

the grapevine

World News

(From ASCRO:) A month or so ago we began talking with the organizers of the Bethlehem festival concerning our participation. They were thrilled to have us participating again this year and mentioned that we are the only group that is requested to come back every year. They also talked to us about their need for us to help them a little bit more this year in getting the concert organized. We pow wowed together different aspects of the festival that we thought could be improved upon and sent them quite an extensive letter about the sound, the lighting, the set up of the square, how and where to set up all the film crews and their cameras, where to put the VIPs etc. When we arrived in Bethlehem and met with the organizers, they said that they had tried to put almost all the points that we had suggested into effect and they could see the good fruit of it already.

One big change from last year to this year is that they requested that the whole event be more "religious," in what we believe is an attempt to appeal to most of the Christian world. There wasn't supposed to be any local Arabic music nor dubke dancing, local costumes and things along that line. As you know one of our pluses in this part of the world is singing some of their music in an effort to become one with them, so as soon as we heard this we had to rearrange our program considerably, putting in even more Christmas music, which was the main thing

that they were requesting this year.

They only had 6 groups this year. The first group was an American Pentecostal choir of 190 people (though only 99 people showed up), then another choir from Latin America and several others from around the world. We were the last group.

One of our sisters who attended the program was sitting next to a lady who apparently cried through the whole program as she said she was so touched. She said the *Heart to Heart* group is what makes Christmas special for the people there.

We weren't able to come up with the total amount of funds needed before leaving for this performance, but it was obviously the Lord that we perform in Bethlehem this year. We went ahead by faith, even though we knew the organizers of the festival couldn't really help so much this year towards our expenses. In the end, when some of our friends heard that finances were a little bit of a problem for us, they helped towards this and our expenses were covered to a "T," leaving us with just a couple of dollars extra. Praise the Lord!

There was more media this year in Bethlehem than perhaps ever before, which we think is also due to the fact of Bethlehem gearing up for Bethlehem 2000. We also just heard that some of our friends saw our Bethlehem program on local CNN, praise the Lord! ●

World Highlights

- ❖ By chance we discovered that four local cable TV stations (600,000 viewers) were broadcasting *KV #3* and *TA #2*! We later learned that a Christian group had asked the TV stations to broadcast our videos, and we are very happy that the message is getting out!—*Mary, Taiwan*
- ❖ The *Heart to Heart* team in India recently met the India representative for CNN while visiting one of their upcoming concert locations. When the team explained about Jeremy and *Heart to Heart's* programs, she seemed quite interested and called them at their Home the next day to get more specifics on the programs. It seems they might want to check it out, which is an exciting development.—*ASCRO Office*
- ❖ Our Bible study group in a very humble area of Lima has decided to begin living communally! They put up the roof and first floor of their building last week, and are building rapidly so that they can start living together. They have asked us to be their shepherds, but we also continue to maintain good relations with the local parish priest.—*Tito, Rosi and Maria Clara, Peru* ●

U.S. News

Christmas Eve Celebration

Happy New Year, dear Family! It certainly seems that your Christmas season was a wonderful one, as is evidenced by the steady stream of inspired witnessing testimonies we are now beginning to receive! Exciting! We hope you enjoy the Christmas spread in this issue!

We had a wonderful Christmas season as well, praying for your fruitful outreach, and keeping busy with lots of pubs work in preparation for the coming year! We've been going full steam ahead on the Feast pubs which should be reaching you shortly, DV.

On Christmas Eve, Mama and Peter joined the staff for our Christmas meal. We set up small, candlelit tables throughout the dining room, and all enjoyed each others' fellowship and company, as throughout the evening each staff member got a chance to sit at either Mama or Peter's table for

WS News see page 3 

Reminders about upcoming Birthday Feast Celebration

BY WS STAFF

Please read FSM 324, "Explanation of Family Birthday Feast-1998!" as soon as you receive it, as it gives important information about the timing regarding when you should read the various GNs that you will be receiving. It is especially important for you teamworkers to study this FSM, but everyone should try to read it so you can plan accordingly.

There are two GNs that should be read in the week or so preceding the Feast: "Victory Review '97" (GN 764) and "Goals for 1998" (GN 765). Together these GNs are 56 pages, which will take approximately seven hours to read. Please plan ahead so you'll have sufficient time to read and absorb this important and inspiring Word!

We suggest you start now to prepare materials to use when caring for the children during the Feast days, so they'll have some activities that will be a little new and different. Family Care will be sending you various materials—some of which need to be prepared in advance—but the material you'll receive from FC will *not* be enough to keep the children occupied the whole time. (Please see FSM 324 for some ideas of things you can prepare in advance.)

Thanks! God bless you! We love you! ●



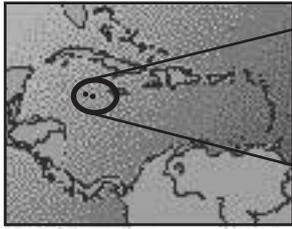
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February password:
flower.books

GRAND CAYMAN

(From Emanuel, Venezuela:) We spent 12 days during the Christmas season in Grand Cayman, Cayman Islands. Our team consisted of five adults, three YAs, three teens, one JETT and four children.

My wife and I have visited the islands twice a year for some time now, to follow up

on our friends and contacts. While visiting in July last year, a close friend showed us a video of how they decorate the island with thousands of lights during Christmas. We got a check from the Lord to bring the real meaning of Christmas into this country, and to give our friends and contacts an even better sample in the form of our teens and



The Cayman Islands are in the Caribbean, located south of Cuba, with gorgeous beaches and friendly people. It is a British colony, and the three islands

(Grand Cayman, Cayman Brac and Little Cayman) have a population of approximately 30,000. It is one of the strongest Christian enclaves in the Caribbean, and it is common to see Bible studies and devotions at schools. The islands have strict immigration laws. The economy is based on tourism as well as the fact that it is a major offshore banking center with over 600 international banks having representative offices there.

children in action. The Lord confirmed this idea, and we returned to Grand Cayman in September to prepare for our Christmas visit.

Just as He had promised, doors started opening for us to visit Cayman in December. We got in touch with a pastor who put together a committee at his church. A friend of ours got all 16 of us rooms at a luxurious resort for a discounted price, which she paid for herself. Meals for our whole stay were donated by managers of a number of restaurants. Our rent-a-car friend promised to give us the needed vehicles for our whole group. The Lord was supplying! We returned to Venezuela on tickets paid for by our friends, loaded down with donations and testimonies.

Back at home, the Lord provided material for manger-scene costumes and a person to sew them. He also provided discounted airfares for all (\$10,000), which the church paid for. A week before our departure, we received a phone call from the pastor of the sponsoring church, saying that another pastor had gone around the island speaking against us. The Lord had forewarned us that we were going to experience some antagonism, so we went on the attack and faxed our friends and sponsors letters showing that we are an in-

ternational missionary organization, as well as a personal letter explaining all the misunderstandings our pastor friend had mentioned in the call. One sponsor called around and asked others if they knew us, and everybody gave a good report about us. In the middle of the night, this sponsor called and told us we should come to Cayman and sing at their

show no matter who was against us, and besides that, they were going to give us a donation!

So off we went! On the first day, we performed at a stadium, atop a flatbed truck. Entrance was free, and afterward a collection was taken. The national TV station

came and filmed the whole show, and a couple of days later it was broadcast for more than 30 minutes. We were invited to a morning talk show to advertise our show, and everywhere we went people knew who we were.

The next day when we sang for the Full-Gospel Businessman's Association, the president got up and gave us a warm welcome. We also did a CTP show at an old folks' home. Our friend, the president of the local Red Cross, said our show was better than she expected and that she was more than happy that we were able to visit. We also visited schools and sang for personal friends. After each performance we were able to pray with people to receive the Lord. Above all, we were happy with the response the young people of the island had. Our teens were able to share the Endtime vision and the need to give their lives to Jesus.

In our last visit to our sponsoring church, the pastor asked us to do our show once again. The Lord anointed this last show even more, and there wasn't a dry eye in the audience. The pastor shared afterward that he has never seen kids and teens in his life with such a belief in prayer as ours.

At the airport, the pastor, other friends,

and young people came to see us off. They also brought presents for everybody, and asked us to come back soon. It was very moving. Even from the airplane, we could see them all waving good-bye to us. Our kids and teens were crying too, seeing how the Lord had fulfilled His Word in prophecy. We are still receiving e-mails and telephone calls from our closest friends, expressing how much it meant for us to spend that time with them at Christmas.

VIETNAM

(From John, Angel and Lisa:) After a rather challenging trip in a crowded minibus, we finally made it to our destination, a beautiful hill station set in the central highlands of southern Vietnam—a cool haven from the heat of Saigon. The town is situated on a plateau; its beautiful rolling hills are covered with market gardens, tea and coffee plantations, pine forests and waterfalls.

A man we sat next to on the very uncomfortable and overcrowded ride turned out to be the reason the Lord had us take this bus! In our shortsightedness we'd thought we were getting a stone (in the travel conditions), but the Lord had other plans. This was the bread He had prepared for us! Mr. Henry turned out to be something of a city father in this city, and he and his brother proved to be good friends and potential supporters.

We met one girl, Mary, several times during our short stay. Although Jesus was a totally new concept to her, she not only readily got saved but also almost immediately began giving out the Word to her friends and classmates. We visited the local university with her, and helped teach one class. We met many students from all over the central highlands region of southern Vietnam, and gave out many posters to her friends.

Although we were in town for only three days, we were able to meet many people and now have so many folks to follow up on. We had to be quite careful, as the local authorities check on their people and how much contact they have with foreigners. But love always finds a way and it was precious to see how these people warmed up when we smiled or showed love and concern. We won 16 souls during our short stay, and distributed many posters, tracts and other literature! ●

Kind words can be short and easy to speak, but their echoes are truly endless.

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Suggested reading age for this publication is JETTs and up. Parents or shepherds may read with or allow portions to be read by younger ages, at their discretion.

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The Indian life

INDIA

(From MaryAnn [of Hosanna]:) I joined the Family in India 20 years ago, was married here, and have always served the Lord here. I recently visited Canada after all these years, and it made me so thankful that I have never had to leave the mission field. I could see what a battle it is to get back to the field. Life is so much simpler here on the field, and it's so much easier to witness and establish a lasting work. The blessings of being a missionary that Jesus lists for us are fantastic, and so true!

When we first started serving the Lord in India, we rode on buses and lived in a \$20 flat with our two small children and some singles. Sixteen years later, we have nine children and live in a spacious house in a centrally located area and pay \$750 rent. We have a cooking range, automatic washing machine, a refrigerator, a freezer, a 486 computer, e-mail facility, and we don't need a dryer because it is so nice and warm. Ha!

What I'm trying to say is that the Lord has always cared for us! We had the same God 16 years ago; He could have supplied much more for us then, but we didn't have the faith and vision. Thanks to the Letters and the encouragement of our shepherds, we now have a good standard of living and eating—and we have lots of fun! The best part is that every day we meet hungry sheep who don't know anything about Jesus, but have the desire to learn.

The need is just so great, and we sometimes take it upon ourselves. But more and more I see how it's only the Lord and His anointing that can reach the 950 million here! Now I feel it is my job to love the Lord and follow Him closely so He can work through me. We are all studying the "Be a Missionary" Letter. It's perfect and just what we needed.

Why bring it up?

ASIA

(From a female YA:) I've heard several Family members (young people in particular, but FGAs too) talk about people they used to know, or various past experiences in the Family, most of which, sad to say, seem to emphasize the negative. I understand it's human nature to tend to remember the negative rather than the positive, and the few I've mentioned this to have told me, "It used to be that way, but it's better now." or "I'm not bitter about it; it's okay now."

Well, if we're not holding a grudge and we've forgiven those who have mistreated us or wronged us in the past, or if we're not bitter about certain past experiences, then why

should we keep bringing it up and talking about it? Let's forgive and forget! If we can't forget but want to forgive, then let's try not to dwell on it so much. Even if we think we're presenting something in a positive way, it may not come across like that, and it will definitely make it harder for us to forget it ourselves if we keep refreshing our memory by telling others about it!

Parents tuning in

JAPAN

(From Phoenix:) While visiting Jonathan, Claire and their 10 children, I was impressed to see how their older children take a lot on their shoulders by taking care of their younger brothers and sisters. They don't complain, and are a big blessing to their mommy and daddy.

Jonathan is very involved with the children, especially their scholastics. When the CVC book first came out, he studied it and read it twice so that he could help his kids take the courses. Even before we held the Osaka CVC seminars, his teen daughters were taking different courses in the CVC. He showed me the records he keeps for their scholastics, and I was impressed by his diligence and faithfulness.

He is a good sample of a parent, who, though so busy with the care of 10 kids, the running of the Home, being on the field, etc., doesn't neglect to pour into his own children in the area of scholastics. So many of us parents don't tune into our own kids' scholastics and education because of our excuse of being busy with our ministries. His sample

N.S. News (Continued from page 1)

some sweet talk time.

Peter then shared with the Family some of the highlights of the year, testifying of the wonderful things the Lord has accomplished! These stats and his very inspirational talk will be coming your way shortly in "Victory Review '97"!

Christmas Angels

Over the next few days, we were all able to take some time off to rest and get re-filled, as well as have some fun and uniting activities together. We each also enjoyed having a special Christmas angel during this period. Each of us picked out of a hat the name of someone else in the Home, and over the Christmas/New Year week, we each did spontaneous and sweet things for our "mortal," as we termed them. People received prophecies, made surprise snacks, poems, cards, knickknacks, room decorations, coupons for future good deeds, etc. Lots of fun!—And of course, plenty of mystery involved in attempting to discover who your "guardian angel" was!

sure convicted me!

Your typical stereotype

BRAZIL

(From a VS:) I have noticed that many of our national young people feel a bit ostracized and like second-class citizens because they are nationals or are dark-skinned. Some of the American or European teens tend to belittle the nationals. Some of the national young people in my Home mentioned how the foreign teens sometimes make condescending comments to them, because English is not their first language or because they have an accent when speaking English. It seems we need to address this with our young people, especially since the Lord is so impartial and sees us *all* as His Bride. I think much of this has to do with the influence our young people get from the movies they watch.

In many Homes I have visited, during movie night, some of the girls will make comments like, "Oh, he is so cute!" Normally the guys they freak out about are blond and blue-eyed. I'm not saying this is wrong, but when this stereotype continually comes up, it not only sends a signal to our boys that this is the type of guy to be, but it also creates an image of a man that our girls won't always find in our Homes. I think this kind of attitude adds to the peer pressure that some of our national teens feel. I don't think our young people do it intentionally, or to be mean, but it is up to us as parents and shepherds to shepherd our teens in this area. We all need to fight to keep this attitude from infiltrating our camps. ●

The quest still continues for some!

Prayers, Praises and Commitments

At our New Year's Eve celebration, Mama and Peter again visited with us all, holding a meeting in which we prayed and praised, and heard some beautiful messages of encouragement from the Lord regarding the past year and visions for the year to come. Mama asked each of us to hear from the Lord personally during the next day or two for the coming New Year, to make our calling and election sure, and to receive any instruction or encouragement which He had for us.

Over the next week, we got together as a Home and different ones shared excerpts of their personal prophecies with all, outlining their prayer requests and goals for the year to come. These times were very beautiful and unifying. We also each received a blank sheet of paper to sign (strictly between each of us and the Lord), symbolizing our commitment to be yielded and willing vessels this coming year, and to leave our lives in His loving care. ●

Mama's Mailbox



Dearest Mama,

I really love you and pray for you often. I've lived in a situation for so long where it's just been me and the Lord as far as any love, concern or shepherding goes. That might be great for someone who is naturally independent, but I'm not. I'm quite an insecure person and love leaning on others for support and encouragement. When I found after the Charter that no one wanted to be leaned on or take the time to understand what everyone else was going through, I freaked out (I wouldn't say no one, as we have wonderful shepherds; it's just the day-to-day problems that you feel so all alone in).

The Lord's love is definitely there, but there are times when you long for a

little human affection and consideration also. I wonder sometimes if anyone understands what it's like out here in booneyland.

You wanna hear a shocker? I'm going to be 21 in a few months and I have never had a date! I live in a city with eight girls and there are no future prospects for marriage or having kids, etc. I think I want to have kids more than anything in the world, but I guess I won't. You're probably wondering why I'm still here. It's because I love this field! I've spent 15 years here in India, and I love it more and more as the days go by!

Don't get me wrong. I live in a wonderful Home with lots happening, but those are just a few of the things we have to live with. I sometimes wonder

how I have kept going, but I know it's the Lord that helps me through all these battles. Like that saying, "When you have nothing left but God, then for the first time you realize that God is enough." It's so true. During the most difficult times, the Lord is the One Who sees me through. He is so wonderful, such a perfect Husband and Lover.

Mama, if ever you pray for India, please pray that more people come; we need them so badly! With the "Come to India" GN, it's so encouraging that there is a future for us over here and the Lord still has a vision for India. It's such a beautiful country with so many hungry people!

—FEMALE (YA), INDIA



A PEEK INTO MAMA'S HOME.

Some time back, two of our Home members, James and June, went on a business trip to another area. Whenever Mama, Peter, or members of their staff travel, they take tracts with them; and at every opportunity they try to be a witness of the Lord's love. Here are some excerpts from June's account to Mama of one unusual witnessing opportunity she and James found themselves in while on this trip.

(June's report to Mama:) While we were out witnessing one afternoon distributing tracts, we stopped for lunch at a restaurant that had a very cheap menu. There were only two occupied tables, one with four young college-aged students, and another with a young woman.

Right away we noticed that the young woman sitting alone seemed to have heavy black make-up around her eyes and nose, which we soon realized were actually injuries of some sort. A few minutes later she started to laugh erratically, and threw a couple of dishes and her drink on the floor. The waiters seemed afraid to do anything with this unstable girl, who was pretty tall, hefty, and intimidating.

Right then one of the girls at the other table passed out. I felt compelled to get up, and I prayed out loud for her in front of her other friends, asking the Lord to strengthen and comfort her, as I stroked her forehead. When I ran out of things to pray, I got the verse, "The spirit maketh intercession for our infirmities." I had never thought of that verse in light of sickness before, but I began praying out loud in tongues.

The girl started to come to, and one of her friends told her that I had been praying for her.

I then asked her if she knew Jesus, and she nodded. I told her to just think about Jesus and she'd be fine. Then she sat up and they took her outside for some fresh air. Her boyfriend thanked me, and they all seemed truly grateful. Meanwhile, James had been praying for me. Thank the Lord for backup prayer power.

After all this commotion, the young woman who had been acting a little strange began to make noises again. I got up from my chair without even thinking, as if I was on autopilot or something. I'm definitely not the type to boldly get up and pray over someone who has passed out, speaking in tongues and saying "Hallelujah!". In fact, I'm quite a timid person; but the Lord led me, to face this unpredictable situation, not knowing if the girl would become violent in that somewhat charged and volatile atmosphere. It certainly was totally and completely the Lord, and thanks to James' prayers, the Lord really did it.

When approaching the young woman, our eyes met and I smiled at her, which seemed to change things. I asked her if she would like to go home, to which she nodded her assent. We got her things together and I told her that Jesus

loved her and was going to help her. I began praying for her, and then asked her to repeat the salvation prayer after me. She started to cry.

When I got close to her, I could tell that she had been badly hit in the face. I put my hand over her face and prayed for the Lord to touch and heal her face, and take away any pain. All this time we were standing up in the middle of the restaurant, totally unaware of time or whether anyone was around!

I took her to a taxi and told the driver I was a missionary and had come across this girl who needed help, and asked him if he could see her home safely. I said, "God bless you!" to him and he replied, "God bless you for helping her." She waved goodbye, her face completely wet with tears, and now happily saved!

Whew! What a lunch!—And all this before our food had even come yet! After lunch we witnessed to the waiters, filling them in on what had happened to the two girls. We gave them tracts, which they read on the spot, having seen the Lord's love and the power of prayer in action. I'm so thankful that the Lord led us to eat at that restaurant, and worked through us by His Spirit to help His sheep. ●

SEARCHING INPUT



Do you have any personal experiences, tips or comments on the topics below? If so, send'm in so that all can benefit!

Hairy hitchiking

I had some pretty hairy, scary experiences while hitchhiking as a teenager in the Family. We also did some dangerous things when on road trips, such as sleeping out in parks if we couldn't find accommodations. Perhaps an open forum discussion or tips on personal

safety and survival would be useful, as many young people are now travelling about together.

—MATTHEW AND MARY, AUSTRALIA

Computer game alternatives

Any tips or ideas for parent time for JETTs besides computer games? We have get-out sometimes during that time, which is fun and edifying. Sometimes they just want to play, and other times they can be kind of bored. Nevertheless, they are not inspired about doing so-called "educational" computer programs. Any ideas?

—SUNNY, TAIWAN

A fulfilled dream

LITHUANIA

(From *Mercy*.) Ten years ago (1987), while living in India, our family had a burden to go to Eastern Europe. At that time we were living with Philippe La Plume and his family. One night I had a dream: We were living on a sort of compound made up of several houses. Our family, along with Philippe and his family, were staying in a nice little bungalow. Then his (flesh) brother, Matthew, came over to pick me up to go to another bungalow/house to live there. It was a little rundown and in need of repairs and work.

When I woke up, I asked the Lord what the dream meant. He told me that each bungalow was representing a field, and that the one where we were living with Philippe was India and the one I was brought to was Eastern Europe.

In 1988, we left India and I thought that the dream might get fulfilled soon. But no, it wasn't the Lord's time yet. During the next several years we worked in various combos, and I soon forgot all about the dream.

Then last year, we came to Lithuania. One day, as I was rereading my diary of 1987, I came to my dream and I felt a chill going down my spine when I realized that our ABM here is ... Matthew! And we are living in a compound with several houses, just like in my dream! Of course, Lithuania does need a lot of help and is in need of repairs, both spiritually and physically.

God may take His time and the dreams, visions and prophecies He gives us may not always be fulfilled immediately, but if we hang on, His Word will not fail. PHN!

Obedience opens doors

ECUADOR

(From *Pablo and Love*.) The Lord showed us in prophecy to go see some old friends and minister to them, and the Lord rewarded our obedience. They recommended us to a school where we were able to give seminars and perform our puppet show. The directors of the school and 230 kids received the Lord; we sold videos and were put in touch with an institute that helps poor children, where we will be performing.

These friends were also able to influence the heads of a company, which we had been unsuccessfully trying to reach for some time, and now the doors have opened to get out our tools on a large scale. The company pays us for what their employees order, and then deducts it from their paychecks in installments.

The seminars we gave were a hit with the teachers, and the following Monday, the director told us that all the students were commenting, "What came over our teachers?! They're so different!" They had all started putting into practice what they'd

learned in the seminars—what we've been taught by the Word all these years! We now have recommendations to other places, and things are snowballing!

Wearisome chore? —Or witnessing chance?

MOLDOVA

(From *Dust*.) Every other evening, I walk through the dark and the mud (there are no streetlights in much of our neighbourhood, and the roads are not paved) to the house of a woman who has a cow, in order to buy fresh milk for my dear wife, who is nursing. I've been witnessing to this woman and her husband, Andre, from time to time as we do our little business.

One evening, Andre, the father of eight and grandfather of 17, laid hold on my shoulder and wouldn't let me go. In desperate expectation, he asked, "What's going to happen to me? I'm a Christian—I believe in my heart—but I don't go to church. Will I be saved?" Thankful to have the security of eternal salvation by grace, I assured him that Jesus never said anyone needed to go to church in order to be saved. Andre was so, so happy! Just when I was about to pray with him, some other people came in and broke the spirit. I prayed for another opportunity.

A week or so later, as I was once again at their home, we were discussing the difficulties of life and the reasons behind them. When I said that the biggest problem in the world is people's lack of love for God and each other, Andre got up excitedly from his chair and went into the kitchen. He returned with a "What Everybody Needs Is Love!" poster. He pointed immediately to the fourth paragraph, saying, "That's just what it says here! I've read this so many times and I like the whole thing, but this is my favorite part!" It was obvious that he had practically memorized the entire poster! This time there were no interruptions, and I was able to pray with Andre to receive Jesus! As soon as we started praying, he said, "That's the same prayer that's on the poster!"

I used to see this time of walking out at night to get the milk as an extra chore and drain on my already too-limited time, but now I've grown to appreciate it as another witnessing opportunity and chance to share the Lord's love with a few of His dear sheep!

When will it snow?

USA

(From *Ivanho*.) Mike C. (13) asked me to ask the Lord when it was going to snow here this winter. Without praying, I blurted out a date. Of course, it didn't happen! So I had to apologize and confess I hadn't really prayed first.

Shortly thereafter, as I was sitting in my

car trying to put in a tapedeck, I was very encouraged when Mike came up and said, "Hey! The Lord gave me a prophecy for you." It was so beautiful and encouraging! I was astounded and happy to see this coming from one of our youth!

A little while later, Mike said, "Why don't we both try to hear from the Lord separately on when it's going to snow?" I said okay.

The first date I got was December 9th. Guess what? Mike got the same date! And guess what else? Two weeks later, December 9th comes around, and it snows! The lessons are to have faith for specifics, and to praise God for our youth—our hope of the future!

Parties for others

PAKISTAN

(From *Janet*.) When we received a large amount of chips and popcorn from one of our friends, we decided to throw a little party for the children at an institution for orphans and abandoned children, where we go weekly. They were so happy when we brought out the party hats and gave them a pack of snacks each! They had probably never had a party before! The *aya* (lady who cares for the children) was so pleased to see the children so excited that she took a ring off her finger and gave it to us. That was the best way she knew to thank us!

Jesus first, you next

MEXICO

(From *Francisco, Margarita and Esdras*.) One of our friends who has a copy of *Treasures* told us that his seven-year-old boy reads it the most.

His son recently said, "Dad, if I tell you something, you're not going to get mad, are you?"

His dad said, "Well, tell me first."

The boy said, "Dad, you are not my best friend."

"What do you mean?" his father asked.

"Jesus is my best friend, then you come next," was his son's reply. ●

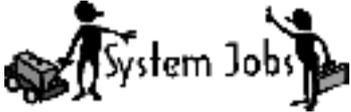
support-a-missionary

(From *the Rose Garden Home, India*.) Many of our home-supporter brethren that were sending gifts to our Home in India have now left for mission fields themselves, either Mexico or India. We feel the Lord has blessed and honored these brethren's faith to help the field, even when they themselves were raising funds to go to the field.

We are desperately praying for new home supporters with a burden to help harvest the fields here in India. We will be happy to write to you about all the wonderful miracles and testimonies the Lord is doing here, and you will share in the rewards of souls won for Him! E-mail: rosein@giabga.vsnl.net.in. ●

(From the Grapevine editors:)

Here are some late arrivals on various open forum topics which we've had. Thanks for your comments—keep'm coming!



I am 46 and the father of 10. We have been pioneering this very fertile Muslim field for 1½ years. We have exciting outreach ministries and several solid and growing CTP programs, plus ample opportunity to personal witness and go on the road.

I am teaching English 12-14 hours per week for a visa. It is a blessing, as it supplies our entire family with good visas, pays the rent, and it doesn't take too much time (three days a week, part-time). Due to the nature of our field and work, I do not tell everyone that I am in the Family, but my employers and fellow teachers know all about the CTP programs we do, and they are impressed. I am usually able to turn my classes into witnessing opportunities, either by sharing various *Reflections*, or capsulizing lesson-filled movies and recommended books, etc. One thing that most of the people I work with tell me is how much they respect "my way of life," and they can all tell that I am a happy worker, which in itself is a testimony.

I have gotten quite close to almost all the staff, whether teachers, management or directors, and the vast majority of them hate their job. They would all rather be doing something else, or preferably nothing at all (if they had the money!). It's not that I "like my job," as it is often a real trial and purge. I would certainly rather not have to teach English for a visa, and we are continually praying for open doors for this to happen, but the difference is that I "know and understand" that the reason I am teaching is to help our team to remain here, to preach the Gospel all together, and therefore there is a good reason for me to be teaching.

I wanted to send this in, in case any of our Family members are considering working only for the sake of making money. My question is: If professional System teachers and administrators, who make good salaries, would rather be doing something else, as just working for the money doesn't satisfy nor make them happy, how can it satisfy the children of David?

—JIM, TURKEY



Something I appreciate and value in older adults is when they can take my exaggerated or emotional statements with a grain of salt and not get stumbled by them. Sometimes I just feel frustrated about something and have to express it; or I really want to do something, even though I know it wouldn't be best to do in real life. If I can discuss it freely with an older person who will take it the right way, without feeling like the person I'm talking to is going to take me too seriously or give me a sermon afterwards, then it helps me to get it out of my system; often I'll bring up the right solution at the end of our conversation. But if the person starts preaching at me right away, I automatically feel defensive.

One shepherd I had was very good in this respect. He loved to listen to us, heard us out, and would understand our wild ideas or desires. When we were searching in our conversations, he would sometimes gently lead us to the right answer, but never came on too strongly in a way that would turn me off. He knew how to tell the difference between when we were just "letting off steam" and when we needed a correction for a bad attitude. Because we knew that he didn't make statements just to show us how much he knew, or because he was worried about "losing control," we really listened and paid attention to what he said, and did our best to obey him.

—FEMALE (24)

I'm a mother of nine (including five teens/SGAs) and have my share of problems and worries with my teens. They bring me great joy and I'm proud of them all, in spite of the fact that they have all gone through or are going through rough times, rebellious stages, etc.

Our teens are serving the Lord daily, and they try to do it with their whole hearts, but they get frustrated when they get criticism from the adults, which is often not balanced with a loving, appreciative relationship. If we're gonna get heavy on our teens, let's first be heavy with ourselves so that we can be a sample to them. I am far from being the perfect model, and I don't want to be so self-righteous with the teens. They need our love and help desperately!

—A CONCERNED MOM, BRAZIL

From my experience, young people like for you to tell them the truth with the maturity of a listening ear and words fitly spoken. I'd like the young people to know that we, without them, would not be complete. "God having provided a better thing (their rising up into places of responsibility, to carry on together as one) so that we (the first generation), without them (SGAs), should not be complete." (Heb. 11:40)

—JOHN FRANK, USA

I didn't have such a hard time relating to other young people, but rather my own. I have two YAs, one teen girl and two JETT boys. A deciding factor was when I stopped looking at my eldest girls as "my kids" and started to treat them like Home members, friends and equals. It made a world of difference.

Learning to relate to someone takes time and effort. It doesn't just happen. In day-to-day living it means going into their room and plopping myself down with them to have fun; listening to their ideas and showing genuine interest, even if I think it's wild; backing up their projects by offering help; stopping my busy work to listen to a suggestion, etc.

I also learned as a shepherdess to respond right away when they want to share their hearts. Unless it's absolutely impossible, whenever a teen or YA comes to ask me something, I try to make myself available immediately or as soon as I can. I think it means a lot to them and sends a message that says: "You're important to me."

—ADULT WOMAN, EUROPE



In my younger, idealistic teen years, visions of gallant

knights on snow-white steeds used to come to mind whenever I thought of sex, love and romance. Naturally it was love at first sight, and my handsome lover would sweep me off of my feet; together we would ride blissfully into the sunset. Only then would I consider the notion of sex. As time went on, I realized that gallant knights were few and far between and that there was a possibility that in order to get any sex in my life I was going to have to lower my standards just a little, even if that meant having a date with someone to whom I wasn't particularly attracted.

So I did—and it really wasn't that bad! Although I wasn't left breathless, savoring every memory of the episode, and didn't experience an emotional high for days on end afterwards, it still was fun. I guess one could call it recreational sex. And when that knight in shining armor with whom I can indulge in that passion—complete with fireworks and other special effects—isn't around, I may as well opt for something a little less dramatic. In the process I can give someone else a little happiness, plus have a little fun myself!

—FEMALE (20), AFRICA

One thing that would make sharing your mate much easier would be if it were understood that the third person wouldn't try to come between the couple, or want to take one partner away. Being prone to jealousy, when I knew the sister sharing with my husband loved us enough not to use her newness or whatever assets she had for her own advantage, it was much easier for me. One even told me, "I would never try to come between you and your husband." Oh, I loved her for that!

And when I overcome my hesitance and follow the Lord's nudges to share with others—even those I'm not attracted to—the time spent together is so sweet and precious that I feel bad that I had hesitated. A lot of it is in the mind, as the Enemy really fights in our thoughts! Try it, you might like it!

—D. (FEMALE), TURKEY

I don't know if all of us young people are using enough love and wisdom in our interactions with one another. I've heard of many guys who talk about which girl was the best in bed, etc. Girls also do the same thing. I don't think it's a major sin, but when that kind of talk starts getting unloving and turns into a gossip session, it cuts people down. I think that subject should be kind of private, and we should work on having more wisdom in our conversations regarding sex.

—16-YEAR-OLD, MEXICO

I was very touched by Korie's article (see *Grapevine* #23), especially coming from one of our SGAs. One thing that always helped me when the going got rough was what Dad told us FFers: "You don't have to like'm, but you'd sure better love'm!"

Another thing that helped was my dear husband's encouragement to share. Before meeting me, he'd been a single guy for six long, lonesome years. After we married, he kept such a broken heart for the single brothers; whenever we'd meet one, he'd encourage me to share with him. When we first got together, we knew it was a special blessing from the Lord, but that we belonged to Him first of all. So we made a commitment to live the One Wife vision as much as we could, which included sharing each other with those in need.

We had our share of trials and battles, of course, and even fell into other relationships which truly tested our marital vows, but the Lord kept us through it all and made us a stronger and tighter unit. Having to share sacrificially made us appreciate each other more than ever, and being involved in other relationships taught us much about the deeper kind of love marriage often brings—the kind that goes beyond romantic feelings and comes out of the fire better than ever before, like gold. We sure played with fire at times, but I'm thankful the Lord had mercy on us and brought us through.

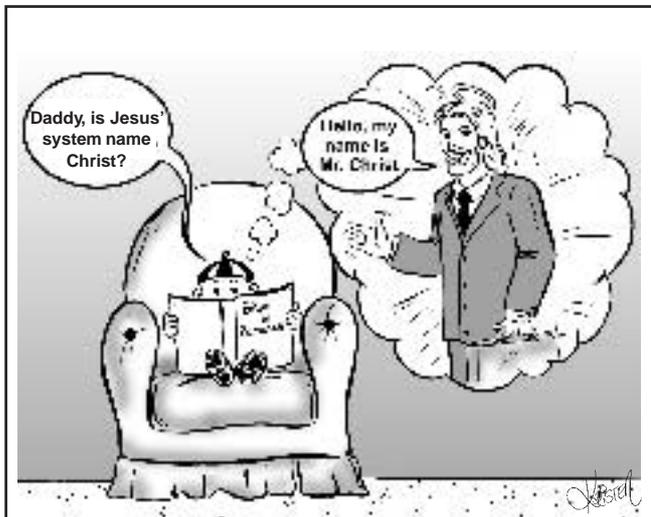
As a woman, I always felt it was part of my ministry for the Lord to keep the brothers in my Home happy, which can be a lot of fun. But recently, living in smaller Homes with mainly young people, it's broken my heart to see some of our YA boys not getting their needs met, and my being unable to help them out myself because of the age difference. I know, girls, about some of the difficulties you're facing and I understand what you go through sometimes, but I also know from experience how much the Lord blesses us women for giving His "love, true love" to our men. I know some of our brothers might not look like Prince Charming at first sight, but you may be amazed at the wonders love can do if you take the first step to kiss that lonely froggy. I think I would probably turn into a froggy myself if nobody loved me. Like Dad told us, real love never fails!

—MARIE (FGA), CIS

In the past, when there was a lot more sharing, I never stopped to think twice if it was someone I was attracted to that I was about to share with. But if it was a person I didn't quite fancy, I would pray for the Lord to help me, as I knew it was the right thing to do, even if I didn't feel like it. That's what the Family believed in, that's what made us different from other Christians, and I was proud of it.

Sharing your mate is a trial for many, I'd imagine, as it was for me (I'm single now). It was never easy, but it sure helped me when all parties concerned showed each other lots of love afterwards! Almost always when my mate wanted to share with someone, my first reaction was "Oh no, no!" But deep in my heart I knew it was right to say yes. Saying yes and giving never bore bad fruit. Lack of communication was what caused most of the problems; not the sharing itself, which I believe is of the Lord!

—R., SOUTH AMERICA



peanuts 'n' raisins



I've been on both sides of the fence and know that when we single parents do what's right, Jesus looks out for us and supplies all our needs (not necessarily wants). I cried to read the comments of the grown single mom's kids. GBT! They make it worth it all!

—KEREN, USA

I helped families for long time with all my heart, and because I don't have children of my own, I kind of adopt the little ones. But in about 10 years of helping, I only remember four mothers who were really thankful. I was often hurt by comments like, "Singles have more free time," etc.

Yes, we have more free time, but many times we feel so lonely. Sometimes I watch one more video than the parents do on my free night, just so I don't go to bed too early; so I'll be too tired to think about anything. Yes, we (sometimes) sleep better without children, but we don't have the joy of having some of our own that we never have to give up. I have forsaken so many babies that I've gotten attached to, and it hurts so much.

—VIDA, BRAZIL

I was a single mom for awhile after my first husband left the Family. Then I married a wonderful Argentine brother, with whom I had five more kids. I was a Fellow Member for five years; four of them were spent alone, as my husband died a year after we became Fellow Members. I recently became a Charter Member. It has been a difficult fight without my precious husband, but I've learned wonderful lessons. I pray I can be classified as one of the "fighters," instead of one who expects everything to be handed to her on a silver platter.

I sometimes have gone through trials that I haven't found a new husband, but I've been teamworking with another brother who's a real blessing to the kids. I believe that parenting teamworks work, whether married or not. TTL!

—JOY, BRAZIL

Sometimes couples will watch a video in their room with their children, but don't consider inviting the children of the singles too. Or they will have a special snack that mom or dad bought, but the children of the singles won't be given any. I see this as being a little partial, and it causes division in the spirit, as the children of the couple can easily adopt an attitude of being a little better than the others.

Maybe other singles don't feel this way, but this is from my experience. Just feeling understood makes a world of difference and makes life as a single much easier!

—A SINGLE, USA

I'm Gentleness, Jerry Paladino's ex-wife, and I was a single mother for 8½ years. Actually, my husband Tiago, and Margie (of Jerry) will agree that we're all one. We're not ex-anything! The Lord's love never ends, and Jerry and sweet Margie continue to take very good care of me in the sense that I have always felt them near. In all these years, he's never missed one of the kids' birthdays—mine either! Or Christmas! We've always kept in close touch.

The point is: We separated and I had half a dozen kids to raise, but I was never abandoned! He was always with me in the spirit and desperate in prayer, and made sure we were in a good situation. The Lord and the Family always took such wonderful care of me that I don't have anything to complain about for those years. Through those years, one of Jerry's desperate prayers was for the Lord to raise up a "real father" for his kids and a new mate for his wife. The kids and I always knew (and still know) how important we are to him, as he always let us know.

When the time was right, the Lord brought precious Tiago into our lives. We first got together because of the kids and were a parenting teamwork. Then the Lord gave us a baby! The love and passion came too, and has kept coming more and more each day! Sound romantic? It is!—Very!

But do you know what? Although the Lord raised up Tiago in answer to Jerry's and Margie's and my prayers, that didn't cause Jerry to dump us and say, "Whew! Thank God she's taken care of. I'm free!" Are you kidding?! We're all even closer now. Tiago and Jerry love and need each other, and the story goes on. Jerry is even more deeply involved now, as he has our three eldest children (Francesco, Angeliq and Sam) with him. He's helping Tiago and I to raise the YA/SGAs, along with precious Margie, who is a real mother and strength and help in bringing my teens through a lot! Isn't that beautiful? And now I'm a grandma, as Francesco and Crystal had their first son! Far-out! The blessings keep coming!

—GENTLENESS, BRAZIL ●



As we all do our part...

The Zocalo Christmas story

MEXICO

(From the *Mexico City Family*.) On December 25th, TV Azteca news cameras zoomed in on a shabbily-dressed man to hear about the free Christmas meal he was enjoying at the Zocalo, Mexico City's central plaza. "These people [the Family] are doing something wonderful! They have love for those who really need it." His words echoed gently around the nation on the evening newscasts. And the miracles of supply and provision that fed over 5,000 that day were truly wonderful. This was the fourth consecutive Christmas that the Family had fed thousands of poor at the Zocalo.

The city's zocalo (public square or plaza) is a special place where many go to express their sentiments and their sorrows. Here at the Mexico City Zocalo, for many years the common people have staged protests because of the injustices they suffer. Indigenous Indians that are going through hard times come in from their towns thinking that here they will find the answers to all their problems and that somehow a listening ear will give answer to their plight and perhaps improve their economic situation.

On Christmas day, many of the poor of Mexico City poured into the plaza, this time not to protest but to enjoy the season's holidays, and others because they know from past years that on Christmas day a Christian group will share God's love in the way of a free hot meal and sometimes clothes and toys.

Getting a permit to hold this event in the main square was a miracle, as the government is responsible for maintaining security of large crowds such as the one we would draw (over 5,000 people). God bless Marcos and Rebecca, a young Mexican couple, who did the main provisioning, organization, cooking, pickups of the food, etc. They were the "motor" behind the whole project.

A friend of ours who owns a restaurant offered to cook 100 kilos of meat and beans, and 50 kilos of rice for this event. This, together with 500 kilos of bread, 60 boxes of bananas, coffee, and fresh mineral water, provided a very complete meal, PTL! Among these poor folks there were some that hadn't eaten all day. There were even some kids that had gone for two days without eating! So to be able to offer them a Christmas meal on this special day was like Jesus using us to love and give them food. We also distributed over 15 big boxes of forsake-all clothes to the poor that day.

All the Homes in the area worked together, performing their beautiful shows on a big stage in a circus tent. A Christian group which was not able to get a permit for the Zocalo gave us the use of their circus tent and their professional sound equipment setup. All the Family members wore provisioned matching hats and T-shirts with the Family symbol and name.

We had tremendous coverage in all the main Mexico City newspapers, and the two biggest

TV networks gave us excellent news coverage. One network aired the Zocalo Christmas event live from a helicopter, with the narrator saying that more people should be helping out the poor like this on Christmas. TYJ!

The best psychological rehabilitation

SIBERIA

(From *Daniel Mountain*.) On December 6, 1997, two engines of an Antonov An-24—one of the world's largest aircrafts—failed immediately after takeoff. This 400-ton mass, carrying two fighter jets, crashed from an altitude of nearly 100 meters into an apartment block and a nearby orphanage, burning half of it to the ground in the Siberian city of Irkutsk. I and other Family members immediately contacted officials to see how we could be of help.

They told us that 140 children from the orphanage had been evacuated to another location for psychological rehabilitation, and they asked for our help. At the rehabilitation center, we were told that God had indeed wrought a miracle on the day of the accident: Shortly before the crash, almost all of the children in the orphanage had left for an excursion. The few who remained behind either died or were injured. However, many of the orphans who hadn't been at the scene had been traumatized by the loss of their friends and home.

Being so close to Christmas, the staff at the rehabilitation center agreed that if we could instill within the traumatized children the joy of this special season, it would go a long way in helping them to look ahead, instead of back to the horrible accident.

We put together and performed a Christmas show packed full of happy songs and a skit illustrating the true meaning of the first Christmas. The children danced and sang along with us, and smiles radiated from their faces. All the children asked Jesus to enter into their hearts and lives, and to be their Best Friend—now and forever.

After our program, we spent time talking with the children who were interested and left them with color pictures of Jesus for their walls and Christian children's stories for their encouragement. Certainly Jesus and His love proved once again to be the best psychological rehabilitation in times of despair and trauma.

As we left, most of the children followed us out the door, to wave goodbye and to thank us for coming. Their smiles were all the thanks we needed!

50 young souls!

SOUTH AMERICA

(From *Mercy and Jonathan, Jonas and Ama*.) We recently went on a trip with the pastor of a small, missionary-minded evangelical church to spend three days at their mission outpost in a small mining town (population: 1,500).

We arrived Saturday afternoon, and

promptly went door-to-door, passing out specially prepared invitations for our Christmas children's program that we had planned for the next morning. Most of the homes were very poor, and the children were running around outside, unkempt and ragged.

Sunday morning at 10 A.M. sharp, coming down the street was a procession of beaming kids—some wearing their best Sunday clothes and others in their dirty rags. Soon we had 50 expectant children, most of whom knew little or nothing of the Gospel. They had never seen a flannelgraph before and sat captivated as we shared scene after scene of the Christmas story. We taught them motion songs and took them outside to play some games that we looked up in the RPMs (with all the neighborhood watching). Then we showed them the *Treasure Attic* program "My Best Friend." By this time, the kids had been with us for four hours and still wanted more, so we told them they could come back for more videos later in the afternoon. We gave them Christmas activity pages and accompanied them to their homes to give each family a "Journey to Bethlehem" game. This gave us a chance to meet the parents, so that the church can do follow-up later.

At 5:00 they were back for more *Treasure Attics*. Later that evening we were surprised to see a whole row of them return for the Sunday night worship service. Once again the next morning they were at the door of the church when we opened it for the morning prayer meeting! By the time we were walking towards the bus stop to return home, parents and children alike were coming out of their houses to thank us and to tell us good-bye. These very special 50 souls were definitely the highlight of our Christmas season!

Letter-writing contest

PORTUGAL

(From *Barz and Sammy*.) While in a shopping mall, I saw a big Christmas tree, and on the side there was a stack of paper and a sign that read: "Santa letter-writing contest!" The best letter would be rewarded. I filled one out, and took some home for the kids. I felt compelled to do this because this supermarket used to help us in the past; however, for some time it had been difficult to approach them. Since I know the director's name, I addressed my letter to Jesus, asking Him to touch the director's heart to help us for Christmas. At home, Sammy (10) also felt inspired to write a letter, which I mailed.

I honestly wondered if anything would happen. But something did! A week later, we got a phone call from the supermarket. The secretary complimented Sammy on the nice letter he had written (Sammy hadn't asked for toys or anything, but simply wished Santa a Happy Christmas). They wanted to know how many kids we had and their ages, as they're going to prepare Christmas presents for them and donated groceries! PTL!

to share the reason for the season of love!

Tape blast and Christmas banquet! MEXICO

(From Jason and Cedar:) This month boomed with a tapenensing explosion that carried us to 38 different cities and towns in four states, spanning two time zones. Our Home's original goal was to get out 3,000 tapes. That looked a bit scary at the onset of our Christmas push, since it was our Home's first Christmas here in Mexico. However, the Lord really helped us, and we ended up getting out 4,341!

One highlight was the Christmas banquet, which the Guadalajara Homes jointly hosted. God bless Cush and Zara for their labors of love in tirelessly working throughout November and December to secure contacts to donate the large amounts of food, drinks, toys and other items that were needed to feed the over 2,000 people who attended.

Two TV stations covered the event, as well as two city newspapers. The TV stations aired highlights of our Family banquet, as well as clips of interviews with some Family members, in the evening news on Christmas Day. One local paper published a very good article which read: "The Family attends to 1,800 people," and had a picture of us giving away food. The food line lasted approximately six hours, and the Homes did puppet shows, sang Christmas songs, etc. As a grand finale, we led nearly 600 people to the Lord at the close of the day!

Chinese pageant CHINA

(From Ben and Dove:) The administration at the school where we teach kindergarten, knowing we are Christians, asked us to put on a Christmas pageant for the student body and teaching staff—a crowd of about 500 people! Our play was taken directly from the *Treasure Attic* "Christmas Friends," and for our program we photocopied the story of the first Christmas from the Bible in comic strip form, plus the lyrics to all the songs, and a message explaining how Christmas, above all, is Jesus' birthday.

Also, we were able to show each of our classes this video several times, and they flipped over it. They sang "Come and See Jesus" in Chinese so loud and wholeheartedly that the whole school could hear it! Then we and our recently saved teaching assistant explained about giving our hearts to Jesus like the little shepherd boy in the video. Then we asked who would like to give their heart to Jesus.—Not one refused! They were each given a little red heart and one by one, walked up and placed it at baby Jesus' feet. Each child received a full-color booklet in Chinese with games and activities, explaining further the story and true meaning of Christmas.

The kindergarten principal has become a close friend and turned-on Christian. For Parents' Day in her department, she's going to have the Christmas *Treasure Attic* playing on a large TV, so all the parents and relatives

who come can clearly see it. She will have Matthew 19:14 ("Suffer the little children, and forbid them not to come unto Me: for of such is the Kingdom of Heaven."), posted in large letters around the entrance hall to the kindergarten as well.

If you are thinking of what you can send to the work in China, by far the most fruitful thing, besides coming yourself, is to continue praying for the Lord's Word and love to reach the hundreds and hundreds of millions of precious souls in this country. Your prayers have done mighty things!

Sponsored Christmas storybooks

TAIWAN

(From Abe and Mercy:) After our twins arrived (see *Grapevine* # 24), our lives became busier than ever. With Christmas approaching, we prayed for ways to make the time we had for outreach to be the most fruitful and the Lord gave Mercy the idea to ask our friends to sponsor the new Christmas storybooks, so we could give them away to orphanages and centers for the handicapped. The response was overwhelming!

Within a few weeks we had secured sponsorship for hundreds of books, and received additional gifts for our work. It provided an excellent opportunity to follow up on our friends, and many thanked us for giving them a chance to do something meaningful for others. Others not only gave themselves, but asked their friends to give and collected money for us. When Mercy went to the bank to pay some bills, the lady at the counter said, "Oh, I heard you want to give books to needy children. Please let me be part of it. I want to help as well." It pays to listen to the Lord's voice and follow through on what He says to do!

Our tools are hits

MEXICO

(From Jason and Cedar:) One of our teams sold a number of Christmas tapes to a store for the purpose of reselling them alongside other secular Christmas tapes. Sometime later, one of our teams happened upon this same store and found our tapes displayed in the store's glass showcase. For the few minutes our team was in the store, they observed that out of the half dozen or so Christmas tapes available, the customers chose our *Sing a Song of Joy* in Spanish over all the other tapes for sale!

While visiting a small town on a road trip this Christmas, a Christian man said that he wanted to give us a special Christmas message. He gave us three photocopied pages of typed text, which he was very proud to share with us. After our witnessing team had regrouped in the van, I started to read this Christmas message, only to discover that it was the text from the back of our "Dear Loretta" Christmas poster! Our line is surely going out to all the Earth!

Christmas program

THAILAND

(From ASCRO:) Since the *Heart to Heart* team was quite busy preparing for the India concerts, we geared our Christmas program towards selected friends and supporters from the Homes in Bangkok, and not as a fundraiser. About 240 people showed up at a very nice hotel which hosted our program. A top friend of ours was the guest of honor. A surprise guest, a very famous singer in Thailand, came up and sang a song, dedicating it to our friend. The evening went very well and was a success, PTL!

Performances and souls

TAIWAN

(From the *Whitewaves Home*:) Three Homes worked together to get our Christmas singing team ready. Our goal was to take a team over the mountains to the east side of Taiwan to sing at some of the large hospitals and institutions there. After an eight-hour trip, we arrived in Hualien and were happy to find our provisioned hotel. The next day we sang for the Mennonite Handicapped Kids Center, a Mennonite hospital, and a Catholic school. One doctor sponsored a set of videos for the handicapped kids center, and a local bakery donated 200 mooncakes. We received an invitation to sing in a big Buddhist hospital run by Tsu Chi, the Chinese "Mother Teresa" of Taiwan. We were filmed and covered by the local newspaper.

Our next invitation was to a nursing home run by the Catholic Sisters of the Holy Cross, some of whom came here thirty years ago from Switzerland. Some of the Sisters were crying, and the Lord touched everyone's heart that day. While singing "Silent Night" in English and Chinese, two of the Sisters came up and joined us, and then sang this well-known carol in German.

Further south on the island was a Presbyterian hospital founded by a Canadian missionary who had come to Taiwan nearly 100 years ago. Here the aboriginal peoples are from the Bunun and Paiwan tribes. They are darker skinned than the predominant Han Chinese, and the women are famous for their beauty, singing and dancing ability. We sang at the entrance of the hospital, drawing a big crowd of people who sang along with us. In two other cities, we performed for handicapped children, nursing homes, kindergartens and schools.

Our final day was spent at the main entrance of the largest hospital, performing during the lighting of their Christmas tree. Guess what song they chose for the occasion?—Our version of "Jingle bells" from *Christmas Treasures*. We had everyone join in, and formed a long train of kindergarten kids wending their way through the crowd that stopped to watch us at the hospital entrance. In all, we won over 1,000 souls and distributed over 2,000 Chinese Christmas tracts as well as other Christmas lit and tools! ●

movie ratings

Movies Rated for Senior Teens and Up

EDGE, THE (1997)

Anthony Hopkins, Alec Baldwin

Adventure/character study involving three men struggling for survival in the wilderness. Good points for discussion on jealousy and the real values of life. Sensitive viewers should beware of some graphic and unpleasant scenes involving a bear.

Movies Rated for JETTs and Up

GEORGE OF THE JUNGLE (1997)

Brendan Fraser, Leslie Mann

Spoof on "Tarzan," based on an old cartoon series, starring a clumsy but tender-hearted "king of the jungle." Sweet story and good lessons, although it also contains foolishness.

TITANIC (1997)

Leonardo DiCaprio, Kate Winslet

Drama taking place on the famous ship's ill-fated voyage. Absorbing character studies, exciting scenes, and a good message throughout. Over three hours long.

Non-Recommended Movies

EQUINOX (Matthew Modine; 1993)

MARY SHELLY'S FRANKENSTEIN (Robert DeNiro, Kenneth Branagh; 1994)

MY BEST FRIEND'S WEDDING (Julia Roberts, Dermot Mulroney, Cameron Diaz; 1997)



movie reviews

MY BEST FRIEND'S WEDDING

(Jesus speaking:) I would not recommend this movie as a time of entertainment or relaxation, for it does not minister Godliness. The Evil One is trying to infiltrate in every possible way, spreading his seeds of selfishness and possessiveness through any means available to him, and he does so in this movie, which appears to be wrapped in such a pretty package.

This movie is dangerous, for it gives a subtle message of jealousy, and that it is okay to act in deceit and hurtful ways, as long as it is based on so-called love. This is the *world's* idea of love. True, jealousy often accompanies intense feelings of love and emotion, and that is why it is associated with love, but My love rises above jealousy and fights for the victory. My love is honest, giving, sharing, even to your own hurt. My love prefers the happiness of others to your own.

The Enemy tries to prove to My children that My love cannot work—that it is futile to share, for it is much more painful. He promotes the idea that a cozy life, with only room for two, without the sharing and sacrifices that true love brings, is the ideal. I do not approve of this poor girl's actions. ●



Re: SGA/FGA parties

In *Grapevine #21*, Paulo and Nina (South America) asked how come teens/YAs/SGAs have parties separate from the FGAs. Yes, we're meant to break down the walls of disunity, but that doesn't mean teens shouldn't like getting together for a rah-rah party, or God knows what they do in their parties in South America, ha! I personally enjoy partying with the FGAs—they're FUN! But I do enjoy some things the FGAs don't, and I'm sure there are some things the adults enjoy that we don't! But, of course, there should also be parties to join and unite everyone (teens and FGAs)!

—TEEN GAL, ASCRO

Re: Open letter to young people

Sweet Maria (FGA in Russia), your loving words of appreciation in the *Grapevine* made our day! (See *Grapevine #30*.) Thank you for taking your precious time to write to us young people all around the world; it's amazing what a few words of love and appreciation can do. We'd like to take this opportunity to tell all our first generation pals that we really love you. Although we might be different and act weird in many ways, we don't mean harm.

Thank you, dear parents in the Lord, for being who you are. We are so blessed! We can see that you're really fighting to get along with us, trying to speak our language, and being so understanding and not giving up on us. We know that you fight as much as we do to build a bridge between generations, and we do appreciate it.—And although it seems we never see it, we do!

—SHARON STARLIGHT (TEEN) AND TABITHA (SGA), BRAZIL ●



Inspection and daily walks with Dad

—BY GABE

As you all know, Dad loved to go on daily walks for his exercise and get-out times. Oftentimes he would go on inspection throughout our property and into people's rooms to check that everything was safe and secure, and to make sure that people were happy and comfortable in their work setup.

On one such "inspection round" with Dad, when we were living in the Philippines, we were walking down a cement sidewalk which led to the driveway of our Home. The walls were made of cement, and there was a cement ceiling above the walkway; basically there was cement on all sides except where you entered and exited the walkway.

In a crack in the cement, right in front of Dad, was a pretty little periwinkle with beautiful purple petals, on the end of what seemed to be a thriving, sturdy green stem. Dad paused and stopped to look at this periwinkle, and was amazed at how well it was doing under such adverse conditions. There seemed to be no soil or water causing it to thrive the way it was. After staring at the periwinkle for a while and admiring its beauty, Dad said, "Isn't that a beautiful illustration of a dedicated Christian? They grow stalwart and beautiful under difficult and trying conditions."

Those few words from Dad and that simple illustration has been an inspiration to me over the years. Maybe the Lord has you in a difficult situation or what appears to be a difficult position; maybe the hardships seem to be more than you can bear; maybe your tests and trials seem overwhelming. Well, that's usually what the Lord has to allow in the lives of His dedicated soldiers—to be in difficult and trying conditions—that their faith may be strengthened.

Another day when Dad was out for his daily walk, he came across a rock wall. Out of the rock wall grew another beautiful flower. Dad paused and said, "Let this be an illustration to you of our witnessing. Out of what seems to be the hardest and stony hearts, with a little love and patience, beauty can spring forth."

Dad was one for always seeing beauty in what others might consider a cold, stony, hard wall. He loved to see the Lord's hand in everything and spiritual illustrations in God's creation. As the verse says, "For the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead" (Rom 1:20). ●

kidbits

more little blessings ...

❖ Masaru, 2nd child, born to Gracia Pioneer on September 28th.

❖ Katherine, 9th child, born to Ester and Eric the Red on October 2nd.—USA

❖ Aeryn Ashley, 3rd child, born to Joan and Richard on October 31st.—North America

❖ Cherise Liana, 4th child, born to Shellena and Gideon on October 31st.—Romania

❖ Baby girl (no name given), 9th child, born to Mercy and Matthew on November 2nd.—Taiwan

❖ Joseph, 8th child, born to Gentleness and Josh Beloved on November 3rd.—Japan

❖ Casey, 4th child, born to Victoria and Mark Little on November 3rd.—Australia

❖ Akari, 7th child, born to Joanna and Isaac on November 11th.—Japan

❖ Loren Godfrey, 1st child, born to Spring and Godfrey on November 15th.—USA

❖ Timothy Robin, 7th child, born to Sarah and Jonathan on November 16th.—Japan

❖ Mikayla Lynn, 1st child, born to Genty on December 28th.—North America

Friendly factoid

--(From the *Grapevine* editors:)
A big thank you—and a hug and kiss—to each one of you who sent us Christmas and New Year's greetings! We pray that you had a wonderful Christmas, and that the coming New Year is the best yet! We love you all! ●

“What God did for our large family!”



—“When we thought we could never venture out on our own ...”

TAIWAN

(From *Abe and Mercy*.) Living on the mission field with a family of nine, mostly young children, and lacking any outstanding gifts or talents, we often wonder how the Lord will supply our needs, yet He never ceases to amaze us with His miraculous supply. Here are two testimonies to encourage other large families to step out by faith.

When we first opened our Home two years ago, our only means of transportation were two old bicycles. Later the Lord supplied a scooter. As our family grew from eight to eleven, with the arrival of a baby boy and next a set of twin girls, we really needed a car. Off I went to driving school and received my license, and soon afterwards the Lord supplied a 12-year-old small car through a friend.

It served its purpose for a while, but for some reason the children didn't like being packed like sardines into a car with no aircon in subtropical summer temperatures. We prayed desperately for a van that would seat all comfortably. We searched and saved up what we could and often checked in with the Lord, but He never seemed to say “go for it” when we were eager to take the leap. Then one day a close friend came by and said he wanted to talk to us about something. To our surprise he told

us that he wanted to buy a brand new van that would be ours to use as long as we stayed in the country. We were speechless! This dear man not only footed the bill for the van, but also covered all the insurance and tax bills!

After our twin girls were born, we didn't know where we would get the needed equipment such as strollers, walkers, etc., but the Lord came through in an unexpected way. It started out when our eldest daughter, Esther, won first prize in a newspaper Father's Day writing contest. To pick up the prize meant traveling to the capital, about 350km away. The Lord told us to do the seemingly crazy thing and spend the money for airplane tickets to go pick up the prize, which actually wasn't worth very much. While there, we met a man whose company exports baby equipment. We explained a bit about our work, and exchanged name cards.

After returning home, Mercy followed up on this man by phone, and told him our needs. A few weeks later four huge boxes were delivered to our door by truck.—Two twin strollers, walkers, bouncers, Johnny-jump-ups, baby toys, baby bathtubs, etc. Everything was brand new and of export quality. The Lord sure works in mysterious ways. All we can do is praise Him for His goodness!

needed a second Home in the city of Madras (now renamed Chennai). We had been wanting to open a Home ever since the Charter came out, but due to lack of funds (we were usually in childcare ministries, and so weren't able to gather many contacts) and not getting other personnel to work with, we gave up the idea for the time being. We didn't think that we could ever venture out on our own!

However, we finally took the step of faith. We only had \$35 to start with, and thankfully, with the help of a friend we found a small apartment. The Family Home gave us a trundle bed, a small table and a few pots. Our friend loaned us the rent in advance, gave us a couch, and lent us the use of a water purifier and a gas stove.

Through provisioning the Lord faithfully supplied: ceiling fans, an iron, kitchenware, chairs, mattresses, a brand new TV and VCR, a computer and printer, a free printing contact, etc. Most of our food is provisioned; household cleaning agents and disinfectants are also provisioned. Our expenses are mainly rent, utilities, transport and some food such as milk, eggs and meat.

With the help of our deaf catacomber, we have been able to have a team out for a couple of hours in the afternoon. The Lord has done many miracles in helping us to get out tools and meet sweet people. There were times of desperation, such as the time when we didn't have any money to buy eggs for the next day's breakfast. But while playing on the beach with the kids and witnessing that day, we found \$25. TYJ!

A few months later, YA Adam joined us and then John and Kalyani, a national couple. Now we are looking for a bigger house! All this to say that if the Lord could do it for our family, He can do it for anyone! He never fails! ●

Urgent prayer request

Paulo, one of our main translators at BRALIM, had a serious accident on January 13th. While riding a bike, he decided to hold on to a passing truck, and when the truck reached the curb, Paulo got thrown on the side of the road. It was a miracle that at that moment an ambulance was passing by and immediately picked him up.

He is presently in the hospital in very critical condition. Doctors say that his skull is fractured and his brain is damaged, and they suspect if he survives, there will be some mental and physical paralysis, as well as blindness. His collarbone and right knee are also broken. Not much can be done for him medically, and, as the doctors have put it, his life is in God's hands.

Please pray for a miracle, that Paulo's condition will stabilize and that he will survive without any permanent paralysis or physical or mental damage. Pray against the clot in his head and internal bleeding, and that he will recover his sight. For Paulo and his family's faith and encouragement, and against condemnation.

Please also pray for the rest of the BRALIM team who are in the middle of the Feast pubs translating and printing push and are having some difficulties with their equipment; as well as for the health and safety of our other NPCs and LIMs who are working overtime to get out the Feast pubs.

INDIA

(From *Samuel and Sarah*.) Along with our six children (ages nine to nine months), we pio-

Thanking . . . —for your spirit story contributions

Matthew (of Claire, China), Jason Free (USA), Marie (ASCRO), Nikki (Philippines), Jonathan C. (Japan), Michael Piano (Thailand), Tom (of Esther, Slovakia). ●

From Mama... Prophecy Questions?

Dear Family,

I love you very much! It thrills my heart to hear, via the personal letters you write me and the testimonies you send in, how so many of you have donned the new garment of prophecy and are hearing from the Lord and bringing Him into your daily lives more and more.

I know that as you are growing in this area and practice using this new weapon, most likely different questions about prophecy will come up, which you will feel you need further understanding of or counsel about. I've received several such questions over the past months, and I'd like to address as many of your questions as possible in a GN. So, if you have questions about prophecy, please send them in so that you, as well as the rest of the Family, can get answers and counsel about these issues.

Before sending in your questions, however, I'd like to ask that you please read over the GNs and FSMs with questions and answers about prophecy which we've already sent out (“Prophecy Questions You May Have Always Wanted to Ask,” ML#3019 [GN 655], #3035 [GN 667]; #3036 [GN 668] and “Tips on Prophecy Meetings, Part 1,” FSM 317). Please make sure that yours is a new question that hasn't already been covered in a previous publication. Thank you! I love you!

Love, *Mama*

A=Adults; Y=YAs
T=Teens; C=Children

new disciple

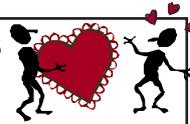
FIND-A-FRIEND



- ❖ Ben (of Tirzah), Christia, Andrew and Pheobe—Natacha would like to get in contact with you. E-mail: robinsperch@ibm.net.
- ❖ Felicia Michelle wants to contact Josh Bruni (Canada) and Gina (of Gabe and Serena, Australia) E-mail: KenLara@online.RU. Add: 630058 Russia, Novosibirsk - 58.
- ❖ James and Dove, someone is trying to contact you, but they forgot to give their name. Please contact them via e-mail: sfbhome@aol.com.
- ❖ Tim (of Joe and Rosemarie), please contact Amanda at e-mail: gi32304@glo.be.
- ❖ Polish Matthew, please contact Mary Farmer (Russian) through the Hungarian ABM to the Gypsy Home.
- ❖ Gideon (Zack Attack) would like to get in touch with Silas, Cheer and Jeffrey. Add: Sean McGilvra, 9051-C Siempre Viva Road, Suite MX052-325, San Diego, CA 92173. E-mail: missionaryfam@infosel.net.mx.
- ❖ Madi would like to contact Ivanna (of Rufus and Dulce), E-mail: missionaryfam@infosel.net.mx. Tel: 52 (73) 16-23-57.
- ❖ Joan (formally Serena), our letter to you was returned. Please e-mail Jerry and Vicky at: Clef@ksts.seed.net.tw. ●

PACRO	A	Y	T	C	Tot
New CM disciples					
FM to CM			2		2
Ex-members to CM			1		1
Ex-members to FM	1				1
New FM disciples					
CM to FM	5	1	1	8	15
CM to ex-member	2	1	1		4
NACRO	A	Y	T	C	Tot
New CM disciples					0
FM to CM	6	1	3	9	19
Ex-members to CM		1	1		2
Ex-members to FM	3		3	8	14
New FM disciples	1				1
CM to FM	1				1
CM to ex-member	1	3	2		6
EURCRO	A	Y	T	C	Tot
New CM disciples	5	5			10
FM to CM	9		6	24	39
Ex-members to CM	2		2	6	10
Ex-members to FM	2	1			3
New FM disciples					0
CM to FM	7			4	11
CM to ex-member	4	1	3		8
FM to ex-member	4	4	2	8	18
ASCRO	A	Y	T	C	Tot
New CM disciples	1				1
FM to CM					
Ex-members to CM					
Ex-members to FM	2			5	7
New FM disciples					
CM to FM					
CM to ex-member					
SACRO	A	Y	T	C	Tot
New CM disciples	5			7	12
FM to CM	1		4		5
Ex-members to CM	1		1		2
Ex-members to FM					
New FM disciples	2		3	2	7
CM to FM	1	1	2	4	8
CM to ex-members	3	1	1		5
FM to ex-members		1			1
All Area Totals	A	Y	T	C	Tot
New CM disciples	11	5	0	7	23
FM to CM	16	1	15	33	65
Ex-members to CM	3	1	5	6	15
Ex-members to FM	8	1	3	13	25
New FM disciples	3		3	2	8
CM to FM	14	2	3	16	35
CM to ex-member (leaving Family)	10	6	7		23
FM to ex-member (leaving Family)	4	5	2	8	19

Valentine's Day Idea



Grapes of Thankfulness

We wrote the names of everyone in our Home on pieces of paper and put the guys' names in one bowl and the girls' in another. Then everyone picked a name from the opposite sex. Our commission?—Be "Jesus" to our person for the day by anonymously showing them the Lord's love in some way!

By the end of the day, most everyone had received something special: a little love gift, a special snack, a loving Jesus picture beautifully colored and framed, a Valentine's Day card with a picture of Jesus on the front; extra help on an unfinished job, laundry washed, a room cleaned, etc. I, as did many others, got the most special Valentine's gift anyone could ever want—a love letter straight from Jesus, given in prophecy!

—K. (YA), ASCRO ●

A big thank you to Tabi, Tim and Betty for all their help and dedication these past two years, for their love and joy in sacrificing to make our small Home happy and able to function. We couldn't have made it without you! We love you so much, our friends forever!

—ABE AND LIBBY, ENGLAND

We want to thank all the dear brethren who have come through our Home and have been so sweet and loving. It might seem a sacrifice to house, feed and share our provisioning with our dear traveling "pilgrims," but it is also a great feeling to be able to be a help and receive appreciation! We do get our share manyfold in return!! Thank you for your encouragement, donations and fellowship, and also for letting us know in advance about your passing through so we can coordinate! WLY!

—ABI (FOR YOUR SL FAMILY), SWITZERLAND

Peculiar People



We (Valour and Trust with three children) are now back at our post in the Ukraine after a three-month witnessing and follow-up trip to Scandinavia. We are so thankful for all the precious friends and Family members who took us in, fed us, helped us, supported us and made our trip not only possible but pleasurable!

(Editor's note: Here were listed the names of 50 of our wonderful Family members, which, for want of space, we could not include. But please know that you are appreciated!)

Thank you to David (of Johanna) for helping me to stay in the Family, and to the Home in Croatia for taking me in. I love you all so much and wouldn't be here today if it wasn't for all the love you showed for me while I was there. I will never forget all of you.

—FEMALE (18), FROM CANADA ●