

AFRICA Advent

Dear Crosspoint Family,

I have so many family Christmas traditions that I love of course decorating the house, picking out the tree, giving gifts, but the Christmas tradition I love more than any other is Africa Advent! In 2008, during the height of the financial crisis that followed the housing market collapse, our church thought:

“if we’re suffering, imagine what it must be like for our friends around the world.”

So, with that in mind, we started our annual Advent Offerings that became known as Africa Advent.

In the 12 years that followed God has given us some amazing relationships with the church in and around the Congo. We have been consistently providing bikes, native language Bibles, church buildings, and pastoral trainings for the gifted men and women who are leading churches in the Congo.

Bikes: help pastors reach out into the ‘bush’ (rural areas) and visit the sick from their congregations. They also provide them a tool to bring their crops to market to provide their family with income. We also provide motorbikes for District Superintendents who oversee Pastors spread out over a large geographical area.

Bibles: Most Christians in the Congo don’t have access to the Bible in their ‘heart language.’ This is even true for pastors, who are preaching and teaching God’s word every week! We help provide pastors with God’s word in the language they love best, so that they can faithfully share it with their people.

Buildings: We’ve built or completed over 100 churches in and around the Congo during our 12 year partnership. That number actually isn’t the most important number though. As much as we love a great building, with a roof and four walls (four walls are optional in Africa), the real beauty in building churches is that they house PEOPLE who are connecting to Christ and each other. Every time we see a church open, and we’ve seen quite a few in our visits, it is filled to the brim with people who love Jesus and their community. Sometimes they are full before they’re even open. Building churches brings excitement and vitality to a community, and gives the local pastor a tremendous opportunity to reach people and connect them to Jesus. We help build buildings, because every time we do our gifted partner pastors fill them with people!

Trainings: One common feature of our visits to Africa is the opportunity to meet with pastors and offer them some encouragement and training. (I personally have done this six times). These trainings help pastors think holistically about their life, family, health, and personal Spiritual development. They also provide practical tools to help them reach their communities. We know these men and women are gifted, we’ve seen the fruit of their ministries. It’s our great honor to help them develop their gifts and stay fruitful for years to come!

I know it’s been a difficult year for us. It reminds me, in so many ways, of our first Africa Advent offerings in 2008. These offerings, and this ministry isn’t simply ‘one more thing’ to add to the stress of our holiday season. They offer a path to a whole new way of thinking about the holiday. And when we’re able to center our hearts and minds on Jesus, we will experience Advent in a fresh new way; as a blessing and not a burden. That’s why we say ‘spend less, give more.’ That’s why we encourage you to cut your personal spending in half to make space for giving to these Kingdom causes. Our heart follows our treasure, and putting our treasure in the hands of the African church pays off eternally. We live more simply that others may simply live.

I hope that this focus on Kingdom causes, and these challenges to live and give more simply, will help your Christmas season become a time of freedom and refreshing. That our sacrificial giving will be a tool that helps us center our hearts and minds in the eternal power of the Holy Spirit, and in doing that, perhaps we will begin to look less at the challenges of our current circumstances, and more at the beautiful (sometimes hidden) work of God’s Kingdom.

Merry Christmas, and happy Africa Advent!

Rurel Ausley

You can give to our advent offerings anytime using the Crosspoint App, at crosspoint.church/givenow/ or at the buckets in the back of your worship venue.