

A CHRISTMAS GREETING

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Christmas, that wonderful time of the year, has come once again. This is the season we celebrate the greatest gift of love ever given to us. A time when we review all that our year has offered, and we look forward to all that is ahead. We here want to thank you, dear Family, for all that you have given and are giving to others during this Christmas season, for all the love you are showing, and the message of Jesus you are sharing with them.

A very happy Christmas to all of you! And may this be the best Christmas yet!

Love,

Your Free Zine team

"Christmas is for Love, and Jesus is Christmas! He's the reason for it all, and Here in Heaven we simply enjoy Him. Just being in His presence is Christmas, as we feel His Love, and His warmth, and His light, and His life, and His peace, and His joy, and His tenderness. We love Him and love each other as we sing His praises. It's a time of love and praise! Angels and saints sing and dance before the Lord! We all join in, singing and dancing and whirling and twirling and praising and loving and hugging and kissing in one big happy praise love feast, as the Heavenly symphony of God plays on!

"We're all looking forward to that day, when we will all sit down and celebrate Christmas together in Heaven. When each soul is finally Home and not one is missing, that is going to be the Christmas of all Christmases! And that's the one that Jesus and all of us up Here are all looking forward to! That's the Christmas that Jesus is saving up for! That's the reason the first Christmas took place, and that is the reason we have Christmas at all—so we can gather each one into the Heavenly Kingdom."

(Excerpts from "Christmas in Heaven" ML #3076, Vol. 23).

A CHRISTMAS WORD FROM DAD

VOICE OF FOREVER

I heard a voice call from the winter sky,
"Watch, oh, child! Thy Savior is nigh."
The voice of angels sang through the air,
A promise of hope, an answer to my prayers.
But where must I find the newborn babe?
I am only a child, I know not where He is laid.
I cried in despair, but amidst trickle tears
The night's deep voice broke clear,
"Look to the star above, little one,
"To find the tiny Love Who's come."

Lifting my staff to help me stand,
I stumbled o'er the dusty land.
Each step pained my weakened frame;
'Tis but a sorrow, for I am lame.
Yet out in the cold and darkened night
An infant beckons me in the starlight.
My heart broken and marred with grief
Finds only a touch of hope, to which I cling.

Pressed by the dream of my Savior's birth,
Till it seemed to lighten the very Earth.
Still I could not hold my head high,
For the howling wind bustled and sighed.
How can my heart falter upon this path,
When the dawning of new life I have?
"Walk on, child, through the mist of tears.
"Though thy way be hazy, believe not the fears."

A glow softly permeated the tiny gaps;
The light of peace, and salvation perhaps.
My heart pounded with profuse rumble;
The Lord of Ages lay tender and humble.
No sign of grandeur save a lowly manger.
"Lord, who is to protect Thee from danger?"
I asked in concerned thought.
To lose Him now, I wish this not.

My tiny sob carried on the breathless air,
Moving closer to see His beauty so fair.
His little body, so small and frail,
Did He come so love may prevail?
I knelt as silent tears slid down my cheek.
"Christ child, so precious and meek,
"Grant me health that I may live for Thee.
"To follow Thy path, where'er it may be."

His eyes fluttered in slumber's bliss.
The coo of His mother's song, her only wish:
"Fair Baby, follow thy heart, where'er it leads,
"Bring hope to all, despite their creed."
A simple prayer, though sent from the soul
Of a mother and her dreams untold.
Still, as I knelt a Heavenly light shone upon me,
Healing my limbs, and setting my soul free.

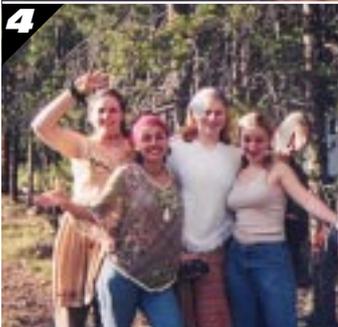
—Chandra (20), FZ



Our team of twelve—Patrick, Christine, Paul, Meeka (21), Nina (20), Andre (18), Maria (18), Lydia (16), Jenna (15), Val (15), Pavel (14), and Manny (5)—traveled some 800 miles from Portland, Oregon to the distant mountains in Montana where the Rainbow Gathering was being held.

D I G G I N

L I F E



1. The bride & groom at the wedding
2. Christina with the first aid station
3. Tim, Patrick, Christina

4. Meeka, Jenna, Cinders, Nina
5. Manny

R A I N B O W

From the Portland Team

Style

The forested mountains were ten miles away from the nearest town, with a grand population of 30, and 20 miles from the next biggest town—population 300. We were literally WAY OUT in the boonies, and we survived for three weeks!

Water was the big deal. One day all the guys did a water run and it took them the entire day, so from then on we just looked around for people who were giving out water. Usually it would take us a couple of hours to find water and lug back 25 gallons to our camp. There was no other water there except a little muddy creek that was undrinkable. There were also no bathroom or shower facilities whatsoever, so it was quite a trip just to stay semi-clean.

It took us two days to get our camp set up, with our inventive additions—tables and shelves constructed with sticks, etc. Our kitchen was on one side, which everyone would mistake for a food kitchen and would ask us for food and drinks, and next to it was our “spiritual kitchen.” On the other side of that we had a little first aid center which “Mother Love” (Christine) ran. (Almost all of us took “rainbow” names while there.) We also had a big campfire in the front. Well, it wasn’t that big, but we did the best we could.

PREPARATIONS

Jenna: We folded millions of tracts! We provisioned tons of boxes of canned food, enough to last us till the cows come home!

Maria: We designed about eight poster boards with radical messages, and prepared our own “rainbow” wardrobe, with the help of thrift stores.

Meeka: There were hours of prep work! We searched through all the MO Books for pictures and info for the poster boards. And we also did some research on the Web and at the library. But mainly it was a lot of prayer and prophecies.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

Lydia: When we got there everyone was greeting us and welcoming us home!

Jenna: The thought running through my head was, “Man, how am I ever gonna fit in?”

Meeka: I’d already been to other gatherings, so I was used to the whole scene. The Lord gave us a perfect spot right in front and on the main path. Everyone was very nice and helped us lug all our stuff from the vehicles to our spot, and then helped us set up camp.

Maria: We had a cool set up. We had like a whole room/ tarp set up with the poster boards hanging in it, and we called it our “spiritual kitchen.” It was a great attraction!

A TYPICAL DAY’S LIFE

Jenna: We’d usually get up at 11 AM. After scrounging around for breakfast, we’d have a Bible study at 12 PM, and people were invited to sit in on it. After that we’d make our way to the “trading circle,” which was like the shopping center of the gathering, except you trade things instead of buy them.

Meeka: The trading circle is like the main event of the day for those attending. But it's sad, because it's still material worship, even though they don't use money.

Jenna: Acid and weed were the only guaranteed money there. We'd tract at the trading circle a lot, as it was a great way to meet people.

Maria: Every night we'd gather around our campfire and sing. It was freezing, so people would come by to get warm and hear the songs, which were all about love and God, the two things everyone there believed in. We got great responses from our songs.

Meeka: As soon as we woke up, there would be people waiting for us to witness and talk to them. Throughout the whole gathering we basically didn't have to go anywhere to find people, they always came to us.

EVENTFUL PECULIARITIES

Maria: Oh, I have to tell you about the "shitter." (No, I'm not being foul, that's what it's really called!) Seeing as there were no bathroom facilities Paul dug a hole about four feet deep, and then laid logs across it so you could squat on them. Huge logs were also stacked up for walls, like a mini log cabin. On one side the wall was made of a hanging tarp, and the other side, the "door," was open. Even though primitive, it was cool, because before that you had to hike up a hill, find a tree to squat behind, and then hope you were alone.

Also something that took getting used to were the nudists. At first there were only a few people going naked, but more and more "bared all" as the days went on. Pretty soon, we were like, "Come on people, we're never gonna be able to enjoy seeing anyone naked again!" Ha!

Jenna: There was mention of the kitchens earlier, but when we say "kitchen," we mean a tarp with a big fire in it, on which people cook up big pots of food. Every evening we'd go to a different kitchen, as there were tons of them, for our dinner. Most kitchens served vegetarian or "vegan," which is food with no salt, no dairy products, and no meat—basically, very bland food.

Sometimes in our search for dinner we'd have to sit for hours till the food was ready, and then we'd all stand in line, and hope that by the time we got there, there'd be some food left. If not, we'd have to hike through the woods till we found another kitchen. Usually we'd leave on a hunt for dinner at around 6:30 PM, and it could sometimes take us till 11 PM to get back to our camp.

Maria: Every evening around 7 PM, there was a "circle" where tons of people get together in the middle of a meadow about halfway down the trail and yell, "Circle!" tons of times. Basically they're yelling that they want food, and the kitchens would bring them huge containers of rice and beans, and try to serve the enormous throngs of people.

Every night there would be a drum circle, where everyone would play drums and dance around till dawn. Which explains our late reveille.

Oh, another cool thing was that someone on our team found a place just a 20-minute walk away, where there was a waist deep, strong flowing river. So, we'd go there to take our "showers" whenever we could. It was freezing, though!

Lydia: We had a very good reputation with all the Rainbow people, as well as the elders there. They all really loved our message and us. The only people that had a problem with us were the Christians.

Meeka: We had a picture of "Mystery Babylon" from "America the Whore" (ML#216), and a lot of the Christians would come by and tell us how offended they were with it, etc.

Then one day, the picture was gone. We thought, "Oh well, guess somebody just couldn't handle it, but it wasn't very nice of them to steal it!" And after that we thought nothing more of it. Three days later, we woke up, and the picture was hanging right back in its place!

We still don't know how it disappeared, so we refer to the incident as the "The Mysterious Missing of Mystery Babylon."

FRUIT TO TELL OF

Lydia: All in all, we got out about 17,000 tracts, 20 Bibles, and 88 *Treasures*.

Jenna: And we won 25 souls!

Maria: It was a very exciting time all around, and really gave us the vision for witnessing, because you don't have to be worried about what they'll think of you, or our doctrines, and how outlandish they are at times, they embrace them readily and even like us for our radical beliefs.

So, for all of you who haven't

1. Redhead Parade
2. Meeka making a table

3. Singing at a rainbow wedding
4. Clinders with John, a sheep



Maria: We also got out countless *Daily Rights* and *Activated* magazines.

Meeka: We met a lot of sweet sheep who we were able to feed and get turned on to living by faith. We have stayed in contact with them since the gathering, and some of them have come up to Portland to visit and fellowship with us, witness with us, and learn more about our life for the Lord.

been, but want to go to a gathering and experience all the thrills it brings, please come next year!

Blast from the Past

Those Days

COOL! All 40 of us FIT here!
PRAISE THE LORD!



Art by Evye

From Dawn (formerly Patience), Thailand

The year was 1974. By a miracle we had found a nice apartment in one of the nicest areas of Buenos Aires, Argentina-Barrio Norte.

We were able to move the Home from our previous old, substandard housing in a poor neighborhood, to this ritzy, conservative area. Our apartment house was quite classy, the kind that had only one spacious apartment on each floor. We were on the third floor, and in a short period of time we were squeezing about 40 people into an apartment that was meant to house a family of five and a maid or two.

In those days there were very few children, most of us were just in our early twenties. What we lacked in wisdom we made up for in enthusiasm and dedication! We would get out quite a few witnessing teams every day and we often would stay out very late, as Buenos Aires was

a town that had a very active nightlife, especially on the weekends.

For some reason we only had one set of front door keys to the apartment building. During the day there was a doorman at the front door, who would let us in, so we didn't need keys. But after a certain hour he went to bed and the door would be locked. So, when the teams would come home late at night, they had no way to get into the house. (There was no doorbell, intercom, etc.) So, we would toss pebbles up to the windows where the boys were sleeping, praying desperately that we wouldn't hit the windows of the tenants who lived below us. It was no easy task to even *find pebbles* in the middle of the city, so we would have to start our search several blocks from home. Then, as we were tossing the



pebbles we would call, "Brother, brother," trying to wake them up, and not our neighbors. This whole procedure could take a while, until we were finally let into the house. We viewed it as the final exciting challenge to end our day, and not really an inconvenience.

One fine summer morning I was on breakfast and had to go to the corner shop to buy eggs. Meanwhile, the rest of the Home was having their morning devotions and inspiration time. As I was heading on home with the eggs in hand, I turned the corner to enter the street where we lived, and walking towards our house I was horrified to hear loud strange sounds in deep voices shouting something like: "HOE-TOE BOR-ROE-TOE, AL-LA BA-TA-TA, KEE-TA-LA-BA-SURA!"

Since it was a hot day, and air-cons weren't common, the whole neighborhood had their windows open too, and everyone could easily partake of our sweet brethren's desperate crying out in tongues. You could've probably heard it in the many buses passing by on the main street, that had their windows wide open, too. Realizing that this had been going on for some weeks now, I quickly went to the shepherds and shared my early morning revelation.

When we had moved into the apartment we had fixed it up quite a bit, as it had been empty for a while. We also partitioned off a very large room to make it into about three smaller ones. These rooms turned into three bedrooms: one for a married couple, one for the single men, and one for the single girls.

One evening, after our nightly meeting, we were all in our rooms getting ready for bed. Suddenly there were loud knocks on the front door and in came two policemen, insisting to look around the house.

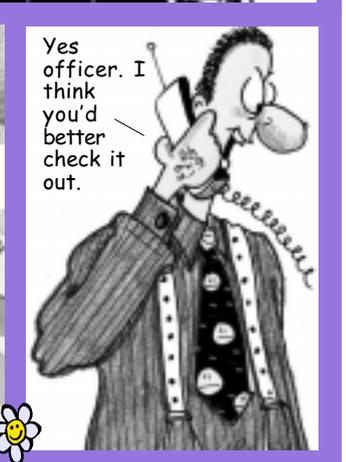
"There have been complaints from the neighbors," the police told us. "They said you are having wild parties and orgies here."

Not understanding why our neighbors would think that, we showed them around the apartment. After seeing our rooming situation they were satisfied and started to leave. On their way out of the girls' room, one of the police called the other's attention to a poster on the wall. They both looked at it and had a good laugh. It was an enlarged version of the cover of "Lovelight" (ML #307, Vol. 3), where the sun and the moon are making love.

"Oh, they like our poster," was my first reaction, "they must be sheep. I wish I could witness to them!" But they were on duty and had to go.

We found out the reason the neighbors were upset was because they didn't know that we had partitioned the large room off into smaller ones. They thought it was still one large room and at night could see inside. We obviously didn't close the curtains due to the heat (one lesson we learned that night). Anyway, they would see in one window and see a man and a woman together, and then see in the next and see several men, and in the third and see several women, and they thought we were all in one room, having a wild sex party! Ha! But there was nothing like that happening in those days.

And then, one fine day we received the letter "How to Survive in a Small Colony" (ML #326C, Vol.3). That was the beginning of the end of our exciting days all bunched up together in the exciting Home of "Las Heras." People started to move out and open up other Homes, and I'm sure the neighbors all heaved a big sigh of relief.



Postcard from Port Harcourt

By Tim E (22)

| <h2>Nigeria</h2> | | <h3>DRIVER'S LICENSE</h3> | | | | | | | | | |
|---|--|--|--|----------------------|--|-------------------|--|--|--|---------------|--|
| Expires: N/A (Up to officer) | | Number: 01 | | | | | | | | | |
| Condition: 2 | | <table border="1"> <tr> <th colspan="2">Explanation of Codes</th> </tr> <tr> <td>Condition:</td> <td>1 - Rarely at fault (local) May claim <i>juju</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>2 - Always at fault Liable to pay for time consumed</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Class:</td> <td>O - Oyibo (Prime customer. Your money keeps cops on the streets.)</td> </tr> </table> | | Explanation of Codes | | Condition: | 1 - Rarely at fault (local) May claim <i>juju</i> | | 2 - Always at fault Liable to pay for time consumed | Class: | O - Oyibo (Prime customer. Your money keeps cops on the streets.) |
| Explanation of Codes | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Condition: | 1 - Rarely at fault (local) May claim <i>juju</i> | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 2 - Always at fault Liable to pay for time consumed | | | | | | | | | | |
| Class: | O - Oyibo (Prime customer. Your money keeps cops on the streets.) | | | | | | | | | | |
| Class: 0 | | | | | | | | | | | |
|  | Address: | Shine Eyes Street 123 Port Harcourt, Nigeria | | | | | | | | | |
| | Date of Birth: | 13-09-1978 | | | | | | | | | |
| | Sex: | Not while driving | | | | | | | | | |
| | Height: | Hard to tell from photo | | | | | | | | | |
| | Eyes: | Present | | | | | | | | | |
| Issued: | | December Free Zine | | | | | | | | | |



Shine Your Eye When Driving in Nigeria

Since my last epistle, I've experienced several Nigerian traffic jams that made those of L.A., or even Bangkok look like synchronized swimming in comparison. I've also had the opportunity to experience, up close and personal, some of the planet's most ... well, unconventional drivers at work.

Being a fairly green driver myself, I try to observe the driving habits of more experienced drivers in order to improve my own skills. Yet every driver I've met here has just one major pearl of wisdom to share. To wit: "Shine your eye!" Which loosely translates as, "Look where you're going! Keep your eyes open!"

This is good advice, because if you don't, or even if you do but someone else doesn't, there's no telling what might happen.

In the advent of an accident for which you are responsible, being white is definitely not a winner when it comes to dealing with the authorities, or anybody for that matter.

However, if the blame for the accident cannot be pinned on you, for example: A large truck with an oversize load of bananas was reversing at a high rate of speed in the wrong lane, and trying to overtake while going around a blind corner without signaling, when it accidentally side swiped the vehicle you were in, and you were not even driving, etc., the offending party (the truck driver, in this case) would most likely attempt to get himself off the hook by blaming the accident on whoever it was that did *juju* (a voodoo curse) on him, thus causing him to have an accident.

Although this is pretty much your basic "the Devil made me do it" type excuse, and no one I know personally admits to using *juju* themselves, it seems it must be effective enough, as everyone uses it.

However, in the interest of objective reporting, I feel compelled to point out that despite what some of the local drivers may lack in the way of driving skills, they excel in the area of communication. Many American drivers for instance, would express their dismay at your having cut in front of them by honking loudly, or flashing a crude hand gesture requiring only one finger. But here in Port Harcourt, Nigeria, which is the main setting for the above

scenarios, a perturbed motorist will often take the time to express himself in a full sentence, such as, "Shine your eye now or I go scatter you for road!" Or if time is of the essence, a simpler, "May God punish you-o!" does just as nicely.

Sometimes this honest, clear, verbal expression of one's feelings makes all the difference!

Needless to say, driving here, or just being on the road for that matter, is something else! Besides watching out for other automobiles, one must be on the constant lookout for motorcycles, which are a very popular form of transportation, both personal and commercial.

Although I don't go out of my way to use public transportation, on occasion I am compelled to travel via *okada* (motorcycle for hire), which are sometimes nice for variety's sake, and definitely faster and more comfortable than "share taxis" (which could be defined as "a taxi you share with as many people as possible, that goes as slow as possible, for which you want to pay as little as possible). Still I cannot fully enjoy the *okada* experience, as it is my opinion that *okada* drivers, as a professional community, have got to be clinically blind. This is, of course, largely due to the fact that emission control has not yet been introduced here, thus we have some of the worst automobile pollution I have ever seen. This may be the reason why not many Nigerians feel the urge to smoke!

My point is, if after being in traffic on an *okada* for just ten minutes, my eyes are burning from smog to the point where I can hardly open them! How can I fully trust someone who's been driving in this environment all day, on a motorcycle, to see well enough to get me to my destination alive? Selah!

Just last week, a local speed maniac ran into our car (I was not driving!) with his motorcycle, causing a little

damage to our car and to his bike (pronounced ma-chine). No one was hurt, and since this is the first traffic accident of any kind that I have ever experienced, I guess I can't complain. Through this experience, I realized how easy it is to have an accident, and how good a job the Lord does of keeping us safe on the road. In the end, we were able to settle the issue with the help of a witness, and the *juju* excuse never even came up. Perhaps it doesn't apply to motorcyclists, just as many other rules of the road don't seem to apply to them!

Actually, this accident happened just as we were on our way to do some outreach, and was obviously an attack of the Devil, so I guess you could say the *juju* was on us, but the Lord was stronger with us. The happy ending is that we were able to get the car repaired for free, but that's a story for another day.

Despite some close calls, and the definite potential there is for worse accidents, the Lord has for the most part kept us safe, and promises to continue to do so if we stay close to Him and don't forget to do our part. So for God's sake, shine your eye! Amen?



dEAD

If you think you don't make a difference...

(Departed spirit speaking:) Hey! C'mon, N., we were all bad at one time. Everyone has their mistakes and their times of testing.

I'm a young man who was born in the System, and as a child,

I was a happy boy. But as I grew older and

as I became a teen like you, I started to

question life also. Oh man, it was much

more difficult than what you think! You

say, "Yeah, everybody's like that, but I'm

different. I'm not like the rest of you," but neither was I. Life

was so hard to cope with! My parents wanted me to be the "goody-goody guy," care for others,

become a doctor. Oh, man! Even the thought of that drove me crazy! I would hang out with girls and

the whole bit, and you may think it's so cool to have a System boyfriend and all, but really, they're never

sincere. That's why I got so fed up with the way I was living my life. It got to the point where I wanted

to kill myself!

But then along came the Family; they showed me real love.—They really cared! I decided to ask

Jesus in my heart, and my life changed. Well, about a month later, I was in a car accident and I didn't

make it. But just think what would have happened if that one person hadn't given me that tract and

taken the time to pray with me!

I came to Heaven and I thought, "Oh, my God! I can't live Here! This is not for me, I'm too bad!" So,

the Lord personally came and told me, "Look, I have forgiven you from all your sins. Come in and enjoy

My love!" Wow! That was enough for me. I

yielded and came in, and oh, how glad I

was! Because Heaven is beautiful and

there's a place for everyone!

And you know who brought me to

Jesus?—It was you! Thank you so much!

I'll be grateful to you forever! Keep bringing in the

souls forever! I love you so much and maybe I'll come

and talk to you again later. Sincerely, Tom. *(End of message.)*

mEN

I RECEIVED THIS MESSAGE AT A TIME WHEN I WAS FEELING VERY DISCOURAGED, AND HAD JUST GOTTEN SOME CORRECTION.

WHEN I PRAYED, THIS

IS WHAT I GOT. I

DIDN'T SPECIFICALLY

REMEMBER THE GUY,

BUT WHEN I ASKED

HIM IF I COULD

SHARE THIS HE

SAID, "GO

AHEAD! IT'LL

BE A HELP TO

OTHERS. IT'LL

ENCOURAGE

THEM!" SO I

HOPE THIS IS

AN ENCOUR-

AGEMENT. I

LOVE YOU

GUYS! KGFG!

tALKING

FROM N. (15), THAILAND

CHINESE MISCELLANEA

中國東西

From Stella (17, of Abe and Mercy), Taiwan

Have you ever wondered what life in China is like? Or perhaps you are moving to Asia for the first time? Maybe you recently received the call (yes, I mean the call!) to give your life as a missionary to China. Well, if any of this remotely applies to you, read on and be enlightened.

Disclaimer: The following does not represent an authoritative description of life and ministry in China, but merely the author's personal observations and viewpoints. Please bear in mind that regional and local conditions, circumstances, customs and habits vary greatly in China. In other words, things may turn out differently for you!

eating habits

Let's start with some of the peculiarities that go with this unique field. They say that by the time an average Chinese reaches his teens he can eat a 12-course banquet with a single chopstick. Just joking! In reality, the key to chopsticks is "practice makes perfect." There are many different ways of holding chopsticks and each area holds them differently, the point is to get the food in your mouth. Which brings us to the next subject ... food!

The Chinese are very religious when it comes to mealtime. Without fail the entire country grinds to a halt twice a day—at 12 PM and 6 PM for lunch and dinner. This is even brought out in the way people greet each other, when the usual "Hello!" or "How are you?" is replaced with the more common "Have you eaten yet?"

The first time I personally experienced this devoted adherence by the Chinese to their mealtimes was about 17 years ago (when I was about to enter this world!) No, I am not joking this time! The following account is true.

My parents were missionaries in China at the time and my mom was about to give birth. The three of

us—Mom, Dad and the soon to arrive me—were in the hospital waiting room. My mom was resting on a cot, and not a soul was in sight, because, as you probably guessed, it was shortly after 12 PM. In utter disregard for Chinese traditions, I decided that enough was enough, it was time to see what it was like out there.

My action ruined the peaceful atmosphere, as my dad dropped his newspaper, jumped out of his chair and dashed down the hall, shouting, "The head is coming out!" Actually, it was out already. Next, I heard four pairs of chopsticks clatter onto the table, chairs being hastily pushed aside and hurried footsteps. Two doctors and two nurses came rushing in, trying to get into their white coats at the same time as they wiped the last grains of rice from their mouths. The rest of my birth was rather uneventful, but after seeing how my hasty action had inflicted indigestion on these hard-working folks I swore to myself that from now on I would show greater respect to the holy sacrament of Chinese meal times.

The Chinese are famous for their delicious food. However, it is wise to ask exactly what you are eating at the beginning of the meal. It's not beneficial to your digestion to be told at the end of the meal that you had just been eating monkey brains, pig blood cakes, snake bile, frogs, etc. Of course, if you are a guest there is not much you can do. One thing that works for me is, when I really can't stomach something (the last time it was live crabs), I'll say I'm allergic to it. This usually works, though sometimes you have no choice but to swallow it.

kids and adults

Male/female works a little different in China. The men are generally quite laid back, but the women are a force to be reckoned

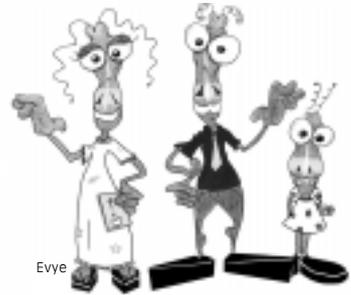




with. It's not uncommon to see a crowd gathered in the street watching a woman scream at a group of men.

Ever wanted to be a celebrity? Well, China is the place. Just being a foreigner will draw crowds of spectators who will stare at you as if you were a Martian. You are on stage all the time and you can be sure people discuss everything about you—your clothes, shoes, the way you walk, etc.

If you are with small kids, it's a lot worse. As soon as I walk into a park, people will surround the kids and touch their faces and hair, pick them up, and think they're mine. Whenever I go out with kids people ask me why I have so many children. And if I am with a guy, aged anywhere from 13 to 50, they of course think he is my husband.



Evve

climate

The climate in China varies greatly, from the tropical south to the Siberian-like north, to the dry deserts of western China. One strange thing is that all of China goes by one time zone—Beijing time. So if you are in the western areas, the sun rises as late as eight in the morning and goes down at 11 at night. Cool!

inside the home

There are many sacrifices the Family in China makes, just like in other developing countries. Some true life examples: Ever tried cooking dinner in the dark without water or electricity? (Great practice for all those late night snacks.) Or how about this: you are all sitting in front of the computer trying to watch a movie (most of China uses VCD), the computer freezes up every five minutes and just as you get it working at last, someone looks at the clock and yells, "The water is going off in ten minutes!" You all jump from your seats and make a beeline for the bathroom to take a cold shower by candlelight (very romantic).

going out

While violent crime is less frequent in China than in the West, thieves are plentiful. Watch your pockets and bags

on buses, trains and in any crowded areas (which happens to be most everywhere in the most populated country on Earth). Another thing to watch out for is being cheated. The mentality is, "You are a rich, dumb foreigner and we are poor locals, therefore, you deserve to be charged twice or thrice as much." Bargaining is widely accepted though, and if you say you are not a tourist and that you live in China, they are less likely to cheat you.

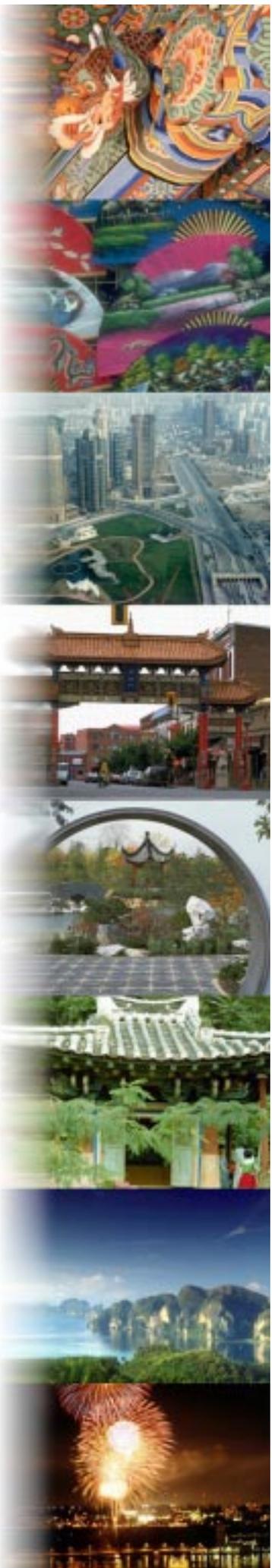
Chinese are quite conservative in dress and outward appearance, though it does vary from province to province. The Family there has a united dress code to abide by. I'd like to pause here and give a hand to all the Family in China who make so many sacrifices, not only the ones mentioned above, but also others, like having to wait months to pick up their regular mailings, not being able to have direct e-mail with others, not much fellowship and many more. God bless you all!

Learning the Language

To really get the most out of your stay in China, one of the main things you should do is learn basic Chinese, speaking and reading! Ouch, I said it! I can hear the screams already, "What!? Not only do you want us to make all the sacrifices of living in a sensitive field, but you want us to learn the hardest language in the world, speaking and reading?"

Well, hey, maybe the famous missionary to India started out with, "I love you and God loves you." But I am sure he didn't end there. Besides, you are learning a language natively spoken by more people than any other language on Earth. And just how are you going to know if you are eating beef or dog unless you can read the menu, huh?

Of course, you will make mistakes, like the poor foreigner who got kicked out of a Chinese restaurant because he asked the pretty waitress, "How much for a night?" when he meant to ask for the price of dumplings. Or the missionary who told the congregation that he just buried his honorable mother in the garbage can. Most mistakes are caused by the five different tones that Mandarin uses. Be thankful, Taiwanese and Cantonese have nine tones. In other words, one sound can have several meanings depending on the tones.





Being a witness

If you are wondering about witnessing in China, that's the best part! Did you ever have someone tell you that they saw their grandfather getting killed for being a Christian and they always wanted to have that same strength? Mass witnessing and mass distribution is not possible here, but personal witnessing works just as good as ever. Even in practical matters like raising children or marriage, everything you say is like, "Really! I never heard of that before!"

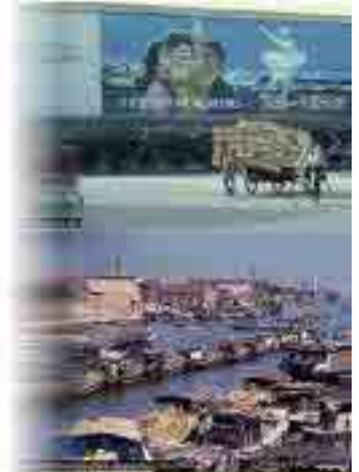
In one Home I stayed in, a girl my age was teaching English and her boss would call her up for marriage counsel. My Chinese teacher, who just had her first baby at 35, didn't even know how to play with a baby. To anything I told her about kids she reacted like, "Whoa!" There are tons of labor leaders to reach, you just have to make sure your zeal does not exceed your wisdom.

The work is slow, but the harvest is guaranteed. The results may not show immediately, but you can be sure that the Lord's Word is never wasted, like in this following example. On one road trip we tried to witness to a young guy, but he seemed rather depressed about life, and when the subject of God came up, he insisted, "God is not the God of China." What he meant was that God might work fine in those Western countries, but that China was a hopeless case as far as God was concerned. After coming back

from the trip we kept in touch by mail and soon he wrote and said that he had asked Jesus into his heart. He was so flipped over the Word we sent him, that he showed it to his girlfriend who also got saved and began writing, asking for more Word.

Or consider this: Once on a long 12-hour bus ride I started chatting with the lady next to me. I soon found out that she lived in a faraway province and had only come to this city for one day. As we were getting off the bus I prayed with her and got her address. Well, the months went by and I forgot all about her. Then one day I found her address and felt terribly guilty, so I quickly wrote her a letter, wondering if she still remembered me. Amazingly, she wrote back, "When I saw the address on the envelope, I knew it was the young foreigner I had met. Although we only met briefly two years ago, the prayer you prayed with me and the words about Jesus have been in my mind ever since. My life has changed! I don't think it was chance that we were in the same city, and the same bus so far from both of our homes. I believe God planned it. Please send me more about Jesus, I want to understand more about giving my life to Him."

In closing, Jesus needs you, so come to China. All you need is patience, love for souls, prayerfulness and dedication. Join the great missionaries of old like Hudson Taylor, Robert Morrison and Gladys Aylward. Be in God's Hall of Fame forever! Now is China's hour! China needs you!



A word from the Man

"Do you hear the whispers? Do you hear the voices calling out to you from those who need you? I speak of the vast land of China—the land where some of My greatest heroes of faith have lived and died. There are so many there who need the truth. If you are unfulfilled, wanting to give your life fully to a cause which you know needs you, which will consume you, which will take your life and your love and multiply your efforts over and over again, come to Me and ask Me whether I've put that longing within you so that you might find fulfillment in China—in feeding the multitudes who are so needy, so in need of shepherds."

—Excerpt from "China's Hour" GN 877.



"Chinese Spirit Helper"
Art by Evye

Zimbabwe to Uganda in Three Pieces

By Tina (21), Uganda

It's not as bad as it sounds, though we did actually start out in two. I just thought I should recap our African adventure for those who have felt the call to somewhere a little less than your typical civilized village or city, but may lack the faith to run in where it's been known angels fear to tread. If so, I hope this will be an encouragement for you in some way.

My boyfriend, Ben, and I had been living in Japan for quite a while and had been involved in a fruitful Catacomb ministry to university students. I was a few months pregnant when the Lord started showing us that it was time for a change. This was quite a surprise to me as I've loved working in Japan and basically spoke the language, and so on. The thought of moving to a new field had actually never occurred to me.

During this time "Reaching Africa the Right Way" (GN 824-825), and other such Africa related GNs started coming out. They were inspiring and all, but I read them in a completely, "Wow, God bless them" type of way. So, when both our Home and us heard from the Lord and He indicated that He wanted us to go to Africa it was exciting, radical, fun-sounding, interesting, and plain scary. If there's one thing I've learned though, it's that if you're smack in the center of the Lord's will, it's the only place where you'll be happy, and anywhere else is living on the high-wire with no net.

We started communicating with a couple of Homes in Africa, and the door opened for us to move to Zimbabwe. After only one month from the time the Lord told us to go we got all the funds we needed from the most amazing places. Our Home at the time had a ton of faith to help us with a large portion of our needed funds even when they didn't have a great abundance. We can't thank them enough for helping us get started. We know the Lord will bless them, and the others who helped us, greatly!

Before we knew it, we were on our way to Holland, which is where we were going to visit relatives and await our clearance to Africa. We arrived there after an eight-hour stopover in Malaysia, where we got to enjoy Malay food and see lots of the airport.

Coincidentally, after our stay with Ben's relatives, it was June, and with the summer travel season coming up, ticket prices were about to take off to heights unknown. We heard from the Lord and He told us to go ahead and book our tickets, even though we had not received our clearance yet. The days went by and our flight date got closer, so close in fact, that we packed and prepared to leave 6:00 AM the next morning by faith. Sure enough, we got our clearance that very night before we left!

Arriving in South Africa, we stayed with Ben's sister for a couple restful days. Then we took the 19-hour bus ride up to Harare, Zimbabwe. On the way there, you pass huge expanses of uninhabited dry grassland, or maybe with a few huts dotting the fields. I was certain the Home there must be some kind of glorified hut, and I continued to pray for faith right up till we pulled up to our pleasantly surprising beautiful house, complete with a swimming pool and yard!

I mainly did phone provisioning and was Home secretary during the latter part of my pregnancy. And shortly afterwards I gave birth to little Kaycee—a miracle from start to finish.

During our time in Zimbabwe, we were involved in helping a registered charity operation called "The Harare Shelter for the Destitute." It was very cool as it was started by the Home there, but was then passed on to nationals to continue and manage. Under the umbrella of this shelter was a "Back to School" program sponsoring children, usually whose parents had died of AIDS, to get an education. It was also an employment scheme where we would help jobless parents to



try their hands at different occupations in companies we would approach for help. Many of them did very well when given a chance, and some even got managerial positions quite quickly.

The government would send people to us when they needed help, and we could give them food and clothes. That of course would help them short-term (sort of a, "Give a man a fish, you feed him for a day" scenario). Having an opportunity as the above, though, and with the abundance of Word and lit which offered desperately needed hope and encouragement, we were actually teaching them "how to fish." In other words, giving them better possibilities for their future.

I loved working with the kids there. Besides being heart-capturing and cute, they really could get out of themselves. We'd host the Back to School and Christmas parties every year, and we'd play games with them. We gave up on playing Freeze Dance though, as no matter who was out or not, the moment you put that music on, everyone jumps back up and starts dancing again.

The Lord certainly had complete control over our timing. As soon as we got Kaycee's passport sorted out, our last visa extension had a very final note to it, and we had to return to Japan. A couple weeks after we arrived in Japan, the Home in Zimbabwe had to evacuate because of all the violence against whites that was going on at the time. And had we been there it would have added a bit of difficulty to close the Home down with a baby and all. God bless them. We greatly appreciated our time of learning and living with these special people. We always managed to have fun even amidst the less-than-ideal things, which kept life ever interesting.

Even after our time there, we're still very much spring chickens compared to those who have labored in Africa for several years. And we know that there's a vast country still to be reached of very deep, precious people, who can all sing, ha! God bless Hannah, a wonderfully efficient Capricorn and registered nurse, who really understands these people after all her time in southern Africa. They really do love her. And of course, Andrew, who has helped hospitals and clinics set up nurse-call systems. Jemina as well, who is an excellent bike rider, a talent acquired due to the petrol shortage we had, where there was no fuel in the country and our only means of transport was by bicycle; Angie (a.k.a. Tigger) who kept life ever fun and was a great help with Kaycee when she was first born. And Kevin, who we only got to be with for a little while before we

left, but he was great fun and had a positive outlook on everything.

(Update: The Lord has recently shown some of them to return to continue feeding the sheep there. If you want to help them out with the great work they've started there, please do so. They are most deserving.)

So ended our odyssey in Zimbabwe, and we're looking forward to the things which are ahead... Uganda!

Yep, we're on our way to join the Radio Activated Home, through which we're sure the Lord will continue to do great and mighty things, and which we hope to be a small part of. Though we're not sure how the Lord will supply this time, we have full faith that He will.



Here are just a few of the wondrously unique things I remember about Zimbabwe:

◆ The names of some of our dear friends were, Friday, Breakfast, Radio, Lovemore, Workmore, Pretty and Innocent. (I wondered if his mom was a little overly concerned?!)

◆ A lot of times when lightning strikes, which is pretty often during the rainy season, the electricity will cut off, and for the evenings we'd play chess and board games by candlelight.

◆ To save water we'd drain our washing machines into buckets for mopping the floor. Not a bad idea, huh?

◆ Sometimes the phone system would drown after some of these rainy seasons, and so you'd be in the middle of a phone conversation and it would cut off and that would be that for a couple days. Ha!

◆ When driving down the road you pass signs that read, "Worms" and "Worms for Sale." I wasn't sure what they were for, as often where these signs are would not exactly be a fishing spot. I found out they eat them! And they're not only found at roadside sales like this either, but you even find them in supermarkets! If you're not careful you may purchase what looks like beef jerky, only to discover they're actually dried worms!

◆ One last thing about the rainy season is that the umbrellas are like huge beach umbrellas. I thought, *Ha! How funny! Why on earth?* But let me tell you, when you're caught out in one of those "little showers" you'll wish they made them the size of small houses.

◆ Our vehicles? Besides the fact that it would be wise to have an umbrella with you in the car, if you care to stay dry that is, you may also want to wear rain boots. One dear old faithful car, which has lasted many a decade or so is ... well, a little rusty! So when a couple of us wanted to go out one day we had thought about using it till someone mentioned that the added weight may make the floor fall through. Needless to say, we walked. (Just kidding!—We used the "rainy jeep," which besides *that* small fault, has a heart of steel, though a body of aluminum.)

◆ When I went into labor we drove to the hospital in our camper, and had to stop for gas, and once we stopped the engine wouldn't start again. So Ben and his sister had to push it to get it going again. Meanwhile I was relaxing inside huffing or something.

◆ In the first four months of the year alone we had seven robbery attempts on our house. The closest they got to entering the house, was that they cut a bar off our carport. We had a motion detector alarm, which when set off would wake up a small country. Andrew set up a few ingenious silent alarms though, since the police had an amazing way of working. When we called the police to report the robbery attempt the conversation went like this:

Us: "Hello! Police? There've been several robbery attempts on our house! It's probably the same guys each time!"

Police: "Okay, try to catch them and hold them. Then could you come pick us up, and then drop us all off at the Police Station?"

Us: "??!?!?"

We soon learned that many of the police don't have cars available, as they lend them out to relatives. Many times you'll see police cars with learner plates on them, as they're just borrowing them for driving practice.

So, the Lord just had to do the protecting Himself, and if I may say, He did an excellent job! The only things that were stolen were a volleyball and an umbrella. It sure did keep us on our prayer toes!



FELLOWSHIP Bonus

By Crystal Lily
(of Cesco),
Japan

It had been nine months since we'd had any sort of area get-together, and since then there have been many changes all over Japan, to say the least. Since S2K many young people have moved to far-flung mission fields, while others have left the CM Family. We didn't even know how many people would show up. However, the Lord encouraged us through prophecy to go with the plan. So we sent out our first message announcing: "SGA/YA dance and fellowship. Come one (at least), come all!"

We figured it was worth it even to see just a few friends; it turned out, some traveled up to 30 hours to participate. In the end over 100 CM SGAs/YAs, and around 20 kids (from babies to 7-year-olds, all third

THE BEACH

Left to right:

- 1) Isamu, Sam, David.
- 2) Debbie and Joan
- 3) Elia, Satoshi, and David.
- 4) Seiko, Angie, Mariko, Rachel, Laura, Rejoice, Fara, Rejoice, Stella.
- 5) Ambrosia and friend.



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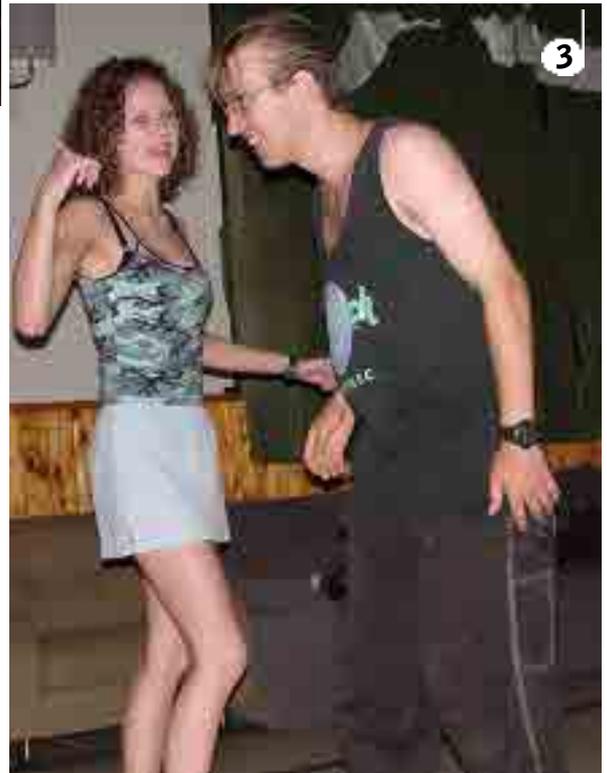
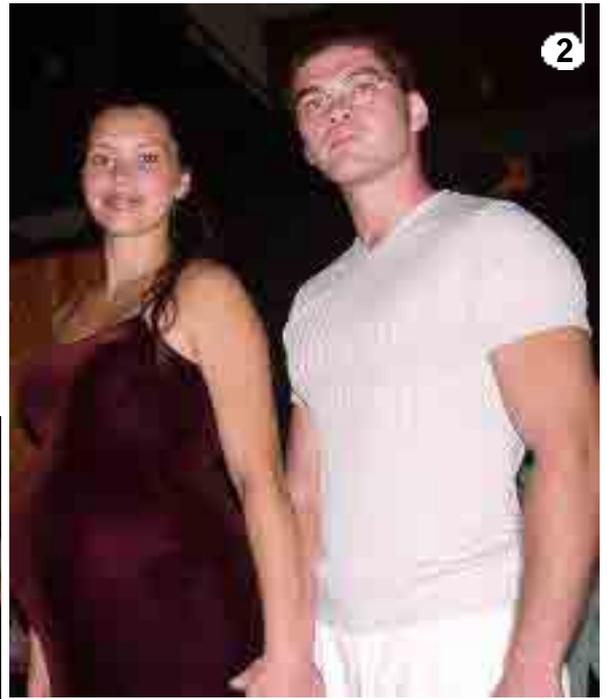
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FELLOWSHIP Bonus

DANCE NIGHT

- Left to right:
 1) Joan and Richard.
 2) Brother and sister—Cryssy and Haley.
 3) Mandy and Oli.
 4) Issac and Rejoice.
 5) Lilia and Danny.



generation) showed up. We had actually planned on having the get-together earlier, but we had to delay it a couple of times. God was totally in control though, as in that time several of our friends who had been on different mission fields—Bali, Mexico, Sweden and Africa—returned to Japan for visa trips and to visit relatives, all in time for the get-together. It was just like a reunion!

The day after everyone arrived we all got together for a short vespers, to thank the Lord for working all this out—and for His amazing supply. We sang songs, and heard some sneak previews of FTT stuff that'll be coming out soon. Communion then followed where we read some key quotes on faith and trust.



FELLOWSHIP Bonus



BAND

- Left to right:
 1) Makoto (charity concert).
 2) NuBeat
 3) Shizuoka Band— Jesse, Steven (13) and Gabe.
 4) Rachel, Chris, Laura, Stella, Johnny, Ikumi, Naomi, Ceeca, Maria, Emiko, Fara, Mariko, Maria, John and Angie.
 5) John L. on sax.



It was encouraging to be together like that. A lot of us are in the throes of big turning points in our lives— decision-making, and tight situations, so it was incredible to be able to talk with other YAs and SGAs who are also determined to do something for the Lord, and are sure that the Family is the best place for them.

I think we can all look back on those couple days we had, and know we created some incredible memories to stash away. And hey, we proved that we are not alone, there are many of us still at it.—Thank God for fun!

We had a witnessing seminar on the last morning before everyone left, where we generated ideas on how to better reach Japan with the

FELLOWSHIP Bonus

new locally adapted Japanese *Activated!* Gotta get moving with it!

We're hoping to get together a whole lot more over the upcoming months with several age groups, as the chance to be shoulder-to-shoulder with loved ones who are sticking and going on for the Lord is exhilarating.

It's strengthening knowing that the few in your Home are not the only ones sticking it out, but there is in fact a throbbing, pulsating team of others of like age, meeting the challenges, finding solutions and reaching their goals!

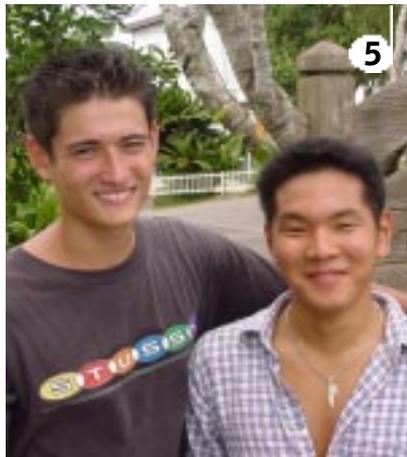
I'll let the photos speak for themselves on the exciting event that took place here at the HCS.



OTHER

Left to right:

- 1) James, Abraham and Keith.
- 2) Maria, Rejoice, Emiko
- 3) Marie Claire, Happy, Mariko, Faithy and Rejoice.
- 4) (Back) Yuki, Jeff, (middle) Ruby, Niki, Liquey; (front) Joy, Aichan, and Phil.
- 5) John and Phil.



A Thought on Christmas

--By Chandra, FZ

Christmas is totally my time of year. No matter where I am—the variant climates I've celebrated it in, or what the peculiarity of the country's celebratory Christmas traditions were—when I close my eyes and picture Christmas, it's crackling yew logs on the fire, snow gently falling and a surreal mist surrounding the event. It would be sentimental to say you can almost smell Christmas, but sometimes you can. And if you think this is merely because I have had the chance to experience the aforementioned picture perfect setting, then I would have to notify you that of all the Christmases I've celebrated, none were like that, yet each, in their own way, was perfect.

I recall listening to the drama of Grandmother's healing (Death Bed to Pulpit), and I was always puzzled by her statement, "I have Christmas in my bones!" I simply repeated it as a kid, because it seemed a decent clause to use at times. For example, should my mum query us on our peculiar behavior, what better answer could be used than, "We have Christmas in our bones!" Of course, this was always backed up by the quote that read, "If you have Jesus in your heart, then every day is Christmas." The trend didn't last long. Back to Christmas, though, there is no denying the special feeling Christmas has to it.

Last year was my first Christmas in WS. Most of my life I wondered how Christmas was celebrated in WS. For all the great ideas I could've come up with, few worthy opinions were formulated, seeing as I was engrossed in learning all the dance moves for the upcoming Christmas shows, or hitting every restaurant and hotel in sight with the Christmas CDs and tapes. True, Christmas on the field is never inactive. And that's

what makes it so optimal, it's the grand finale of the year.

When my first WS Christmas rolled around, I was stumped. What was I to do with myself? There was no illustrious stage to stand on and tell thousands of people the true meaning of Christmas. Everything looked very different, especially as I sat staring at a computer monitor, psyching myself up with, "I have Christmas in my bones!" Not really.

A thousand memories flooded my mind, those of caroling till my toes were so frozen I was certain if I stubbed my toe it would snap off. But I barely noticed it then, because it was Christmas Eve and I was bringing an extra touch of the Lord's love to people's Christmas. It was enough to forget about my numb feet and hands. Or the excruciating summer heat that our show troupe was trying to perform in, somewhere at the bottom of the globe; but I loved it all the same.

I can picture the old folks we visited, who were so touched that tears were their only expression of gratitude. The satisfaction I felt at such moments is the essence of the happiness of Christmas for me. Or the times we stood on the sidewalk handing out Somebody Loves You tracts to the cars inching along in the Christmas traffic. The smiles that illuminated their faces as they asked, "Really? Someone loves me? Who?" are etched in my memory for eternity. Because in those moments I could feel every part of my body tingling with the warmth of Christmas that I felt and was in turn sharing with others.

Things were different, though, here. It's not a mighty Christmas witness you can give a computer, and I couldn't help but feel a loss. But I found a new sense of joy the more I thought about it—I was still a part of all the Christmas adventure ... only now I was the back up recruit. It was apparent with all those who I lived with, the highlighted prayer topic was the Family's Christmas outreach.

So Christmas day rolled by, and I still felt all the elation surrounding the wondrous day. It was not extravagant, by any means. But it was beautiful, and that was because we were all there together enjoying the birth of the most amazing person Who ever walked the face of the Earth. His birth so long ago has not faded, and never will despite the passing millenniums.

There is no soul insignificant enough to be forgotten and left unaffected by the Christmas beauty we have to share. And even if it is only one person whom we touch, at least it is one person's life that will be changed for eternity.

Merry Christmas!

