

What If Jesus Had Never Been Born?

Several years ago, I came across a book title by the late Dr. D. James Kennedy, "What if Jesus had never been born?" It was my desire for many years to buy and read the book. Unfortunately, my peripatetic lifestyle has not allowed for me to sit still and order it.

As I have reflected on what to write for this Christmas newsletter, the question, "What if Jesus had never been born?" dominates my thoughts.

With the increasing secularization of our societies and the current emphasis on multiculturalism – especially in matters religious – the massive impact that Christianity has had on civilizations is often overlooked, obscured and often denied.

Amazingly, many of our existing institutions and values reflect a Christian origin. Countless individuals and civilization have been transformed by Jesus Christ. In the ancient world, Jesus' teaching elevated brutish standards of morality, halted infanticide, enhanced human life, emancipated women, abolished slavery, inspired charities and relief organizations, created hospitals, established orphanages and founded schools. His teaching still inspires us today...

In a climate of multiculturalism and its mandate to "find truth in all religions," it isn't politically correct to talk about the impact and influence of Jesus and the movement He started. But, the fact remains: No other religion, philosophy, movement or nation has so changed the world for the better as Christianity has done! This, despite its supposed "shortcomings" which are nevertheless heavily outweighed by its benefit to all mankind.

"What if Jesus had never been born?" I have pondered on this question over and over. What if Jesus had never been born? I wouldn't be where I am today. I wouldn't be connected with you. You and I wouldn't be involved in this or other ministries that are 'bridging the gaps – changing mindsets and transforming our cultures.' Most importantly, our lives would not be changed!

This Christmas, as I ponder on His impact in the world, in my life and the work of Bread For Life, I am reminded of the response of His disciple to His question: "would you also go away?" (John 6:67), to which Peter responded, "Lord, to whom would we go? You have the words that give eternal life" (John 6:68). Speaking to a similar drifting culture of his day, the Apostle Paul addressed their "ignorance" (Acts 17:22-26), exhorted them to "seek the Lord... He is not far from everyone..." (Acts 17:27) and affirmed the fact that "in Him we live and move and have our vitality" (Acts 17:28).



A ride from Loussou village to our demonstration farm: Only Jesus Christ can change hearts and bring people from diverse background to serve together.

Merry Christmas!



Ernest Ehabe

IN THEIR OWN WORDS **My Heart Was Touched**

by Jessie Terry

For years I had dreamed of going to Africa. It finally happened! I couldn't believe it did. I was given an opportunity to intern at a special needs school. The plan was for me to spend about three months at Ray of Hope Academy in Douala – a school started by my dad's friend of many years. The whole trip was an adventure in faith.

I boarded the plane from Little Rock to Chicago and from Chicago to Brussels in Belgium. From Belgium we would go to Douala, Cameroon. I was stopped at the gate in Brussels, "ma'am, you cannot board this plane, you do not have a visa..." I stood in disbelief. I had forgotten to apply for a Cameroonian visa!

I had to spend five days in Belgium. Fortunately, Mr. Ehabé had distant relatives in Antwerp. The five days in Antwerp would be used by God in very unusual ways. I made new friends and had an opportunity to visit the city!



What a great experience only God could plan.

I eventually got my visa and landed in Douala and was met by two Bread For Life staff. We drove to the Ehabé's home and I went to bed. Thus began part two of my adventure.

I worked at Ray of Hope Academy. It was such a wonderful experience. The highlight of the trip was singing to a nonverbal (autistic) child and he spoke. I knew God was doing something. The kids touched my heart and it was so worth the waiting. I saw so much sadness but so much joy in the midst of it all. Two weeks into my trip I fell ill. I had a kidney stone and problems with my liver and was advised to return home for treatment. I thought God 'why did my trip get shortened, why did I have to get sick?' On the way back I was put in the hospital in Brussels and was given medicine and finally sent home. On the flight to Chicago I was able to share the gospel with a man sitting next to me. It was all worth it. I finally understood why I left so early. If God is calling you, then go. Do not be afraid to make a difference! One thing I do not want you to forget is your visa!

Jessie is an 18 year old daughter of my friend from my college days at Arkansas Tech University. Her whole family (grandparents, aunt and parents) support the work of BFL. It was a blessing to have her serve with us. What a trooper she was!



MINISTRY HIGHLIGHTS:

LEADERSHIP: The CRUX of it all!

"And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others." 2 Timothy 2:2



Pastors Appreciation Dinner: 70 Pastors in Yaoundé converge in our office compound in Yaoundé for a meal and to hear John speak on "Leading with Integrity."



An outdoor combined service at Yaoundé International church. John Spoke on "developing leaders by leading with Intentionality."



With the Prime Minister of Cameroon. Sharing about our special needs school and sharing about our work and faith. He asked me why I was not in politics. I told him that wasn't what God has called me to do.



Listening to John speak to about 200 pastors in Yaoundé on "leading with Integrity."

November has been an incredibly hectic, busy but productive month for our team. We crisscrossed Cameroon talking about "leadership." A number doors opened for us to meet with top government officials in different parts of the country. We also had a very productive meeting with diplomats at the US Embassy. The highlight of these meetings was our meeting with the Prime Minister of Cameroon. He allotted "five minutes" in his busy schedule to meet with us but we ended up meeting with him for almost two hours! It was a great opportunity to talk about the work of BFL in Cameroon, share our faith and talk about other pertinent issues.

Our country (Cameroon) is going through one of its most difficult time in its 57 year history and union as a "Republic" - (the union of the French and English colonies, often referred to as "Francophone" and "Anglophone" Cameroon).

Like every "union" Cameroon has had its share of challenges that climaxed in the last year. A small section of the country (Anglophone Cameroon) has been agitating for self-rule. Arguing that they are marginalized. They contend that, although most of the country's natural resources are from their region, they are the most underdeveloped and are under-represented in the government. Some in the "Anglophone" area of the country want to secede and form another country, some want a "true Federal" style state and others are okay with the status-quo.

There have been sporadic demonstrations in the "Anglophone" sections of the country. Unfortunately, these demonstrations have occasionally been met with brutality and reports of killing by some in the government's armed forces. If Cameroon has ever needed leadership, it is now. Like other African countries, at the crux of all of Cameroon's problem is LEADERSHIP: Altruistic leadership. Visionary and innovative leadership. Purposeful leadership! Leadership at the top, leadership at the grassroots - something that seems to be alien in a country where living and leading abnormally has become normal and where living and leading normally is now abnormal. The high unemployment (over 60 percent) and lack of visible development and a "bright" future is fueling this crises.

It is with this backdrop that God provided opportunities for BFL to do a series of leadership talks across some parts of the country as well as engaging leadership at different levels. So thankful that my friend of over 30 years from my days at Arkansas Tech University (John Terry) was willing to come alongside us. John is part of the John Maxwell Team and he speaks and writes on leadership issues. His daughter recently volunteered in our special needs school in Douala. Also joining our team was Tim Reed, pastor of Connection Church of Sherwood (North Little Rock), AR. Rev. Reed and his wife Rene opened their home and hearts to us this summer. We all camped in their home with our son, AJ for six weeks while our team received training at Pediatrics Plus and our son was also enrolled at their pre-school.

We started off with a visit to Loussou (a Baka Pygmy village where we are struggling to develop a model demonstration and teaching farm) and then we returned to Yaoundé where we started our series (Leading with Intentionality) at two BFL related church plants in Yaoundé (Yaoundé International Chapel and Berean Baptist Church). Yaoundé International Chapel was planted with the goal of reaching leaders and their spheres of influence. It is a model church in Cameroon. We moved to Douala and then to Tombel, Bangem and Limbe. Several meetings were also held with leaders from different walks of life.

A HUGE NEED At Ray Of Hope Academy

"What do we live for, if it is not to make life less difficult for each other?" – George Eliot
"One of the deep secrets of life is that all that is really worth doing is what we do for others." – Lewis Carroll

We continue to see God at work as we care for special needs children and provide support for families desperate for a 'ray of hope' at our school in Douala. Although the journey to create Ray of Hope Academy started with our desire to help our son with autism, in many ways, we were already on this path, our son's situation just woke us up. There is no doubt in my mind that there is clearly a divine purpose in the challenges we each face. Only God can turn the challenges we face into solutions to help the multitudes (Gen 50:20).

We are now caring for 45 neuro-typical ("normal") and neuro-diverse (special needs) children and developing a model curriculum that is capable of addressing children with various learning abilities or disabilities.

A HUGE need at the school at this time is for a van or bus to transport our kids. Most of them live far from school and take motorcycle taxis to school, a very dangerous form of transportation in a crowded and chaotic city. Although this has been a huge concern for us all, we have not been able to do much given other pressing needs. Recently, a motorbike transporting one of our "special" children had an accident and our little one fell off and had multiple wounds. For a while, he was unable to attend school. He is doing better now and most of his wounds have healed. It has been a very traumatic experience for all of us.

This situation has forced us to intensify our prayers for a school van/Bus. It would cost us about \$20,000 to get something that would not break down for a few years. We are presently squeezing many children into our small car meant for five passengers. Would you join us in lifting up this huge need as well as helping us fundraise by sharing this need with those who may be able to help?

Our students beginning the day



Student injured in motorcycle accident



Two students arriving at school on a motorcycle taxi



End of the Year Gifts

During the Christmas season, we celebrate the priceless gift we receive through the birth and resurrection of Jesus Christ. In worshipful response, we also give – of our time, energy, abilities and resources. We know that kingdom investment is important to you and want to invite you to consider joining BFL in your year-end giving. Here are some things to keep in mind:

- Contributions mailed to CTEN must be postmarked no later than December 31st.
- Online credit card donations must be posted through the CTEN's website (www.cten.org/breadforlife) no later

than December 31st.

CTEN is also able to receive contributions of stocks, bonds and mutual funds, which are then sold and the proceeds provided to Bread For Life International. Remember that any year end gifts of stocks, bonds or mutual funds must be received in the CTEN's brokerage account by December 31st. Call 800-872-5404 for more information.

Please email us with the intent of your gift so we know which project to apply it to. All other funds will be used for general operation or where most needed.

Tax deductible gifts to Bread For Life may be sent to:

Commission To Every Nation:

PO Box 291307, Kerrville, TX 78029 • (830) 896-8326 • www.cten.org/breadforlife/

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