

The Link

Birthday Conundrum

*Gifts given in celebration of one's birthday with a **twist***

A **parable:** This is a very special day for Harvey. It is his birthday! He had a long list of names that he mailed invitations to knowing that each person would bring one or more wrapped gifts. A chocolate cake decorated with candles, gallons of ice cream and many gifts to open captured Harvey's imagination. He said to himself: "This was going to be an awesome 13th birthday!" Everyone on the list gathered that evening to partake of the eats and to watch Harvey blowout the candles. Finally, the time came to unwrap all the wonderfully decorated gifts that each person brought to the party. All the guest gathered around the mound of packages that they distributed amongst themselves, but none were given to Harvey. The birthday boy was stunned, hurt and disappointed that all the guest left with wonderful gifts leaving Harvey empty handed and with a huge mess to clean up.

Not to sound like a scrooge, but Christmas is very much like Harvey's birthday party. Christians come together to celebrate the birth of the Christ child, but their minds drift to all the packages under the brightly lite tree. In many homes a cake with candles is presented while singing happy birthday to Jesus followed by exchanging gifts to everyone except Jesus. How interesting! Though believers sprinkle the Christmas season with decorations, good food, exchanging of gifts and family gatherings, it all somehow overshadows the birth narrative. At the end of the 25th, nothing remains except a mess to cleanup, decorations to take down and some disappointed children (and parents) who's wish-list was not realized. In fact, the birthday celebration of the Messiah diminishes/fades as believers step into the New Year.

I do not want to throw cold water on what some describe as a "holiday." Yet, maybe during this season we can all be more cognizant of the true meaning of Christmas. In fact, maybe we can be more intentional to lay at Christ's feet gifts in honor of His special day.

By now I am in danger of being strung up on a tree for tampering with Santa and his reindeer, Amazon's online shopping, Black Friday extravaganza and Christmas eve

eggnog. **STOP:** Somehow believers must take time to analyze the whole Christmas story to make sure that their celebration does not end up like Harvey's birthday. Allow me to share a few tips to help keep the right perspective.

- 1) Rather than focusing just on receiving gifts, make a special effort to give gifts throughout the year as unto the Lord. It could be raking leaves for a neighbor, making a visit to an elderly neighbor, bake cookies for a lonely widow/divorcee, or giving a monetary gift to a struggling family. Be creative! Jesus states in Matthew 25:40, "...**Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did it for one of the least of these brothers or sisters of Mine, you did it for Me.**" In fact, make the gift of giving in 2021 a daily event. Look for ways to give an encouraging word, a needful act, a timely phone call to a friend or simply sharing a tangible gift.
- 2) Review your personal life, and present to Jesus a sincere plan to keep the Christmas story the focus of the New Year. Pray & read the Bible more; look for ways to share Christ's message of redemption; love more, be kind to all and let your words be salted with the message of Christ. (Read: **Phil 2:3-5; 2 Cor 8:1-6; IJohn 3:15-20; Isa. 58:5-8**)

Devising creative ways to give "**as to the Lord.**" Without question, our Redeemer's life was a prime example of serving and giving (**Mark 10:45**). Jesus left the glories of heaven to enter history through the womb of a lowly Virgin woman. He gave His life that we might have true life. He became poor that we may become rich! Jim Elliot, missionary to Ecuador, understood how closely we should hold to this world: "He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose." Elliott's life began when he loosened his grip on the world making Christmas an everyday event. Without question, the mark of a thriving Christian is giving—giving as unto the Lord. **LISTEN**, we ALL struggle with giving to God; usually our generosity is merely the crumbs from our table (our surplus at best). Let's make it a real birthday celebration for our Savior this season and throughout the coming year. Let there be NO **TWIST!** Merry **CHRISTmas!**

Rick

Merry CHRISTMAS The Directors of Mission Link International are very grateful for all the prayers and consistent support given for both projects and to the General Fund in 2020. God has accomplished much this year through our faithful friends. Wishing you an awesome Christmas celebration and a very blessed New Year! **Top Left to Right:** Wendell Drumheller, Vice Pres.; Jim Masloff, MD - Medical Director; Jeff Dalton, CPA - Treasurer; Jack Sadler, Dir.,

Bottom Left to Right: Candy Sadler, Dir., Glassell Williamson, Sec., Garry Rund, Dir.; Charlie Kardos, Dir.; (Rick Sadler, Pres. not pictured)



Thank you for helping Mission Link end 2020 with a year-end gift enabling a strong beginning for 2021!!



Pictured far left is Terri Hansen, a passionate volunteer for Mission Link International. Terri has a heart larger than life for Africans and for the many widows MLI supports. She is an example of how one can live in the states, yet have a great impact in Africa. Below is a message of praise from Terri in how her daughter's employment contributed a gift to help MLI finish the Milling Project in Itukulu:

*I heard it recently said that it is not happy people who are thankful, but it is thankful people who are happy! I cannot print **THANKFUL** or **HAPPY** any larger, or bold enough, to describe my heart! From grateful hearts we want to thank Chantel Ray of*

*Canzell Realty and CR Cares for a love gift of **\$10,000** for the Mission Link International Widow's Ministry in Uganda! The money will be used to complete the Milling Project in the village of Itukulu and to give our widow sisters "A Christmas to Remember!" Our God is the kind of God who keeps a careful eye on the widow, profoundly concerned for her. A righteous God that is a defender of the widow (Psalm 68:5), He makes it very clear that it is "the church" that is to care for her (James 1:27). What a privilege given to us to love on our widow sisters in Uganda. A privilege that I feel honored to be part of. From my happy heart, **THANK YOU CR CARES FOR YOU GENEROUS GIFT.** [You can keep up with the latest happenings on www.missionlink.org]*

Latest Happenings



○ **MILLING PROJECT:** The **\$10,000** gift from Chantel Ray of Canzell & CR Cares will be used in part to complete the maize Milling Project in Itukulu (pic left)

○ **DEAF SCHOOL:** A doctor in Tennessee has committed **\$50,000** to help construct the Kamuli Deaf School. Prayerfully, we are believing for additional funds to help

with security fence, electrical power, well and other facilities. In the initial stages, we hope to accommodate 50-60 student. Praise God for his provision!

- **MISSION LINK IS MOVING:** MLI will be making the move to their new office in Pearisburg, Virginia. Upon Glassell Williamson's retirement, Candy Sadler became the new office administrator; she will be able to stay close to home (rather than 3 hour trip to Charlottesville each week) to handle ministry affairs especially when Rick is in East Africa. We will need several to **HELP LOAD** the U-Haul truck the first of January. Please call 434-981-9101, if you can help. The full transitional story is forthcoming. We will also maintain our Ch'ville location as a warehouse for the next three years.
- **RICK'S RETURN TO UGANDA:** The Uganda election is January 14, 2021. I want to return in February, but I am not sure of the political atmosphere both in the USA and Uganda. I (Rick) "hope to" be in Uganda for 5-6 weeks. **Issue:** However, the Center for Disease Control has Uganda rated at the highest level for C-19 and encourages travelers to avoid all travel to Uganda and Kenya.
- **PASTOR EUTICAULS OF KENYA:** Pastor Euticals is having a difficult time paying his 45 teachers during the Covid pandemic. He is responsible for three schools.
- **MUCH NEEDED GIFT:** GENERAL NEEDS AND FOOD DISTRIBUTION — PTL **\$5,000**
- **THE GENERAL FUND APPRECIATES ANY SIZE GIFT TO FINISH OUT 2020.**

UGANDA NEWS

Below are a few highlights of Uganda's pandemic and the upcoming election.

The Ugandan election is January 14, 2021. Bobbi Wine, the opposing force to Museveni, has been beaten and jailed multiple times. Seventy-five percent of the population is below the age of 30 (Wine is 38). Hence, he has a large following. PLEASE make December a prayer month for Uganda and Kenya.



CORONAVIRUS UPDATES

As of December 2, 2020

- 21,035 confirmed cases
- 205 DEATHS!
- Recovered—9,044

NOTICE: Again, **December** is a continuation of MLI's cell phone collection. Please ask your family, friends, Bible study group and church (Pastor) to donate their old cell phone to Mission Link. Also needed are laptops, tablets, electronic keyboard, and cameras. Thank you for helping!



Thirty (\$30) a month brings great happiness & needed provision for our African Widows in Uganda!



Monic Mauli: Monic was born in 1964 and has 5 children. Her husband died of malaria in 2003. Monic is grateful to God for having benefited from MLI projects of piggery, soap and a stove. She fellowships at a Catholic Church in Itukulu. Her challenge is the meeting of basic needs for her family. Please pray for Monic

Additional On Going Prayer Needs

Pray for Pastor Timothy and Dr. Sam both recovering from surgery. Connie, a single mom, needs **\$125** for school fees. Medical fund continues to be used for clinical visits and meds. Pastor Emmanuel (a graduate of MLI pastor training) has been ordain as the "official" pastor of MLI church plant—Kagira! MLI church in Jinja has been painted! Though deaf school has maintained salaries and requirements for a few students during the shutdown, the school will reopen fully in January under strict governmental guidelines. The widow's "gallery" is being renewed in December on www.missionlink.org . Pray to support a widow in 2021. Also in 2021, MLI must have funds for monthly FEEDING of widows, albinos, boda-bodas and staff. MLI teachers (James, Stanley and Paul) are hoping to reopen 2 more classes soon. During the shutdown, Stanley and Paul have been receiving additional training in the Bible in a local SBC Seminary. Thomas, our faithful bookkeeper, needs help to finish his house. Merry Christmas!