

ETHIOPIA



Two years ago, my friend, Lale Labuko, told me about the Mingi practice (killing “cursed children”) in Ethiopia. Lale is from the Karo tribe in Ethiopia but was living in Germany with me doing his YWAM Discipleship Training School. With the help of my friend, Kristen Neuenschwander, Lale was finally able to start an orphanage and save the children who would otherwise be murdered.

From June 15th to August 5th, I will be in Ethiopia living with the Karo tribe and providing aid for the orphanage. My hope is that I will be able to show God’s love in a real way to the Karo people because I know that only God can change the hearts of the elders, and in doing so, stop the Mingi killings. In addition to this, I will use my photography to communicate the infinite love that God has for His children: the Karo.

-Tyler Moore



What is Mingi?



The people of the Karo tribe have a tradition-rich culture. It is informed by customs and beliefs dating back hundreds of years. Because of their geographical isolation from developing areas, changes in the ways they think about their society occur very slowly. Very superstitious, the tribe lives in fear of evil spirits who can bring ill fortune to the tribe. The Karo use the word “Mingi” to describe subjects they consider cursed or otherwise imperfect. There are many different ways in which a thing may be considered Mingi; but there are a few that are more common and have severe consequences. One example is when a woman becomes pregnant outside of marriage. Parents and tribal elders still hold all the power in arranging marriages. A female goes to the man with the highest bid, which is on average, 120 goats or sheep, and most of the time it’s not the man she loves. Without the tribe’s blessing, some young couples in love become pregnant outside of a marriage. A second example of Mingi is when a married couple becomes pregnant before announcing their intention to the rest of the tribe. The parents must notify the tribe they are trying to conceive; otherwise any pregnancy is considered illegitimate. Another example is when a child’s top teeth come in before the bottom teeth. In the Karo tribe it is very rare for a child’s top teeth to come in first, and they see this as a bad omen for the entire tribe. The Karo believe that the presence of Mingi children on their land curses the tribe. Their solution to this perceived threat is to kill the child.

On a previous visit to the tribe’s villages, Kristen was introduced to a woman six months pregnant with a Mingi child who knew she would be ordered to have it killed soon after its birth. Overwhelmed already by learning of this terrible process, Kristen couldn’t believe how difficult it was just to ask her how she felt. The mother tried to be emotionally unattached because the issue of her motherhood had been decided; she knew no other option for the child. However, as she spoke, the tears began to gather in the corners of her dark eyes. To know that you have to kill the child that is growing inside you must be harder than anything we can imagine. Kristen felt a conviction to search for another solution.

What we will do in Ethiopia

Mingi Orphanage:

We will provide food, school supplies, and clothing for the current and future children. The orphanage is set up to run indefinitely, but we would like to see the children returned to their parents. Through our ministry with the Karo tribe, we hope that the elders will begin to see the Mingi children as a blessing and not a curse.

Rescuing Mingi children:

Because of my friend Lale Laboku, we have permission to take the Mingi children out of the villages and into our orphanage. However, there is one problem. If we do not get to the children in time, then the elders will kill them. This is a problem because the three Karo villages are spread out, and it takes a day to walk to each of them. Often when a child is decided to be Mingi the mother goes into hiding with the child, but they both cannot last long in the harsh landscape of Ethiopia. Because of this immediate need we will be staying year round in order to rescue the Mingi children.

Photography:

It is important to remember that the Karo are the children of God. God loves the Karo and the Karo's culture. I want to use my photography to communicate the infinite love that God has for these people. The tragedy of the Mingi is just an example of a world without God. Because of the fear and superstition, the Karo believe they have no choice but to kill these children. Despite this, God still loves the Karo and wants to preserve their culture.

Like in Buduburam Refugee Camp I will use my photography to help support the Mingi orphanage and the Karo people. Preparing for this trip, I am realizing more and more that it is not about what I can do, but it is about what God can do. Only the freedom of Christ can stop the Mingi practice and only God's love can allow us to connect with the elders of the Karo tribe. This is why we are going to show God's love to the Karo by providing much needed aid.

Only God's love will stop the Mingi killings; only God's love will open the doors for future ministry. This is why we are going to show God's love in a real way.

