



*"For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do." Ephesians 2:10*

December Update

*"For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end." Isaiah 9:6-7*

I was inspired by a devotional by Dr. Rodney Orr on Luke 2:30-32. It really made us think about the present conditions we are facing in Nigeria and the effects it has on this Christmas season. Nigeria has faced many struggles these past months and is still in the midst of struggles right now. We praise God that Ebola is no longer active in Nigeria, but Nigeria is still plagued with attacks in the Northeast and other areas in the form of suicide bombs and insurgents taking over towns and villages. Also, Presidential and State elections are scheduled for February and there is always apprehension about post-election violence. All of these struggles can overshadow Christmas and make it hard to get in the mood of putting up decorations and buying gifts. Many people are probably asking themselves, "What do we have that is worth celebrating at a time like this?"

It is understandable that many may ask this question, but I hope that the answer that springs forth from their hearts is The MESSIAH'S COMING. That is what we have to celebrate. I am praying that all the struggles and fears we are facing do not distract us from celebrating the coming of the Messiah that brought salvation to the world. I hope that I and others can follow the example of Zachariah, Elizabeth, Simeon, Mary and Joseph. They were not just looking for the Messiah's coming—they were longing for His coming. I hope we are all longing for Christ's coming and that we can celebrate like Simeon, being thankful for the Savior and telling everyone: "I have seen your salvation, which you have prepared for all people." (Luke 2: 30-31).

## Where is my Home?

We have all been shocked and saddened by the reports of 1.3 million displaced people from the Northeast of Nigeria. People have escaped with only the clothes on their backs and many do not even know where some of their relatives are or if they are even alive. There are several refugee camps set up in Jos to house and help care for the needs of these people. Many people in Jos and surrounding areas have taken people into their homes as well.

We were also devastated by the report given by the President of the *EYN* Church (Church of the Brethren in Nigeria). This denomination has been virtually decimated, from a human point of view, by the insurgents. **1038 members and 6 pastors have been killed.** 178 of the Chibok girls who were abducted were EYN members. The church has **700,000 members** who have been displaced, that is, they have had to leave their homes and seek safety elsewhere, whether in Cameroun, in Jos, or in other cities here and there. **Of 50 DCCs (District Church Councils), 36 have been destroyed** and are non-functioning. 278 churches and 1390 branch churches have been destroyed. EYN has over 200 pastors



who are unemployed right now. This is just one denomination of the many who have suffered devastation in that area.

We want to help these displaced people, but just the thought of the number of people and the magnitude of their needs is a bit overwhelming. Many organizations are working in various ways to help these people and SIM has decided to be apart as well. We are donating funds to buy food and clothing for the 96 families in one refugee camp. Some of us are baking cookies to hand out to the hundreds of children in the camp. We met one afternoon to pack bags of beans, maggi cubes and milk powder for each family. Then on Christmas Eve Day, we will go to the camp and sing Christmas carols and handout the packed bags of food and clothes to each family. These people may not know where their home is right now, but we hope that these small gifts will help remind them that wherever they are, God is with them.

## MERRY CHRISTMAS

It's **CHRISTMAS TIME!** What does that mean in Nigeria? It means a new outfit and shoes, a big meal with meat and going to church on Christmas day (if they are a Christian). For the missionaries and



Nigerian staff working with City Ministries, it means lots of shopping and lots of parties!!! Each child in our care centers gets a new outfit and shoes and then money is provided for a nice meal for the Christmas party. We put together goody bags for each of the children filled with candy, pencils and small toys for the little ones and candy, deodorant, notebook, etc. for the older ones. The Christmas party is a big day for the kids. They all have prepared special numbers which include scripture memory, singing and dance routines. It is never a dull moment at these parties!

Our teenage girls in the Du care center had their party at Auntie Nicky's house. They all came dressed in their new Christmas clothes and had their hair either braided or all fixed up. I hardly recognized some of them! We had a great time together playing games, and presenting special numbers of singing, dancing and drama. The girls said a word of thanks and gave a gift to two of the staff who had given so much of their time to work with the girls.



I cannot believe another year has gone by and these girls have grown up so much. Three of them will probably be leaving the center sometime next year to go back to their relations and start work or further their education. We are still looking for land to build a new girls center that will allow us to house more girls as well as have rooms for vocational training in various skills. Pray that we will be able to find land in a good location and at an affordable price.

### Praise:

1. For all the people who have supported me and the ministry through prayer and financial donations this year. You have been such a blessing and the ministry would not happen without you.
2. Praise for the many blessings of food, clothing, salaries and good health we have seen this year in City Ministries.
3. Praise for God's continued guidance and strength to manage the different ministries he has given me this year.
4. Praise for the increase in patients referred to the burn clinic and the successful reduction of scars in so many of our patients.

### Prayer Requests:

1. Pray for all the displaced people from the Northeast as they celebrate Christmas in a place that is not their home.
2. Pray for peace in Nigeria during this Christmas season.
3. Pray for peaceful elections in February with no post-election violence.
4. Pray that God will change the hearts of the Boko Haram and that they would see what they are doing is wrong.
5. Pray for a safe journey for all the children in our care centers who are traveling to see family this Christmas.
6. Pray for a teachable heart for each of our teenage girls who are doing apprenticeships in various skills training.
7. Pray for the two awareness seminars about pressure garments that are being planned for the beginning of next year.

**Have a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!**

**Gay Lynn**