



December 2008

Dear Friends and Family,

When we come to the month of December each year, we again turn to the **birth of Jesus**. It is that special moment in history when **God sent His unique Son into the world** to proclaim His plan **for our salvation**. For me, it is frequently difficult to separate the infant from the grown man for He set so much into motion during His brief sojourn with us. When I look at the baby in the manger, I think also about the countless lives which He touched over centuries and the worldwide impact of His ministry. In His life we see the beginnings of a movement that started in a remote Roman province and over time expanded into the far reaches of the global human community. In **His accomplishment** we recognize **the difference that one person can make in a brief lifetime**.



This realization is one of the fundamental convictions that inform the ministry of Leadership Vistas in Africa. **We are in the business of equipping men and women** to be leaders in the organization established by Jesus Christ so long ago. **We train** people to step out---often courageously---and under His guidance and supervision to transform lives through preaching and teaching His Word. **We educate** people in the basic truths of Scripture so that they in turn can change lives in their service to our Lord. **LVIM**, then, is one missionary effort in a long chain of ministries across many generations that **is committed to making a difference for Christ**.

In this Christmas season **my mind remains fixed upon several groups of men** who attended our conferences in the past several years. They are largely **pastors who labor for Christ in the Goma region of the Congo**, where a horrific war has gone on for over a decade. *These men take up their cross daily in the midst of multiple armies that loot, rape, torture, and kill civilians without provocation. Some have endured attacks on their families and lives. Hunger, disease, homelessness and terror are the basic conditions in which they live and minister to others in such dire circumstances.* Faithful and obedient, they stand steadfast and bear witness to Christ's glory in this vale of suffering. **They exemplify the model of Christ and they are making a difference.**



It has been a *great privilege and an inspiration to serve the Lord* in this teaching ministry. When I reflect on *the conduct of His workers in the Congo, I feel greatly honored to know and to have worked with such dedicated followers of Christ.* **We at Leadership Vistas---and you, our prayer partners and financial supporters** in this ministry adventure---**are a part of this great work of the Lord** that has lasted for two millennia and needs to continue. With this long-term view in mind, *please prayerfully consider making an end-of-year donation to our ministry or a pledge to regularly support us during 2009.* As we celebrate the birth of Christ in the next few weeks, I make this request of you *in the name of our Precious Savior so that we too can make a difference.*

*Have a Merry Christmas, and may the Lord bless you abundantly in the coming year.*

In Him,

Jerry (for the Browns, Stouts, and Bamulekes)

