

The Sowers' Hands

A Quarterly Newsletter for our Faithful Patrons

"He who plants a seed has faith it will grow, and he who has faith has hope." • Issue 23

Incidental or Intentional – You make the choice...

By Mike Mueller, Executive Director



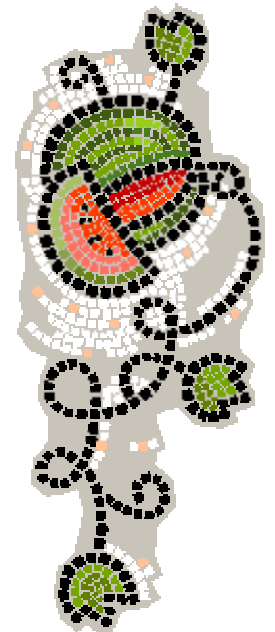
A man sat on his front porch on a summer day, eating a slice of juicy and sweet watermelon. As he ate, with his feet up, and overlooking his lush green and manicured lawn, he spit seeds.

Some of those seeds landed along the edge of his yard while most were among the grass. He watched as a hungry squirrel came from the nearby oak tree and consumed the meaty watermelon seeds... but not all. A few of the seeds missed the hungry eyes of the squirrel among the grass clippings along the edge of the yard... and then winter came.

In the next season of spring, a single watermelon plant emerged along the edge of the yard. The mower did not mow, nor did the squirrel eat, though the man almost pulled it up by the roots. He stopped short in awe and respect for the vigor of the seed to survive the winter. He decided to see what would become of this single little seedling... after all if it died no loss... so it grew. The man did not tend or fertilize... all the plants needs came from the clipping and what was in the soil. The man made no investment in the plant.

As the spring turned into summer the seedling became a vine, rambling where it would. Sometimes jostled by the wind or the passing of the lawn mower, it grew vigorously. It eventually began to bloom... some female blooms and the rest male flowers, leading to a pollinated ovary for a new watermelon. The yard sprinklers came on at regular times and provided the water needed, the spraying for bugs in the grass helped protect the watermelon vine, and the regular mowing of the yard continued to provide grass clippings as mulch for organic material and moisture retention. The melon grew.

In the heat of a July day, the man sat in the shade of his tree on his porch in front of his nicely manicured and watered lawn, admiring the vine with a single fruit. He began to wonder... Is this fruit ripe yet? Is it ready to eat? As he looked at the fruit and examined the exterior he noted that it was not quite as large as the melon where the seeds came from, but it did appear to be ripe. He surmised that this survivor from last summers feasting was ready to be eaten. He picked the fruit, took it to his porch and pulled out his trusty pocket knife and cut the melon.... It burst open with a pop as he touched the skin with the sharp blade... it was perfectly ripe, and the sweet aroma was more than he could resist.... He immediately took a hearty handful from the center of the melon ... Oh, so good! And it was even sweeter than he remembered the taste of the melon of last year.... He savored every bite as he sat back down on his porch in front of his manicured lawn, watching the squirrel scamper in the tree, eyeing the watermelon seeds he was spitting out of his mouth.



As the man enjoyed this melon he began to think to himself.... “This melon came from but only one seed, and that seed survived without my help. I did nothing to protect it from the squirrel or the winter weather. It was watered and fertilized incidentally as I cared for my lawn. Wow, this little seed sure did some great things... and now look at all the new seeds which came from this little watermelon. And I had nothing to do with it at all except eat it. I cannot even brag about how I grew it for myself to my neighbors or friends... all I can honestly say is that I watched it grow.”

He then became speculative and asked more questions of himself. “What if I had intentionally saved more of those seeds, and intentionally prepared soil as a place for them to grow, and took care of their needs with watering and fertilizer? How many more melons would have been produced from my watermelon feast of last summer? How many melons can I help produce from the seeds of the melon I just ate? Would I have enough to share? “.



What if....?

Friends – This story is an illustration of the difference between “Incidental Outreach and Intentional Outreach”. How many times in our lives do we all have a watermelon of an opportunity to share Christ and the Gospel Message and do nothing intentional with it?



There is great victory and rejoicing in the Incidental conversion – the finding of a lost soul. We should always be prepared to relish such an opportunity and marvel at how the Holy Spirit nurtures and guides. As it says in 1 Peter 3: 15... Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. And then...

We might ask ourselves what if I had Intentionally planned to plant more seed, to water and nurture, to encourage and teach, to protect and make provisions for the struggling soul. Paul writes us in 1Corinthians 3: 6 - I PLANTED THE SEED, APOLOS WATERED IT, BUT GOD MADE IT GROW. ... and further it says this ... FOR WE ARE GOD’S FELLOW WORKERS... Just think of how much cultivating and caring for seedlings we might get done if we act intentionally in our planting of seed. What if...



Hope Seeds intentionally shares seed with missionaries and mission teams who intentionally go to share Christ in word and deeds. The quality seed we provide freely to these motivated and called workers are a valuable tool in their ministry, and your gifts make it possible. We ask you to be intentional... send a gift to Hope Seeds... Plant Seeds! Feed Souls!

The Plans for Hope Seeds in 2008 are ambitious, yet achievable. Growth and Development plans are in response to numerous requests for more seed, training and instruction, and human relief packages.

- Ministry programs to children via our Bible Garden School are being prepared for 20 locations in Haiti and 2 in Uganda for this summer
- Teaching Garden and Seed Depots are being planned for Uganda and Kyrgyzstan. The existing Garden work in Haiti is being reorganized to be more instructional to our many partner ministries there.
- Human Care and agricultural tools are being collected and prepared for shipment to Uganda, Kyrgyzstan, and Haiti.
- Seed is constantly being packed and prepared for shipments from our Florida and Missouri locations. New requests from many countries come in each month... 43 countries in 8 years. Seed is the source of all food security, good nutrition, and sustainable agricultural income.

We appreciate and praise God for all the support you send to Hope Seeds. Thank you.

Gifts In Kind Shopping List

Below is a listing of items we are seeking as donations, or dedicated funds for purchase, which will be used in three countries where we have projects in 2008.

If you have interest in donating or helping us locate these items we would be most anxious to talk more with you... Thanks for your prayerful consideration. Mike Mueller

Electric Generators

Corn Planter

Wheel Disk

Stan hay or precision seeders to
mount on two row tool bar

Portable Mix Mill

Mechanical Transplanter

Small Square hay baler

Rotovator

Chisel Plow

Root Crop digger

Welder and shop equipment

30 HP Kubota Tractor ~ 4WD diesel

Funds for 4 wheel drive Vehicle

Our manager in Haiti is in need of a reliable source of transportation. The roads in Haiti are so bad that most 4 wheel vehicles (Nissan, Toyota, etc...) last less than 40,000 miles before they are shaken apart and monthly maintenance is greater than replacement cost. At present our worker Enoch has no vehicle, and rents or borrows when he needs transportation to go to a region with deliveries of seed or to give seminars. A good vehicle is a necessary tool for Enoch to function efficiently and service the needs of our partners in the field.

Our best guess estimate for a good used vehicle is around \$20,000, while a newer model Toyota Four runner is around \$30,000. We are not seeking a vehicle donation from the states... because the cost of freight and customs makes it more expensive than buying a car from a dealer there. Plus the US vehicles must have smog-control equipment, while Haiti vehicles do not – making them cheaper to purchase. Therefore, we seek dedicated funding toward this goal – a reliable means of transport for Enoch Firmin, Hope Seeds Haiti manager.

Gifts in Kind are donations of material items and are also tax deductible. Should you want to donate an item from the list above, please contact our office by phone or email. (941.228.5660 or info@hopeseeds.org). Should you wish to make a financial contribution toward any of the items on the list please note your check accordingly. Thank you for your kind gifts.

Honorariums and Memorials

Thank you to the individuals that made this meaningful tribute for their loved ones.

Gifts of Seed

Honor of Schleg Christmas

Honor of Jim Moreton

Vic & Kathy Engelhardt's Christmas

Vic & Kathy Engelhardt's 50th Anniversary

Honor of Stuenkel Family Christmas

Honor of Debi & Butch Howey

Memory of Leslye Robertson

Memory of Raymond Horne





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*A higher standard.
A higher purpose.*

Pray for Missionaries: Lord Jesus, remember in mercy the missionaries You send. Keep them strong in faith and in their mission to spread the Good news of Jesus and in their mission to spread the Good News of Jesus Christ. Help them respect the customs and cultures of the places where You have stationed them. By Your Spirit, let them communicate Your message of love clearly and effectively. Keep them healthy, both physically and spiritually, as they plant your Word. *Amen*

Bless the messengers and recipients of Hope Seeds for Spring:

Country	Ministry	Seed Packets
Haiti	Hope Seeds Haiti Manager	10,000
Liberia	SAND International	4,385
Haiti	Friends of Haiti	900
Kenya	Hearts 4 Kenta	2,000
Haiti	Ayiti Gouvenans	5,000
Haiti	Mike Bellamy	1,175
Ukraine	Sowing Hope	5,000
Zambia	Bridge International	500
Haiti	Lekol Kominote Matenwa	1,000
Uganda	Debie Collins	100
Haiti	First Presbyterian	3,000
West Africa	Christian World Outreach	3,500