

It's More Blessed to Give

At Christmas we go out of our way to give to others less fortunate than ourselves.

One of my earliest memories of Christmas takes me back to 1956, when I got my first bicycle. It was a wonderful Christmas in which my brother and sister and I received many nice gifts. But that year, my parents did something that remains with me 46 years later. They encouraged us to give one of our newly opened gifts to a poor family in our church.

I don't remember why the family was poor. Nor do I remember what I gave. But I do remember visiting their home and giving those kids something I probably wanted to keep.

It was a good reminder to me that the focus at Christmas is on giving, not getting, as our materialistic culture would like us to believe. The Bible says, "'It is more blessed to give than to receive'" (Acts 20:35, NKJV).

Today my family "tithes" on what we give—not out of legalistic necessity but to remind ourselves that we should give to Jesus at the time of year we remember His birth. We add up what we spend and give a special offering of roughly 10 percent of the total cost of our gifts.

Some years we've taken gifts down to a homeless shelter in our area. One year I went there dressed as Santa Claus and, after telling them the story of the real meaning of Christmas, I distributed the gifts to some neighborhood children as well as to some toothless homeless men.

Other years we've given to a national ministry we felt was

doing a good work. Operation Holiday Hope, sponsored by Bill Wilson in New York City, is one example. This year we are raising money for that ministry, too.

Most years we remember the men at a Teen Challenge training center nearby who can't go home for Christmas. We give them some small gifts to let them know they are remembered.

In all of this, the point I make to my own two sons and my staff is that at Christmas we go out of our way to give to others less fortunate than ourselves.

This year you can join us in our giving by sending a contribution to our nonprofit partner, Christian Life Missions, to help the 12 ministries highlighted in this issue of Charisma. Each of these ministries, though not widely known, is making a significant difference for the kingdom of God.

Nearly 50 years ago Christian Life Missions was founded by Robert Walker to make it possible for the readers of Christian Life magazine to help Christians in South Korea, who were so poverty-stricken they were boiling tree bark to make soup. The magazine reported that in postwar Korea some enthusiastic Christians were spending all their time evangelizing and no time planting the gardens they needed to supply their food.

Today we continue the ministry of Christian Life Missions by inviting the readers of Charisma & Christian Life to give to worthy ministries such as the ones featured in this issue. In the last few years, readers of this magazine and several

others I publish have given more than \$1 million to various ministries.

Christian Life Missions gives the donor a tax receipt and forwards the offering to the ministry involved, taking nothing for overhead. That's because our company covers much of the overhead, and the rest is raised from other sources. So when you give, you can do so with confidence.

Our goal is to raise \$100,000 from our readers for these ministries this Christmas. You can either donate to a specific ministry by naming it or tell us to give as needed. We'll divide your gift among all the ministries or give to ministries we know have specific needs.

Although \$100,000 may seem like a lot, that is much less than 50 cents per subscriber. I know many of you will give generously—as I will.

I like to think of you as our family—and I encourage my family to give. As we join together to help others less fortunate, we minister to the Lord who said, “‘Inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me’” (Matt. 25:40).

Stephen Strang is the founder and publisher of Charisma. He encourages you to participate in our special Christmas project by sending your tax-deductible gift to Christian Life Missions, P.O. Box 952248, Lake Mary, FL 32795-2248.