

# NEWS UPDATE FROM DEBBIE HOWARD, CONGO

## JANUARY 2010

Dear Friends,

This arrives just in time to be called a January newsletter so although it is a month after the event, I trust you had a good Christmas and I wish you all a Happy New Year.

The Christmas and New Year Period was full with activities and went very quickly. I think I am probably still recovering!

### HOLIDAY CLUB

From the 22<sup>nd</sup> to the 24<sup>th</sup> December I ran a three day holiday club for the adolescents of my church. Rather than open this to all, we restricted the numbers to those who attended the Sunday school and adolescents group regularly making it more manageable. As it was the first time for the Sunday school teachers to hold a holiday club I had quite a lot to do but they worked really hard and were very committed. Seeing young people becoming Christians, recommitting their lives to God and growing in their relationship with Him made it all worth while. On Christmas morning, they sang in Church the song "King of Love" in Swahili and although this was the first time they had done this, I think they sang as well as any other church choir.



### CHRISTMAS THEATRE PRODUCTION

Despite the rising panic as Christmas day got closer this went extremely well. All the young people were so committed and enthusiastic about the production. As we were short of time, all night rehearsals were scheduled for Saturdays followed by Sunday afternoon rehearsals in youth group. They also insisted on having an all nighter on Christmas Eve so that they wouldn't forget anything!



And on the day, all went well. There was certainly plenty of drama. The script allowed a fair amount of poetic licence and so there was: Mary and Joseph's family meeting to arrange the bride price, soldiers looking for bribes during the census, the reaction of innkeepers to Joseph's request for a

place to stay, Joseph's suspicions when his friend tells him that Mary is pregnant and Herod's guards coming close to killing the wise men. The closing scene was with the wise men worshipping the child Jesus and finished with the narrator giving a call for all to worship Jesus as the shepherds and wise men had done and not to follow Herod's example. The whole cast then sang the angels praise song which the whole church was soon joining in with.



The only thing that almost went wrong was that minutes before the play was scheduled to start, Joseph, Mary's father and Joseph's father had still not arrived. It turned out that Joseph and Mary's father had had a falling out which had turned to blows. Even though they were there performing the dispute had not ended. Oh the joys of youth work!

### AND THE REST

There were of course plenty of other activities: a wedding the Saturday before Christmas (sadly a funeral as well), a street boys visit to the zoo, Sunday school parties at my church plus others, special church services and yet somehow presents still managed to get wrapped and distributed to friends, colleagues, children and people in need.

Thank you to everyone who sent Christmas cards and email messages. The mail actually arrived on the 15<sup>th</sup> January meaning that Christmas lasted that little bit longer!



Thank you for all your prayers and support. God bless you, *Debbie Howard*

All gifts for my ministry in Congo should be sent to Elim International Missions or as appropriate to the Irish Missions Director.  
Cheques payable to Elim International Missions. Thank you.

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