past two years, SIM has be helping to establish a missionary sending agency called "NEST" for the Caribbean Islands to provide missionary care and support for those they send out. This was my third trip. My Dad, five of his children and their spouses were invited for some R&R. (Only Don and Carol could not make it) This was the first extended Harding gathering since my Mom died four years ago. What a great family time with all the sun, surf and sand, wonderful meals including "jerk chicken"! We give thanks to the Lord and to the godly Jamaican couple that made this dream come true.

**Ethiopia/Kenya, May 23-June 8** In a few days I will be leading a vision trip to Ethiopia. A very good friend and businessman from Charlotte, Jeff Faulkner, will join me. Also coming is my son, Kyle (right). This will be a return to the country of his birth! He will stay on for six weeks with his cousin, Jordan, to do some water development and construction. My sister, Gwen, her best friend and daughter will come and work with HIV-AIDS orphans in Addis and some health work in a clinic at Langano.



Thanks for praying for us and standing with us in making an impact for Christ around the world.

Bill and Grace

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