

## Sellers Sequel

Christmas, 2005

*“I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people!” Luke 2:10*

Christmas is a time of **GOOD NEWS!!** Here in Cote d’Ivoire, we are surrounded by people in desperate need of some good news. In the last few weeks, it seems that we have been inundated with victims of AIDS in need of some good news. These cases are even touching the lives of church members and their families, like one woman who was a leader in one of the churches. Over a year ago, she disappeared from her home and church. Then just two weeks ago she returned to see us. She was open enough to share her sad story. She discovered that she was HIV positive, probably infected by her husband. She left home to seek treatment in another part of the country. Now she has come to us asking for our prayers and seeking some **GOOD NEWS**. One of our pastors’ sisters was also diagnosed as HIV positive – devastating news for the whole family. After desperately seeking treatment for her, the pastor took her to a Christian hospital where she was re-tested and found to be HIV negative – **GOOD NEWS!!** We have been struck by the rapid increase in AIDS cases that are coming to us, especially in the areas most seriously affected by the war. While medical treatment is available for a privileged few here, the church is the only source of **GOOD NEWS** for the vast majority of these victims. Will we be able to provide **GOOD NEWS** to so many in need of it? With your help and support, the Church of God in Cote d’Ivoire is ready to do its part to bring **GOOD NEWS** to as many as possible.



Christmas is also a time of **GREAT JOY!!** The past three years of civil war and political stalemate have taken a major toll on people’s joy. Many have lost homes, family members, jobs, schooling opportunities, health, and hope for a better future. We have sensed a greater heaviness and burden in dealing with hopeless people that are taking a toll even on many pastors. As we seek to encourage pastors and meet needs of hurting and despairing people, we find it even taking a toll on our family and us. But throughout it all, churches have been praying and fasting for God to restore peace and joy to Cote d’Ivoire once again. Thousands of all-night prayer vigils have been held around the country on both sides of the battle lines. Then just last week, the announcement was made that a new prime minister had been agreed on by all sides. This was a major step toward peace that has been long awaited before disarmament, reuniting and elections can take place. A population that has been weighted down for 3 years is now seeing signs of **GREAT JOY** being restored once again. On a more personal level, LeAnn is seeing **GREAT JOY** in the eyes and minds of ten new literacy students here in Yamoussoukro as they learn to recognize letters and read words for the first time. Many others are waiting to start literacy in other areas, but trained teachers are lacking to bring **GREAT JOY** into the eyes and minds of so many others.

Christmas is meant to be **FOR ALL THE PEOPLE**. God’s good news of great joy is for all the people everywhere. That is why the Church of God is striving to reach out to all 60 ethnic groups in Cote d’Ivoire in addition to the many foreigners in the country. But we also have a

vision to reach the people in the extremely poor neighboring country of Burkina Faso. Larry has made three exploratory trips there, once with two Ivorian pastors to begin projecting how we might be able to take the good news to the people of this very needy nation. We had hoped by 2006 to have a missionary team in place that would be able to begin sharing the good news there. However, with the Critsers' new job description that takes them to many other parts of Africa and has increased our responsibilities within Cote d'Ivoire, we have had to put this plan on hold as we have no prospects to send there and cannot yet leave the young church here in Cote d'Ivoire to go ourselves. We desperately need more missionaries to join us here in Cote d'Ivoire in addition to others to be sent to Burkina Faso. But so far, our pleas, publications and prayers have yet to yield any fruit for the harvest. Are we really concerned **FOR ALL THE PEOPLE?**

As you celebrate Christmas this year, please take some time to remember that the Good News of Great Joy was never meant to be limited to just some of the people—our family, our ethnic group, our city, or our nation. Christmas is meant to be celebrated **BY ALL THE PEOPLE** for Christ came to bring salvation and joy **FOR ALL THE PEOPLE**. What are you ready to do to take that **GOOD NEWS TO ALL THE PEOPLE?** If you need some ideas, let us know. We will be glad to give you some!!

On a personal note, we are all excited that on December 16<sup>th</sup>, Laura arrives from boarding school in Senegal for the holidays. We can hardly wait to see her and will go to Abidjan to surprise her at the airport. Our family is looking forward to some times of **GREAT JOY** while she is here with us. Larry will take her back to Senegal on January 14<sup>th</sup> along with two other MK boys from another mission group here. We will send you more updated news from Cote d'Ivoire after that.

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**With Great Joy for all the People,**  
Larry and LeAnn Sellers  
and Laura and Lee