

For Immediate Release

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For more information, please call David Joseph, 1-877-571-5673

The Last Harvest to distribute 20,000 Christmas gift packages in Egypt

El Cajon, Calif. – Christians in Egypt celebrate the birth of Christ by giving toys, clothing, and a special meal with meat – a rare treat for poor Christian families.

However, for years, the situation facing Egyptian Christians has been grim, and Christians are increasingly unable to celebrate these simple Christmas customs, said David Joseph, founder of The Last Harvest, Inc., in El Cajon, Calif.

The Last Harvest is a Christian nonprofit organization that equips indigenous churches, and supports church planting efforts in the Middle East. The Last Harvest invites North American Christians to bring a little Christmas encouragement to 20,000 Christian families in Egypt this Christmas season.

By working within Egypt, for a cost of \$20, The Last Harvest provides a package containing a T-shirt, toothbrush and paste, a pencil, pens, crayons, a notebook, a hairbrush, a toy, candy, a picture Bible, a chicken for the family Christmas meal, and a teaching audiotape, said Joseph.

Due to long-standing discrimination, and overt persecution of Christians in a country where adherents to Islam are the majority, Egyptian Christians live within an environment of persecution where they cannot get fair access to jobs. As a result, they struggle with crippling poverty, he said.

If the situation facing Egyptian Christians is grim, the difficulties facing displaced Sudanese, who have fled sectarian-inspired violence in Sudan and now live in the slums of Cairo, borders on despair. “The Egyptian government refuses to classify them as refugees, and they have no aid, no work, no medical care, and no access to education. In many ways, they are in even more dire straits than when they lived in Sudan,” said Joseph.

Christians have been massacred in Islamic-inspired rioting in different Egyptian cities in the past six years. Others have seen their businesses destroyed, their daughters kidnapped and forcibly compelled to convert to Islam, and their husbands and sons killed or injured, said Joseph. According to reports from advocates for Christians who are victims of persecution in Egypt, an Egyptian soldier, *Hani Sarofim Nasralla Issak*, was allegedly tortured and killed in early August after refusing to convert to Islam.

Christmas packages will be given to Christian Sudanese refugees in Cairo, poverty-stricken Christians living south of Cairo, and families of victims of violence in El-Kosheh, Alexandria, and Girza, said Joseph.

For information about providing a Christmas gift package for an Egyptian or Sudanese family, call The Last Harvest at 1-877-571-5673; email: thelastharvest@aol.com; or, visit the web site at <http://www.thelastharvest.com>.

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