

Dear friends!

Feliz Navidad!

Christmas is here again; what a wonderful time of the year! Many people have been busy; now this is the time for a break and celebration. In fact, at home, children have been asking Emily and me to have a Christmas tree with all accompaniments! They want to start eating the fruits before they mature on Christmas Day! I remember how Christmas is celebrated in the West at this time of the year; streets from Ambridge, PA, to Orange County, CA, are just colorful. I loved driving at night in December when I was a student over there. I do not know if all those decorations were an expression of welcoming the newborn Jesus Christ or if they signified something else!

A few days ago, just early this week, I wanted to surprise some people in the slum; together with my friends, we wanted to know how the slum dwellers are getting ready for Christmas! When we reached there, there was no sign of a big event at all, but guess what! There were very good sounds of Christian music coming out from the tiny iron sheet shelters considered as churches. When we asked, they told us everybody is busy rehearsing for the Christmas productions where children and parents alike will have their own presentations.



We walked through the slum under the tropical heat of Lake Victoria, where we met some people trying to pump water from the well, and I took courage to pump for them and filled their Jerrycans/tins. Among them I got curious with a middle-aged woman. I said to the lady, "Can you welcome us to your home today?" With a hesitant expression in her eyes, I could see what she wanted to say: "*Who am I to welcome people from the town? I am not your class.*" I told her, "*Let us help you carry that water; my friends and I are serious! We want to come home.*"

She accepted and led the way slowly as she narrated her story to us. She is a married lady with seven children; the husband does boda riding/motorcycle taxi, which he got on loan. We asked her how the husband will pay the loan, and she replied, "*We have to work hard together.*" That answer impressed me so much!

We reached her place. In African culture, a visitor must have a seat and at least a drink. We started seeing her neighbors bringing stools one by one; there we sat. I asked, "*Where is your house?*" She said, "*Right here.*" May I go in? *Yes, go and see it yourself.* I pushed a linen, which acted as a door, and I asked her, "*Where do the children sleep from?*" "*All nine of us sleep there.*" she replied. There was one bed that was tall enough to allow girls to sleep underneath. And boys to sleep where I was standing. Then I asked, "*How do you close when boys are here?*" She said, "*After entering, we close once, and we go out once.*"

We sat on the stools outside for more interactions, and she revealed to us that they hardly get one meal a day between 2-3 pm from January to December. She is a saved lady who sings in a choir; all her 7 children, ranging from 19 to 7, were raised there, and they all love God. In fact, that very day the children's voices were among the good melodies we could hear from surrounding churches. We prayed with her, and I will finish the story in my next update because it is still rolling.



Friends I do not know how you are going to celebrate the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ, but I pray that you have a good time with your families and friends! And if God tells you to do something, do it with an open heart to bring joy, love, peace, and hope to those who are craving them.

I would like to thank you for your prayers for us last month when Emily and I were traveling. Indeed we had a good time with friends and family members; we do not travel home often in Rwanda, and it has taken many years for both of us to travel together due to the young ones. We praise the Lord now they are big girls and boys.

We wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year 2025.

In case you would like to partner with Square Ministries Africa in reaching out to a lady like the one in this story to have a second meal a day or to educate children like hers for a better future, click on this link and follow the instructions. *Now you can go to the Square Ministries Africa webpage [www.squareministriesafrica.org](http://www.squareministriesafrica.org) and click "how you can help." Scroll down to the "Donate" button and follow the instructions. Once you donate, I will get a message, and I will send you a word of appreciation. Any donation of this kind is "tax deductible" according to the USA law of taxation. In case you need more explanations, please let me know.*

## Love and prayers

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