



Lowell & Claudia Wertz
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December 2020

Dear Friends,

Over the years, certain sermons have impacted me. One brought me to Christ and His salvation. Every sermon, even the "not so great" ones, helped me. Some I will never forget.

Reflecting on the Christmas season, my thoughts go to those sitting with an open Bible, preparing a message to help people. God's servants doing His holy work.

The missionary sermon is a specialized niche in the world of sermonizing. One Pastor advised me, "Don't preach what I can preach, preach about Africa!" Another Pastor, perhaps more cynical, said, "Anyone can preach one good sermon." It is true that I only need one or two good furlough sermons that will be used dozens of times.

When my kids were young, they had my furlough sermon memorized. In the car, they would grade me on my delivery and they would grade the audience. How much did they laugh at the jokes? Were they cool and disinterested, or warm? Kids have a certain honesty.

This furlough's sermon was one God let me know He wanted preached. I would have chosen otherwise. The theme was 'Christ's joy in the midst of hard times'. Little did I know I was preaching in the run-up to a world wide pandemic. One day the churches closed and my sermon was finished. Half of our churches had heard -- half didn't.

My preaching stopped. The pandemic is worse than anyone could have imagined. But our joy, found in Christ, is more real than virus or life's circumstances. Christ came that first Christmas so He could redeem us and we could be His joy forever.

Love,

Lowell + Claudia

Joy in the Harvest®



A Faithful God

**Great little one!
Whose all-embracing
birth
Lifts earth to heaven,
stoops heaven to
earth.**

Richard Crashaw
1613 -1649
Cambridge educated English poet.

2020 has been a year where our faith has been tested in a crisis. God has remained faithful and His love has sustained us.

When our furlough plans were short-circuited by the virus, and we found ourselves in America, separated from Africa and our missionary work, I

didn't know what would happen to *Joy in the Harvest*. Could it be the end?

What happened was wonderful. Our African staff rose to the occasion and kept the ministry going full force. In America, some churches and individuals couldn't contribute financially. Others — knowing this — were able to give early and some gave extra.

You can imagine how happy we are to see our African staff, trained and ready, able to work effectively in this crisis and succeed beyond our dreams.

You can imagine how humbled we are for the confidence of American Christians who value *Joy in the Harvest* and are committed to see it do God's work in its unique and special ways.

Our God is faithful. We are loved! ☩



CHECKLIST



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Gift Envelope Enclosed

So much depends on your gifts.



WORKERS FOR THE HARVEST

Here are the heroes of *Joy in the Harvest*.

Our staff in Kigoma, Tanzania do God's work everyday. They are dedicated, hard working, and faithful.

We have 45 fulltime staff members who are working under



45 Families Earn Their Living and Serve Their God Working With JOY.

difficult circumstances for the Lord. All the many diverse aspects of the ministry are performed by these 'workers for the harvest' and done with excellence. All of our staff are

striving to fulfill our motto: **"... so they may know Jesus..." ☩**



Things You Want to Know!

An End of the Year Message From Mindy

Our part-time office manager, Melinda Bendle, works from home and asked me to include a few reminders in this newsletter.

1. We can accept and liquidate stock gifts. You benefit by letting us liquidate stock gifts. Call me (Mindy at 708-925-6681) to find out more.
2. Get gifts postmarked this year, by Dec. 31, to get tax credit in 2020. Last minute gift? Use our website with *Just Give* button.
3. Use Smile Amazon, and make *Joy in the Harvest* your charity. JOY gets a small amount from Amazon. Every penny helps!



Joy in the Harvest Serving in Jesus' Name!

- Monthly support for refugee pastors
- Radio JOY
- Computer School
- Help churches with construction
- Weekly Youth Meetings
- Widows Meetings
- Destitute Camp
- Feeding Center
- Friday People in Crisis Program
- Guest House Ministry
- HIV/AIDS Prevention Soccer
- Help build classrooms
- Evangelism
- Teaching Pastors
- Bible Studies
- Community Center
- Ministry to Refugees
- Training Seminars
- Housing for the Poor
- 45 Staff Jobs (supporting families)
- Short Term Mission Opportunities

JOY Holds Advanced Training for Ministers

Two advanced study programs were taught at JOY. Thirty Bishops and Pastors (including three from JOY's staff) were taught at the Degree Level. Another twenty were taught at the Diploma Level. The teaching staff were visiting Professors from a Christian Bible College in Tanzania. All students who passed their studies are scheduled to graduate on December 18, 2020.



QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

When Are You Returning to Africa?

Q. When are you returning to Kigoma?

—asked by a friend in Indiana and others

A. We are excited that the vaccine is almost ready. I thought we'd be the first to get it but it seems we will be second in line after healthcare workers and long term care facility seniors. Our best guess, right now, is that we should be able to return in March. We would love to ship a



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container of supplies before we head back to Africa. The supplies are packed, inventoried,

and ready. We are hopeful we will be able to include radio equipment for a new repeater station for Radio JOY. It would greatly increase our audience.

This time in America is the longest we have been away from Africa and we are missing our mission work and African friends there. So, to answer the question — AS SOON AS POSSIBLE! ☩

"The people walking in darkness have seen a great light... they rejoice before you as people rejoice at the harvest." Isaiah 9:2,3