



New Hope for Children

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Merry Christmas

December 2021.

Dear Friends and Supporters,

Be uplifted, although there are challenges, there is reason for great joy. Titus 2:12 tells us ***“For the grace of God that brings salvation to all men has appeared.”*** What a reason for joy, over 2000 years ago, the provider of grace, who continues to gift salvation to all who believe in him; came to the earth, he is called Jesus! Merry Christmas to all!

We have seen God’s grace so many times this year, many reasons for joy and to give thanks and praise! The houses are decorated, the trees are up, the lights are shining, and boy do we have a ton of very excited children! The other day, some of our smallest children stopped me (about ten 3- to 6-year-olds) as I got to the ground floor. “Do you know anything about the presents?” they asked. “It’s a secret” I replied. “You do, you know something, you can’t go until you tell!” And then in a flash, I had three children hanging off each leg, sitting on my feet and I was going nowhere! It was so funny that we couldn’t stop laughing, but I had the last laugh because the secret continues to be a secret....well for the next week at least!

The day before yesterday, I received a phone call from “M”, a little boy we began to help many years ago. He lived with us, graduated from the school and we continue to help him today as a true family would. You could hear the emotion in his voice. He told me “Dad, today I presented my final university project (thesis) and I can now graduate, I am a life transformed. Who knows where I would have been today if I hadn’t received your help.” “M” has benefitted from our University Scholarship Fund and a little boy who was being taught to plant land mines, is today a fully qualified Architect. As I write this my eyes fill with tears of joy. I am so proud of all he has achieved and the grace of God over his life is clearly shining out! Thank you to our University Fund donors!

The new Blessings building is finished! How fitting, that the first celebrations in the new facility were the end of school year ceremony and the high school 11th grade’s graduation dinner- events to celebrate the blessings of the children and praise God for their achievements. Jeanene and our teachers worked so hard, and the place looked beautiful (you can see some of the photos on our social media pages.) The end of year ceremony was so special, dramas and dances, praise songs and prayers, over 250 people and that was with social distancing. To see the 5th floor being used for its purpose (presentations and/or sports) was a memory I will never forget. Then we moved to the 2nd floor for graduation dinner. It looked so special, taking our breath away and bringing tears to our eyes. Elegant, beautiful, and very, very functional!

Our graduating class melted our hearts. They composed and sang a song about us and Children’s Vision, giving a recount of their lives here. We laughed, we cried and there wasn’t a dry eye in the house. Here are some quotes from the words of our graduates. “O” spoke of the donors, child carers and teachers. Thank you for “your great help and collaboration....to instruct, care for and forge wise, competent, humble and capable women and men who are useful to society.” “D” said “Thank you for your unconditional love and help, for opening the doors to your heart.....your example of untiring will to overcome challenges.....so that us, your children, can achieve our goals and dreams.” “M” said “the most marvellous people that I have ever known... that give everything of themselves without receiving anything in return.” We all gave thanks and glory to God. Jeanene and I told them we are all a huge team, the workers and supporters, those who pray and those who donate. And, we receive everything in return, to witness a future changing transformation in the lives of the children!

It was also great to see at graduation dinner, some of our older children, brothers and sisters to those who were graduating. “J” is now a qualified Industrial Engineer, and an engineering supervisor at a

sewing factory, "R" who only graduated last year is now studying Business Administration at the University whilst working full time. There were many other testimonies, especially to know that none are living in the poverty from which they were saved! What a joy to see success, to see God's grace over their lives, and to know that they are helping their families have the possibility of a better future.

Over the last three weeks or so the new Blessings building has been going through inspections. Please give God thanks we were able to achieve RETIE standard. This certifies the electrical installation is to a very high standard. I had a sizeable smile on my face as I received the seven separate certificates that make up this important achievement. **This building is an amazing miracle, giving important help to many, and a place that will generate many special memories and lots of joy and laughter.**

The next special occasion was the external student's Christmas celebration. The air of anticipation was tangible, and the children were so full of energy. It was so special to watch them as they sang Christmas songs and praised God. Laughing, jumping, chattering, oh and of course happy to eat the sweets. Then the moment arrived for the presents....3, 2, 1 and a half!.....wait for it.....1! An explosion of joy as toys were played with, teddy bears and other toys cuddled, cars zoomed across the floor, board games sprung into action, new clothes were admired, books began to be read and huge, huge smiles were everywhere. These moments are priceless, to give such joy to a child who has had a difficult start to life, these things are special memories that will last a lifetime!

Please pray for "Z", one of the 16-year-old, external student girls. She cried as she recounted the terrible experience she went through in October. "I was walking close to my house (shack), and a stray bullet hit me in the leg." Both bones were broken, and two surgeries were needed to extract the bullet. Praise God, for help and healing in her recovery process. Please pray for complete physical and emotional recovery, she has a long path ahead yet- both the physical and emotional scars are so evident to see. It was so special to give her Christmas presents, and see her laugh and smile, gifts that brought great joy in a time of great personal challenge.

Please pray for very special Pastor friends of ours in Northern Ireland, Gretta and Denver Michael. Pray for God's healing power and his abundant peace. We love you Denver, Gretta and family!

I wanted to finish with this story today. "M" was a little girl we met many years ago living in a shack in one of the poorest areas of the city, she came to study at our school, has just graduated and dreams of becoming a vet. Just a few weeks ago, I had the privilege to tell her that she had been awarded a scholarship to study veterinary medicine at university, something that at one time would have been impossible, now it is a dream come true. She cried so hard with joy; she couldn't even speak! University begins in January. Thank you Lord!

There is so much more that I could tell you like the USA humanitarian aid donations container, or that today we all ate candy floss from a machine we were donated, that was fun!..... We give thanks to you our supporters and to God for all of it!

These moments and many others make up the total of the many special moments that Jeanene and I get to be part of. We love it with all our hearts! We want to thank you, our friends and supporters, our helpers and the New Hope for Children trustees, Christine, Margaret, David. Thank you for serving God, for helping make life transforming changes in our children, and giving Jeanene and I the privilege of many, many memorable moments that we will cherish forever.

On behalf of New Hope trustees, Jeanene and I, Henry and all here in Bogota we wish you a fantastic Christmas and an outstanding 2022 filled with God's hope, love, peace, grace and abundant blessings.

Love and Hugs, Blessings, Richard and Jeanene, Henry, and our big Bogota family.

We are currently taking bookings for speaking in April 2022 (Covid restrictions allowing) so please get in touch with Ruth as soon as possible if you would like to book, E-mail: ruth@newhope4childrenuk.org or via telephone: 07538 887305.

Serving God, Transforming Lives

Trustees: Richard Sanderson, Christine Hodgson, Margaret Swift, David Hodgson