

How a single gift launched a global ministry

From the time Alice Teisan was a child, she had a passion for biking, and at the age of 15 she biked from Portland, Maine to Portland, Oregon. The trip lasted 42 days and covered 3,600 miles.

“Whenever I faced hard times I always told myself, ‘If I could bike cross-country I could get through any challenge life presented.’” Alice says. “That line has stayed with me ever since.”

At age 16, Alice biked from San Diego to Virginia Beach, and the following year she took her first international biking trip in England and Scotland.

In 1988, while on a biking trip in Israel, she rededicated her life to the Lord in the Jordan River. Her dream was to bike on all seven continents and in all 50 states.

The following year she went on another adventure by completing Crown’s *Small Group Study*. But shortly thereafter, just four days before going on a 1,000-mile trip, she began suffering from Chronic Fatigue Immune Dysfunction

Syndrome (CFIDS). “Since my illness began, it’s been difficult to ride even a mile without trouble, but I’ve learned to be thankful for those miles, too,” she says. “I never knew that the lesson I learned on my first cross-country ride would help me through such a difficult challenge.”

In the midst of this hardship, Alice handled her money according to God’s financial principles, and He blessed her to tithe and live debt free. He also had other blessings in store for her involving her health and opportunities for ministry.

A big step of faith

In 2003, while entertaining Rev. John and Carolyn Lutembeka from Tanzania, Alice asked, “What could the church do to help your ministry of working with pastors and lay evangelists?”

Unaware of Alice’s love for biking, the couple gave the following answer: “If every church family donated \$100, each \$100 gift

would buy a bike, allowing a pastor or evangelist to evangelize five villages and reach many throughout Tanzania.”

Bicycles are an extremely valuable tool in Africa, where pastors traveling on foot are subject to inclement weather and sometimes spend five or six hours en route from one village to another.

Since 1997, Alice had been praying, “Lord, combine all of who I am in a God-sized way, utilizing my talents, education, interests, and love for You.” That prayer was about to be answered in a big way as God challenged Alice to give \$1,200, the price of her custom-built road bike, to purchase bicycles in Africa.

Alice says the Lutembekas were shocked the following day when she handed them a \$1,200 check. “Do you know how many people will be reached for Christ because you gave?” they asked. Afterward, they prayed for her, believing God would restore her health within that year. Because she had seen more than 40 specialists in 11 years, her faith to believe those words was weak.

Another challenge facing Alice was finances. “At the time, I was only making \$450 a month,” she says, noting that the \$1,200 check she gave was almost three times her monthly salary. “Within one week, the Lord anonymously returned that money through three givers. I’d given out \$1,200, and I got back \$1,500 to cover the amount I had given plus my car insurance.”

During the next five months, the Lord worked through four new medical providers to uncover treatable parts of Alice’s illness. The restoration of her health has baffled her physician and many others.

Reaching around the globe

In the year following Alice’s \$1,200 gift for bicycles in



Because of Alice’s obedience, God has allowed her to help people like this pastor, who previously walked using wooden blocks.

Tanzania, she met a missionary from Nigeria. “The Lord again challenged me to give the price of my bike, so I gave it,” she says. “The money went to buy bikes for seminary students and people with polio.”

Since those days, God has done even more amazing things in Alice’s life. In May 2005 she helped to launch a nonprofit organization in Wheaton, Illinois called His Wheels International, which mobilizes God’s work through the use of bicycles. So far, the organization has given away more than 300 bicycles, some of which are serving educators in Angola, seminary students in Nigeria, and pastors and evangelists in Kenya and Tanzania.

In the United States, His Wheels has partnered with World Relief to provide bicycles to immigrants and refugees from places like Sudan, Ethiopia, Cuba, Burma, Eritrea, and Iran.

A new design for mobility

Today, Alice serves as a Money Map Coach for Crown, a role in which she provides guidance to individuals seeking to become financially free. “I enjoy challeng-



Alice Teisan on a hand-pedaled trike with a missionary from Ethiopia serving in the United States.

ing others to commit their lives to walking in financial freedom," she says.

She also enjoys seeing the miracles God is using to make bicycles available to people who desperately need an easier means of transportation.

One of these miracles involves the development of a three-wheeled, hand-pedaled tricycle, which Alice first discussed with an African government official in August 2005. The trike can mobilize people who have been disabled by illness, war, and land mines and give them an opportunity to earn a living.

Developing the trikes would have been a challenge without the volunteer help of Kevin Nikolich, with Fox River Design in Winfield, Illinois, just a short drive from His Wheels. Nikolich designed, built, and covered the cost of four prototypes. The project was valued at more than \$115,000, but the only cost incurred by His Wheels was \$170 to have one trike painted.

"In November 2006 our first prototype flew to Africa with a family as excess luggage," Alice says. "The two 50-pound bags should have cost us between \$250 to \$375. However, they were sent free of charge.

"In addition to sending the trike, we sent two welding helmets and extra parts so they can have the basic, hard-to-get parts for three trikes. The welding helmets are sent to replace a sunglass lens that the people are now using to protect their eyes while welding."

From this small beginning, Alice hopes to see African people launch small businesses in order to build these trikes. She's asking everyone to pray with her regarding this effort, which could prove to be a tremendous blessing to the disabled people of Africa.

Editor's note: To learn more about His Wheels International and see additional photos, visit www.hiswheelsintl.org.



Jill Hart is the founder of Christian Work at Home Moms (CWAHM.com). She is also coauthor of the upcoming book, *Home Based Blessings*, due in early 2007 for Christian moms who want to work at home. Jill and her husband, Allen, of Christian Work at Home Dads (CWAHD.com), reside in Nebraska with their two children.

Around the Home

By Jill Hart

Five ways to teach kids about giving

Teaching children to have a heart for giving is a year-round endeavor. Christmas, however, provides an opportunity for showing kids not only what the act of giving looks like but the reasons behind giving as well. Below are five ways to teach your children about giving this Christmas season.

Read the Christmas story

Take time to sit down and read the biblical Christmas story with your kids. Use this opportunity to share with them how our Lord gave of Himself to come to earth as a lowly babe in a manger. The wise men's gifts to Jesus in this story are another picture of giving at Christmas.

In our family, we've often used this as a way to explain to our children why we give gifts to one another at Christmastime. We explain that just as the wise men gave precious gifts to Jesus to celebrate His birth, we give gifts to one another to remember His birthday. In all the excitement about presents and Santa, kids sometimes need a reminder of what Christmas is really about.

Let your children pick out gifts for each family member

Allowing children to pick out the gifts they will give is a good way to get them excited about giving. It helps them experience the joy of giving when their loved ones are opening gifts they picked out.

If your child is old enough to receive an allowance or hold a job, you can deepen the experience for them by encouraging them to spend their own money.

Even very young children can begin to understand the meaning behind Christmas presents. The year our daughter was 2, I took her to one of the dollar stores in town and allowed her to pick out items to give her father and grandparents. Christmas morning she was almost more excited about

handing out the presents she was giving than she was about the gifts she was receiving.

Volunteer

Giving is something that children can learn not only at home but out in the community as well. Christmas is a good time to volunteer at a local homeless shelter, soup kitchen, or church. Seeing others who are less fortunate and being able to reach out and help is a good lesson for kids to learn at any age.

Provide Christmas for a needy family

Another way to show your children the joy of giving is to allow them to help you gather gifts, food, and other necessities for a family in need. There are many ministries like Angel Tree and Operation Christmas child that connect you with others who may not be able to afford Christmas presents. You can also check with your church to see if there are any local families that may have suffered a job loss or tragedy and need help this Christmas.

Collect non-perishables for local charities

Some local charities rely on donations at Christmastime to get them through the year. This is a great way to get your kids involved and show them what giving is really all about. It's important for kids to understand that sometimes giving isn't about expensive gifts; it's about giving time and going out of their way for others.

The lesson of giving, when consistently taught to your child, will last throughout his or her lifetime. It's a lesson that compounds annually as it touches countless lives. And, it is a beautiful reflection of what God gave each of us so many years ago: the gift of His only Son.