



*An Advent
wrapped in Love.*

Shared Joy

By Pastor Tamara Walker

Christmas 1972 found my family in the Kingdom of Swaziland. We had arrived in August. My parents were brand new missionaries with two small children, my brother Brian was 3 years old and I was 4.

I woke up hearing little scurrying sounds and footsteps outside my door and further, into the Living Room. It took me a few moments to remember that it was Christmas morning because in my first moment of wakefulness I felt grumpy. The sounds in the next room were of quiet delight and laughter- happy sounds.

I walked out of my quiet bedroom, into the living room, rubbing my eyes. My Mom and Dad were already seated, smiling and drinking from their mugs. Brian was standing over an unwrapped present - a little doll crib. Not only was it not wrapped but my dolls and stuffed animals filled it up. Brian's face was alight with joy. He was beaming with pride and excitement for me. He had been sneaking into my room since he found the prize, carrying all my babies quietly from room to room-wanting to surprise me!

I'd like to say that my response was gracious.



I do know that my confused disappointment was quickly resolved. We gathered together as a family and shared our gifts and smiles. All was well and right with the world in that candle lit living room.

What I remember best from Christmas 1972 is the smile of joy on Brian's face. He was so excited for me. He loved me so much and wanted to share and participate in what he knew would be my joy. There is a saying, "Trouble shared is trouble divided. Joy shared is joy doubled." Joy was tripled or even quadrupled on that sweet face. I will never forget it.

An Advent wrapped in hope, joy, peace and love is what we all long for. Each is found in unexpected places, like a doll bed in the Kingdom of Swaziland or in a manger on the outskirts of Bethlehem.

*Prayer: Loving God, you have already wrapped us in your love and your promise to be with us always. Open our eyes to see your hope, joy, peace and love wherever it may be found. May we be channels of these gifts for others too.
Amen*