

*Lowell & Claudia Wertz
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March 2025

Dear Friends,

When does God stop being God for us? What is the limit of our trust? We know God is the God of the mountain top, but is He also the God of our valleys?

John White, the famous Christian author, was a friend of my parents. He wrote in his book, *The Cost of Commitment*, how he put his family on an international flight in a snow storm. He expected to rendezvous with them later in Bolivia. But before their flight he had an overwhelmingly strong premonition that they would be killed in an aircraft accident. But he didn't believe in premonitions and didn't discuss it with his wife. He felt fear, shame, guilt, and nausea as he left for his hotel. Shaking and with a dry mouth, he prayed to God. "What's the matter? Can't you trust me?" Was God speaking? "Yes, I'll trust you if you give them back to me." "If I don't give them back, will you stop trusting me? Can you not trust them to me in death as well as life?"

By faith John said, "I will do your will whatever it costs me or them. I will trust you." Their plane crashed and all on board died. But his wife had a strong premonition on the flight and got the family off the plane at the stop before the tragedy. Had it not worked out, he said, "I would have grieved. But I would not regret my decision to trust -- to follow Christ fully."

We visited a church a few weeks ago in Indianapolis called *Even If*. I loved their vibe. Young people and old happily poured out love in the form of a pitch in dinner. There was joy in the air and these were spiritually serious people. The clergy couple that served the church are experiencing serious health crises. The name of the church comes from many Scriptures. One example is when Daniel and his men faced the fiery furnace and said "even if" God does not save them, they will not bow to another god.

Faced with JOY's financial crisis of 2024, I had many sleepless nights. There was a real possibility that JOY would not be able to continue. At times I had trouble holding back tears. The "what if" was consuming me. It has taken me over a year to let the "what if" go and move to "even if". Thank you *Even If* church. You have helped me to trust Jesus more fully.

Love,

Lowell + Claudia



Joy in the Harvest®



Greatest Speaking Furlough Ever!

“No distance of place or lapse of time can lessen the friendship of those who are thoroughly persuaded of each other's worth.”

Robert Southey 1774-1843
A romantic and radical English poet turned conservative, known for the fairy tale “Goldie locks and the Three Bears”

Needing to use a stool, due to the knee replacement, did not change the fact of this being a great furlough.

Our last furlough began in Sept. 2019 and was cut short by the

Covid epidemic. So for some churches it has been ten years since we last visited them.

We have been on the road for eight months. Paying calls on old friends and making new ones has been inspiring. What fantastic congregations we've visited. God has brought together the best people in the world to support this ministry!

We have been to churches in 13 states so far. Snow and cold haven't slowed us down. We have slept in many church and Walmart parking lots, as well as campgrounds. We are blessed to have a good travel trailer and truck for our travels.

With months and miles ahead, we respond to invitations and love speaking and sharing about God's work in Africa. ☩

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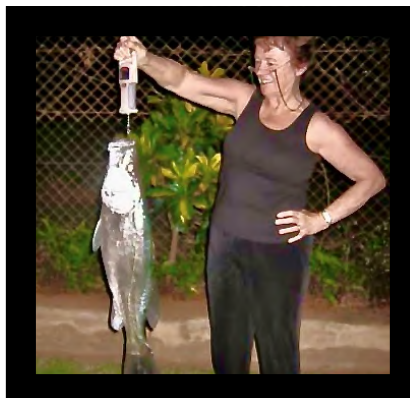
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WORKERS FOR THE HARVEST

Our dear friend, Mrs. Lonnie Bone, went home to be with the Lord on Dec.16, 2024.

I describe Lonnie as a combination of Sister Teresa and Amelia Earhart. Married to Jim Bone, a United Airline 747 captain, she secretly got her pilot license to surprise him. Together they flew our single engine Cessna 182 from the USA to Tanzania — a Charles Lindbergh



Lonnie Bone
1937—2024

type feat. Lonnie loved the people of the Destitute Camp and renamed the camp — Victory Camp. She made numerous trips to Kigoma spending endless hours at the camp learning their life stories and ministering to each resident. They loved her dearly.

She loved the Lord and always had a bright and cheerful spirit. We will miss her greatly. ☩



Latest News For You!

A New Partnership!

The Board of Directors of *Joy in the Harvest* has approved a new partnership with Dr. David Ayers and his family.

Dr. David Ayers is a pediatrician. His wife, Julia, does women’s ministries. They and their children live in Kigoma. Dr. Ayers has a boat ministry to the villages along the shore of Lake Tanganyika saving lives with cyclic cell anemia treatments. They are seasoned missionaries with a vital witness to the Lord. JOY is please to assist them by having them work under our umbrella. We will help them with permits, licenses, and visas. They are great missionaries and we are privileged to be able to partner with them.

Black Ink for 2024!

With God all things are possible.

In the middle of 2024, we were so **deep** in red ink, I wouldn’t have thought there was **any possibility** of ending the year with balanced books. With lost church income, our accounts were empty.

Along with everyone else on earth, I hate money troubles. They are discouraging and cause enormous stress. But God put a burden on hearts. Funds came in from totally unexpected places; and even a few large gifts. JOY couldn’t pay employees their Christmas bonuses so Claudia and I did. All together, it was enough to just end 2024 in the black by a thousand dollars. A **MIRACLE!!!** Thank you Lord.

Furlough Extended!

We stay in close touch with Kigoma. The good news is that our staff, headed up by Mwenge Muyombi, is doing a great job. All programs are running smoothly, including Radio JOY.

Our BOD has asked us to consider extending this furlough to continue strengthening our church support base. We expect to do so and add about three months to our USA stay until September. This will enable us to accept more church invitations.

We eagerly anticipate our return to Kigoma. However, we want to do as much as possible in the near term to advance the mission work in Tanzania.



QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

“Give Me Some RV Advice.”

We are retired and thinking about getting an RV. Can you give me some general advice?

— asked by a retired missionary

There are so many different kinds of RVs and no such thing as the perfect RV. You want to get one that checks as many of your boxes as possible. How much will it be used and in what kind of weather? Your tow



Furlough winter camping 2025. Emptying black and gray water tanks.

vehicle? All RVs are poor financial investments. Will you utilize and enjoy it enough to justify the initial and on-going costs? Will it match your personality traits and life style? Will your spouse enjoy it? I love RV’ing. Our unit is considered a “four season” trailer but required many upgrades for full time winter camping. We extract great utility from our trailer and it is extending our ministry service. ✠

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