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**WHERE
I BELONG!**

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Bend in the road

Top to bottom: Saskia (of Dawei) with daughter Troye, Taiwan; Ivan (of Karri) doing a CTP in India; Celeste, EURCRO; Kevin and Jemina's Home, South Africa; Theophany, Middle East

Who wants an Oscar, anyway?

By Saskia (23, of Dawei, Taiwan)

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ver done something that went completely against your grain and loved it? That's me ... in the Family!

I can't count the times I nearly left the Family. The reason I say that is because I don't deserve any of the credit for still being here today, and definitely not for anything sacrificial or unselfish that I might do in my service for the Lord. I was practically born in the Family (joined at the tender age of three), but like a lot of second-generation kids have found out that that alone doesn't make you the real deal. Sure, I've always believed in the Family's doctrines, but I wasn't a *disciple*. At some point I had to ask myself, "What am I doing here, anyway?" and I didn't really like my answer, as it usually was, "Not much."

I had big plans for my life, and through my teen years those erratic ambitions changed just about every other week. In the early years it seemed "God" (probably just my dad) kept me out of trouble by making sure I always lived in places that were, like, five miles from the nearest convenience store, and where we were short on fellowship, Family or no. I had a wild streak, but that was pretty well tamed by a busy schedule.

Most of my life I can remember being described by my teachers—both in and out of the Family—as talented, whether it was in art, writing, singing,

dancing, acting, or learning a new language. If I put my mind to it, I could do it, and for a while even tooling became my own little career. I was like a princess, my life before me like an elaborate feast, the dishes of my potential waiting to be snapped up by whatever indulgent whim I fancied at the moment. I knew one thing for sure: I wasn't going to be just like everybody else.

The problem was, I was. Sometimes I wanted to be a humanitarian aid worker and go on peace missions to dangerous war zones, and sometimes I wanted to be totally unoriginal and go with the backup plan of moving to Tinsel Town, becoming "somebody famous," and spending my free time shopping for shoes in Paris with my celebrity friends. Of course, I never actually *told* anyone this, but I had this idea that I could do whatever I wanted, and when I decided I



Dawei, Saskia, and Troye

wanted to, I just would. I'd just sit it out in the Family for a little longer, and while I was here I would even put my all into it, but as soon as a better offer came along ... that's about all it would take for me.

When people ask me if I had to give up anything to be in the Family, my answer is an emphatic yes. You can never make a sacrifice for God, true, but that doesn't mean you don't have any forsaking to do. For me, it wasn't just turning down a millionaire who wanted to take me around the world on his yacht (oh, and he promised I could still "preach to the natives" as we went island-hopping!) or ditching my long-awaited big break in modeling to move to a strange land with US\$10 in my pocket, get pregnant, and marry my boyfriend. More than that, it was forsaking my own ideas about my life and what I wanted out of it. It was finally getting to the point where I could say, "Yeah, these are the best years of my life, but I want

to give them to the Lord, and that's whether or not I'll ever see another shopping mall or designer label. I'm going to make this decision, and not look back."

I think to truly determine your resolve about staying in the Family, you've got to think of your biggest weakness for the world—sports, money, fame, your own house, early retirement in Aruba, or whatever—and multiply that a few times over. Then imagine yourself in Jesus' shoes when He was standing up there on the temple roof and the Devil offered Him the world. What would he be offering *you*? And if you knew you could have it, today, right now, would you still turn it down to do what you're doing?

What's your price?

Not having a "price" is one of the goals that Dawei and I have set for ourselves. There'll always be something you think you need or want, but if

- **"There is no 'perfect place' where you aren't going to have any personality conflicts or financial trouble. But you *can* find fulfillment in the Family, in the only job that'll ever truly be worth your time investment-wise, and have fun doing it!"**

you really believe that the end of the world is coming, just how much do you *really* need that stuff, anyway?

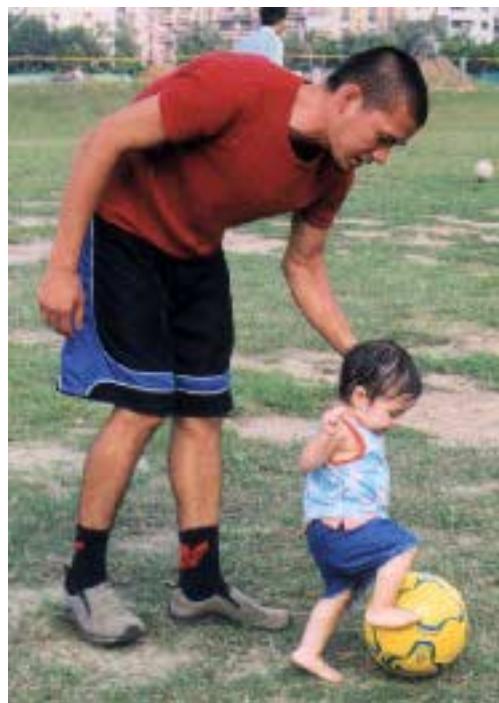
Dawei and I both are idealists. We used to be looking for that “perfect place” we could serve the Lord in, and when we weren’t finding it and when the money for all the worthy projects we wanted to do didn’t just drop in our laps, we would wonder why we were even bothering. But the truth is, there is no “perfect place” where you aren’t going to have any personality conflicts or financial trouble. But you *can* find fulfillment in the Family, in the only job that’ll ever truly be worth your time investment-wise, and have fun doing it!

Dawei is the kind of person who really *could* do just about anything he put his mind to (except for the small exception of singing, ahem!). He’s a natural innovator and inventor, and would be valuable to any company. He’s always finding better and faster ways to do everything, and his ideas and energy seem limitless. When he first joined my Home in South Africa, he’d only ever played basketball and other more American sports, but he showed up with a pair of soccer togs, and the same afternoon after getting off the plane, he went out to play with the neighborhood soccer fanatics, and despite making a fool of himself initially, he is now so good at the game that he’s a coach.

Three years later, Dawei, of his own initiative and with the help of some great people here in Taipei that we have the privilege of working alongside, has started a soccer club for JETTs and teens in the Family as part of a JT board project (we’re both members of the board, and I think our year-old daughter is too, ‘cause she’s always at the meetings and seems to have the most to say!). Dawei designed the outfits for the soccer team, e-mailing the design of the team badge to the company who embroidered them for the uniforms.

On our W&R Dawei drags me off to some new place to get stuff for the team. At the International Sports Expo

we made contacts who have since stocked us with more than fifty quality soccer balls and all kinds of other stuff, like shin-pads and socks and stuff. We’ve got all the coaching and training equipment—planners, tactic boards, cones, whistles—you name it. He even got five silver medallions to give out to the team’s most valuable and improved players as motivational incentives. All of this without a whole lot of money.—Dawei just took the ball and ran with it, so to speak, and it’s been his perseverance and in-



credible stamina, phoning around, calling places to get sponsorship and needed supplies that has played a big part. The Lord's blessed his faith, and I'm sure he'd tell you himself that it hasn't been all that hard, because where God guides, He always provides.

The kids practice twice a week and play with other children from clubs and schools around Taiwan, and they love it. The Chinese children are fascinated by all the foreigners and want to make friends with them, so that opens the door for witnessing, too.

Sports aside, our board is also holding a weekly activity night, which starts with a Bible and current events class and is followed by games. We've had kick-ball, traditional party games, charades, talent night, hat and mask competitions and a dessert potluck. We hold regular parent-support meetings for parents of JETTs and teens and we're planning two separate camps for 12- to 14- and 15- to 17-year-olds in the next few months.

Besides taking care of our extremely active and far-too-smart-for-her-own-good, adorable baby girl, Troye Ashley, I'm also secretary for our national JT board, help out at the city youth club with music, engage in various methods of fundraising, witnessing, and

learning Chinese. As for Dawei, besides being a fantastic dad, he's an all-rounder, excellent outreach, driver, and cook, too. Our Home also supports a VS ministry and a radical Web site creator!

All of this wouldn't be possible if it weren't for the Family and for the sacrificial lifestyle of people who are willing to dedicate their time, talents, and resources to the Lord day in and day out. Isn't it amazing how we do all of this without a visible means of support, without being in debt or tied to a mortgage, without years of university and doctorates in our various fields of expertise?

I have so many friends outside of the Family who think they have their lives "made," but they all owe somebody something for being there, and their riches and pleasures are fleeting. When we get up there we're going to be the stars! Get it? We're going to be the celebrities in the Kingdom of God. And as for me and my house, we'd rather go for that than a temporal existence of feigned happiness in the System's matrix!



The puzzle pieces in place

By Ivan (22, of Karri), Japan



t's difficult to describe exactly what I do. I guess like many of us in the Family, I'm a jack-of-all-trades, master of none. I don't have a specific ministry like studio musician, Web designer, artist, or provisioner, but I do a little of everything, from singing for sheep and visitors to designing newsletters and flyers. I'm on the Home teamwork as the childcare teamworker, but since the only "children" in our Home are a JETT and two junior teens, I'm more like the JETT/teen shepherd. When I read the message asking me to write a bit about myself and what specific experiences I went through to find my calling, I didn't know what to write because, like everyone else, there were so many different trials, battles, and little decisions that brought me to where I am now.

One of the most life-changing experiences for me was getting married and the events that led to it. Here's the story:

I was 19, and the Home where I had lived (in Japan) for over four years was closing. I had wanted to go to a different field for quite some time, but it seemed the Lord wanted me to stay put. The Lord told me to just hold on and that He would reward me with more than I could ever dream of. However, with the Home closing I thought that I'd find another Home



where I could raise funds and then head off to another mission field.

At that time I got a request from another Home asking if I could go there to shepherd their JETTs and teens. It was a big Home with 30-plus members in a city with no other Homes and no CM girls my age. That was not what I had in mind, seeing as I was hoping to leave Japan.

After thinking, praying, and hearing from the Lord about what I should do, He told me that it was His will for me to help that Home. So I helped close the Home I was in, and then made my way to the next Home. The whole time I was thinking, *What am I doing?* I just couldn't see anything good coming from the situation and I was having serious doubts about it all. When I arrived at the new Home I was even more certain that I'd made a mistake. I hadn't been in a big Home like that since the Combo days. It was not what I wanted!



Singing for Gujarat earthquake victims

For the first few days to a week I was so discouraged and depressed I thought that the Lord was punishing me, but instead the Lord reassured me that this was all a part of His plan and that it would work together for good. He told me that He had amazing things in store for me if I would just hold on and learn the most that I could from the situation I was now in.

Once I started getting busy with my ministry and began shepherding the JETTs and teens, my discouragement and depression slowly disappeared. I found that I was actually enjoying myself.—I was happy and fulfilled. I still went through quite a few trials wishing that I could be doing something more glamorous, like doing CTPs in the jungles of some remote Third World country, ministering to the needy and seeing immediate results of my labors by finding people who are actually desperate for salvation and the Gospel. But instead, here I was, just teaching and shepherding a group of rowdy JETTs and teens, and the Lord continued to remind me that this was what He wanted me

to do, that these young people were my mission field, and that through these JETTs and teens I would reach hundreds of thousands more than I could ever reach on my own.

Quite often I went through trials about not having a girlfriend or even a girl my age in the area. The Lord told me that it was not the right time, and that having a girl around would be somewhat of a distraction, because I needed to invest all my energy in the JETTs and teens. He also told me that there was someone very special just for me and that I would meet her soon, so I just had to hold on. All of that took quite some faith to believe, that it wasn't something I was making up in my head, which could have been very possible due to the fact that I was getting pretty desperate for female company.

During that time the S2K Letters came out, and they helped me to have more conviction and faith in prophecy. The GN "The Blessings of Loneliness" (ML #3216, GN 818) was a big blessing as well. During that time my connection with the Lord was greatly strengthened since He was the only One I could turn to and depend on to always be there for me.

I had been in the Home for about six months and I was enjoying myself and fulfilled in my ministry. I still wanted to go to the field, but I had decided to trust the Lord to work it out in His good time. Then the Lord showed our Home that it was His will for us to go to India. Some of us weren't sure if this was such a great idea, but after hearing from the Lord and confirming that it was indeed His will, we started working towards that goal.

The Lord did many amazing miracles and soon we had all the funds needed and a container full of clothes, stationery supplies, shoes, etc. It was all so amazing for me because I had pretty much told myself that I wouldn't be going to India for another couple of years, so this change was totally unexpected. The Lord had promised that if I would do His will then He would give me the very best, and He kept His word.

Everything was ready and we had a month before our departure. My younger brother, who was in India but had returned three months earlier, my

younger sister (who was living in another city) and I decided to meet up and go visit our grandparents. The Home lent me one of our vans to use for the trip, so I contacted my grandparents. Everything was worked out.

Then I got an unexpected e-mail from my older sister who was in Taiwan, saying that she was returning to Japan in a month and an e-mail from my parents stating that they would be returning from China a week before my older sister. We had all been apart for a while, so we tried to organize a family reunion at our grandparents. All of this would take place during the time I was supposed to be going to India, which meant that I would be delayed a month. I was torn between going to India and spending some time with my family. When hearing from the Lord about it, He said that this had all been orchestrated by Him and that it was His timing, so I just had to trust that He knew what was best for me.

So finally, after a month of visiting relatives and spending time with

my family, I made it to India! I had a great time going to villages, schools, and orphanages distributing the aid we'd brought from Japan. I also helped at with a polio camp where we were able to help cheer up poor children with polio who had just been operated on. I was also in India during the Gujarat earthquake and I was able to help with the disaster relief—building tents and helping to bring the people hope.

After six months my Home had to return to Japan, but since I had come to India a month later than they did, I still had a month left on my visa. At the beginning of that last month in India I heard of the nationwide Activated meeting. I wasn't sure if I should go, but a few of my friends and I got together and heard from the Lord; He told us to go and that it would be very inspiring for us. So we went.

It was during the Activated meeting that I met Karri, whom I thought was very cute. I was interested in getting to know her better, which I was able to do frequently during the rest of the meeting. I started falling in love with her. We were both definitely interested in each other, so after the meeting we decided to stay in touch. She went back to her Home and I went for a much-needed vacation to Goa. Though I had only known Karri for four days I missed her like crazy. I desperately wanted to meet her again and was considering visiting her Home.

Another Home in Pune, where my Home was, asked if I could help them paint their apartment and do some filming for them. The Lord told me that I should go to the Home in Pune first and that He would work it out for me to visit Karri. After helping with painting and filming, I went up to the Home where I was based temporarily in Mumbai. I still desperately wanted to

visit Karri and the Lord told me that now was the time. I got on a train and traveled for 18 hours to Hyderabad where Karri was. I stayed there for a week and got to know her better. The Lord showed us that we were meant to be together.

I had 10 days left before I had to return to Japan, so Karri and I went back to Mumbai together. I couldn't bear the thought of leaving her again, but I didn't have much of a choice. I told her that when I returned to Japan I would raise funds for her to come to Japan if she liked the idea. This was all so sudden. It hadn't even been a month and we were already so serious about each other. We both needed more time to pray and hear from the Lord about it. She saw me off at the airport, and during the trip back I felt so depressed, wondering if

● “It seems so easy to quit, to say enough is enough. But those times of loneliness, trials, and hard times are for a reason. You will look back one day and see that those trials and tests were what helped to make you into the person the Lord wants you to be.”



English discussion at a university

I'd ever see her again. The Lord reassured me that He would give me what was best for me, and that all I needed to do was trust Him and have faith that He would fulfill His promises to me.

After returning to Japan we wrote each other almost every day. When we heard from the Lord He told us that the time apart would make our love grow stronger, and that He was teaching us to make Him our First Love and put Him first in our relationship, and that when we learned those lessons He would work it out for us to be together again. I went through many different trials being away from her, and I wondered how I would raise the funds for her to come here, or if it was even the Lord's will.

We both took it to the Lord and He confirmed that it was indeed His will that we be together in Japan, so we started to make preparations. Little by little I was able to raise funds for her, and after a little over four months we were together again. Everything the Lord told us had come true, our relationship was stronger from that time spent apart, and we both learned many lessons during that time. A month after her arrival we got married.

After we were married we asked the Lord what He wanted us to do. We wanted to know whether He wanted us to move to another mission field or if He wanted us to stay in Japan. The Lord told us that He wanted us to stay, and that if we had patience and faithfulness, we

would see amazing fruit. So we decided to stay. A month after we were married Karri got pregnant.

We've started getting involved with the youth ministry, called True Colors, started by the Blades Home over four years ago. God bless them, as they have faithfully kept ministering to the young people who attend True Colors. We got involved about eight months ago and have been able to learn from them and start True Colors in our Home as well. Through our working together with this youth ministry, the Lord has been opening doors and we are starting to reach the very elite of Japan's youth. Though at times it can be discouraging because of the slow results compared to other countries, I know that if we are faithful to do what the Lord shows us, we will reap a mighty harvest in Japan.

In this testimony I want to tell how the Lord fulfilled all His promises to me. Looking back now,

I see that those hard times were nothing compared to all the rewards the Lord has given me. He told me that I would find someone and I did. He told me that time spent shepherding JETTs and teens was not wasted and now I'm on the JT board. Of course, no glory to me; it's definitely only Jesus. He told me to stick it out in Japan, and He has begun to fulfill His promises of a fruitful ministry with many new disciples.

All that to say, I know what it's like being lonely and wondering exactly what it is that you're accomplishing. It seems so easy to quit, to say enough is enough. But those times of loneliness, trials, and hard times are for a reason. You will look back one day and see that those trials and tests were what helped to make you into the person the Lord wants you to be.

I think back sometimes. If I had gone to India a month earlier I wouldn't have been able to attend the Activated meeting, which means that I wouldn't have met Karri. So though some things may not make sense to us, we just have to believe that the Lord knows best and that He will give us the desires of our hearts.



Karri and Ivan

On God's itinerary, not my own!

By Celeste (22), EURCRO



would have to backtrack three years to pinpoint that pivotal time in my life when I saw that the Lord was taking me in a certain direction. Time certainly has flown, and I'll have to go back a few more years to relate how it all started, and to give the history.

I'm your average young person—very average! During my JETT and teen years my desire was to be a secretary. (I know, one of the many!) It took years and quite a few obstacles before I managed to get a grip on my "place of service," so to speak. I wanted to prove myself, but I wasn't always given the opportunity to become what I wanted to become. I often found myself thinking, *How will anyone know if I can handle that ministry if you don't let me try? How am I meant to become experienced if you don't even give me a chance?*

Don't get me wrong, I know the FGAs I was around wanted to see me challenged; in fact, I think they just didn't realize how frustrated I was, because I didn't express it. However, I was determined. I wanted to be able to do something that would keep me motivated. And I can be pretty headstrong when I'm determined to do something.

One asset that helped me find a fruitful ministry was my desire to find *something* to do, and then realizing that I had to have the faith and patience to

see it happen without trying to do it all on my own. I have a tendency to feel that if I want something done there's no one that's better qualified to get it done than me. Lord help me. That doesn't work in our Family, though, especially when you realize that even though our parents and the FGAs do want to see us fulfilled, at the same time we can't just expect them to step aside and let us take the reins, leaving them in the dust to feel they've "passed" their prime. Hey, they haven't!

I bounced around from one ministry to another and tried to be a holy hole, as much as I could. During that time I went to great lengths to hone my secretarial skills, only to end up taking on provisioning or other such ministries. However, I didn't look on those times as a failure, either then or now. I was rather frustrated in those situations, but when I look back, I real-

ize that the Lord had to teach me the balance between what I pushed for and what I let the Lord do of His Own accord and without any of my help. (As if I *could* help, ha!)

The surprising part for me was finding that once I gave up trying so hard to get into a certain ministry, then the Lord did it. Actually, when that happened I was a bit perturbed. Picture this: I had finally convinced myself that it was never going to work for me to do secretarial work. I'd found an outreach ministry that was great and that I was good at. So I determined to forget about my secretarial goal, and stick to outreach, provisioning, and follow-up.



At the time we had a young people's Home on the beautiful coast of Dalmatia, Croatia where I was fulfilled and happy ministering to my contacts, sheep, and so on. Then, completely out of the blue, I received a message from the European Media Desk, asking if I'd be interested in joining their team.

I sat down to write. My answer? "No, but thanks for considering me!" But for some weird reason I couldn't type those two simple letters: N-O. I realized I couldn't write off that offer without checking with the Lord. I don't think I've ever put so much trust in prophecy as I did then; well, I should say *until* then, as I've definitely had to make it a practice since.

I wrote about 10 of my friends who were scattered around the globe, asking them to pray for me and get some direction from the Lord without telling them what my actual feelings were on it. From the things that they received for me, it was evident that the Lord was asking me to commit to this ministry and join the European Media Desk.

Ironically, by that time I didn't think I wanted

to do secretarial work anymore. People who knew me weren't sure they could picture an active, loud person like me spending my day behind a desk. It was a true forsake-all for me to leave Croatia, as I'd finally found a field that I loved, a place I wanted to invest my life and time into.

Undeniably, yieldedness is the name of the game. Looking back I can see that there was a plan and pattern to the path the Lord took in my life. Sure, it's been the breaking-to-then-be-molded pattern, but then, I often shudder at the thought of how I might have turned out had I not gone through those breakings. (Trust me, you don't want to know!)

Back to my story: I accepted. I joined the European Media Desk in Christmas of '98 and found that I was in for a freakier roller-coaster ride than I'd thought. Those who I worked with truly gave me ample space and opportunity to branch out and grow in my ministry. When I first joined the Media Desk there were two FGAs and I was replacing an outgoing secretary, so there were two of us second-generation girls—another SGA girl and me. The other SGA girl moved on about a month or two after I joined the team, and shortly thereafter my mom came to replace her. Yup, I was the only SGA on our team, and I was working with my mom.

Contrary to natural expectations (or better put, misconceptions of how bridging the generation gap is almost impossible), I think I was almost at an advantage being the only young person on our team. My teammates didn't look down at me for being younger; if anything, they made me feel like I was a valuable asset to the team. I got to attend conferences, speak up for the Family, etc., and through it all the governing factor of our teamworking was that of finding out what the Lord wanted us to do.

One example I'm reminded of was right after the French court verdict in which the Family's *non-lieu* was upheld and the case was closed once and for all. We



were contacted by some NRMs about going to Paris to speak on behalf of the Family and testify to a religious freedom panel about the atrocities we'd experienced. Up until that time I'd only attended a couple of seminars.

We got together as a team and prayed for guidance on what to say, and if we should accept. The Lord told us to accept, so we then asked Him who should go, already with a certain team in mind. Surprisingly, though, the Lord emphasized that I should be on that team, and even mentioned that my witness and presence would make an important impression. We were going as a team, so the Lord wasn't speaking about me being the center of attention, but somehow the

Lord kept reiterating that I was meant to be there. Well, we followed the Lord's leadings, and sure enough He knew exactly what He had in mind.

We got to the hearing and after we all gave our speeches, everyone was highly impressed with the design and how we each gave our speeches with tact and coordination, and thought we'd planned them this way well in advance. In reality, we'd only had one morning to organize our presentations. We knew it was all due to the Lord's counsel and guidance through prophecy.

Though I'm presently not working at the Media Desk anymore, I know that the time I spent with that team, and the training and experience I gained from various projects I worked on and helped coordinate with them were invaluable in helping me realize how far someone can go when you drop your own itinerary and let the Lord plan things out for you.

Another example I'm reminded of was how for about two years I've wanted to be part of the team that would go provisioning at a computer fair here in Europe. Each time I came very close to being able to go (I think!); however, it never worked out. I finally figured that if it was the Lord's will for me to do so (I actually wanted to do it for the witnessing, which is something I miss a lot sitting behind a desk), then He'd work it out.

Then one day, out of the blue someone suggested that perhaps I could go to a book fair with the Aurora team. That wasn't totally the same, but it was an opportunity for me to witness. Since then it's been working out for me to go to the book fairs here in Europe. So far there hasn't been one fair that I've gone to that doesn't find me bumping in to some sweet sheep that I can witness to. But again, that whole ministry was something that worked out without me trying to coordinate it or plan ahead of time.

The past four years have been very full and exciting for me, and I owe each and every "success" to the Lord's leading and planning. I count myself fortunate to have had so much training invested in me. The lessons learnt weren't always the easiest to accept, but when I look back, I realize that the obstacles I encountered in my life weren't meant to be stones turned into walls preventing me from moving forward, but rather stones I could use as steppingstones to help me climb the mountain of the Lord's will.

I can't say I succeeded in taking each test gracefully, but the fact that I'm still here today is encouragement enough for me to realize that the Lord must have managed to get through to me somewhere along the way, and hopefully I'm more of a moldable vessel now. And if I could make it through all that, I'm sure anyone can.

“I owe each and every ‘success’ to the Lord’s leading and planning. I count myself fortunate to have had so much training invested in me.”

Something out of nothing

By Kevin and Jemina (SGA), South Africa

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ur Home is situated in George, a small coastal town 400 km east of Cape Town. Being a tourist town, George booms in the summer months, but comes to a near standstill the rest of the year. We knew we had to find different means outside of tooling to support ourselves. We needed friends and supporters who would be willing to help support a work in their own city.

Our Home officially opened in November 2001, with the first two people being Jemina (German) and me, Kevin (South African). DJ (SGA who came from China) joined us two weeks later. None of us are the rah-rah, talented, and outgoing type. But the Lord had brought us together as a team, grown us up, and taught us quite a few lessons.

Shortly after DJ joined us we got together, thanking the Lord for bringing us together, and praying for the Lord's anointing as we committed ourselves to Him and each other. We took the time to pray and hear from Him as to where to go next, since the Christmas push was upon us.

Opening a Home was completely new to us and we felt quite incapable. However, we knew that if we put the Lord first and let Him work through us, He would honor our faith and bless our labors. The Lord told us that He wanted us to do CTPs, shows, and witnessing.

None of us are really childcare oriented, and the last time most of us were in any sort of show was when some of us were kids ourselves. Scary! We got together, racked our brains to think of all the songs we used to sing when we were kids, put together a few skits and games, and with desperate prayer managed to get a simple program together.

We wanted to do something special for the kids at the orphanage that we were to do our show at, and a lady that we know gave us a donation. With the money we bought each child a snack pack, and donated 10 *Treasure Attics* to the orphanage.

We also wanted to cook a Christmas meal for the less fortunate. But having just arrived in George we didn't know where to start, seeing as we were still trying to feed ourselves. It was then that the Lord led us



Kevin with children at an orphanage

to a woman who runs a bakery. She explained that she couldn't help with bread for our projects, but would help our Home with bread daily.

She then introduced us to another woman who'd worked for a child welfare agency for 35 years, who had now retired and was feeding the kids at the informal settlement near where she lived. Each day she feeds approximately 150 kids a simple meal. The Lord gave us the vision to offer these kids an unforgettable Christmas lunch. We prayed that the Lord would supply all that we needed, and He told us to go out and get it.

We approached a man who deals in fruit and vegetables and he agreed to help us. He filled our car with potatoes, squash, and onions while commenting that our car was too small for all that he wanted to give. In the space of two weeks the Lord supplied a total of 750 kg of food, which, in a small town like this, was way beyond our wildest imaginations.

On Christmas Day we fed over 600 people and shared the Gospel with them. We also did three shows. We were amazed at what He was able to accomplish through us three nobodies.

When our Christmas push came to a close we still hadn't made much of our budget to carry us through the financially difficult months of January and February.

We were praying about what we were going to do to raise the funds and wondering whether what we had heard from the Lord was right—about putting Him first. Nevertheless, we made that our contract with the Lord. We went to a friend's house for dinner and told him of our contract with God. He told us to wait and came back a few minutes later

with a check for US\$250. That was half of what we needed and an answer to prayer.

Trusting the Lord, we carried on praying and traveled to a neighboring city where I have a sheep that I feed via e-mail. Once a week he calls and I talk about how the work is going, counsel, and pray for him. We went to visit him to find out how things were going. During our conversation he told us that the Lord had told him to give us a donation of US\$250—providing in full the amount we needed to see us through January and February.

In addition, this man recently started helping us with a monthly dona-

tion. We were praying about asking him to help, and were following up on him every week when he phoned and told us that the Lord had spoken to him about supporting us. He then went on to ask how much we would like every month. We told him that we didn't want to put God in a box and so didn't want to name a specific amount. He responded with an amount that the Lord had laid on his heart, which was double what we were going to ask for.

We have countless testimonies of how the Lord has supplied for us. The formula has always been to put Him first in every situation and let Him work through us. The Lord has always supplied for us when we followed that rule, no matter where we are or what we are doing, whether during work or play.

Jemina needed some dental work done, which came to about US\$200. We prayed and committed it to the Lord, and when witnessing to someone while surfing I found out that he was just the person we needed for the job. He offered to do the work for us for free. *Witnessing always pays!*

While witnessing we are always meeting people who help us with our projects, either by donating food or things that we need around the house. What has also paid off is that when we meet people and they help us

once or regularly, we then put them on our weekly e-mail feeding program. The Lord has blessed us with donations right when we needed them through these people we've been feeding via e-mail.

For the first five months we were trying to get things together for our Home—furniture, beds, a washing machine, etc. We didn't have many of the other creature comforts like a TV, VCR, etc., but in some ways I believe that the Lord set it up that way, so that we wouldn't get distracted and could concentrate on spending time with each other. He used this time to knit us together as a team and help us to focus on the job at hand.

We went to a *braai* (barbeque), and met a man who we witnessed to. Right away he told us to not ask him for anything, so we told him a bit more about our work and how we live. He then told us that he would buy us a lounge suite.—Another need taken care of!

When we first opened our Home we spent quite a



Marianne and Kevin with donated goods for a children's home

bit of time reading the “Conviction vs. Compromise” series, “The Era of Action” GNs, and “Why Witness.” These GNs got the fire burning in each of us and gave us a vision to get out and witness. We’d spend our evenings talking about our experiences in the Family, things that we’d gone through, things we’ve learned, praying, reading, hearing from the Lord, and singing songs together.

Initially it wasn’t that our team clicked perfectly. Everything wasn’t just fine and dandy. We had our clashes every now and then, but overall the Lord has helped us to work well together.

So far the Lord has supplied over 2.5 tons of food, 10,000 units of special nappy cream for babies with AIDS, the printing of tracts in the local language, and this is not counting what the Lord has supplied for setting up our Home. We actively participate in a feeding program for 150 people, perform regular shows at an orphanage, have people we follow up on and minister to, and maintain a weekly e-mail ministry. With the Lord’s help we know that our ministries will continue to grow. After reading “Reach the Rich,” we’ve been making an effort to have people over for deeper witnessing,

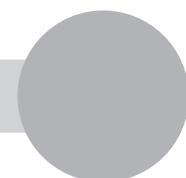
and it’s been going well.

Unfortunately, DJ (best known as “Snickers” to all the kids at St. Mary’s orphanage who *still* ask about him) had to leave us due to visa problems, which left a huge gap in our Home. His musical talents for kids shows, comedic nature on some of those long boring nights, and uncanny but funny talent for always finding the rocks while surfing will definitely be missed. Marianne (YA) came from Romania, and helped fill the gap for a few months, and now, Lord willing, we’ll soon have several young people joining our team.

Bend in the road



fter five years in the Middle East, my youthful need for adventure made me question whether I was supposed to be somewhere else. Shouldn’t I be making experiences for myself in the Family in other parts of the world, building the dreams that would change my life? Wouldn’t that give me a more well-rounded perspective and determine whether I was really supposed to be in this particular place?



By *Theophany* (20), Middle East

The distant memories of my childhood travels had me yearning for new experiences.

I was born in Argentina. From there my family moved to England, and then on to India. The following twelve years were spent with my family pioneering different



fields in Southeast Asia, and when I was fifteen my family moved to the Middle East, where I've been ever since. As far as I can remember, I'd never lived in one place longer than two years, until I got here.

The frequency of travel that I experienced is pretty normal for your average Family young person. Many of us have been to and experienced things that most people our age in the System could only dream of, if that. I admire our parents for their great faith and obedience to the Lord and the Letters in following wherever the Lord led. I often wonder if I'll ever attain that level of faith and trust in the Lord, to where I'll be



able to just drop everything and do this or go there at a moment's notice, in spite of a whole tribe of kids, simply because the Lord told me to.

My mom once told me, "It's not that we have *great* faith. We've simply seen the Lord come through for us over the years and do amazing miracles countless times, so we have no reason to think that He won't do it again."

She had a point, but here I was wondering what on earth I was doing with my life, and thinking that I'd missed my boat somehow. Everyone else around me seemed happy and fulfilled, and here I was feeling sorry for myself.

The other young people who had been here when I'd first come to the Middle East had all moved on to their own callings and were happy in what they were doing. At the time I was the kitchen deacon and the finance deacon, along with another YA in our Home populated by 15 to 20 people. I'd reached the point where I felt unchallenged.—There were no new worlds to conquer, or so I felt.

In my dreams I heard a resounding voice telling me that because I was so needed and responsible, I

would now join the teamwork, become a VS, and at that thought numerous ascending ladder steps began to fill my view. The dreams progressed: I soon saw myself as ... well, never mind.

I'd remember what I was, and would try and convince myself that what I was doing was very important. On the other hand, I did get to do a number of other things. We had several fun and fruitful ministries that enabled me to perform and witness. However, my contentment in life, or lack of it, had to do with my *perception* of things, and when I was going through battles it was hard to see beyond the thorns and recognize the roses.

It was then that I decided it was time for me to move to a different field. I considered going to Brazil, mostly because it was the furthest place I could think of from where I was. In the midst of that the Lord managed to get through to me, and He told me to write my shepherds and tell them about what I was facing, and ask for their advice. I did, but what I heard back was not exactly what I wanted to hear. The Lord



"Clown" Theophany at a CTP

said that if I wanted to leave this field, that was fine; however, if I wanted His highest will, then I would need to stay and hold on. This was my bend in the road, but I couldn't see how I'd ever come out of it. I was devastated.

My struggle continued when I was offered a very good System job by a friend of the Family. I was hit with thoughts about whether the Family was the place for me, and if I was cut out for the level of yieldedness that the Lord was requiring of me.

When I reached the point where I didn't know where else to go or what to do next, I took it to the Lord. He gave me just the answer I'd needed all along. The words He spoke were so incredibly sweet; I'd never felt so understood and loved. I broke down and cried. I knew I had to stick it out and be willing to do whatever He wanted me to do, even if it meant staying in the Middle East doing the lowly tasks at hand.

Shortly afterwards, things started looking up. A number of young people came to our Home, and we put together a show troupe. I was able to travel with the team to different countries in the region, etc. Now looking back, I realize that the Lord was only able to give me those perks once I'd decided to yield to Him.

Even after I said yes to staying here, I still had many comparing trials. I wondered why it seemed that some had it easier in life, compared to me. Saying yes and yielding to the Lord is easy when you're fulfilled and enjoying what you're doing. Being that I'm a rather ambitious person and one who gets satisfaction in setting high goals and putting everything into reaching them, I felt that I was looking at a very bleak future.

The Lord told me that my comparing came from criticalness and negative thinking, which is something

I've battled with for most of my life. He said that I needed to get united prayer from my Home before He could give me the victory. I took the plunge and got united prayer, and it was like a weight was lifted off of my shoulders. I still have to fight to keep the victory, but united prayer definitely started me down the right road.

Not long afterwards I was asked to join the national CGO board. Now some people may think that at this point I should've been counting my blessings and jazzed about new opportunities in my life, but it so happened that at the same time my boyfriend was appointed chairperson for the JT board, as well as a VS. This may seem trivial, but because I'd been going through comparing battles I felt like I could never be good enough no matter how hard I'd try.

I reached the point where I felt I was com-

● **"The things that truly matter in life are not who I am or what ministry I have, but how much I love the Lord, and how much of that love I'm willing to show to others."**



L to R: Brian (1), Philip, Marco, Theophany, Sharon, Stevie, Sean, Emmy, and baby Nicole

pletely losing the victory that I'd just struggled to gain, and that was the one thing that I didn't want to happen. I poured out my heart to the Lord and called on the keys for help. That's when the Lord so sweetly showed me what I needed to do.

The truth was I'd been struggling to be good and do all the right things so I could prove to others and myself that I could be *somebody*—that I could lead. Having a pretty strong personality by nature, it's easy for me to want to move things in the direction that I want them to go in. But it wasn't what the Lord needed of me. With all the Letters on weakness coming out, I found myself trying so hard to portray a meeker spirit, but somehow I never quite got it down. It was only then that I realized that to be weak, it's essential to let go entirely and rely on the Lord's strength alone. That was a big "discovery" for me.

I went over the Letters on weakness and the prophecies I'd received when reading the "Conviction vs. Compromise" series. What it came down to was that the

things that truly matter in life are not *who* I am or *what* ministry I have, but *how much* I love the Lord, and how much of that love I'm willing to show to others.

When I finally let go of all my aspirations of trying to be somebody and do something, that was when I found fulfillment and joy where I was and in what I was doing. It was then that my service for the Lord and witnessing became a joy! I even found contentment in the menial tasks. I was simply glad to be in the Family, to be in the Lord's highest will. I was glad to be alive! Once I focused on the positive, I realized how many blessings I have, and how it must grieve the Lord when I am so critical and negative about all He's given me.

If there is anything I'd tell others, it'd be to hold on and not give up. Those hardest times are simply bends in the road. Some bends seem like they'll never end unless you move onto a different road, but if you continue to hold on, sooner or later down the line you'll be glad you did. The best thing is finding out what God's highest will is for you, and believing it no matter what happens.