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tlc Updates

Today in the town of David a savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger. Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests. Luke 2:11-14

December is always a busy month for everyone. Sometimes we are guilty of getting caught up in the activity and forgetting the message or reason for the celebration of the season. We pray that you are in constant celebration with your family and friends because of this most Holy Birth. Jesus Christ has come. Come for you and for me. Remember and be thankful.

The Zion Mission school year ended on December 8th. For the first time ever the end of school celebration was held in town. In the LA town hall. People and families from the community were invited. The children participated in a wonderful event including speeches, singing, dancing, music, skits, and presentation of awards. All of this was followed by a big lunch celebration back in the village. Several of the chiefs from the villages and honored guests came along to enjoy the food and fellowship. We were proud of our children on their academic achievements and their performance in the celebration. Many compliments came from the invited guests.



Now, time to get the Children's Home decorated before they leave for the holidays. So, to work we go. Tree, well, it has seen better days but it stands and has lights. Once the tree and the lights are on, we read the names on the ornaments in the evening and the children hang each ornament with care. The tree starts to come to a special beauty – just like each child. The Merry Christmas banner goes up and some other small reminders of the holiday are mounted around the room.



Soon after school was out, we had the children getting ready for home village visits with family. At this time of year, many of the children leave to see and hear family stories and bond with family they have in the villages. They are always excited to go and always excited to get back. The village becomes quiet with only 7 children remaining, 4 little ones and 3 older boys.



After the drop off of the children (which takes 2 full days), we had our first spiritual retreat with our staff. It was a combination of team building and spiritual renewal. Our volunteers helped to make agape for the event and we did some very fun team building activities which we learned in our missionary training. Several members of the staff were touched and even changed. We were asked by many if we could have this kind of event again. This type of "attention" has not been focused on staff before and they were appreciative and thankful for the opportunity. We are excited and thankful to God to have the request to repeat a similar event.



The day after the spiritual retreat for staff we had the staff Christmas Party. Now, this is a fun time but not a party as you and I would think of. We had food – chicken, sausage, potato salad, macaroni salad, sodas and home baked cookies – yes, Lorna was working again this year. The music was African music (not Christmas music) and there was dancing all around. It was an enjoyable day that ended with giving Christmas gifts to our staff. Red and Green—not at all. Fun, Yes©



tlc Updates continued

Next is the Mafuta feeding center and the Christmas celebration with the staff and the 100+ children that are orphaned or vulnerable in this village. What a blessing to serve at this special place. What a special group of staff/volunteers that cooks and serves these children each day. Chicken, macaroni, rice and cabbage was provided for the celebration. Many of you have sent Bennie babies and there were just enough to give each child this gift. It was exciting and we know that God provides for such a time as this. Books were left from Real Way Down and we gave the duplicates to the pre-school volunteer there. She said it was her prayer that God would provide books for them. God provides for each of our needs!



We were finally "invited" to an African wedding. It was only one of the phases that can be included in an African wedding but it was interesting and fun. We walked across the bush then rode in a makolo (dugout canoe) and enjoyed the celebration, including food and dancing and listening to the advice the elders were giving the bride and groom. Interesting how the men sit in the front under tents in chairs and the ladies sit in the back under tents on a mat on the sand! Check out our blog at www.tlcinthisservice.blogspot.com for more pics and information on the stories!



On Christmas Eve we went for a boat ride with the children. It was a peaceful time and we saw several animals including hippos, a crocodile, fish eagles, and monkeys.



Christmas day we made breakfast at our house and took it to the children's home for all of the children and volunteers. Then we had them come to our house for lunch. Again, we had chicken, rice, gravy, gem squash and lemon pie. There were many dishes to be washed that day!



It is during this holiday that we especially miss our family and friends. God still continues to bless us for following His call to Africa. We know that you are a part of this calling or you would not be reading this letter. We thank God for you and for your faithfulness to this ministry. You are in our hearts and our prayers and we know that God will bless you in this year and the coming year.

Merry Christmas and Blessings for your New Year!!!

Praises:

- For Jesus Christ who came and was and is and will always be our friend and our Savior!
- For our supporters over the last year and the coming year.
- For our family and friends who pray for us, support us and encourage us each day.
- For those God has placed in our path and who have blessed this village.
- Please continue to pray for the approval of our work permits.
- Please pray for safety from harm in our village and the community.

Prayers:

- For our children and our staff.
- For guidance and wisdom with many decisions we must make every day.
- For health and safety in an unsettled time.
- For each other in a new culture and challenging times.
- For our travel to America for the Global Impact Celebration at Norcross FUMC the end of January.
- For our permission and work permits – still.
- For the New Year and new times in 2012.
- For our friends in the US that continue to battle cancer – Chuck, Paul and Tim.

We thank God for YOU! Your encouragement, financial support, prayers and love!!!