

The Link

The Christmas Event Expresses God's Passionate Love for You & Me!

Am I passionately in love with God?

God's passionate love for the world was gloriously expressed through the gift of His Son, Jesus Christ. "For God SO LOVED the world that He gave us His only Son..." John 3:16a. This priceless sovereign GIFT is why true believers celebrate CHRISTmas. Being that God loves me to so very much, what should my love for God look like? How much do I really love God? Is God truly the supreme passionate love of my life??

If someone were to ask me, "Do you love God?" I would absolutely say YES! Yet, as I read Revelation 2:1-7, I must qualify what it means to truly love God—to place my love for Him above every other love in my life. The following passage is an eye-opener, sobering, arresting and extremely revealing.

1-To the angel of the church in Ephesus write: These are the words of Him who holds the seven stars (angels, messengers or pastors) in His right hand and walks among the seven golden lampstands (churches). 2-I know your deeds (works), your hard work and your perseverance. I know that you cannot tolerate wicked people, that you have tested those who claim to be apostles but are not, and have found them false. 3-You have persevered and have endured hardships for my name, and have not grown weary.

4-Yet I hold this against you: You have forsaken (abandon, deserted) the love you had at first. Consider how far you have fallen! 5-Repent and do the things you did at first. If you do not repent, I will come to you and remove your lampstand (church) from its place. 6-But you have this in your favor: You hate the practices of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate. 7-Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who is victorious, I will give the right to eat from the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God." NIV

In verses 2, 3 & 6, the Lord compliments the church for their achievements (deeds):

- Hard working church that endures hardships "for My name."
- Perseverance—"Persistence in doing something despite difficulty..." (dictionary meaning)
- Holy and standing boldly against wickedness (not afraid to stand for biblical morality in a world that is literally decaying.)
- Theologically/biblically strong in their faith opposing all who bring false doctrine.
- Hating and speaking out against the practices of the Nicolaitans (Theologians have various opinions regarding this evil sect; regardless, the Lord and the church hated what the Nicolaitans were doing.)

In our present day, the characteristics of this church would be considered exceptional and godly. True believers would want to fellowship with and belong to the church in Ephesus. Yet, there is a problem when we read verse 4. God says, "I HAVE THIS AGAINST YOU; YOU HAVE FORSAKEN THE LOVE YOU HAD AT FIRST." The Lord is not suggesting that His complimentary words to the church of Ephesus are not essential, but their ministry busyness had overtaken the most important thing—

their intimate love for God. This reminds me of the occasion when Jesus was having dinner in Mary and Martha's home. Martha was "distracted" preparing the meal while Mary sat riveted at the feet of Jesus, drinking in His words, and in awe of His presence. Martha complained to Jesus about Mary not helping prepare the meal. Jesus said to Martha (and to ALL Christians): "...you are worried and troubled (anxious) about many things. But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part..." (Luke 10:41,42).

Many today believe busyness is a sign of a deep love for God. IT IS NOT! Our **doing** should originate from and should be empowered by our **being** in love with Christ. Is **doing** good deeds important to the Lord? YES, but unfortunately, **being** intimate with God is no longer a passion/priority among believers. Attending church on Sunday, sponsoring a food basket for the needy, giving a tithe to the church, participating in a mission trip, and teaching a Bible study are not necessarily an expression of one's love for God. So, you may ask, what then shows my deep love for God?

Verse 5 says, "REMEMBER" AND "REPENT" ("repent" is a word we do not hear much from contemporary churches). When I first laid eyes on my bride 54 years ago, Candy was constantly on my mind. I looked forward to being with her at ever opportunity. Consequently, due to my passionate love for her, I penned love notes, held her hand and would hold the door, gave her special gifts, took her out to dinner, and spend hours talking with her on the phone. I can recall in Geometry Class, we sat across from each other. We would lay our heads on our desks and peer into each other's eyes. One day the teacher called us up from our seats, and suggested we drop the class. I was deeply in love! Believers should be heavenly minded—deeply in love with their Savior. You have heard it said: "You are so heavenly-minded that you are no earthly good." But I say that you MUST BE heavenly-minded in order to be earthly good! This is the very reason the Apostle Paul wrote: "Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on the earth. For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God" (Colossians 3:2,3). So how can I find my way back?

REFLECT on when you first were converted—the intense love you had for God. You were so very thankful for your redemption. The Lord was constantly on your mind—talking to Him throughout the day. You loved reading the Bible more than eating a slice of chocolate cake. "God's Word" was always on your lips. You glowed! God was truly the love of your life.

REPENT: Ask God to forgive you for allowing other things (even good things) to crowd out your intimate relationship with Him.

As you and I celebrate the coming of God's greatest gift, make Christmas more than a "holiday," but a time to rekindle your love for Jesus Christ, our God and our Savior!

Rick



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 2022. 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, 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., Todd Childers, Exe. Dir and Jackie Carver, Dir. not pictured)



AS 2022 Comes to an END and 2023 BEGINS, Please consider helping with these General Operating Needs

- **MLI CHRISTIAN STUDY CENTERS:** As our #1 objective in East Africa, we are obeying our Lord's command in making disciples that make disciples. Our school's pastors/teachers (James Abalyawo, George Sempebwa, and Paul Akise) need your prayers and support as they travel to remote villages to train new pastors. There remains an ongoing need to purchase training **books** and to help provide **meals** for our students during their weeks of study. **ANY AMOUNT IS APPRECIATED.**
- **WIDOWS SUPPORT FUND:** MLI is constantly caring for a growing number of widows in Uganda. We would like to say **THANKS** to many of you that have given to help us bless all widows in need.
- **WIDOW EARTH-BAG HOME PROJECT:** This unique project is being used as a powerful testimony of the GOD's grace as many in the Mafubira area are praising the Lord Jesus for such a beautiful home provided for Nulu, one of our Mission Link widows. The cost is set at **\$4,500** per build.
- **MEDICAL FUND:** As of Dec 1st, our Medical Fund in Uganda has less than \$100 USD available. Please consider giving to this very important need, as we are contacted daily from multiple sources to help many during their time of suffering and illness. **ANY AMOUNT IS APPRECIATED.**
*Please note: we do not simply give FUNDS without witnessing the need or a medical bill from the patient. We strive to be good stewards of the Lord's blessings.
- **MISSION TRIP ASSISTANCE:** MLI plans to conduct two trips in 2023, Uganda in Feb and Kenya in June. Any donations given to this area helps to offset the costs of future trips due to rising fuel prices globally. This fund allows MLI to offer scholarships for those needing help to "GO On Mission" and to witness GOD at work in Africa.
- **STREET KID FUND:** Many in the USA cannot imagine children (7-8 yrs old) living on the street. However, in many third world countries this is normal. MLI has helped opened its heart and put several Street kids through school. This fund also allows us to do many other things to show GOD's Love to those who are considered the "least of these." We purchase medications for sick Street Kids and often buy them shoes or clothes.
- **GENERAL FUND APPRECIATES ANY SIZE GIFT** TO FINISH OUT 2022. This will help us to meet any of the above mentioned areas of need in Uganda and many more.

UPCOMING MISSION TRIPS

LAST CALL: UGANDA FEB. 3-17, 2023

Evangelism & Encouragement trip. The cost is \$3,000. We have a team of 8, yet there is still room for you. Call Todd 540-871-0517

Sign-Ups Needed to reach Team Minimum of 8 for **KENYA Trip: JUNE 2-16, 2023**
Goal is provide Medical Clinics, feeding widows & children while sharing the gospel of Christ. Sign-Up by Feb. 1, 2023.
Costs is now \$3,500 / person.

For more information visit:
www.missionlink.org/missiontrips



Thirty (\$30) a month brings great happiness & needed provisions for our widows in Uganda

AVAILABLE FOR ADOPTION

Name: **FLORENCE**

NAMUGERE is 58 and has 3 grandchildren.

Husband deceased: Her husband died in 2018 from throat cancer.

Testimony: Thankful for God's salvation and her provisions through Mission Link.

Challenges: Rents land for farming and her house lacks windows and doors.



Pictured Above, Top Left: Pastor/Teacher James Abalyawo being sent off with a joyful farewell by his students in Kitgum, Uganda. Top Right: Pastor Paul, beside Esther, as he delivers the weekly devotion from God's Word. Bottom: A Sweet time of fellowship and prayer in our weekly team Zoom Meetings. Praise the Lord!