



A CHRISTMAS BLESSING *by Lorrie Jonat*



'Tis the season of ribbons and bows, mistle-toe, Christmas trees and lights all twinkling brightly; what a delight to smell the cookies baking and wrap the presents so colorfully and tuck them under the tree. Everyone is thinking of home, family and all the pleasures of the Christmas season.

In Malawi we don't have a Santa on every corner and houses lit up to celebrate the holidays. We have beggars on the street asking for "their Christmas", orphans, widows and street children with hands out in hopes of kindness this season. We have thieves doing their shopping from your living room and we have suffering, always suffering.

But the angels sang, *Glory to God in the highest and on earth Peace.* Luke 2:14

One day we drove the dusty road to the village to visit a family. The house is made of mud brick and grass thatch, the children dance in the red earth that coats them in grime that is hard to wash off. Mom is returning from the well with the water pail full and sloshing on her head, dad is resting under the mango tree in the hot African sun, his little store is open but the shelf is bare, there is nothing to sell. We have come today with a food hamper for the family. We have brought candies for the children and small toys; we have salt, sugar, oil and tea. There are cookies and nail polish for mom; candles and coke for dad. We have meat for their meal and all the fixings. Big round eyes sit silent and waiting, the children do not grab and push, they just sit. The amount of what we have brought is almost too grand to imagine. Father pumps my hand and says "there has been no meat for a year"; mother is so pleased that there will be sugar for tea and she says "I knew you would bring Christmas to me". We praise God together for His abundance and we pray. As God directs and provides we are off to do it again.

The miracle of Christmas is that every one of us can offer a Christmas blessing to those around us. Many people have suffering and hardship that we can relieve if only for a moment with a simple act of kindness; an extra hug, a Christmas card sent, a small gift or a welcoming smile.

All these things are our part of bringing Glory to God in the highest and on earth Peace.

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