

Joy's December '07 Monthly Memo

Praise

- The Bibles have arrived in the port of Mombasa!

Pray for

- Clearing through customs and transport via truck and temporary storage in Yei and Loki

Praise

- Good mobilization of church leaders, contacts in the army and others who will receive training and distribute the Bibles

Pray for

- Hiring of 5 staff in Kenya by early January
- Printing of evangelistic tracts to accompany Bibles
- Purchase of vehicle and motorcycles
- Good team communication

Giving Gifts

Don't we endure a lot to see that our Christmas gifts are just right? Have you ever been in a parking lot waiting to see the brake lights of a car reversing out of its spot and had that vulture-like attitude that you're going to slip in before anyone else notices that it's vacant? I feel like I'm playing bumper cars at the amusement park in the grocery store with wall-to-wall people and carts. Only each contact does not elicit a scream of joy but rather a cringe while wondering, "where did all these people come from?!" Have baked goods that you planned to give away been burnt just a little too much for giving?



These are some of the challenges of Christmas I'm experiencing – even here in Kenya! But they're all wrapped up in good intentions. We all want to give the perfect gifts to those we love and appreciate.

A few weeks ago I was in Malakal, South Sudan and I received the perfect gift. Brent, my colleague, and I had just arrived in this city where Samaritan's Purse has not worked before. We were getting acquainted with church leaders and other organizations in

preparation for distributing Bibles. I was standing in the shade of the church offices talking with several church leaders. Rev. Thomas interrupted our conversation and said to me, "This woman wants to give you something." She was not an imposing figure. She was stooped and standing a few feet behind our little circle. Without saying a word she came over and put a lovely hand-strung turquoise beaded cross necklace around my neck. Then she turned and began scurrying away. I hadn't met this woman before but she knew I was there to bring Bibles to the people of Sudan. As a sign of our sisterhood in Christ she lavished this hand-made gift on me. I ran after her and she turned around. Without the benefit of words I

wrapped my arms around her and gave her a hug. I think this will be my best gift this Christmas.

I am challenged by one of the readings in my Advent devotional. Let me share it with you. ". . . and still every time I am willing to break out of my false needs for self-sufficiency and dare to ask for help, a new community emerges - a fellowship of the weak – **strong in the trust that together we can be a people of hope in a broken world.** . . . To receive help, support, guidance, affections, and care may

well be a greater call than that of giving all these things because in receiving I reveal the gift to the givers and a new life together can begin.” Henri Nouwen

The Bible does tell us that it is more blessed to give than to receive (Acts 20:35), and despite the crowds and self imposed pressure I delight in giving gifts at this time of year. I am challenged though to take to heart the words of Henri Nouwen. Am I willing to

reveal my needs, my weaknesses, my need for control in order that God can send someone to meet those needs? And in the sharing of gifts –a stronger community is built.

In my daily life I see evidence of a broken world and it’s easy to get the idea that my job is to give. It’s then the responsibility of those living in poverty, those living a less than dignified life, those who are suffering the effects of war – to be receivers only. My

necklace is a reminder to me of my need to be a humble receiver of gifts as well as a giver.

At this time of year I am also reminded that I have received so much from all of you. I can’t say thank you enough for your generous support of my ministry, for your prayers and encouragement. I humbly accept all that you do to enable me to in Sudan to build His Kingdom.

Appreciating His gift,

Joy

Brent & Simon unpacking their new motorcycles – gifts from WGM supporters – Thank You!



Joy explaining the Bible Distribution Program to a pastor



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