

Hotel Harvest

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A young girl yells back to her friends; she has found a gift from foreigners that was tossed from a passing truck!

People are traveling more now than any time in history. Almost every hotel provides travelers with complementary travel sized shampoos and soaps. Some even provide a toothbrush, combs and razors. If you're like me, you know you paid for those products and you don't want them to go to waste, so you pack them in your suitcase and carry them home, just to throw them away a year later because you never followed through with your plan to use them.

Although, to most people, these items don't hold much value, for someone living in a developing country they can mean the difference between life and death. Having the ability to thoroughly clean their body with soap, or to brush their teeth is a luxury. The poor would not consider buying soap instead of food, or toothpaste instead of saving for a dowry. Disease from dirt-borne pathogens or sepsis from tooth decay diminishes the quality and length of their lives.

In many countries where we serve, the indigenous population is told to fear Christians. There are few opportunities for us to connect with strangers in a friendly way, without first giving a caring gift. By distributing small hygiene care kits, we offer an essential element for prolonged life and therefore receive acceptance in the community. This offer of friendship opens the door to communication and becomes the currency of love.



If you think about it, the cross (in its time) was a symbol of death, much like the electric chair or a hangman's noose. Because of Christ's loving sacrifice, the cross became a symbol of hope and love through the rest of time. In the same way, the small gift of these seemingly trivial items from your hotel become a symbol of compassion and love. A person living in poverty would treasure a comb or toothbrush, and would make a tiny bottle of shampoo last for a month.

Symbolically, this is representative of the scripture where Jesus washes his disciple's feet and reminds them to serve others in this same way:

John 13:12-17 (NIV)

When he had finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes and returned to his place. "Do you understand what I have done for you?" he asked them. "You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and rightly so, for that is what I am. Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. Very truly I tell you, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them.

Please consider washing the feet of the lost with us by participating in the Hotel Harvest. For information about where to send the items you have collected, please contact us through our website.

www.partnershipforsustainableaid.org

