

ZINE

A tale
of
Calabar

Jonas
and Friends
feature
interview

Experience
the freaks
the tents
the mud
Paleo



Dear Ed:

RE: Interview with Juan Carlo (FZ #045)

Very impressive! Definitely encouraging to see a young guy having the courage to take up the unique ministry of witnessing, it deserves a good amount of admiration! To sum it up, it was a great article and definitely worth reading!

—Natacha (17) Reunion Island

RE: As Diamond Tears

I was very touched by the heart-breaking yet beautiful testimony Erika wrote about Kosovo in FZ #46. Erika, you are a brave soul, and a very good sample. I've always admired young people that know what they believe in and want to give their life for Jesus.

Your testimony made my eyes wet with tears. I especially liked the way you ended your article: "But for now, the cry of Kosovo echoes in my ears, whispering its bittersweet ballad in the chambers of my heart. I believe it will for a while yet. It may never leave me. I don't mind—I've come to love its melody." It's beautiful and I think that's the way all of us should feel about the field the Lord calls us to. We should just love what the Lord has for us there and commit ourselves to it.

God bless you, Erika. Keep going for God. The Lord must be proud of you!

—Simon Gypsy, Poland



"Albert, Charlie has made remarkable progress. He's read everything in the library, but suddenly after reading the *Theory of the Species* and the Bible, he became confused. He doesn't know if he's his brother's keeper or his keeper's brother."



Experience Paleo



EXPERIENCE PALEO

By Phil, Christina,
and David, Belgium

Captions:

Top L. Emmanuel (5, of Peter and Hannah).

Top R. Getting ready to go tracting: Phil, Christina, James, Petra, Claire, Marie Ange, Carol, and Cecilia.

Bottom L. View from some of our tents.

Bottom R. Mealtime

For the past 25 years, an annual rock/pop festival, Paleo, has been held in Nyon, close to Geneva, Switzerland. Our team got together, joined by others from France and Belgium—Peter and Hannah, and their progeny, Emmanuel (5), Cecilia (7), Michel (9), and Faithy (14) and Raphael (15), Grace (14) and David E. (15) from France. And—James (21), Phil (20), Petra (20), Timothy (19) and Christina (17) from Belgium.

Around 1:00 AM we arrived in Nyon and found that a few thousand “freaks” were also in the process of putting up some means of shelter from the elements. (Notice the words “tents” or

“campers” were not used, seeing as that would have been an inaccurate description of the scene which our eyes beheld.) Our tents (yes, real ones) were set up in a little corner they barely fit in for the night.

Upon waking the next morning (not that we slept much due to the noise that surrounded our abode) and after standing at the make shift bathrooms for forever and longer, we found the other half of our team who’d arrived that morning instead of the night before. After the hellos, hugs and kisses, we moved our tents to a place we could all be together, and then all 14 of us squished into their little camper for devotions and inspiration. Thus began our first day.

After having a little fun and adjusting to the environment, we set out on our first personal witnessing experience. For some of us this was the first time in awhile to be doing solely personal witnessing, and not just giving out tracts, so it was slightly difficult to take the first step.

Phil: I handed a tract to this freak-looking guy, with matted hair, an orange two-piece cloth (not exactly fit to be called an item of clothing) covering his runt of a body, and earrings and chains all over him, sitting there rolling a joint. He took the tract I offered him, and I left not thinking anything of it. About 15 minutes later I crossed his path again and decided to ask him if he had read the tract, which he had. We ended up talking for about half an hour, and he got saved. It was great.

Roughing it was part of the deal. The noise and racket would go on until five or six in the morning before we could get to sleep. We usually had to endure around five hours of every kind of noise you can think of. (Use your imagination. But the worst and funniest was the rally call “bom boulet,” which meant death to the cops—to them at least.) Once one person would yell it, it was a domino effect, till practically the entire place was shouting something, and there



were up to 14 thousand people in the field we were camping in—evidently. It got pretty loud at times.

It rained a good amount of the time, and we would stumble out of our tents and the ground was just mud and puddles, sometimes occupied by people who didn't quite make it back to their tents the night before. Our shoes were caked with mud at all times, and twice as heavy as their normal weight. Even the camper was mud-covered. But to look at it from the positive side, at least there were sunny days.

Wandering around the camp you'd see all the different "landmarks" of the

various clans and groups, many had banners hanging over the camps—ranging from Union Jacks and Che Guevara to Bob Marley and hemp leaves. So we came up with an idea of putting up our own symbol above our camp.

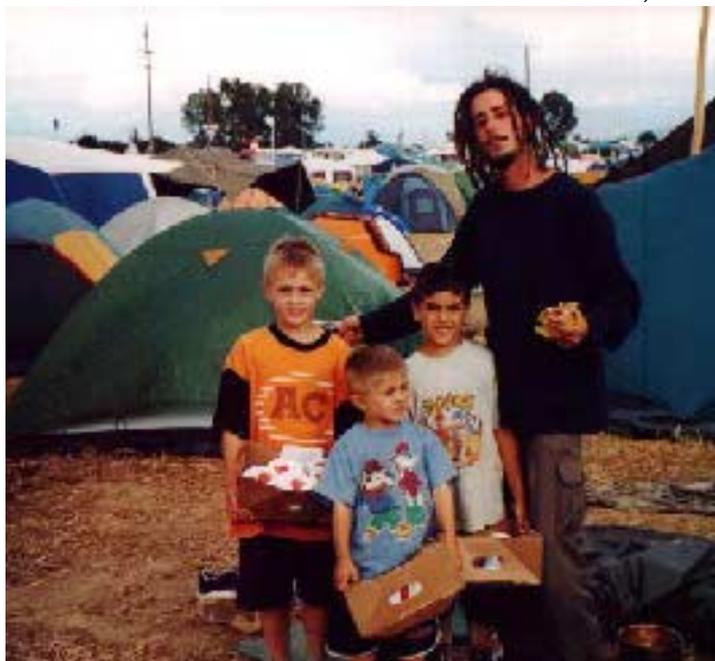
David: I woke up to the sound of a deep voice speaking an African language. I peeked my head out of my tent and saw three Rastafarians. I went up to them shyly and asked them if they needed anything. They stated that they needed a place to pitch their tent, and had chosen our square of land. We worked it out for them to have a spot near us that would not bother us, and I

went back to bed. That morning I found out that Peter had witnessed to them, and they had prayed to receive Jesus before they had left. They were Muslims, what a miracle!

There were about five other Christian groups present at the festival, which gave food and shelter to people. But the sad part was that we were the only ones that went out to find the lost sheep instead of them having to come to us, as was the case with the other Christians.

We had tons of yogurt come in the provisioning and we started distributing it to people at the festival, with a tract to accompany the yogurt. Michel (9), Cecilia (7), Emmanuel (5), and a couple of friends they made at the festival, took up the job of distributing the yogurts and tracts. The good influence the kids had on their friends was surprising—even getting them started on witnessing. The one little girl Cecilia befriended would give out the tracts saying, "This tract is for you to know Jesus better." The little boy, after giving yogurt to a guy and having forgotten to give him a tract, ran after him over a distance of fifty meters through mud and tents and people just to give it to him.

Peter (of Hannah), France: The Lord gave us the special strength of spirit we needed for this festival. Before the festival, He had shown me that, in order to keep a "sound mind," I would have to go out of the camp and spend time with Him each morning before reveille. I am so happy I followed this counsel. It was so nice, just listening to Him, and reading from my quotes notebook! Another thing I will remember is that the Lord seems to like it when we put Him on the spot. On the first night it was raining and muddy and we were looking for a possibility to



witness in spite of the conditions. We prayed earnestly. Two minutes later, under a shelter with tables and benches, where many people were conglomerating because of the rain, we saw Vincent, who sat alone with a guitar. We talked with him for a couple hours, he prayed with us and then hung around us for the rest of our stay.

Another time when Petra and I were witnessing, we had met some sheep, and won some souls, but we felt the Lord had someone special He wanted us to meet—someone with a real vacuum. So we prayed, asking the Lord to help us meet that special someone. As we were going out we met another team on their way back to our camp, who asked, “Where are you going?” Petra answered: “To meet *the* person.” But we were not aware that it was going to happen only a few seconds later. Passing through the tents, our eyes met those of a Peruvian man, in his 40s. There was something desperate yet very sweet and humble in his eyes, and it struck me at once. I told him that I felt a sweetness and humility in his eyes.

“It’s my problem,” he answered. Meaning that people often abused him for his sweetness. So we encouraged him that God sees things very differently, and a very deep conversation followed. His name was Arthur. At one point he said that when passing through the camp he was often repelled, even scared, by the vibes he could feel all around, but now he could see in us the very spirit he had been looking for all his life. When we asked him if he wanted Jesus, he opened his two arms very big and said: “Let Him come! Let Him come in!”

Arthur is an artist living in Switzerland to be near his 10-year-old son, whom he loves very much but



Feeling really expressive: L-R Raphael, Phil, Grace, Faithy and Christina.

who is living with his ex-wife. We took his name for the Spanish *Activated* program. It was such a specific answer to prayer, the kind that leaves you with no doubt it was the Lord’s hand in action.

One night an older lady came, one of the founding members of a Christian endeavor at this festival, and she wanted to know more about what we are doing for the Lord, etc. After talking with her, tears formed in her eyes, when she began talking about how much the Christians needed to get out of their lethargic spirit and follow our sample. She had a real love for the lost young people, but she was physically diminished and couldn’t do much anymore, she said.

David: It was hard to

leave each other as the Belgium and French teams split to different destinations. We all hugged, said our farewells and prayed for safekeeping. We were all very thankful for the fun and fellowship that we had together and all that the Lord did for us in that short amount of time that we all spent together.

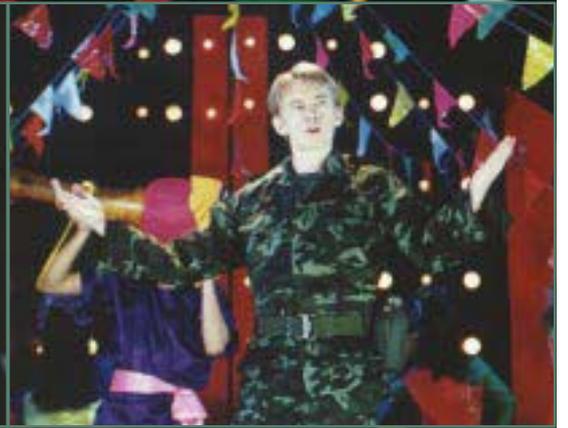
Thank the Lord for all the many blessings and victories that He gave us, and also Peter (of Hannah) for leading the expedition, and for dear Hannah (of Peter) who faithfully did the cooking, cleaning and being a mother for us all. We couldn’t have made it without you.

Also, a big thanks to everyone else on the team who gave their all to win souls for the Big Place up There. ■



Hannah witnessing to Arthur.

"Play those drums."
The team performs in
Supanburi province in
traditional
upcountry outfits.





Jonas and Friends

With this 50th *Zine* edition we trace our steps to our beginning, to the interview we conducted in our first magazine. Four years ago they were known as “Heart to Heart.” We now present you “Jonas and Friends” ... the changes, the approach, the difference.

WHAT IS LUKTHOONG?

Lukthoong is the Thai form of country music. It would be the Thai equivalent of a cross between western-style country and blues. The word “lukthoong” literally means “child of the field” in Thai. It’s famous all over the upcountry areas, but each region has a slightly different version of it.

Generally speaking, this type of music is appreciated by people outside of Bangkok and the main cities. It’s grown to have a wide appeal because it expresses feelings and themes that are important to Thai culture and things most everyone in Thailand can relate to. It’s sort of a folksy, down-home type of singing about the simple things of life and realistic situations.

Lukthoong songs are usually written about life in the country, the simple pleasures and beauties found in that way of life. They often express love stories or heartbreaks. There are even some that are basically a recipe for a favorite local dish!

What sets *lukthoong* music apart from other styles is the long and very pronounced vibrato, as well as the intricate voice inflections. You could say it resembles the scats that some jazz vocalists specialize in, but *lukthoong* uses a different scale than English songs. An important aspect of *lukthoong* singing is the emotional way in which it is sung.

In the Northeast they have another type of *lukthoong* called *moh lum*. The lyrics are actually more Lao than Thai. *Moh lum* style differs from *lukthoong* in that it’s usually sung in a much tighter scale with a smaller range—different note variations in the same chord, and the verses and words aren’t repetitive. The lyrics are sung in an up-tempo, staccato style that resembles rap, though it’s actually sung rather than spoken.



FZ: Since our last interview with you much has changed not only with your team, but you've also had a complete direction shift in the style of your music. To bring us up to date, could you recap for us who is involved in this show troupe, your names and ages. And what does everyone do?

Jonas (of Praise): As himself—that is, the world's most famous non-Thai *lukthoong* singer. He's also an emcee, 28 years old, father of two, husband to one. (We think. Right, Jonas?)

Angelina (of Jon B.): Singer, excellent Thai speaker and emcee, 25 years old, mother of three.

Christy: Singer, 22 years old.

Angela: Dancer, 21 years old.

Jon B. (of Angelina): Dancer, 22 years old, father of three.

FZ: You used to be known as "Heart to Heart," is that name still used?

CHRISTY: We don't have an official new name, but we're not "Heart to Heart" anymore. We're sometimes referred to as "Jonas and Friends" or just as "The Family."

FZ: From what we've seen, you've become authentically Thai, in contrast to the previous years where there was an obvious Western influence, in not only your music but your style of dress as well.

Lukthoong was not the original style of music of your group, so how did it first become an idea and a possibility? When did you realize that *lukthoong* was the direction you should be going and begin the cultural transition? Was there something in particular that

(Jonas finally finishes conversing with fan and he continues with his answer.)

JONAS: Okay, so how did we get involved with *lukthoong*? Well, incidentally, this is a very common question that we get asked in interviews these days, so of course, it would be appropriate that our interview would also include this question. Anyway, I think the bottom line is that there is no credit to us; it's just the Lord that engineered it.

CHRISTY: It sure wasn't what we had planned or even what we expected or necessarily hoped for, but the Lord sort of forced us into it in a way. What I mean is, like you said, *lukthoong* wasn't our original style of music, we were all a lot more into western style stuff, be it in our songs, our style of dress, even our mannerisms and the way we acted



“ There's just no comparison gotten from the Thai people

Michelle: Dancer, 20 years old.

Pandita: Dancer, 18 years old.

Faye (of DJ): Dancer, 19 years old, mother of one.

Vijay: Dancer, 19 years old.

Note: Mary (of Paul Hart) and Anisa (of David) also played an important role on the dancing team at the beginning of the *lukthoong* ministry. But as they're both pregnant now, they haven't been performing with the team for some time and were not present for the interview. DJ (of Faye) also occasionally steps in as a dancer from time to time.

furthered your integration into Thai culture in this way?

CHRISTY: Yes, there was, actually—the Lord!

JONAS: Right. ... (Jonas' cell phone rings, so he pauses to answer it.)

CHRISTY: Um, Jonas is actually meant to be answering this question. However, I think he's talking with a fan. Here comes the catchphrase ... (Jonas in the background: "Sawasdeekap! Pom Chue Jonas krup!"). For the benefit of our readers, the translation for that is, "Hello! My name is Jonas!" (That's the name of his album, "Pom Chue Jonas.")

and talked in public and on stage. We sort of had the mistaken idea or notion that this was what was going to reach the Thai people. And in a way it did. I'm not saying that we didn't reach anybody. In fact, we were able to do a lot with that style, we reached a lot of people who liked it and all, but really, there's just no comparison with the type of reaction we've gotten from the Thai people, and even the amount of people we've been able to reach through this ministry, now that we've "gone cultural."

JONAS: About five years ago, when performing for a community event, Christy and I were requested to sing a

lukthoong song, which was a duet actually. This song was very famous at the time, as it had debuted in a very popular TV drama. Around that time, *lukthoong* was starting to make a comeback with even the Bangkok crowd. At first we were like, "Well, gee, *lukthoong*?" We'd never done *lukthoong* before and to be honest, it was pretty different from anything most of us had ever heard, much less sung, in our lives before. Michelle is just reminding me we couldn't even sing it straight through without laughing.

CHRISTY: Until we actually performed it, I'd never sung it through once without bursting into laughter. The vocal sounds and the way we sang it were so funny. Even on stage, it took a really large amount of control not to laugh.

JONAS: It was definitely different. But

that!—As did!!—Ha! I guess it goes without saying that if we, or the Lord rather, had not gotten us into doing *lukthoong*, most likely none of what's happening now would have happened. Being that we're foreigners, singing this type of music really touches people's hearts.

ANGELA: Actually, performing that particular upbeat number at a very large fundraising party was what got us an invitation to appear on a very popular TV variety show, among the most watched variety shows in the country. This TV show was eventually what kicked off the present *lukthoong* ministry that we have, and opened the door to a greater witness and the Family becoming well known in this country.

FZ: What changes did you have to put into effect in your

FAYE: Initially, I guess it was like sort of "subtle integration" as far as the style of music we did. Like Jonas explained earlier on, we started out with one and then just a few *lukthoong* songs as part of our repertoire. But once we went into this new ministry and promoting Thai culture, all of a sudden we had to make a complete switch over—a total change—and since then we've been doing pretty much all, or mostly, *lukthoong*.

MICHELLE: It changed our entire show, as we had to learn a whole new set of songs and dances.

PANDITA: It's true. You ask what changes our show had to put into effect to make *lukthoong* the focal point.—Everything, just about! The easy thing about it for us was that we didn't have to try to figure out how to do it ourselves. In other words, there



with the type of reaction we've now that we've 'gone cultural.' ”

since it was specifically requested, we went ahead and gave it a shot, and the audience really, really liked it—much more so even than the other popular Thai non-*lukthoong* songs that we'd sung in the past. In fact, it was one of the best received numbers we had sung up until that time. Because of the incredibly good reaction that it received, for a while after that, we would include one or two *lukthoong* songs in our shows. I guess we sort of realized that in the interests of becoming one, we should try to learn more *lukthoong* songs. Eventually we added a more upbeat *lukthoong* number which the girls did a dance to, and of course, people enjoyed

performances to make *lukthoong* the focal point? Did you find the switch in styles difficult?

CHRISTY: The main thing that had to change for me was my mannerisms and the way I acted overall. That's a pretty broad statement, but naturally I am a rather western sort of a person, both in the way I look, the way I talk and in the way I act. I've had to learn how to tone things down. It's been a real change for me to have to revamp my modus operandi, my habits and mannerisms, my dress code and so on, but it's been so good. It's taken me a while, and I've still got a ways to go with this, but by God's grace, I'm learning, slowly but surely.

was a choreographer, a costume designer, and the songs were chosen for us—all we had to do was learn the material. So the Lord made it easy for us in that way. As far as whether or not the switch in style was difficult, well, it was hard on our pride!

CHRISTY: Just to explain, we started this "promoting Thai culture" project some months back with a music company here, which is how Jonas eventually ended up cutting an album. Their idea was that having foreigners performing Thai music and speaking Thai, especially young foreigners, would help to promote Thai culture here in Thailand (especially with the

Thai youth) as well as even abroad. This music company's designers and producers, etc., were the ones who designed the costumes, chose the songs, recorded them with Jonas, etc. So far their plan seems to be working and it's received a very good response.

FAYE: As far as the dance steps, they were pretty simple and easy to learn (other than the traditional Thai dancing). Besides that, the other thing that took some adjusting to, though, was the fact that, of course, we wanted what we were doing to be "yo" and "cool" and this Thai stuff didn't exactly suit that bill in our book. But who are we doing it for anyway?—The Lord and the sheep!

ANGELA: Yeah, it's not like we were dying to do it at first, and it was difficult to get used to only doing *lukthoong*. That side of things took a while. With the dancing, as some people already said, the Thai dancing is what's difficult. We had a short course in it not too long ago which helped, but that style of dancing is definitely not easy. The other *lukthoong* dancing that we do is pretty simple, which is nice in a way because it makes it easy for us.

VIJAY: Yes, it was very difficult to get used to at first. We had to change

just about everything—our song list, costumes, music, and choreography. The only thing that's still the same is the team.

FZ: If one were to take a step into your life for a day, what would they find to be the usual circumstances surrounding a day's work? Can you give us a general idea of a day in your life?

JON B.: Well, it's a little hard for us to give a complete rundown on a day in our life since it's never exactly the same. Some days are more normal than others, while some are definitely abnormal! Pandita, it looks like you have something to say...

PANDITA: Hee, hee, hee. Christy, get the black box out of my face. Noooo! Christy! (Black box = dictaphone.)

CHRISTY: It's on!

PANDITA: What? Oh, man, okay. One time ... well, it started the day before. That morning we were told we had to appear on a TV interview with

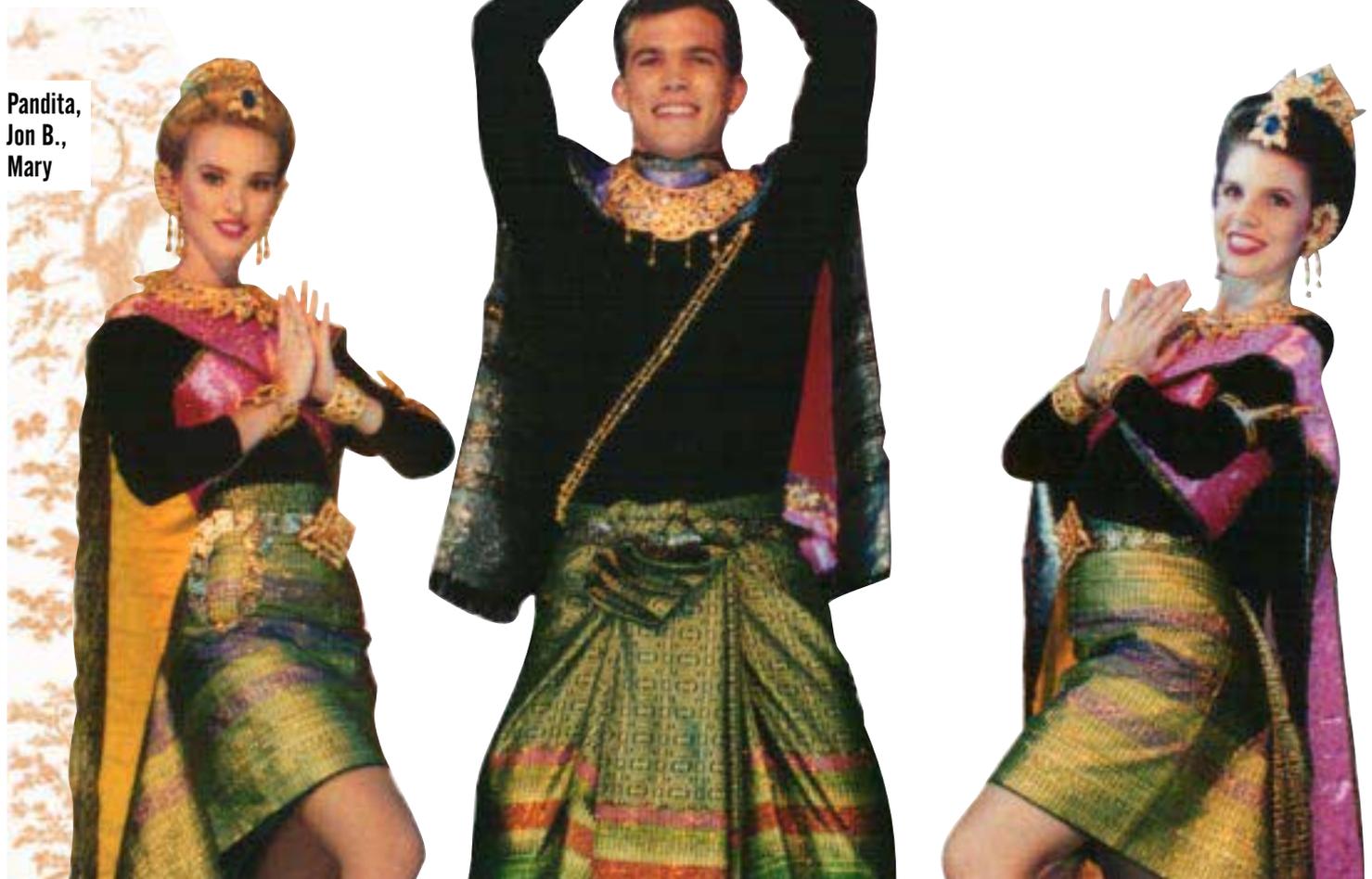
Jonas the morning of his press conference (which was for the release of his album on June 15th), just to be there for moral support and answer a few cultural questions in Thai. So we were all very freaked out. We actually didn't have any idea as to what they would ask us, so we were brainstorming trying to think of the answers to every single question possible.

Anyway, we went back home late that night and we were desperately trying to review our answers. We barely got any sleep that night—no one actually slept—but we got up around 4 AM. We had to get dressed in these traditional outfits. The makeup took two hours and the hair another couple hours. (It's a little hard to know who is who after they finish our make-up and hair, ha.) We started doing the make-up at like 5 AM and the preparation went till 7:00 or 7:30 AM. Then we were rushed into the studio where they filmed the interview, which was broadcast live.

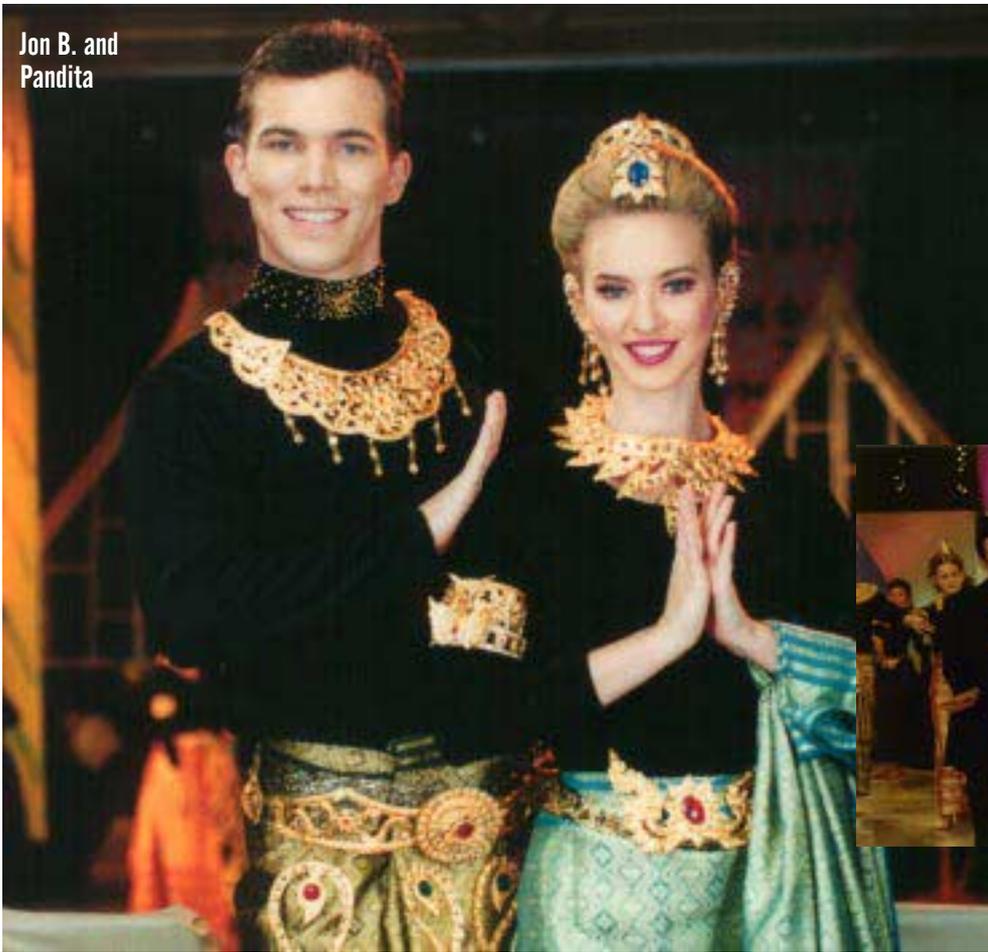
(Jonas' cell phone rings again.)

CHRISTY: It's probably a fan from Australia.

(Angela picks up where Pandita left off:) Then we rushed to the Thai Cultural Center and did one run-through, and then a dress rehearsal without the air-con on, mind you.



Jon B. and
Pandita



The team Thai dancing with the MCs of Channel 3's "Twilight Show" (the number-one rated TV program in the country), after performing "Issan Bahn Hau"



We're talking about real true heat here, our costumes being drenched with sweat and our make-up dripping all over the floor. Then we ate breakfast at 11:30 AM.

CHRISTY: At which time the dancers were just about ready for lunch and dinner both.

ANGELA: While practicing and eating, we had to keep our hair up in the traditional style and of course, our make-up and all. We practiced for three hours. In the meantime, Jonas kept running off to the side to do interviews while at the same time trying to sign 500 posters in his spare time. He ended up signing 200, along with a lot of help from the dancers, who were kindly scrawling his signature for him. (In case you're wondering why it took so long, it was in Thai).

JONAS: Plus, I was frantically trying to memorize three pages of script.

VIJAY: Right after the press conference was finished, at around 7:00 PM, Jonas was whisked away for yet another live interview or two that same evening. I think in total, he must have done 10 plus interviews that day or something, and pretty much all of them were live.

JON B.: But I think the earliest we've

had to get up in the morning to get ready for a program was 2:45 AM. (The latest we've gone to bed was 4:30 AM.)

ANGELA: Then there was the time when we never really went to sleep at all because we started traveling at 12:00 midnight till 8:00 the next morning to get to the northeast of Thailand.

FAYE: We've performed live for some pretty big crowds too, actually. The largest one was in Korat for over 100,000 people.

FZ: Many would consider your present popularity to be a step into fame, but for yourselves, on a personal basis, is that the case?

ANGELA: Well, to be honest, yes, it has been a step into fame in the sense that Jonas is recognized pretty much everywhere he goes, and there has been almost daily coverage via either TV or newspapers about him or what he's doing, etc. But at the same time, it has also meant a step into fame for The Family, especially here in Thailand, with a lot of good publicity, since everyone knows Jonas as a member of The Family. It's less likely, though, that people will recognize the dancers when we're out as we're pretty well disguised (make-

up, hair-dos and traditional costumes) on stage.

ANGELINA: As far as our being famous, it's kind of like the verse "God has chosen the weak things of the world to confound the mighty, the base things of the world and foolish things and things which are despised hath God chosen that no flesh should glory in his presence."

JONAS: We're out almost every day



Michelle

doing shows. However, when we're able to be home, we do the same duties that everyone else does. Usually the girls step in on childcare, or we do staff, home front, dishes, or some of us are involved in studio work. And though I guess in a way, this situation is giving us a pretty realistic idea of what it's like to be well-known, famous, or popular, it's not like people we live with see us any differently than they ever did; we're just the same. For myself personally, it's not necessarily my idea of an enviable or desirable ministry because, as is the case with most any ministry, there is a lot more to it than meets the eye. Even just the schedule we have to keep at times is pretty difficult and taxing. But it is what the Lord is using to open up some incredible doors here and like what Angelina said, if the Lord can use us and if He could use *lukthoong*, He can use anything.

FZ: If you could sum up the benefits of this switch into a more cultural performance, what would you say they were?

CHRISTY: Gee, there have been a lot of benefits! In my opinion the main one has been the witness that's been able to get out and the doors that have opened here, as well as the very

good public image and extremely good publicity that it has given the Family in this country. I've never seen anything like it, nor did I ever imagine that it would be like this!

VIJAY: Yes, it's benefited the work as a whole, because people recognize Jonas as part of The Family, so it gives The Family more credibility.

CHRISTY: There's something that is real neat about Thai culture, which I think has been a benefit for us personally. And that is, here it's considered a good thing to be humble and take the lower seat, regardless of how famous or popular you are. It goes against the rock star, obnoxious super star approach that you might expect from a famous person or a celebrity of any kind. It's really taught us a lot. Even the physical things you're supposed to do, the manners, the way you talk, the dancing, the way you act when you sing, etc., they're all about being humble and self-effacing. That's been really good for me anyway.

ANGELINA: Another reason it's quite good for our humility is because it's not exactly something that we really glory in or anything. Probably another main benefit is that it has made us, The Family, very, very relatable to Thai people, as *lukthoong* is such an

We're out almost every day doing shows. However, when we're able to be home, we do the same duties that everyone else does.

L-R: Angela, Pandita, Anisa, Michelle, Mary



I think becoming one is about the coolest thing you can do, and being a missionary is the greatest thing.

integral part of their culture and very close to Thai people's hearts. They just cannot fathom that foreigners would do something like this for them—become one with them in such a major way. I think we were on the way to this for a while, but we just didn't know it. I mean, we've been on the way for a long time, but we didn't know that this was going to be the culmination of many years of training.—Because God works in mysterious ways, His wonders to perform.

MICHELLE: We also had to take some Thai classical dance lessons. Traditional Thai dancing is very intricate and can be quite complicated. But it was very interesting to learn this type of dancing and it's something that's real neat to know how to do.

JONAS: Yes, Thai classical dancing isn't easy by any means, but the dancers got pretty good at it and everyone says that they were extremely fast learners.

CHRISTY: We got some incredibly good vocal training. In preparing for our albums and for the various shows, we had a singing instructor who worked with us extensively, teaching us and coaching us. He did a great job and really helped us a lot,

even though we were (and still are, in comparison to professional Thai *lukthoong* and *moh lum* singers) pretty raw and not exactly what you'd call professional singers. We didn't have any background in it at all, except from the little bit we'd heard and tried to copy from tapes. So that was a real blessing.

It's helped us a whole lot with our Thai speaking as we all of a sudden found ourselves on TV and radio and being interviewed on stage. We had to really pull up our socks in this area, especially since the majority of us have been in Thailand all or most of our lives. Besides, we're supposed to be promoting Thai culture here, so we've had to really work on that.

ANGELINA: Because Thais can tend to be skeptical of foreigners (often because they, the Thai people, are quite proud of their heritage and their culture), the fact that we are on a promoting-Thai-culture "campaign" softens them up and tears down any walls there might be. It breaks the ice, and helps them to trust us more right from the start, rather than our having to build up their trust over a few years. It's much faster.

VIJAY: Speaking of training! We even went to drama classes in order to learn more about performing and how to express ourselves and carry

Jonas and team in traditional costumes (this particular picture has been reprinted many times in local newspapers)



ourselves on stage, etc. The lady who was teaching us is extremely famous here, the most famous lady in the acting or entertainment business, I think. So that was pretty "exciting"! But it's a whole story in itself. Another thing the girls and Jonas were doing was learning Thai instruments. They were going to classes for a while. Each of them had a different classical Thai instrument to learn. Pretty far out looking things, actually, and very difficult to play, most of them!

FAYE: Another very big benefit for us has also been the team effort side of things. Jonas is very well known here in Thailand as a personality, but really, it's been a major team effort with the dancers being such a big part of the whole thing, the folks who've spent tons of time going to the shows and interviews with us, coordinating things, etc., our Homes and everyone who has to work double time when we're out doing shows and stuff, our shepherds (who we've definitely kept on their toes, God bless them), and a host of others who work real hard behind the scenes. It's taught us so, so much about unity and working together. And it couldn't have happened any other way.

JON B.: There is all the positive international media coverage that the Family has received as a result. For example, there have been articles on the *lukthoong* ministry in the

International Herald Tribune, Time Magazine, and Far Eastern Economic Review. Reuters and AP also interviewed us, which resulted in CNN and BBC featuring us on a few TV spots around the world. CNBC also did two live interviews with Jonas earlier this week. There have also been several interviews with Swedish-based newspapers, magazines, radio and TV. This doesn't include all the Thai media, the figures of which we hardly even know because they're so phenomenal.

We also have a website www.thaifamily.org/jonas (check it out!) and Jonas has an e-mail address, which have been announced on radio and TV on several occasions, so we get a lot of fan mail, too, from all over—that is, not just from Thailand, but even places like Switzerland, Sweden, the States, Australia, Norway, Poland, Denmark, Japan, etc. From the fan mail we get, we've developed a mail ministry course (God bless Thai Marie at the Ivy Home who takes care of it), whereby we're able to feed the people who write in. It's gotten lots of good responses so far.

JONAS: I would also like to add that I think all of The Family's efforts so far in this country through becoming one, gaining the trust of the Thai people in general with our work and CTPs, and witnessing and ministering to them is what has made this present situation possible.

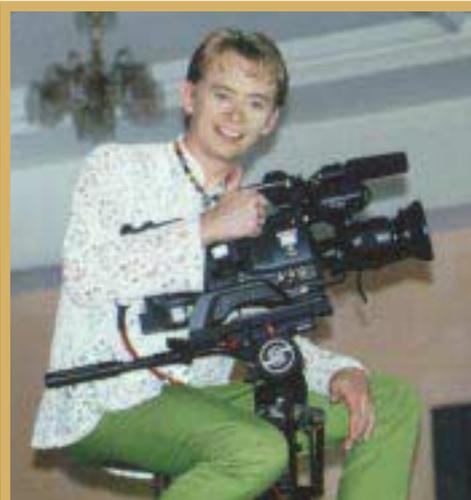
FZ: Jonas, your name has been on numerous websites—international and national—you have one of the top 10 songs in Thailand, and your album is a best seller. How do you deal with this fame?

JONAS: It's definitely taking some getting used to. A lot of people recognize me, almost everyone, all the time, so I always feel like I'm being watched no matter where I go or what I'm doing. I start to feel quite self-conscious and sometimes it's a little hard to know how to react. I just basically try to smile and greet as many people as I can as I go along and *wai* (the Thai greeting) to many people as well.

Generally, at programs or concerts, it's very busy and there are people who want to interview me, people who want an autograph and other things, and at the same time, I'm having to keep in mind the upcoming performance and preparations for that, and that becomes pretty difficult to keep up with.

Sometimes I get nervous because I don't want to miss anything or I don't want to do something that would be unwise or the wrong way to respond. So in that way, there is quite a lot of pressure. There is also the pressure of the performing itself, as well as the language factor. It's always hard to feel sufficiently confident to do a performance in Thai.

A situation which also causes me to be pretty nervous is when there are media present, especially English



Jonas taking a turn on the camera during the filming of the music video.



Performing on a TV variety program—Angela and Jonas



Jonas and his instrument (a Thai one, that is)

“ For myself personally, it's not necessarily my idea ministry because there is a lot more to it than

or foreign media, because it can have more far-reaching effects and I don't want to do something that would reflect badly on our loving Family. It's a lot of pressure because what I do or say doesn't only reflect on me personally, but there is the whole Family in the country here and even elsewhere in some cases.

So I think the way to cope with it is basically being desperate and praying the Lord will keep me humble. Getting the Lord's counsel, prophecies, hearing from the Lord step by step and getting His input on how to deal with things has really been the key.

I think another important factor in all of this is that there are others who work with me. I couldn't do any of this on my own. Of course, there are the dear folks in The Family, the Thai sisters here, Rose, Pat, Bright, and then Angela from the PI, who also carry a lot of the weight in this and run interference for me. It really, really helps to have that support and I wouldn't want to do anything on my own without that. Of course, there is the rest of the team and their support and prayers. Being able to perform with them is a real strength. It's not a solo effort by any means—much to the contrary—it's really a team thing and all of that is what makes it happen and makes it work. Not to forget, of course, our dear shepherds who also are very involved in counseling with us and giving us suggestions, organizing and coordinating things and having to bear



Jonas learning to play a classical Thai instrument

**of an enviable or desirable
meets the eye.”**



“Sawasdee Krap!” Jonas *wai*ing.

Far left:
Jonas singing “Jai Ja Kart”
(Note: This heartbreaking love-song is sung in what Thais call “pleading tones,” which Jonas has become quite famous for.)

the weight as well. So, coping with it sure is a heaven of a lot easier with a little help from my friends.

FZ: Jonas, would you say there are specific means the Lord uses to keep you humble? And how do you find the balance of accepting the popularity you've received over the past years and remembering that it's only the Lord?

MICHELLE: The dancers help keep him very humble. Har, har!

CHRISTY: Angela is quite the expert here so maybe she should fill you in.

VIJAY: Angela's personal responsibility is to keep Jonas humble.

JONAS: Angela has taken the responsibility upon herself to be my personal PR secretary and promotion agent.

VIJAY: When Jonas walks through a mall, Angela is always in front of him screaming, "Jonas! Jonas!" doing her dance steps, and waving her hands very frantically.

MICHELLE: He has to wear spats under his costume, and sometimes we make him wear them for us without his costume (don't worry, we only do this at Home).

CHRISTY: Actually, Jonas does a pretty good job of keeping the rest of us humble, ha! Well, I'm sure we do a pretty good job of keeping him real humble as well.

JONAS: Well, to start with, one of the things that keeps me humble is that we're dealing with a genre of music that is not the most pride-inducing type from a western standpoint. Not that that is what we really should go by, but it does help it not to go to our heads. If it had been some type of pop music, or rock music, boy band group, or whatever, it might have been easier to get proud about it.

Also, nowadays I have to approach a style of music that I'm not by any means an expert at. It's not my main talent and is pretty demanding vocally, so I don't ever feel like I'm on par with the standard of professional *lukthoong*. That definitely helps as a reality check.

Then of course, while there are some people who are awed by meeting someone who is famous, there are a whole lot of people around me every day who are not by any means awed and know how I am. They see my failings and my natural self and that helps keep my feet on the ground too.

There are a lot of folks who check

me and help me, and remind me about things, which does involve some correction, having to get things critiqued, and having to get counsel. Of course, being a bit clumsy and forgetful helps too. There have been a number of occasions when I've forgotten the words to my songs on stage, which is pretty embarrassing and helps bring me back into the realm of reality. Also I'm really not a dancer, so any type of dance movements I have to do help keep me humble and can be a bit humorous at times.

Please do pray for me too, though, as there is always a need for me to have more humility and fight against pride, which is a pitfall of this ministry. For me sometimes the pride comes not so much in feeling that my singing is good or even adequate, but rather maybe more being offended about suggestions, not being open to counsel and not being receptive, or being a bit independent. Lord help me. Sometimes I get lethargic, too, and I'm not always sufficiently desperate.

The bottom line is that it's really all the Lord. It's the Lord's doing, the Lord's timing, the Lord's workings, and if I want to be in touch with reality at all, I have to accept that and believe it with my whole heart, because it's the truth. Between the Lord and everyone else and what they've put into this, it doesn't really leave me with much credit at all.

FZ: Christy, apparently your name is also known around Thailand, as well. Do you see yourself working on an album any time soon?

CHRISTY: The company (who recorded Jonas' album) is definitely

interested, but we're praying and seeking the Lord as to how He wants us to proceed. I'm also personally praying about it myself. The Lord has indicated that we should be open to it, so please keep me in your prayers that I'll be open to whatever He has for me and that we'll make the right decision.

FZ: **There's not a lot we've heard about the dancers. Can you tell us a bit about what is involved in your part of the show? Are there times**

PANDITA: Nothing has really changed as far as I go, because I can't sing. But Michelle and Angela really had to take up the torch (they did a great job of it) with the lead singing when Jonas and/or Christy weren't available. It was a battle at first—a real battle—between them, like who was going to sing what because they both prefer dancing to singing. Mary also helped with the singing (Angelina was pregnant at the time, so she wasn't able to be involved so much). Some of the studio boys also filled in

when Jonas wasn't around, and they did real well.

CHRISTY: They're perfectly capable of pulling off a show without us, it's just that lately there hasn't been much of an opportunity for it. Actually, something we've been working on and doing more of lately is a show with Angelina and I and the dancers that we can use for CTPs and other shows for our friends, etc. Jonas is under contract, but I'm not under contract yet and Angelina sings and speaks



Angela and Vijay on the set of "Jai Ja Kart" during the filming of the music videos.

I think we all had to say yes to Jesus and now we're seeing the fruit.

when you do solo performances without the accompaniment of Jonas and Christy?

CHRISTY: "We dance," they said.

FAYE: Yeah, we dance and we also do tape promotion at various malls and record stores. Sometimes when we're on tour, we do autograph signing, visiting different famous people and places to pay our respects, etc. Plus we do a lot of witnessing and talking to people along the way.

MICHELLE: When Jonas and Christy first started getting famous, we had to do our normal non-*Lukthong* shows, and CTPs, etc., without them, and the shows were quite lacking.

CHRISTY: That's their opinion. However, I have it on good authority that that's not the case. The shows were absolutely fine!— Better than fine!



Jonas and the girls
L-R: Angela, Mary, Jonas, Michelle, Pandita)

Thai super well, a lot better than me actually, so we're still able to do that together and it's been a real blessing. It's nice sometimes to do some non-*lukthoong* type shows as well just for variety. And the training that we've received from our *lukthoong* ministry has really helped and improved our shows overall as well. TTL.

FZ: The Family as a whole has entered a new era of action, and



Dancing at a CTP.



With young students after an anti-narcotics program in Samut Prakarn Province.



everyone is required to make the steps into committing fully. Were you faced with decisions at the beginning of this year where you obviously stood at a crossroad? Have you seen the difference in your lives personally, and as a group?

ANGELA: Around halfway through last year, before this whole *lukthoong* ministry started, I kind of wanted a change and a move. I was praying about it and in different prophecies I received the Lord said it wasn't time to move yet, that He had some major things in store for us as a team and He wanted me to be a part of it. Then about a month later, *lukthoong* happened. That was encouraging and

it's been exciting to see the Lord use it so mightily.

MICHELLE: I think for a lot of us, definitely if the Lord had not shown us to make the transition to *lukthoong*, we would probably not have chosen to do this style of music and dancing. But it is an era of greater works and greater yieldedness, and we know it's what the Lord wants us to do and He's using it.

FAYE: I'd been on the singing team for a while (this was last year), but then I had kind of pulled out for a bit as I had a baby. There was a need for more female dancers, though, so I had to decide if I was going to continue on with the team or not. My husband used to be more involved in this dancing ministry, but he now very sweetly, sacrificially stays home and takes care of our little baby. Since being on the singing team again, the Lord has been doing a lot in my life and I've had to commit further. Sometimes it's hard to leave my little girl at home, but I know she's well taken care of. The Lord has shown me to continue on here so far and I've definitely seen the fruit of

sticking.

PANDITA: Well, I definitely didn't think that after the several years of performing on the team, I would end up performing this style of music almost exclusively. But being that it's the Lord's will and the era of greater works, and He's using this so mightily to win so many people, I have decided to stay on the team for as long as it's the Lord's will. It wasn't an easy decision to make. It's like counting the cost and there is a price to pay, but there are also the benefits and the rewards that we know come with sticking to this ministry.

JON B.: I think we all had to say yes to Jesus and now we're seeing the fruit.

VIJAY: I used to be in Bangalore, India, and joined the team very recently. It's something I always wanted to do and I was always quite interested in joining Heart to Heart. When I came, I had my own ideas about what we would be doing, sort of the style of dancing and music they were doing previously, and that was sort of more my goal and vision. But not long after I was here, we switched to *lukthoong*, so that was a bit of a shock and something that took a while to get used to. I felt like a fish out of water as everything was different—the music, the costumes, the dance routines, having to wear make-up and mascara and eyeliner and more lipstick than the girls, ha! That was a little bit of a hard saying. But it's obviously the Lord's will and once I committed myself to doing what the Lord wanted me to, it became much easier. I got much more used to it (not the make-up part!) and it's become fun and very fulfilling and I wouldn't trade it for anything.

JONAS: For me, definitely this whole thing has required a pretty big commitment, especially since it involved contracts and basically committing to doing this for the long haul. I know that it's the Lord's will and the Lord is continuing to be in control and leading and guiding. I think that every step of the way, it requires more yielding, more depending on the Lord, and also being willing to accept the things that come along with it—the Lord working in my life and requiring things of me, and having to say yes step by step. It's definitely only the Lord's grace that has helped me every step of the way and nothing of myself.

CHRISTY: I think that although it's been perhaps humbling at times, or whatever the case may be, this whole new ministry has really been a fulfillment of the era of action for us. We're seeing direct fulfillment of prophecy practically every day, both prophecies from the GNs about things that the Lord promised He would do in this day and age for The Family, as well as prophecies that we ourselves got when praying about this ministry. It's been so neat!

When this all started out and we were faced with the reality of the situation, we were all asked to take time to personally pray and hear from the Lord about what He wanted us to do and for how long, etc. We had to "make our commitment sure" so to speak, and "be fully persuaded in our own minds" that this is what the Lord wanted us to do. Different ones of us got different things as far as the time frame and how long we'll be sticking it out for. I think that's really been a help for all of us to have that to stand on. It's always a good reminder and encouragement for us.

I can definitely see the difference and benefits in my own life as I often battled with discouragement or wanting to move on and have a change, not that that's bad in itself or anything, but it was often a trial for me because I wasn't always extremely committed. But I have to say that once I "said yes" and made that decision to fight and to commit myself to this, I've been so much happier and more fulfilled. I think too that a lot of the success of this whole venture would have to be attributed to everyone having to be real committed and united on this. We wouldn't have been able to do it otherwise. Plus we've been able to "encourage one another in the Lord" and lift each other up.

PANDITA: I think sometimes one of the trials we go through is wondering what other Family young people around the world think about the ministry and what we're doing and stuff, as it can maybe seem a bit peculiar, because it's such a cultural thing and it may not be what one would naturally consider "cool." But we always have to remind ourselves that it's the Lord's will and it is cool because we're doing it for the sheep and we're thinking about the long term vision, the Lord's ultimate plan for all of us, what He's going to do and where He's taking us with this.

FZ: You've been around for several years, and in that time did the prospect of nationwide recognition ever become a focal point, or even a thought? We've read countless articles regarding the highlighted places you've performed at, as well as the notable personages you've performed for, but to release an album, and find your name among the most famous of *lukthoong* singers, and as a group being rather well known, was this even a

We're talking about real true heat here, our costumes being drenched with sweat and our make-up dripping all over the floor.

dream?

CHRISTY: No, definitely not! Like we said before, we never imagined this would happen. We really are, and have always been, just your average singing team on a mission field just like anywhere else in the world. I think if the Lord would have let us in on it in advance we would have all been scared off. He just sort of dropped it on us when we weren't looking! I sure never thought about it or even imagined it. I don't think any of us did.

JONAS: Initially, I never thought of it at all, never dreamt of it— never! I think as The Family started doing things that were somewhat commercially-related, we've been

open to the possibility or idea, but I don't think we ever thought it was actually going to happen— certainly not to the extent that it has! That definitely was beyond my imagination, even the fact that it was a *lukthoong* album we ended up doing.

FZ: You've done a few music videos to go along with Jonas' album. Can you tell us about what goes into the making of them?



Promotion of Jonas' album



MICHELLE: We had to film Jonas' music video for three days in a row. Reville was at 3:15 AM and we had to be at the filming location at 4 AM. There we'd sit around waiting for everyone else to arrive— the producers and other dancers, for around 45 minutes. Once they all arrived, we began the long process of make-up, doing our hair and costumes, which took about three hours.

PANDITA: Just in case you're thinking, "Gee, that's an awful long time for hair and make-up," please note that we're talking about five or six different layers of stuff on our faces involving a rainbow of colors, not to mention the drawn-on eyebrows and the fake eyelashes which are

applied with super-glue (well, not really, but something fairly strong that feels a good bit like super glue). And I don't exactly know how to describe the way they do our hair.

ANGELA: We have to wear these, what we call "rats" in our hair (they look basically like a large wad of matted hair, or maybe a nest of some sort) to make our hairstyles more puffy. We also call them "minute lice" because every once in a while for one or two minutes your scalp itches uncontrollably and there is nothing you can do about it.

MICHELLE: Anyway, we'd get there at 4 AM and we'd start filming at 7 AM and we'd work till 4:00, 4:30 in the afternoon. We'd get three or four songs done each day and we did this for three days in a row. Anyway, we were all pretty wiped after that.

CHRISTY: Little did we know that our days of early reveille were only the beginning of an era of much greater action in the physical as well!

FZ: You're mentioning that singing or performing *lukthoong* doesn't come very naturally. When you get on stage, do you feel an extra special anointing? What is it like?

JONAS: I usually feel pretty nervous before I'm about to go on stage because I feel like I have obstacles to overcome every time. For example, I don't sing *lukthoong* as well as a



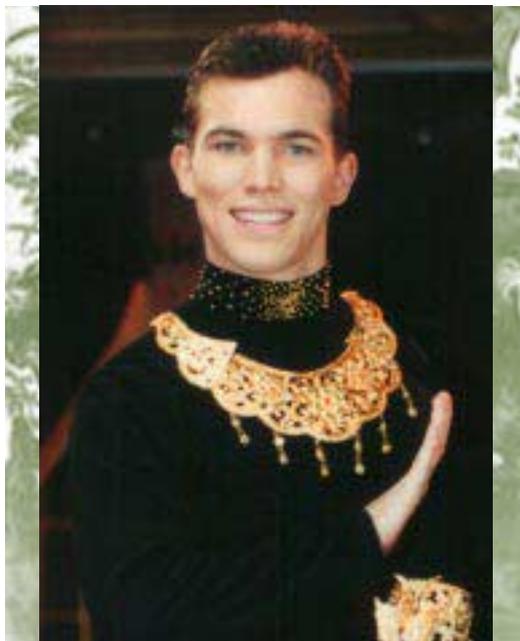
actual press conference was meant to start, I made tons of mistakes and couldn't remember half my lines. But once I got out there, it was amazing as I felt the Lord's spirit fall and He quickened things to my remembrance, things to say, ideas and little jokes, etc., so that was neat. TYL!

CHRISTY: I certainly don't think it's something that comes naturally for any of us, at least for me, so there's got to be a pretty far out, supernatural, cosmic anointing involved. I've felt it very strongly at times. There've been times when I was sure I couldn't do it, for example, TV interviews in Thai where I was completely freaked and felt like it was impossible, but when the time came by a miracle it just worked, in spite of me, and ended up being a real victory. But I knew it had nothing to do with me since I was completely blank beforehand.

Another time, we had this big show for an important event. Thousands and thousands of people were there, not to mention all the TV stations, which were airing the program live. I had to sing this one song that I had just gotten the words for the day before and I didn't know it very well. I was backstage waiting for my cue and I decided to try to review my song. I got through the chorus and realized that I had absolutely no idea what either of the verses were or how they went or anything. I was completely lost and totally freaked out and I didn't have the words with me so I

“ I certainly don't think it's something that to be a pretty far out, supernatural,

Thai. For them it's much more natural; it's sort of like a Black singing soul, it comes naturally to them. Other people copy it, but they don't always get it quite right. Similarly, singing *lukthoong* is not in my natural musical make up. I'm often fairly nervous about the speaking, too, because I'm not totally confident with the language, like I was saying. But I have definitely felt the Lord's anointing come through every time, if I'm desperate and really claiming that He will do it. I know that was especially the case when we did the press conference in the beginning because I was very nervous. It was the first program I had done since recording the album and during the dress rehearsal right before the



couldn't check them for a refresher. No one around seemed to know the words to the song and I was just about to tell them that I couldn't go on stage when I heard my name being announced and the music for my song start. So I walked out there with a big smile on my face (I think), completely clueless as to what I was going to sing or say. When I got to the verse the words just started coming out of my mouth. I had absolutely no idea what the next word or the next sentence was going to be and it went on like that for the entire song. When I got off stage I still couldn't recall what the words were to the song that I'd just finished singing. Pretty weird, huh? I thought so too, but I sure was thankful!

FZ: Every public figure has their less than complimentary moments, incidents that happen while performing, or peculiar events that take place. Do you have any particular ones you could share with our readers?

CHRISTY: Once Jonas and I were out together. The dancers had to go to a practice session and we were supposed to get home by cab. It was sort of late at night and they dropped us off in this rather heavily populated area where there were some festivities and celebrations going on. It was difficult for us to find a taxi that didn't already have passengers, and we stood on the side of the road for rather a long time. Of course everyone recognized Jonas, and to top it all off he had this huge brace around his neck as he'd hurt it a few days earlier in a basketball game (people knew about this as it had been in all the papers and on TV that he'd been hurt). So we're standing there, traffic was heavy and everyone in their cars were waving and blowing kisses and Jonas was waving back, people were yelling his name, others were coming up and asking him how his neck was doing and wishing him speedy recovery. It was nuts! Finally I said, "Jonas, would you please go stand behind that tree over there because this is becoming embarrassing and I'm not real used to all the attention." So he did, and it was a real blessing. And when we finally got a taxi, after enduring about



waiting for about an hour or so, I settled for this other bus. It was a particularly "special" bus, someone once fittingly named these buses "the green death toboggans." Actually the reason it was named that was because they drive so fast and so crazily that you feel you're ready to meet your Maker at any moment. But this time I was sure I was going to catch my death from suffocation, or perhaps claustrophobia. The bus was crammed full of soaking wet, smelly people, and I'm not exactly the type of person that you could describe as "small" or "short," so I wasn't really the best addition to this already over-crowded bus. I must have taken up at least a third of the bus (that's a slight exaggeration, but anyway).

I was hunched over and my head was pressed up against the ceiling. I should probably explain here that I had just been on a very popular TV talk show just a few days earlier where Jonas and I had been interviewed and I had sung a *moh lum* (sung in the Lao language or dialect) song that's extremely famous here called "Bow Ruk See Dum" (Black Bow of Love). Anyway, back to my commentary, I was in this bus and at every bus stop I was being pushed further and further inside the bus until I was standing directly underneath a neon light (without a cover on it). A few minutes passed and I realized that everyone in the bus was looking at me rather queerly, or like they were trying very hard to

comes naturally for any of us, there's got cosmic anointing involved. ”

an hour and a half of far too much attention, the taxi driver didn't even recognize Jonas! Talk about Murphy's Law!

I have a pretty good story of myself as well. Normally, especially nowadays, we try not to go anywhere on our own. But this was a while back when all of this *lukthoong* stuff just began, and I had been at singing class and the rest of my team was going to another Home. So I told them I'd just catch a bus home and I'd be fine. There was one particular air-con bus that I wanted that would get me all the way home, so I thought I'd just wait and catch that one. But I waited and waited and it didn't come. It started pouring rain and I got completely drenched. So finally after



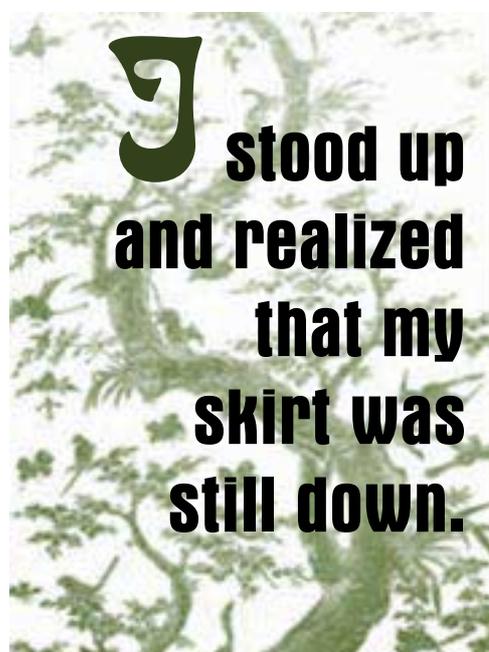
restrain laughter. People had recognized me when I got on, but I wasn't sure what this was all about. It was then that I began to smell a rather odd smell, much like the smell of burning hair! I looked at my reflection in the metallic window frames and realized that my head was indeed smoking! Once my fellow passengers saw that I had noticed my state and had finally realized what was happening, all restraint and quiet Thai manners were thrown to the wind. They could hold it in no longer, and the whole bus erupted into a fit of laughter, interspersed with shouts of "Bow Ruk See Dum"!

I failed to see the immediate humor of the situation, but looking back on it now, or actually, even

looking back on it a few minutes after it happened, it was pretty funny. Thankfully, my hair wasn't badly burned or anything, and I didn't cause anyone else in the bus any bodily harm or danger, but it was a good "have a good laugh at yourself" sort of an incident for me.

FAYE: Like Vijay said before, he only just recently came to Thailand. Anyhow, recently we were at a show and were being asked our names on stage. The mike was being passed down the line and when the interviewer got to Vijay he asked him, "Chue arai, krup?" (What's your name?) and God bless Vijay, he very wholeheartedly answered with a "Chue arai, Vijay Krup?" (What's your name, Vijay?).

PANDITA: When doing one show, in between songs, we had this



extremely fast costume change. Jonas was meant to talk for a little while, to give us time to put on these very, extremely "special" white tutus. You should see a photo of them.

ANGELA: The dance teacher was afraid we wouldn't all make it on stage in time, so there were just going to be two of us girls dancing.

PANDITA: Anyway, the music came on and we went charging up these high, narrow steps. Thankfully, we made it up in time. And one of the girls ... me, was making rather strange faces at the other girl ... Angela, trying to hint that something was wrong with her skirt.

ANGELA: You have to explain the skirt.

PANDITA: The skirt is like a tutu with

a wire frame, but it has more layers so it's extra puffy. It comes up and out so it's like a palm tree, you know? But in Angela's case, this particular time, it was reversed. Ang had put it on upside-down—sort of like an upside-down palm tree around her waist—and it was bobbing up and down and you could see her entire ... oh well. But anyway, she was laughing, having a very good time rocking out for the Lord, and, she didn't know anything was wrong, thank God, otherwise she would have run off and left me alone on the stage.

ANGELA: I did know!

PANDITA: You did? Oh wow! Well, anyway, once we got off the stage we all had a very good laugh about it.

ANGELA: Another time we were doing a Thai song in traditional Thai costume. We were wearing these skirts, sarong style, that look sort of like a big silk sheet that you tie in the back with a great, big knot, and then one side is tied to your wrist. And so we're doing this Thai dance, dancing away and there's this one step where we go down to the floor in a sort of a kneeling position. But that time when Michelle stood back up her skirt stayed on the floor! Underneath she was just wearing these small black spandex, spat things, and she ran off stage to put her Thai sarong-skirt back on.

MICHELLE: Meanwhile the camera was on me right at that point. So I stood up and realized that my skirt was still down. I quickly pulled it up and started walking backwards to leave the stage and the cameraman continued following me off the stage with the camera thinking that it was part of the dance or something till he finally realized that it was indeed not part of the dance!

PANDITA: At some of these shows they have a fair amount of dry ice blowing in, but this one time the machine malfunctioned so the entire stage was covered in dry ice, and as everyone knows, skin-to-dry-ice contact can be very painful. And at the same part (you know, from the story above), where we have to go down to the ground on this one song, I happened to kneel directly on this big patch of dry ice and it was so painful! But we had to keep shining brightly for Jesus. I was yelping and screaming with this huge grin on my face. Angela (PI) was on the side

looking at me all worried like, "What in the world is she screaming and yelping about?" I was trying to motion to her about the dry ice on the stage. Meanwhile my male partner, Jon B., who was dancing barefoot, had his feet covered in the stuff. So he too was grinning wildly, and we were both trying to be real soldiers, but it wasn't working out so well.

VIJAY: With this dry ice stuff, your foot goes from very cold to very numb to a very painful burning sensation within a period of about 30 seconds.

ANGELA: Yeah, we've all experienced it plenty!

FZ: Do you have any closing words you'd like to share with our readers?

JONAS: Just to confirm, I only have one wife.

MICHELLE: God can use anything.

JON B.: I think becoming one is about the coolest thing you can do and being a missionary is the greatest thing. If this can help us to do that better, then that's what I want to do. Please pray for us that we can really use this to reach this country.

ANGELINA: I've been in Thailand for a long time and it's really fulfilling to see the Lord moving so wonderfully. Of course, as we said before, we never really expected that it would be like this, but the Lord always has something new and exciting up His sleeve. I think ever since the beginning of last year when the team got more involved in this ministry, it's been challenging and even taxing in many ways, but it's had its very rewarding moments and times which definitely make it worth it. I think it's also the Lord's blessing on Thailand for having accepted the Family and being so sweet and receptive to us and our message for over 20 years—well, actually, the nearly 30 years that we've been here now.

ANGELA: We need dancers! Anyone have the burden?

VIJAY: Dream the impossible dream, and hang on to your crown.

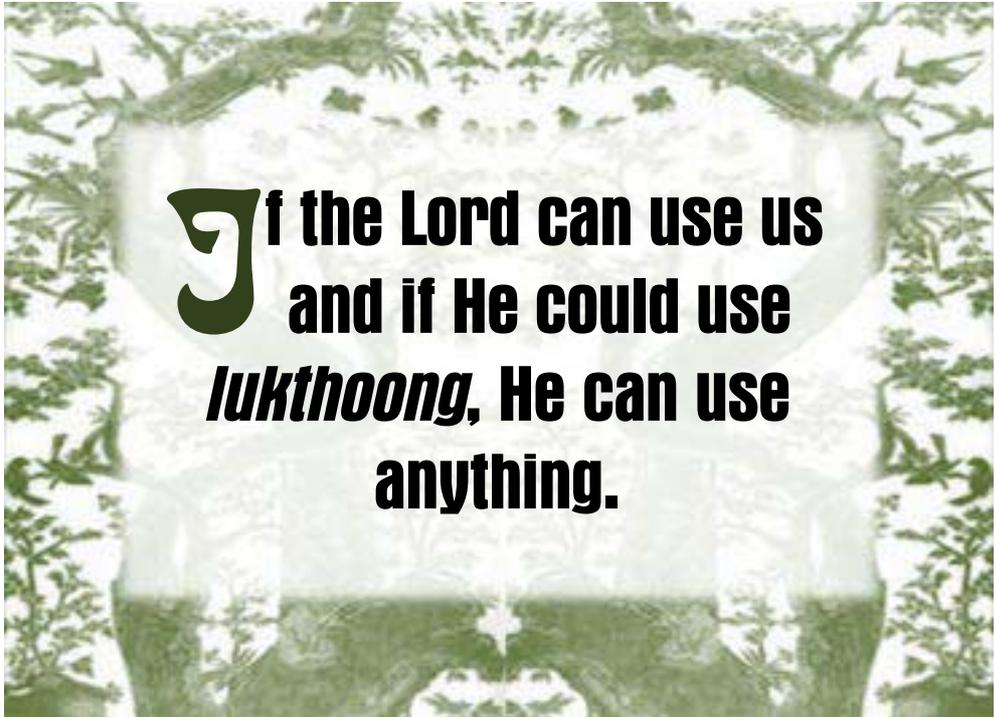
CHRISTY: We've got the coolest, most wonderful Family in the whole world! Thank you all for being so terrific!

JONAS: I would like to thank all of the folks who keep the Home fires burning, be it taking care of the kids, Home clean up, cooking, etc., while

we're out. Among those, primarily my wife, Praise, who takes care of our kids and often has to be on her own with them. She's very patient and loving and sweet and encouraging and that really helps make things easier for me.

FAYE: I'd like to say a big thank you to my husband, DJ, who stays at home and takes care of our little five-month-old baby. He's a very good daddy.

PANDITA: I want to say thank you to Mama and Peter and those in WS who got the prophecies for us. They're very encouraging. We all have our own copies and we can go over them frequently and they're a big blessing! Thank you!



**If the Lord can use us
and if He could use
lukthoong, He can use
anything.**

The entire music
video cast.



Postcard

A Tale of Calabar

By Tim E. (22)

from Port Harcourt

Once upon a time, not too long ago, four of us guys took a trip to the city of Calabar in southeastern Nigeria. This was my first road trip in Nigeria, and a welcome change from the city of Port Harcourt...

I was quite impressed by Calabar, which was quite pleasant and not as overpopulated and commercial as Port Harcourt, thus the atmosphere was more relaxed. Actually, although the atmosphere of Port Harcourt can be quite tense, it's often difficult to get something done as people can tend to be pretty laid back on the inside. Thus doing business here can be compared to working with the US Social Security system, although the people here at least manage to *look* busy.

Back to the story: The night we arrived in Calabar, the whole city was without *nepa*, which is to say, electricity; it was very dark. Upon finding the guesthouse we had arranged to stay at, we discovered that due to some miscommunication, the person responsible for letting us in was not there and wouldn't be there till the next day or so, so we were unable to get inside.

Naturally, we were dismayed at this development, so we decided to better our situation by heading into town and seeing what could be done for food. Samson, one of the nationals on our team, remembered a friend from times past who lived in the area, and he let us cook our food at his house. But in order to get to his house, we had to go down a series of small dirt roads which all the locals had claimed were "motorable." That night, we learned the hard way that "motorable" is a rather loose term. In this case it meant the roads were fit for motoring, but only if your vehicle had four-wheel drive with high clearance, sturdy shocks, a trusty winch, dual airbags and good insurance. Or as was our case, a Peugeot station wagon full of "third-class-

passengers"—who later agreed that the recent rains had done no favors. But, we, like every other great man and woman of God throughout the ages, had found a cause in which we believed, and for which we were indeed willing to die, so we braved the terrain and had our dinner.

Once fed, we faced the next challenge of finding accommodations for the night. After praying about it, we decided to aim high ("Let's try someplace with a generator!") and approached one of the city's best hotels for help.

Arriving at the hotel, a couple of us stayed in the car as prayer warriors, and the other two went inside to speak to the manager, who upon hearing their brief explanation of our situation, handed them the key to a room. Within minutes we were all praising our way up the stairs and into a nice, yet tragically small room. Apparently the manager had thought there was just the two of them. But "where the Lord guides He provides," which in this case meant providing air conditioning and hot water for our showers. Good personal hygiene is crucial to survival in a cramped environment!

We slept well despite the inconvenience of close quarters (I slept on the floor as that was the only place where I could find enough space to accommodate my full 6' 2" length), and woke the next day refreshed and inspired.

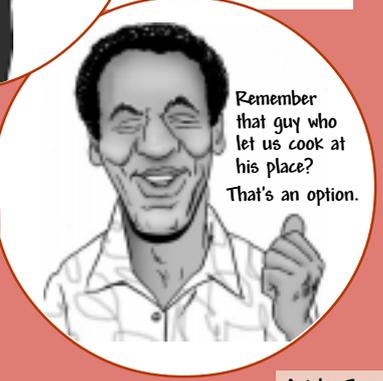
The next couple of days went well, but on the last night, we

had a close call when a disgruntled police officer who claimed we had parked in the wrong place (although there were no signs or road markings indicating such), attempted to deflate our tires. The driver had gone to the market for some groceries and had taken the car keys with him, so we were unable to move the vehicle. I tried my best to explain our predicament, but the cop began to let the air out of one of the tires anyway.

Seeing that my approach had failed to do the trick, Samson who had been in the military, took over and proceeded to use the much more effective approach of demanding respect for having served his country, dropping names, etc. Meanwhile I used my foot on the open valve to prevent too much air from escaping. The strategy of letting someone else do the talking appeared to have worked, as the cop eventually returned the valve cap to me, accepted a tract, and went his way before too much air was lost. Then we remembered the parking brake was out of order and pushed the car to another spot.

Deflating the tires of an offending vehicle seems to be more of a disciplinary measure than a solution, although it's a pretty popular practice. (The next day we saw the same thing happen to someone else who probably hadn't prayed much about it before parking across a narrow one-way street). The happy ending was that the rest of our trip went without incident, and the following day we all returned home safely and in one piece.

(One piece each; four pieces altogether!)



Art by Eyve