

SOME NEWSLETTERS AND MISSION REPORTS OF DR. KISSEADOO'S GHANA MISSION TRIPS

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NEWSLETTER, DECEMBER 2004

Dear Friends and Partners,

We have not been in touch since May 2004, and we know you are waiting for all the news so far, especially about the August 2004 mission trip to Ghana. We shall provide you with a brief report on the mission, and update you on current events. Special thanks to all our friends and partners, who supported my trip, and continue to encourage us with your donations, love, diverse forms of support, and prayers. You will receive another (shorter) newsletter next month for the new-year.

This newsletter is not casual mail, and therefore consists of 20 pages. It is the summary of half-year report and activities plus exhortation from an international organization. It is similar to several pages of magazines we receive at home, or pages of important information we download on our computers. The exhortation for this mail focuses on Christmas, but some other essential lessons are interspersed here and there to fit several contexts of the report. We know that some of you normally print out the Newsletter when you receive it, and then take time to read later on. Others store it till they have the time to ponder over the contents.

Please take time to enjoy every bit of it, use any part to teach important lessons, feel free to forward it to as many people as you can, and try to give us a feedback. We ask you to kindly acknowledge the source if you use portions of this letter for other purposes other than simple exhortation and references. You are among the few people we chose to receive this report, therefore promise us that you will take time to patiently digest and derive all the benefits and blessings of this newsletter. Make sure you read the special testimony I have narrated at the end of this newsletter, regarding my air travel. Please remember to pray for us.

PEACE AT CHRISTMAS

With all the upheavals and turmoil in the world today, how much peace do we have to be able to enjoy the Christmas of December 25, 2004?? If your inability to marry, or have a good marriage, or have children, or get healed of a troubling sickness, or overcome a financial problem, or deal with an enemy, or obtain the help you need at school or on the job, or experience a successful ministry, etc., puts you in a state of mind or position that prevents you from enjoying this Christmas, then the question is: should your condition dictate your celebration of Christmas and its significance, or the occasion is rather given

to you freely by God to bring back to you the peace and joy you have lost or have been craving for? We can explore several reasons for Christmas that should make us enjoy the occasion, but for the sake of space, let me enumerate just 9 of them that I thought about this week:

1) Christmas is about Easter. What do I mean? Christ was born in order shed His precious Blood and die for us. Jesus died to wash our sins in His Blood, and redeem us (buy us back from the slave market of sin). Anyone without a true understanding of Easter (the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ) will also not really understand Christmas, no matter how he or she tries to celebrate the occasion. People who dislike Christmas do not really understand or appreciate the Redemption plan of God, and do not understand why we should take one day in the year to celebrate the birth of the Savior. Whether Jesus was born on 25th December or not is not the issue. It is a day chosen by those who love God and understand what Jesus has done for them, to specially honor the Lord, and proclaim His salvation plan to the whole world. In fact, any true Believer should see it an annual opportunity to spread God's good news around, rather than the politics some people try to play with the occasion by putting forward all kinds of meaningless and unreasonable arguments about the celebration.

2) Christmas is about God's favor and blessings. When the archangel Gabriel was sent to Mary, he must have dashed down to earth with excitement to give her the message about the birth of Christ. The first utterance from his lips to Mary was "Hail, you are highly favored (God's favor), the Lord is with you (God's Presence); blessed are you among women (God's blessings)!" (Luke 1: 28). What primarily excited God's chief messenger was the favor (approval and grace) of God that was upon Mary's life. Why don't you and me seek after God's favor as our primary goal in 2005? God's favor must go with His divine Presence, and will ultimately be accompanied by His blessings upon your life. If Mary had all these 3 essential qualities before she became the wife of Joseph, why shouldn't the woman you are going to marry have these 3 qualities in her life as well? The man who is going to be the Head of the woman, should had the favor, Presence, and blessings of God upon his life first, in order to qualify to marry such a lady specially prepared by God for him. If the man is wishy-washy, and is merely looking for a partner to satisfy himself selfishly, he will not have any godly and moral standards that are high enough to look for a woman with God's favor upon her, and will not even recognize or appreciate the qualities when they are presented to him in the woman.

3) Christmas is about marriage and family life. God's salvation plan was made manifest through the family of Joseph and Mary. Anyone with a contorted view of real marriage and family life will also hate or misunderstand Christmas. Marriage is the highest ordained institution of God for ONE MAN and ONE WOMAN. It is Adam and Eve, and NOT Adam and Steve, or Araba and Ekua.

Mary and Joseph gave us a true example of a pure relationship leading to marriage. The bride-to-be (Mary) kept herself pure as a virgin for her future husband. Even after their engagement, which was a kind of traditional marriage (similar to the traditional marriage or customary marriage in some cultures like Africa etc.), they did NOT have any sexual

intercourse because the marriage had not been finally blessed by God (Mathew 1: 18). We need to be careful and ensure that we do not hinder the Hand and power of God's holiness that must follow us into our marriages and bless our family life, by disobedience and refusal to do what is right in the eyes of God. For true Christians anything they have, must be sanctified by God before they can use it meaningfully. That is why we even sanctify the day with scriptures and prayer in the morning before we use the day to do anything. If we do not allow God to be in charge of affairs this way, then the Hand of God will not follow us in the things we do. Joseph and Mary believed in complete obedience and not partial obedience like the case of Moses who tragically lost His only chance of entering the Promised Land that he so much toiled for.

We are told that "Joseph her husband, being a just (righteous man), was not willing to disgrace Mary publicly, and was contemplating on how to put her away (divorce her) quietly. If people found out that Mary was pregnant and thought she had committed adultery, she would be stoned to death! By the way, if we (people of today) were in the Old Testament days we would see many dead bodies (especially dead men) in our streets each morning after the horrible adulteries that take place each night (and in the day too) these days! We would stone people until all the stones in our neighborhoods get finished! Anyway, we learn from Joseph that one sign of a just and righteous husband (or man) is one that loves his wife (or fiancée) so much that it will hurt him to disgrace his wife or fiancée publicly. Men and husbands, can we use this standard to test our righteousness now and in the future?"

4) Christmas is about God's love and forgiveness. God manifested His ultimate love by giving us His only Son Jesus at Christmas. The good news is that no matter our past sins and mistakes, and whatever our condition at this moment, God still loves us, and is ever ready to forgive and forget the past, provided we acknowledge our ignorance, pride, disobedience, sins, and weaknesses, and truly repent. Although we are the ones that committed horrible sins against God, He chose to come down to us in our miserable situation, dialogue with us, and save us out of our sins. "Come NOW, and let us reason together, says the Lord: though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow" (Isaiah 1: 18). God's love and forgiveness are unconditional, and we must learn to do the same for others.

5) Christmas is about peace and joy. We have peace with God (by accepting His offer of Christ to deal with our sins, guilt, and diseases), which is automatically followed by the Joy of The Lord when we continue in obedience by making Jesus both Savior and Lord (absolute Master) of our lives (Romans 5: 1). God must be pleased with us before we can experience His true peace. When Jesus was born the Angels sang: "Glory to God in the Highest, and on earth peace, goodwill to men (WITH WHOM HE IS PLEASED)" (Luke 2: 14). Many people walk around today with little or no peace in their minds and hearts! The solution is in a life that is yielded to the Lordship of the Christ of Christmas, and using His word to control your mind, emotions, attitudes, choices, and actions.

6) Christmas is about giving. It is often said that your giving will always give you away (i.e. will reveal who you really are). Apart of God giving us His only Son, the Wise men

(Magi) also gave the baby Jesus three important gifts (Luke 2:1-12). Let us draw some lessons from the Magi:

- A) Their wisdom made them seek for Jesus, rather than allowing it rob them of the opportunity to use the wisdom to know God who is the Giver of the wisdom.
- B) They made every effort to look for the Savior themselves.
- C) They were able to discern the working and leading of God through the special star they saw.
- D) They rejoiced at what God had done and was doing, rather than allowing their wisdom and riches to be their highest joy.
- E) They fell down and worshipped Jesus at home without waiting to do so only in church. A true encounter with the savior will always result in true worship.
- F) They carried the best of their gifts to the Lord.
- G) They offered their gifts willingly by opening their own treasures and presenting their own gifts. They established a personal relationship with the Savior.
- H) They were obedient and humble, and did not leave the Presence of The Lord to go and boast foolishly about it to Herod and his people. They applied their wisdom as Wise Men to heed God's warning, and departed to their country by another way.
- I) They gave gifts to Jesus that had value and meaning. Their gifts constituted an interesting mixture of 3 items, and we learn that: i) The timing was right. Timing gives meaning to your gift, and determines the extent of its value as well. ii) The gifts were precious and significant. Gold signifies the Royalty of Jesus, Frankincense signifies His Divinity (Leviticus 2:1-2, 15-16), and Myrrh signifies His Humanity (and death). Myrrh was crushed before the sweet-smelling oil was extracted. Jesus was crushed (bruised) for our iniquities (Isaiah 53: 5). When the scent of myrrh gets into your dress, it is difficult to get it out; the Lord Jesus is like that in our lives. iii) The motivation of their gifts was right. They had good motives for their giving. Your motivation gives importance and value to your gift as well. Do you check your true motives before you give your gifts to people?

7) Christmas is about miracles. The greatest miracle in the history of the universe happened when a baby was directly placed in the womb of a young virgin, developed to full term, and born naturally. Wow! That baby was God Himself (God the Son) who humbled Himself to become flesh, and came down to the earth to live among men. Do you notice that every miracle on earth has a natural component? This is something I have been carefully thinking about this week. If a crippled person is healed, you can see the same legs after the healing, and he or she must physically use them. God does not walk for you. If a blind man is healed, the components of the eye are perfectly restored, for the person to use his physical eyes to see things like everyone else. When Jesus multiplied the 5 loaves of the little boy (Mark 5: 32-44) to feed the thousands, the bread was still the same kind of bread the boy's mother gave him as his lunch on his way to the church service that Jesus was conducting in the park. God did not distribute or eat the bread for the people; they had to share and chew the bread themselves. Whatever supernatural occurrence God has graciously allowed to happen to you, or whatever special gift He had given you by His divine power, there is a part God does not play. Never expect God to do any particular thing for you, that He expects you to obtain through obedience.

That might be the problem you are facing now (but you may not even be aware of it), after The Lord worked in His own special way (usually as an answer to prayer) by healing you, giving you a spouse and children or nice family, giving you good friends, providing you with a job or house, blessing you with wealth or valuable property, opening the door for you to obtain admission or scholarship, enabling you to have good education, giving you a position or promotion, causing your bills to be paid or finances to improve, providing you with the much-needed visa to travel or immigration papers to live where you are, and enabling you to establish a good church or ministry. Instead of submitting what God gave you to His Lordship in order for him to give you the wisdom to handle His gifts and miracles, you “become a possessor of the Holy Spirit” instead of the Holy Spirit possessing you. When that happens, then what should give you joy will rather give you unhappiness (at Christmas, in your marriage, as a single person hoping to marry some day, in your home, as a leader or boss, at school, on the job, in your business, as an immigrant overseas, in your church and ministry etc.).

I have come to learn that when you (the proud self in man) control any gift or blessing you have from God (intelligence, education, beauty, achievements, marriage, family, sexuality, business, money, opportunities, position, talents, abilities, etc.), then whatever is supposed to give you contentment, joy, and peace, will rather give you pain instead, and can even become a thorn in the flesh.

8) Christmas is about believing and acting quickly. When the Shepherds heard the message from the Angels that Jesus was born, they were not told to go and see Jesus, and behave towards the baby in a particular way. They believed what they heard, and decided (used their sanctified common sense) to “go to Bethlehem and see this thing which the Lord has made known to them” (Luke 2: 15). They did not merely discuss to do a good thing and then end there. “They came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger” (Luke 2: 16). They acted quickly without delay when they knew God had given them His word.

Now let us confess: How many times did you and me kept delaying until we forgot to do something important in 2004 or some other time? Are we going to improve upon that in 2005 and beyond?

LIFE CONSISTS OF CHOICES WE MAKE EACH DAY. OUR CHOICES SHAPE OUR CHARACTER, AND CONTROL OUR BLESSINGS, AND THEREFORE DETERMINE OUR DESTINY. GOD HAS A PLAN FOR EACH OF US, BUT HE WILL NEVER FORCE THE PLAN OR HIS WILL UPON US, OR HOLD OUR HANDS AND DRAG US LIKE ROBOTS TO OUR DESTINY. IF HE COMPELS US AGAINST OUR WILL, THEN WE CANNOT WORSHIP AND SERVE HIM IN LOVE. HE SIMPLY GIVES US HIS WORD TO GUIDE US TO OUR BLESSINGS AND DESTINY, AS WE LISTEN, DECIDE TO OBEY, AND ACT QUICKLY HIS PEACE IN OUR HEARTS (ACTIVATED BY HIS WORD THAT WE MEDITATE ON) WILL ALWAYS ENABLE US TO KNOW IF WE ARE REALLY FOLLOWING HIS WORD AND DIRECTION (Colossians 3:15, 16).

9) Christmas is about the Anointing as well. The name Christ in Christmas means the Anointed One. It is the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew Messiah in the Old Testament.

Christmas should be a time of anointing when the Spirit of God (the Holy Spirit) comes down to influence the affairs of men beginning from our hearts and our homes. God's anointing is designed to teach us, and build godly character in us. Anointing without character is a disaster for any servant of God, marriage, home, church, business, and society! If we receive the anointing of God's Spirit, we will by all means learn new and great lessons from Him "But the anointing which you have received of Him abides in you, and you have no need that any man teaches you; but His anointing teaches you of all things" (1 John 2: 27).

Attacks on Christmas and family life

These are days (Last Days) when the forces of evil and darkness are desperately trying to attack anything holy and godly. The ferocious attack on family life has escalated to the point where there is even now an attack on the family life of Jesus (God) Himself. People in league with the devil, are trying to destroy the sacredness, beauty, significance, power, and meaning of the family life of the Lord for all of us, and our children.

The enemy tries to replace Jesus with Santa Claus, worldly fineries and goods, empty songs that make no reference to Jesus who was the baby that was born, and people chanting "Happy Holidays" instead of "Merry CHRISTmas" etc.

The Nativity Scene is now a taboo in some localities, and the old-time, powerful, soul-healing, God-inspired Christmas Carols are being banned in many places, especially schools where the young people (the leaders of tomorrow) are being robbed of their God-destined foundations of reverence for things of God. These tender minds and hearts are being deprived the development of a God-fearing spirit, and knowledge about God's salvation for the bright future that the Almighty intended to establish through them, when we (the adults) are gone into glory.

It is our divine duty today to recognize the danger, pray fervently, take hold of our heritage and position in Christ, live the godly life expected of us, and influence society with the power of God in our lives, starting from our homes. Are we making time to read the Christmas story in our homes this Christmas, and explain all the implications to our families, especially the young ones at home? Or it is the dress, toy, decoration, gift, cookie, drink, turkey, chicken, pork, and goat meat as usual without the heavenly component? The familiar Christmas trees, lights, and gifts whose meanings are not explained and benefited from will float around once more. Our giving is therefore only once a year, and selfishness plus abuse or apathy reigns for the rest of the year. Those chicken, goats and pigs could rise and testify against us on the Day of Judgment, you know? If Jesus said that dust from the feet of the Apostles could testify against those who rejected their preaching, then what about live animals?

Significance of the Christmas decorations

Do you know why you decorate your home in a specific way at Christmas? Some decorations that have to do with socks, reindeer, and Santa Claus have no scriptural basis. We have added a lot of trifles to Christmas to simply make the occasion glamorous to our own taste. But let us stick to the essentials and make them paramount. For example, the Christmas tree signifies the death of Jesus on a tree (the Cross). The Lights

signify the fact that He is the Light of the World. Of course at the end of the year it is appropriate to give an annual gift as a token of love and appreciation to loved ones (including cards with encouraging and grateful expressions), but in addition, the gifts we give to one another do signify the gift of God's Only Son Jesus, to mankind. Shame on you and me if we celebrate the birth of Christ but feel shy or are afraid to say Merry CHRISTmas, and rather parade the neighborhood with "Happy Holidays" like a "mantra".

Derive comfort and salvation from Christmas

For some people, Christmas and the New Year are sad occasions when they remember loved ones who no more, especially if they perished in disaster, or died suddenly. But, that is why we have Christmas. Christ was given to take care of our sorrow, brokenness, and the sinful nature that brought it all on mankind. That is why Christmas, means Easter. It was on the Cross of Calvary that Jesus bore all our sins, pain, and grief. Please make a decision to give your heart to Christ this Christmas, if you have never done so, and experience his forgiveness and peace. If you have backslidden or are merely religious but not truly committed to Christ, then please take the opportunity to renew your commitment to the Savior and Redeemer of your soul. Nobody can predict tomorrow. Please, act now!

"He heals the brokenhearted, and binds up their wounds" (Psalm 147:3). The summary of it all is this: "God was in Christ (at Christmas), reconciling the world unto Himself, and not counting their trespasses against them, and has committed unto us (true Believers) the ministry of reconciliation" (2 Corinthians 5: 19).

Be a promoter of peace

Be a peacemaker in your home and community with your wife, husband, children, fiancée, in-laws, friends, church members, fellow workers, and neighbors. Practice the forgiveness, tolerance, patience, understanding, mercy, and love that Christmas brings to us. Any activity, project, ministry, marriage, relationship, financial undertaking, etc that does not bring true peace to you and others around you is a questionable one, which is not likely to be directed or approved by God. The peace of Christ in your heart is the final test for God's will in all matters (Colossians 3:15), and is activated by the Spirit of God through consistent meditation on God's Word, when the "Word of God dwells richly in your heart" (Colossians 3:16).

This why the Angels sang: "Glory to God in the Highest, and on earth peace and good will to men WITH WHOM HE (GOD) IS PLEASED" (Luke 2:14). Jesus came to make peace, and preach peace to us, and that is why He is our peace. There is no other source of true peace for anyone in this world. You may have some form of temporal peace of mind because a particular problem is solved, but there is no other way you can have peace resulting from forgiveness from the sins you committed in 2004 or before and beyond, and peace resulting from deliverance from the demons that tempt and torment you, especially your mind.

Allow the Jesus of Christmas to have his way in your life. If you are not in serious need as others are, but you know deep within you that you do not enjoy the peace you desire

for each day, and you still cannot put your finger on the main reason why you do not have peace, then it is possible that the reason might be your unwillingness (or ignorance) to yield yourself and all your blessings plus resources to God for Him to control. May the Christ of Christmas help us to surrender fully to Him this season, for us to experience the joy and peace that can come only from Jesus Christ. Determine to live a more meaningful life in the coming year, and obtain greater successes and victories.

**HAVE A MERRY CHRISTMAS, AND A THOUGHTFUL, HAPPY, PROSPEROUS
NEW YEAR!**