



Lori Hatcher

My daughter's freshman year of college was especially memorable. As part of her major, she took a women's studies class. She learned that in many impoverished countries, women don't name their babies until the child reaches her first birthday. Because of the high infant mortality rate, over 50 percent of children die before they are one year old. Tragically, the women think not naming their babies will make their deaths less painful. Local cemeteries are full of tiny graves that simply say *Baby*.

My daughter's eyes shone with tears as she related the heartbreaking tale. "The babies die of malnourishment. Their mothers have to work so hard to provide for their families that they can only nurse them a few times a day."

That year, I discovered the Samaritan's Purse Gift Catalog. The catalog lists gifts you can buy to help someone in a war-torn or impoverished nation. One of the pages featured a beautiful brown-skinned, almond-eyed mother with a tiny baby strapped to her back. The accompanying paragraph read, "Mothers in southeastern Ethiopia carry their hungry babies for miles across dry, dusty plains to reach the Samaritan's Purse feeding center. Though many of the children arrive near death, most are healthy enough to return home after a few weeks of nourishing food. Around the globe, malnutrition claims millions of young lives each year and leaves many others with physical and mental disabilities. In regions ravaged by hunger, a \$9 gift can help us feed a baby or nursing mother for a week, presenting a powerful witness for our compassionate Savior." As I looked into the baby's eyes, I knew I had found something special to give in my daughter's name.

As I continued to leaf through the catalog, another gift caught my eye. Gift 24 enables boys and girls to learn God's Word. "Children are the most receptive audience for the Word of God," the catalog stated, "yet many churches in developing countries cannot afford child-friendly evangelistic materials and activities. Working with local ministry partners, we help provide Gospel literature, Christian camps,

and other creative resources that are especially designed to reach and teach young people. A \$30 gift can send a child to a life-changing camp or supply materials for an entire Bible class.

My husband is a youth minister who came to Christ at age 17. Since his salvation, he's had a passion to reach young people with the gospel of Jesus Christ. He often laments the fact that Americans have so much Bible study material at our fingertips, yet we take it for granted. I knew the opportunity to provide discipleship materials specifically designed for children would make him very happy. Gift 24 was something special I could give in his name.

Perhaps you missed the Operation Christmas Child shoebox collection that Dawn Gonzalez writes about in our cover story. Maybe you're looking for a "Jesus gift"—something special you can give with eternal value. It's not too late to view the Samaritan's Purse gift catalog online (www.samaritanaspurse.org) and choose a gift. And if you donate in honor of someone you love, three people will be blessed—yourself, your loved one, and someone who needs to experience the love of Jesus through a life-changing gift.

I pray God's richest blessings on you and yours this Christmas season,

Lori

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what we're all about

Reach Out Columbia is committed to presenting the heart and works of Jesus Christ in clarity and purity. We strive to encourage a deeper, more steadfast love toward others as well as provide a vehicle for the body of Christ to come together as one voice in corporate agreement and expression of faith.