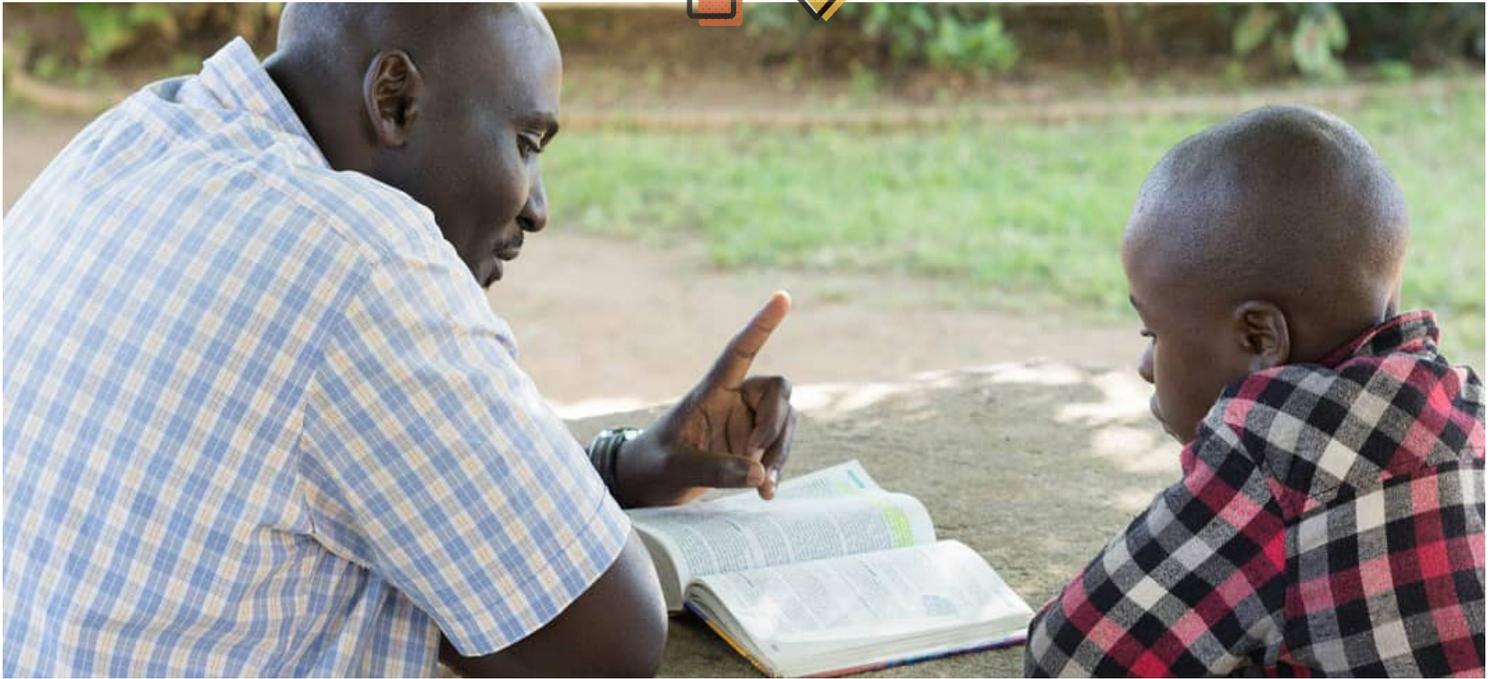


CHERYL'S LETTERS



2 Corinthians 3:17 Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.

Dear friends and family,

January has arrived, a new year, a time of reflection. For me, 2020 was (among many other things) a chance to learn to dwell and abide with the Lord on a deeper level. That when circumstances are binding to heart and mind, there is a path to freedom through the Lord's presence. I knew this, but now I know it better.

One of 2020's unexpected blessings was the decision to study the Bible - one chapter each day - with extended family. Born out of frustrated attempts to connect (encourage) over Zoom through games, I felt prompted to suggest Bible study instead, "bring them to me." Where a game failed to bring peace and comfort, God's word ushered us into His presence, accomplishing many purposes! God's word, a vehicle for peace. God's peace, a vehicle for freedom of heart and mind. I think of how the apostle Paul wrote many of his letters while physically locked down in prison. Yet, as I read Paul's letters, his words exemplify freedom - peace, hope, and joy - fueled by the Holy Spirit and unfettered by his circumstances.

Children arrive on the Agape campuses from very difficult backgrounds, often marked by bondage to trauma and pain. So, what's the strategy to free them? Bring them to Jesus. While the program on campus is well thought out and planned, it is in the redemptive power of Jesus that we place our trust.

Over the years, Agape missionaries and staff have collaborated to create gospel-centered class curricula, counseling frameworks, and group activities. Our desire

is to see children's lives transformed through a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Freedom from their past, hope for their future - through the power of the Holy Spirit.

The first 4 weeks on campus, all children attend Reasons to Believe - Old and New Testament lessons that point to the problem of sin and God's redemptive plan. Upon completion, those who have decided to put their trust in Jesus then attend a discipleship class called Grow in Christ. In some cases, when counseling reveals spiritual confusion or strongholds, a child is led through a series of one-on-one sessions called Freedom in Christ. The pastor helps the child understand his identity in Christ - to recognize any lies that may have been internalized - and to replace those lies with the truth of God's word. Truth equals freedom! And in case you're wondering, those who don't yet profess faith continue to hear the gospel at morning chapel and see the gospel in action through the love and affirming words of the Agape staff.

The fatigue related to Covid is real. So many have experienced sorrows of sickness, loss of life, economic hardship, plans on hold. And there's a simple but profound longing for freedom, to move and gather as before. While we wait, let us fix our eyes on Jesus, renewing our hearts and minds with His word, and dwelling in the freedom of His presence.

Please pray that the Kenyan government would grant permission for Agape to reopen their campuses and, in the meantime, for Agape staff ministering to kids while on the street. If I can pray specifically for you, it would be my privilege. Simply reply to this newsletter with your requests.

In love, *Cheryl Insua*

NEVER STOP PRAYING

by Wesley Corbitt, Executive Director

2020 was definitely a different and challenging year. The Kenyan government required all child care facilities to shut down, believing this would help slow the spread of Covid-19. Though this was perhaps not the most effective solution, we complied with orders, and on March 18, 2020 we closed the rehabilitation work on campus and reintegrated all our children with their families. We moved some of our rehab team to street rescue ministry and continued to rescue children from the streets, directly reintegrating them with their families or temporary foster situations until biological family could be found. Reintegration without rehabilitation and full assessment of the family situation is not ideal, but we believe it is much better than the hurt and abuse of being on the streets.

We are very hopeful that 2021 will allow us to return to full rehabilitation services with family counseling and family assessment. The Department of Children Services (DCS) allowed children to return to our Kisumu campus on December 28, 2020 with two requirements – a negative Covid test and a court committal to our care for every child rescued. However, these requirements are impossible to meet. If a child cannot stay on campus until a negative result, where can that child stay while waiting for that result? Many times it takes weeks to locate a child's family, a requirement for court committal. DCS has relaxed the negative test, praise God, but not the court committal. Even if we can locate a child's family, the courts are closed until February. Please pray the DCS will remove the court committal requirement. In the past we have always obtained it, but not before bringing a child on campus. We currently have two boys and four girls on campus. This is a praise, but the population of children on the streets is rising again, and we need full operational ability to rescue these children and meet their needs.

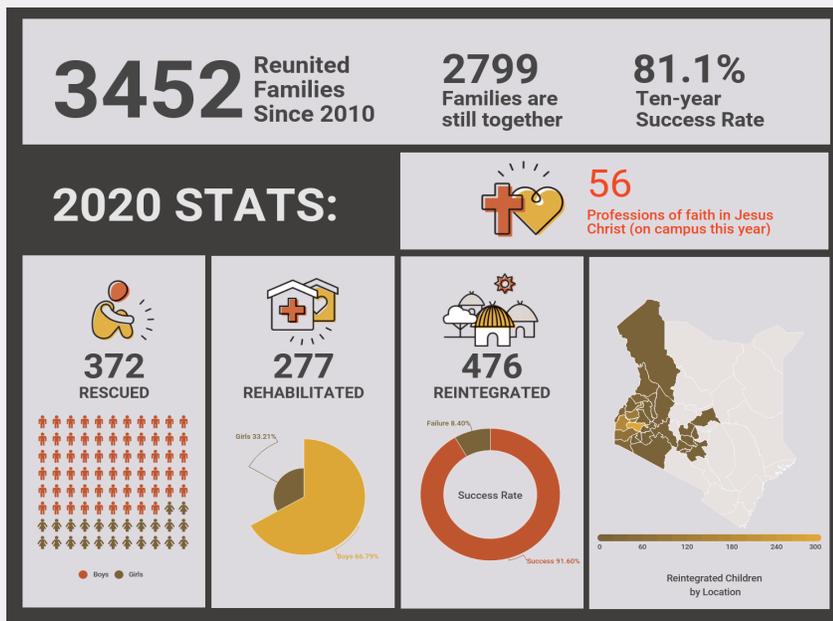
Kitale campus, being located in a different county, has been allowed to reopen without the above restrictions as long as all staff working have tested negative for Covid-19. They did, praise the Lord! We are now waiting on the Ministry of Health (MOH) to certify the results. Certification by the MOH was the only requirement of DCS in this county. The MOH has had the test results for several weeks, but has not yet certified. Please pray that they will see the damage their delay is causing for children on the streets and will quickly certify the results.

This summer Agape ceased using public transportation to visit reintegrated children and instead used rental vehicles in order to better protect our staff. Public transportation puts 15 people in a 10-passenger vehicle, making these vehicles breeding grounds for Covid-19. Using rental vehicles increases the reintegration cost of child and family visits exponentially, but it is the right thing to do. Doctors in Kenya are expecting a spike in Covid cases due to Christmas travel, so we will need to continue to use rental vehicles for staff to visit our children and families. We will also be increasing the number of reintegration visits in the first six months of 2021 to provide the care and counseling that was missed while our campuses were closed. Please pray for God's provision for this added expense in 2021.

Our added family strengthening ministry is operational. We have added three field pastors and three field counselors

trained in our field counseling program to better care for families of reintegrated children. We believe this is an important work to increase the successful results of children staying with their families, to prevent more from running away, and to better share the life-changing gospel of Jesus within these children's communities. Please pray for these ministers of the gospel, that they will be well received by the chiefs, families, and communities.

In 2021 we are also finally beginning to open family counseling offices in Lodwar and Nakuru. We have the funding for these offices and are continuing to seek the financial provision for a full Agape Model (Rescue, Rehab, Redemption, Reintegration) campus in Nakuru where 900 children are currently living on the streets. There is still a need for monthly operational funding. We currently have approximately \$6,800 in monthly commitments, praise the Lord, and will need an additional \$18,000 to cover all the costs of an Agape campus in Nakuru.



There are two churches willing to help and moving forward to raise support for the new center in Nakuru. We will need more support, and I believe the Lord is already lining it up for this additional campus. Please pray for the needed funding.

A final word of praise! God richly supplied all the funding Agape needed to meet the challenges of 2020. Against all odds, 2020 was our best year in terms of financial support. Is our God not great? Has He not provided "pressed down, shaken together and running over" even in a Covid year? He can do this because He is the mighty God! And, "He will supply all your needs according to his riches in Christ Jesus." Give thanks and please pray that we at Agape will serve well. Sharing the gospel, discipling, loving our children and their families, doing what is best for each individual child, and doing all things for the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Never stop praying for Agape and each other, for prayer is our source of the power found only in Jesus. ■

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