

## An Important Word

October 2020

I'm excited to share with you in this letter about our plans for this Christmas, but let me backup a minute first. This morning I was reading in Mark chapter 16 about the women going to the tomb to anoint the body of Jesus on the third day after His brutal death. They were still reeling from the horror of what they had witnessed. Undoubtedly their world was dark, empty and confusing. At the moment, their main concern was who could help them roll the large stone away from the entrance to the tomb so they could apply the spices to Jesus' corpse. Then in verse 4 we read a small, very meaningful word. It's the word, "but". "But when they looked up, they saw that the stone, which was very large, had been rolled away." This changed everything! They would go on to enter the tomb and discover Jesus had indeed risen and their lives would never be the same again!



Our goal is to find quality toys so that each child walks away with a gift that makes them feel special!

We see this transformative word in the original Christmas story in Luke 2 as well. When the angels appeared to the shepherds in the field, verse 9 tells us they were "terrified". Rightly so! Then verse 10 states, "But the angel said to them, 'Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; He is Christ the Lord.'"

The word "*but*" designates a change in what we perceive to ordinarily be true. In the face of fear, the word "*but*" can proceed good news. When things seem dark and confusing, the word "*but*" can usher in hope!

Now please don't get me wrong. I'm not attempting to equate the best news in human history from the above passages, with a Christmas toy for a child. *But...* It has been an *extremely* long eight months for the kids in our neighborhoods. School is still not in session for Mexican children. Many families have been hit hard

by the economic results of the lockdown and will make purchasing any Christmas presents difficult for parents. It's dark and confusing times for our kids and because we have been unable to host a regular Spectrum outreach, many are asking if we will be giving Christmas toys this year at all.

The answer to them is yes! Planning for Christmas will present some unique challenges in 2020, *but* we hope to have a toy for every kid we encounter in our six



Tea time! The smiles from the kids when they find the right toy are such a blessing!



Santa and his helper checking kids in to go on the bus to pick out a gift.

neighborhoods. We will still have the "Cool Bus", decorated and loaded with toys for them to choose from. We'll make it as safe as possible by dousing their little hands with hand sanitizer and only allowing one on the bus at a time. The lines will be long with social distancing, but our Spectrum staff will set up small stations to provide hot cocoa, candy canes and donuts along the way. We even plan to have Christmas music performed by local church groups to make the scene festive!

With no school and travel being limited, we expect to see more kids this year. Our goal then is to purchase 1,800 toys to make sure there are enough for everyone. Because we have connected with a toy warehouse, we can buy good quality toys for 5 dollars each. That means we need \$9,000 to reach our mark. With the help of you, our faithful Spectrum partners I know we can do it!

We're so excited to bring Christmas gifts to the children of our neighborhoods this year! A toy can bring joy to kids, communicate love and inspire hope when things are so bleak. It gives them the idea that there are people out there that care for them and want good for them. It opens the door in their minds to a God who loves them and gave them the best gift of all, His Son. 2020 has been hard and the world so uncertain, but... God is on the throne and nothing can stop Him from showing these kids how much He loves them!

From all of us at Spectrum,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Matt Kooi".

Matt Kooi  
Director of Spectrum Ministries



For some of our kids, the toy they choose on the bus is the one toy they will receive at Christmas.



Scouring the shelves to buy the right toys begins now in order to be ready by December!

*"But God demonstrates His own love for us in this: while we were still sinners, Christ died for us." - Romans 5:8*