

\Here is a story for the fourth of July that I would like to share with you:

In 1928 the Sudan Interior Mission sent the first missionaries to the Wallamo tribe of Ethiopia. They faced a difficult task, for the Wallamos were Satan worshipers. On the first day of the year the tribe performed a ceremony resembling the Old Testament Passover but that was, in reality, a sacrifice to the devil. A bull was sacrificed, its blood was smeared on the doorposts of each house, and a drop of blood was placed on each family member. The ceremony ended with the head of the household on his knees praying to Satan. Then everyone ate raw meat.

Wealthy Wallamos were slave owners. If a slave owner decided his slaves had had enough children, he would have all further babies born to them buried alive.

By 1930 the Ethiopian government was attempting to stop the infanticide and slavery among the Wallamos. In 1935 Emperor Haile Selassie I was in the process of trying to modernize his nation when Italian troops under Mussolini invaded. Italian troops had attacked once before in 1896, but that time Ethiopia had overpowered them. That humiliating defeat marked the first time in history that an African nation had defeated a European invader. Now Mussolini was determined to avenge that defeat.

This time the Ethiopians were no match for the well-equipped Italian army. They fought courageously, but in May 1936 the capital of Addis Ababa fell.

The Italian army advanced into the tribal areas, demanding that the missionaries leave. On April 16, 1937, the day before the missionaries to the Wallamo left, they shared the Lord's Supper with the believers. When the missionaries had first arrived, there were no believers in the tribe. Now, nine years later, there were forty-eight.

The next day Italian army trucks took the twenty-six missionaries and their children to Addis Ababa for evacuation. As the trucks pulled away, the missionaries wondered if they would ever be able to return and what they would find if they did.

With the missionaries gone, the Italians tried to stamp out the fledgling church. Many church leaders were given one hundred lashes, and one was given four hundred. After the lashings they could not lie on their backs for months, and three died.

Toro, a leader in the Wallamo church, was able to stay in hiding for six months before he was finally captured. He was given forty lashes. Then an Italian officer wearing hobnailed boots jumped up and down on his chest, nearly crushing his rib cage. Later as he lay immobile in his prison cell, he saw a vision of Jesus, who said to him, "Do not be afraid, You are my child."

After a slow recovery, Toro was released from prison, only to be arrested again when he resumed preaching. This time he and other church leaders were taken to the marketplace, stripped naked, and each given more than one hundred lashes. Back in jail, Toro's Italian captors taunted him saying, "Where is your God who can deliver you from us? You'll never get out of here alive." Hardly able to speak, Toro whispered that God could deliver him "if he chooses-and if not, he has promised to take me to heaven to be with him there."

Later, Toro and his fellow believers were praying when a fierce thunderstorm descended upon the prison, the gale-force winds literally blew the roof off. Torrents of water separated the mud walls from the foundation. Most of the non-Christian prisoners escaped. The frightened jailers were convinced the storm had come in answer to the prisoners' prayers. "Ask your God to withhold his anger," they begged Toro, "and we will release you." They kept their word and released him.

Finally on July 4, 1943, the missionaries were able to return to the Wallamo. During the six years that they were gone, the forty-eight believers had multiplied to eighteen thousand. The End

In Matthew 13: 31-32 it reads, "The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field: Which indeed is the least of all seeds: but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof."

To all who have participated and prayed for Faith Cometh By Hearing ministries, remember that we are planting the smallest of all seeds but it will become the largest of garden plants and grow into a tree for the Kingdom of Heaven. The truth will keep marching on!