

You don't have to get it perfect—you just have to get it going. Babies don't walk the first time they try, but eventually they do.

Christmas in war-torn Palestine

By a team in the Middle East

(Note: Aliases are used for our friends' names.)

In early December, the Lord put it on the hearts of several Family members to take a trip to Palestine to encourage and minister to the precious people there during the Christmas season, despite the obvious dangers involving a trip like this due to the ongoing conflict.

For many years before the Intifada broke out again (after Ariel Sharon's visit to the Temple Mount in September 2000), we had been able to take our singing team to Bethlehem around Christmastime to participate in the Manger Square Christmas Eve celebrations that were held there each year. However, these celebrations have been cancelled due to the occupation, suffering, and war-like conditions the Palestinian people have been living under for over two years now. So the main purpose of *this* trip was to visit and encourage some of the people and dear friends that we'd met while performing in Bethlehem in years past.

We prepared a beautiful card for each person, including a prophecy, a CD of Arabic songs by Heart to Heart, including the songs "The Phoenix" and "Christmas in Bethlehem" (found on the MO site), both of which were especially written for Palestine, a photo of our Heart to Heart singing group, and a personal note from the person that had originally met or who witnessed to them.

Before we left, the Lord also gave a special message of encouragement for the Palestinian people, in which the Lord expresses that He sees and knows all they are going through at this time and offers His comfort and hope for the better world to come.

While we have, of course, been somewhat aware of the hardships the people there endure through hearing and reading the news, coming face to face with what is actually happening was both shocking and heartbreaking. We found the Lord's description of what the people there endure to be more than true and the need for the Lord's message of comfort and hope was beyond description. This tract was duplicated and passed out to thousands of people in Palestine and was received with deep appreciation.

(Editor's note: To read the tract passed out in Palestine, check out the MO site at: http://www.familymembers.com/overflow/pubs_overflow/33)



Team sings at the Peace Center, Bethlehem

Meeting with Fareed

We met Fareed a number of years ago. When we first heard about him, we weren't quite sure what to expect, as he has quite a controversial background. In his younger years he was a radical Palestinian freedom fighter, much hated and wanted by the opposition. After some years of being quite outspoken against the occupation of Palestine, he was seriously wounded. By a miracle he survived and recovered, but he partially lost his hearing as well as the sight in one of his eyes.

Despite his handicaps, Fareed has remained a very dynamic person, yet we also found him to be kind and gentle. We learned that through his injuries and other horrors he experienced, Fareed decided that peace is the only solution to the conflict in the region and he has been promoting and fighting for peaceful solutions ever since.

We've met with Fareed many times. He's received personal prophecies, and whenever we've sung our songs for him he's cried, as he has a tender and receptive heart. So he was one of the people the Lord put on our hearts to see during our visit to Palestine. When we called him and told him we were coming, he was thrilled and really wanted to see us.

However, the immediate problem we faced was that the area in Ramallah where Fareed and his wife live, was under curfew. We only had a few days, and we weren't sure if we'd be able to wait until the curfew was lifted. When we prayed about it, the Lord indicated that despite the curfew, we should at least try to get into Ramallah for Fareed's sake, as we had heard a few rumors that the curfew wasn't as tight as it had been at other times.

To make a long story short, by a total miracle the Israeli soldiers at the checkpoint let us pass. However, after getting

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The Phoenix

There's a long stifled cry in these timeless lands

There's a dream in these olive covered hills

There's a tear mingled prayer rising from uplifted hands
Buried hopes that yearn to be fulfilled

And the Phoenix shall rise from the ashes of the night
And sail into the waiting sky
And the long promised dawn shall shed its golden light
Upon the hills of Palestine.

In a child's pleading eyes that long for days of peace
There's a faith whose fires have dwindled low
But the promise is sure, all oppression's power shall cease
And in freedom the little ones shall grow

Let your faith be strong
Though the night is long
For the dawn shall surely come
Let your love hold on
Till your dreams are born
To greet the morning sun

(WRITTEN BY MICHAEL P.)

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into town we were shocked to find the streets completely deserted, and everything in Ramallah was closed with everyone inside their houses. There was hardly any traffic, just a few UN cars and a Red Cross ambulance that was driving around in case there were any problems. Aside from that, ours was the only vehicle on the road. Thankfully we made it to Fareed's house safely without being shot at.

We had a beautiful time with Fareed and his wife. His wife Nisreen is an American-Palestinian, and she had just arrived back from the States that day. They poured out their hearts for about five hours about all that had happened to them during the occupation of Ramallah and the subsequent bombings.

They told us that because their house is situated in a somewhat strategic location on a hill, the Israelis came to their house to take it over. Even though Fareed has been through a lot in his life, this was a very traumatic experience for both him and his wife. What happened to them is something many others went through at that time and are still going through as the occupation continues.

The Israelis invaded their building with machine guns, hitting Fareed as soon as they got to the door to the point of knocking him over. Then they took over their whole house while forcing them into a corner. The soldiers were very, very rough. They immediately started tearing the house apart, pulling down all the curtains, throwing the furniture aside, and being brutally inhumane, as Fareed and his wife put it. The soldiers were urinating in the corners of the room, throwing things out the window and were breaking things right and left. Their lives were threatened a number of times when both of them at different times tried to ask them not to do certain things or to behave a certain way. At one point a machine gun was put to Fareed's head and they threatened to kill him if he didn't shut up. They were poking Nisreen with their guns and were screaming at her as well.

At one point Nisreen asked the soldiers, "Why do you have to act this way? You don't have to act this badly!" To which they responded, "Why do you [being American] have a problem with

it? America does worse things in Afghanistan than we're doing here." It goes to show that America's bad example certainly doesn't help. At the same time that the Israelis took over their house, they also took over all the surrounding houses in the area.

The long and short of the story is that the Lord did a real miracle for Fareed and his wife. He gave his wife a mobile phone and told her to tell the soldiers she had to go to the toilet, which she proceeded to do. They weren't too happy about it and wanted her to leave the door open, but she locked the door anyway and quickly called an Israeli general they know. As soon as she got him on the phone, because the Israeli soldiers had heard her calling, they broke the door down. At that very moment she handed the phone to the Israeli soldiers and said, "General So-and-so is on the line and wants to speak to you." Thankfully the general ordered the soldiers out of their house. The sad thing is that in a number of the other houses nearby, because they didn't have such powerful friends, quite a number of people died from injuries, as they weren't able to get medical help.

Fareed told us that his wife was completely traumatized for a few weeks after this happened, and that she couldn't even pull herself together enough to fix up the house. It was such a difficult experience. She said the next morning when she awoke she thought she had ringworm, because she had round red circles all over her stomach. She then remembered that was where the Israelis had poked her with their guns when they pushed her around the house and threatened her.

During the days that followed, some American journalists from NBC television who were feeling sorry for all the people who were trapped in their homes, tried to go around to distribute some bread and other food so they'd have something to eat. Because they were showing their sympathies to the Palestinians, the Israelis shot one of these NBC reporters. This happened right in front of one of the houses on their block. The Israelis wouldn't allow the ambulance to come in and get him, so one Palestinian man ran out of his house, and despite the threat of him getting shot at and possibly killed as well, he carried the wounded NBC

reporter on his back through a maze of Israeli soldiers and tanks to the other side of the checkpoint, where he was able to get him to an ambulance. God bless him!

Nisreen said that up until this point, she tried very hard not to be a racist, but she's afraid that the things that she saw and experienced during that time affected her in a very negative way, as it was so difficult to go through. She said that Fareed, on the other hand, in spite of everything that he's been through, always stays softhearted, and that he still keeps hoping and praying for peace.

Meeting with Abdullah

Abdullah is one of our long-time and closest friends from another part of Palestine. He is a very influential man, and because of his responsibilities he's always "on the go." Because of the fact that he is so busy it's not so easy to get to see him. However, as the Lord had put it on our hearts to try and minister to him, we had left a message at his office that we would be coming and that we really would like to see him if at all possible.

Abdullah typically tends to surprise us with some of the eccentric and unusual things he does, and this time was no exception. Suddenly, while meeting and fellowshiping together at the place we were staying, the doorbell rang. Who else would it be but dear Abdullah, who showed up without calling or letting us know he was coming. We all quickly scrambled to get a little snack ready, and we ended up having a very beautiful evening with this dear man.

Abdullah is not a religious type of person, but he has come quite close in the spirit and has read a lot of our materials. Even though he's the typical "sinner" type, he's been very receptive to the Lord and His Spirit in us.

Abdullah shared some very beautiful things with us that night. It encouraged *our* faith to hear this dear man speak with such an anointing about the situation and with so much faith. A fair bit of the things that he shared were things that we taught him previously, but to see him put it all together and hear him speak with such faith about everything was just amazing.

As we tried to be sympathetic and encouraging, he began trying to encourage *us*. He told us that we should not worry and that we have to realize that they

(the Palestinians) know that although they are losing the war right now, they are going to win the "World Cup" in the end. He was joking about it a little, calling the last war, or the Battle of Armageddon, the "Final World Cup." He just kept saying over and over again, "You have to understand that we *know* we're going to *win* the final war; we know we're on the right side and that we're going to win. It is written, it's a promise, and we know that God is not going to break His promise." He kept saying, "God can't break His promise. He can't take back His Word. It's a promise from God and we know it."

He then went on to say, "I know you feel bad for us and it *is* very difficult right now, but we also know that this is the preparation of the heart for the future and for the final game. Because we know that we will win in the end, we can endure and we can have patience." He said, "It's important for us, though, to not look to the right or the left. We have to keep our eyes on that goal, that home that is being built for us in the future. We have to stay focused on that."

Then he went on to talk about the whole AC takeover, the one-world government, the AC being raised up, and how the many are going to think that this man is their messiah, but that we know he's the wrong messiah and we're just waiting for Jesus who's going to come again.

Seeing Abdullah so full of faith really encouraged us, as the situation there is so very difficult. Sometimes it's very hard to tell the Palestinians, who are suffering so much, about the future, which in essence means that things aren't going to get better "today." Of course, we know the Lord wants us to witness to them about the future, because the only hope is for them to keep their eyes on the goal, but sometimes it is very difficult to witness about that as we don't want to be insensitive to their present suffering. So to hear this man speak with such great faith about the future was very encouraging for us.

Overall situation in Palestine

The above accounts of the meetings we had with Fareed and Abdullah are just two examples of the beautiful time we had following up on some of our friends and contacts in the area.

It kindled in us the desire to especially try and do something for the people in Bethlehem around Christmastime, even though all the official celebrations were cancelled again this year due to the suffering. The Lord miraculously opened the doors for us to return for this, which is a whole other story. But before sharing some of the miracles the Lord did during the second trip we took, we want to mention something about the current situation in Palestine.

Things have changed so much in the last year that it completely overwhelmed us. We saw with our own eyes what has been done to the whole country of Palestine. The Israelis have completely destroyed any infrastructure that Palestine ever had. Every police station and all the presidential compounds, including Arafat's residence, have been leveled. There's really nothing left of Palestine, and now they're closing in on them more and more. The situation is just unbelievable. It's by far the worst we've ever seen it since we've been in this part of the world. It really breaks our heart to see what is actually happening and the suffering the people endure.

According to some of our friends, many people in Palestine are literally starving now because they are just not able to get food or work. The situation is not just affecting the working class, but we recently have heard from Nisreen that the middle- and upper-class Palestinians are also going hungry, because the economy has been completely crippled.

It is hard to fully imagine what it must be like for the people there, so please, please pray for them!

Christmas in Bethlehem

After our return home, we continued to stay in touch with Fareed, and both he and his wife assured us that even though it seemed like not much was going to be happening in Bethlehem during Christmas, due to the town being under siege since the Israelis re-occupied it, we would still be able to do something to encourage the people there. In praying and hearing from the Lord about it, He encouraged us to just go by faith and that He indeed was moving and working.

In hearing about the need there, we felt led to try and provision at least some warm

clothing for a group of people we'd heard would especially be encouraged by receiving a gift for Christmas. Within two days, the Lord miraculously supplied 200 warm name-brand sweaters, which we were able to gift wrap along with a copy of the prophecy tract "To Our Palestinian Friends," two *Motivated* magazines, one of them the newly printed "Through the Storm" special edition, and a tape with some of Heart to Heart's Arabic numbers, including "The Phoenix" and "Christmas in Bethlehem," both of which were especially written for Palestine.

It was a good thing that the team of eight people going on this particular trip didn't actually see the amount of stuff that had been prepared for them to take or they might have chickened out. Along with all their personal luggage and sound equipment, there were eight humongous suitcases filled with gift-wrapped Christmas presents! It was quite a spectacle, to say the least.

Needless to say, we all prayed desperately, claiming the power of the keys, and we also held prayer vigil for the border crossing, as there was a very real possibility that the Israelis would question the team concerning all of these gifts, and there was a good chance that they wouldn't let them in with it. Thank the Lord, a total miracle happened! All of the suitcases got through, without one question asked concerning what was in them.

We were rejoicing and praising the Lord that we made it through the border safely, as it's not like crossing the Israeli border is a piece of cake by any stretch of the imagination. Each time it keeps us desperate from the moment we reach the border till we're through. Though the crossing should be very quick, it's not uncommon to spend at least three or four hours waiting at the border, and there's usually always something that comes up. Nevertheless, He's done it each and every time, and in this case especially it was nothing short of a miracle!

Meeting Fareed again

The first evening we were invited to Fareed's home for a Christmas gathering. He and his wife had invited a number of their close friends and they wanted us to come and sing and minister to these people.

It was probably one of the most thrilling witnessing experiences we'd had in a long, long time. Fareed's friends were incredibly hungry and receptive. We sang a lot of Christmas songs and a lot of our other meaningful witnessing songs. Different people were crying and just so moved in the spirit. Towards the end of the evening, we were doing some Arabic numbers, and by that time people were so inspired and happy that they got up to dance. Nisreen later said that Fareed hadn't danced for a very long time; in fact, she couldn't remember the last time she'd seen him dance. But they were both up there dancing away along with many of the other guests. As people were leaving, they came up to us one by one to thank us, and they said such beautiful things to us. One man said that the songs that we'd sung had gone straight into his heart and that they had changed him.

After all the guests had left, we spent three more hours with Fareed and Nisreen. At one point Fareed asked if we could open a bottle of wine, and after serving everyone he wanted to make a toast. As he rose and raised his glass he said, "I want to make this toast to Jesus, my very Best Friend in the whole world—the One Who I pray to, and the One Who speaks personally to me. He's the One Who came to earth to save mankind, and the One that we love so much, and the One that deserves our love." After he finished the toast, he said, "I want you to know that I am a believer. I pray to Jesus from my heart, and He speaks to me as well." It was very touching to hear Fareed make such a public declaration to the Lord.

Fareed and Nisreen poured out their hearts again about the present situation and their burdens for the people. Fareed told us that now even some of the upper-class people are going hungry and that they have a hard time supporting their families. He told us what a catastrophe the whole situation is and that because some of the upper-class people don't want to beg or ask for help, many are literally starving to death from going without their basic needs. They asked us if there was any way we could help them with distributing the food and goods they get together for these dear people. He said that it's often too humbling for the

people to receive it from them, but they thought that if maybe we could go around with them, and sing to them that it might make it easier for the people to receive this help.

We ended up leaving their house around 1 AM to return to our accommodations. Fareed and his wife were under the impression that the checkpoint we had to pass through would still be open. However, when we got there it was closed with barbwire all across the road. The Israeli soldiers were shooing us away and told us we couldn't cross. We were pretty desperate to get through as we had nowhere to sleep and would have had to go back to Fareed's house.

A couple of us finally went up to talk to the soldiers and one of them turned out to be quite sweet. They asked us what we had been doing in Ramallah, so we told them we had been singing Christmas songs. One of them said, "Okay, if you sing me 'Jingle Bells,' I might let you through the checkpoint." This was a pretty unusual request, especially coming from an Israeli soldier. What could we do but sing "Jingle Bells" for him. Amazingly enough, it really touched him! He was trying to joke with us and told us we were "bad singers" and that we had to go back, but in the end this young Israeli soldier said, "You know, I certainly can't remember anybody ever singing me a Christmas song. The world is a crazy place now; my country's crazy, and those people in there are crazy [referring to the Arabs], and basically the world is crazy, so please take care, 'cause you guys are good folks." After that he made a clearing in the barbwire and let us through so we could get back.

It reminded us of what Dad taught us, that war is hell for everybody, and that both sides suffer. What a sad, sad world!

Christmas Eve

We realized that going into Bethlehem on Christmas Eve was going to be no small feat, plus we had no idea what we were going to encounter when we got there. We had no assurance that the team going would be able to perform. We also didn't know what the situation would be like with the Israeli troops, and the potential for the circumstances to be rather tense was a real possibility. However, the Lord led us to go

and assured us that He would be with us, so off we went claiming the power of the keys.

By a miracle, we were able to get through the checkpoints, and although there was absolutely nothing happening in Bethlehem for Christmas due to the town being under curfew, the manager of the Peace Center, which is located right next to the Church of the Nativity in Manger Square, was thrilled to see us. He arranged for us to do a program inside the Peace Center as it was raining outside, which proved to be better overall as there were a lot of soldiers outside in the Square, and the situation was very tense. We were able to perform for hundreds of people and children that night. They were so touched that we'd come despite the circumstances, as no one else had come to do anything for them that year in Bethlehem. The manager of the Peace Center said, "You made Christmas in Bethlehem this year!"

Conclusion

We've been back home for a while now and Fareed and Nisreen have written and called us several times since our return. Nisreen said that everyone is talking about what we did for the people over Christmas and that those who received the gifts we brought were so very, very touched. She also mentioned that they had been in touch with the elders of the Jenin refugee camp, who humbly asked if some of us could come and do a program to encourage the people there as they are so very discouraged at this point in time. She felt that what we have to give would be a great help and comfort to them. Please pray that the Lord will continue to make a way for us to reach these dear persecuted people with the Lord's message of comfort and hope for the better world that is to come, when the Phoenix shall rise again from the ashes of defeat and the children of Palestine shall live in peace once more.

Recently the Lord gave the idea of putting together a tape of songs and quotes for the Palestinian people, similar to the *How to Win* and *How to Be Happy Anyhow* tapes. In order to get this project off of the ground, we are in need of finances. So if the Lord lays it on your heart to help with a donation towards this project, please send it via ASCRO, designated to the "Palestinian Tape Project." Thank you so much, dear Family, for your help as well as your continual prayers for the people in this war torn land. We love you!

(*Jesus speaking:*) My Family, for the most part, enjoys peace and plenty. Though they have their battles, though they sacrifice a great deal on many fronts, most do not know or even have a clue of the extent of the sufferings of some, such as those in the Middle East, who are persecuted so cruelly by the world. So how can My children pray for them as effectively and as desperately if they don't know, if they are unaware of what is really happening? The Family has to be told and made aware of the seriousness of the situation, of how desperate the people are, so it would be good for them to hear a firsthand account.

Without knowing the desperateness of a situation, the black-and-white account of the difficulties, how can My Family pray as effectively? There's something about a personal testimony, about hearing what it's really like, that motivates you and stirs you up to pray more desperately and fervently than you otherwise would. (*End of message from Jesus.*)

REACTIONS FROM ACTIVATED SUBSCRIBERS

I subscribed to *Activated* more than a year ago. I have faithfully acquired most of your Aurora products for my children as they have such an incredible effect on them. When I first got *Sweet Dreams Tonight*, my kids usually wouldn't let me go to work and kept crying; then one day before I left I played it for them, and they became more peaceful.

Recently my husband disappeared for a while and I didn't have a clue what had happened to him. It was one of the most difficult times of my life. I asked you, my Christian friends, for desperate prayer for the safety of my husband, and also for me and my kids.

It was through those most difficult days of my life that I found comfort in the Lord's reassuring Word. *Activated* played a very important role to that end. The articles would become alive and talk to me, giving me the faith and assurance that He is

always there for me—always watching—and that I could place my total trust in Him without a shadow of a doubt. Thank you for this wonderful privilege. After more than a month of what seemed like an endless eternity, the Lord answered my prayers and my husband contacted me. He had left to be with his relatives from a far away province, to reconsider our marriage and lifestyle. After another month of reconciliation and heart-to-heart communications, we are now together again.

Thank you for your prayers and being there for me when I most needed it. I am very thankful to have *Activated* magazines around. Now I am endorsing you to all my friends and relatives. God bless!

—YVONNE, PHILIPPINES

I read from the first page to the last page of an *Activated* magazine and cried all the way through. It was the Lord's Spirit that moved me. It's an excellent magazine that is suitable

for everybody. I want to be God's salesman to help get out God's Word!

—JIMMY, PHILIPPINES

I would like to thank you for standing by my side with the Word of God. Thank you for all the books that I have received from you. Thanks especially for the book *From Jesus with Love*. It has helped me to build up my faith. It has made me believe that in any situation I am in, bad or good, God is there for me no matter what.

—JOHN M. A., KENYA

I thank God for the *Activated* magazine. It has encouraged me about how to hear from God also how to receive healing from God. I know there is no distance in the spirit. As you pray for me, I believe that God will answer. I need spiritual and physical restoration from God.

—BROTHER FERDINAND, NIGERIA

Since I started communicating with you, my friends, I am now in a different world

because I have learned many things from your *Activated* magazines. It has led me to mobilize my friends to share the magazines. I feel so much great joy about the booklets that I received, and I assure you that they will keep me growing in my faith.

—BAGIRE R. J., UGANDA

Thank you for the *Activated* mag. Please do keep it coming. A wonderful new year to the team.

—ROSS, INDIA

I found special interest in the poem "Who's Rich?" and the "Mountain Man" article. I called my mom and read some to her. I'm not real emotional, but it almost brought tears to my eyes. I thought that I was one of the only ones who took the road less traveled (not an easy one), and that I'm the only crazy one and everyone else must be right. It's nice to read things like that to know that I'm not alone.

—MICHAEL, USA

2002 Christmas

Christmas in Soweto

By Rachel Scott, Johannesburg, South Africa

This is a story of the love of Jesus amidst poverty, hard-core gangs, and bomb attacks!

The Lord told us through prophecy that we should spend the months of October and November working in Soweto*, one of the most famous hot spots during the apartheid era in South Africa—a place white people were afraid to venture into. We performed our fantastic Christian clown show in 28 schools, touching the lives of thousands of children. Some of the areas we visited, like Elderado Park, which is right next to Soweto, looked like a war zone with barbed wire, high walls, and so called gun-free zones inside the schools. In some parts, the gangs hang out in the streets looking as though they would kill you as soon as they look at you! In other parts, the people are working hard to have a little safe haven for themselves and their children with little gardens and small businesses. One thing we knew for sure: They all desperately need Jesus!

Two weeks into our outreach there, nine bombs exploded in Soweto by extremists and as white people were suspected of setting off the bombs, it became a big question whether we could or should carry on our frequent trips into Soweto. However, the Lord told us to go ahead, and He continued to bless and protect us. We believe it was even more important to show the people that we and Jesus cared for the people of

Soweto during this time of uncertainty and fear.

Our Christmas clown shows proved to be extremely popular, as we explained the true meaning of Christmas through the "Xmas skit" (putting Christ back into Christmas) and used the Dr. Chainbuster skit to show how all the children needed Jesus in their hearts. That, along with puppets, live clown action, and Christmas music had everyone in stitches and by the end, everyone prayed to humbly receive Jesus into their hearts. We had advertised *Activated* by faxing all the schools before the shows, and the teachers were clamoring to receive copies. We offered a sponsored subscription to every school, but many more want the mags.

"Your show was wonderful—just what the

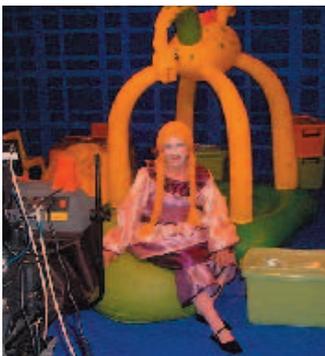


Some of the children on Christmas Day with their presents, Christmas hats, and crackers; many of these children do not receive any Christmas presents if we do not give to them

children needed!" said Mrs. D.C. Lenong from Diodi Primary, Soweto. The Head of Department from Phumuzile Primary School commented, "Just what we have been teaching the children. It consolidated our curriculum." As a result of those shows, 15,890 children and teachers prayed with us to receive Jesus into their hearts!

Besides this we have been busy with our children's shows, CTP Christmas parties for AIDS orphans, our handicapped class, and our Christmas *braai* (barbecue) for over 100 people in a squatter camp, and on Christmas Day we distributed over 200 presents to underprivileged children. By the power of the keys the Lord had supplied miraculously for all these events. We have also been on the radio and TV several times as the Lord miraculously continues to open new and exciting doors.

If you would like to help sponsor teachers in Soweto for *Activated*, please let the African Activated desk know. These subscriptions could help change the lives of not only the teachers but all the children in their care. They want it! They need it! Will you heed their cries for help?



Meg being filmed for ETV, a national TV station for South Africa; they have filmed 36 short spots so far and want more



Christmas clown show in Soweto



Some of our Active members helping cook the 80 kg of meat the Lord supplied for our Christmas barbecue



Children performing at our Christmas barbecue

Going into "Comuna 13"

By Maria, Colombia

We performed 47 Christmas shows, where we had the chance to meet lots of different people, give a powerful and meaty witness, distribute lots of material and pray with thousands—over 10,000 souls!

One of the most special and moving concerts that we did was the one we did for an infamous neighborhood called "Comuna 13." You might have heard what happened in this neighborhood on the news (a few months back). This neighborhood in Medellin had been taken over by the guerillas a few years ago and had become a bastion for the urban militias working for the guerilla forces. Armed youth guarded the streets and the entrances to this overpopulated impoverished district, with the power to decide who could enter and who could not.

A few months ago, a military contingent consisting of approximately 5,000 soldiers of the Colombian army besieged this area, with the backup of the Colombian air force that manned the helicopter gunships. In an offensive that lasted several days, the troops fought hard to gain control of the sector, sometimes gaining ground house by house. They freed over 20 people who were kidnapped by the guerillas and were kept in hiding; most were found in holes dug under the houses of this neighborhood. We could hear the shooting of this confrontation between the army and the guerilla, as well as the helicopters as they flew over our house. This military operation was questioned on an international level, as the guerillas would use the inhabitants of the neighborhood as their shields. There were many casualties on both sides as well as to the civilian population who

were trapped between the crossfire. How we yearn for the day that the prophet Micah spoke of: "He will judge between many peoples and will settle disputes for strong nations far and wide. They will beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not take up sword against nation, nor will they train for war any more" (Micah 4:3).

After the military took over the zone, the Colombian community asked the one-million-dollar question, "Now what?" The army is entrenched in every street of the zone to impose order, but this neighborhood needs something more than weapons to pacify the situation. There is a great need for social investment to truly ameliorate the situation. The government is doing what it can and taking positive steps in this direction, but we know, in truth, that more than the social betterment of this situation, the people need a firm faith in God, His Word, and His love. At the time that all of this happened, we talked about doing something for the people of the "Comuna 13," but it seemed quite difficult as the army forces had tightened their control over the area and were restricting the activities held there to those they themselves were overseeing and organizing. So we prayed and gave this desire of our hearts to the Lord knowing that in His time He would open the doors—and, after some time, He did!

As Christmas neared and as part of the social reconstruction of the affected area, the authorities organized a big Christmas event. They prepared to give out food to the thousands of inhabitants of the area; they brought medics to attend the people, etc. Then the miracle happened. Somehow they heard about us and our singing group and they invited us



Cristina (15) with Casita de Corazones kid at Christmas celebration

to participate in the event with our Christmas concert, which was going to be the central event. We were so happy and were again reminded that it always pays to put our desires into the Lord's hands and trust that He will take care of everything in His time. It was a visible miracle for us to see that out of all the more famous and prestigious singing groups in our city, God led the organizers' of this event to us in order to answer our prayers, so that we would have the opportunity to give to these people the message of the true meaning of Christmas: salvation, love, and forgiveness.

On the appointed day, for the first time since we arrived to this city six years ago, we made our way through the streets of "Comuna 13." We had to pass through several military roadblocks where they stopped the cars to inspect them rigorously and interrogate the incoming person(s). We finally arrived at the place, an old stone quarry that was the perfect spot for the event, due to its great size and excellent acoustics. We were able to sing our message of faith, love, and hope to over 3,000 children, youth, and adults. They were a very receptive audience and we felt a beautiful connection with

them while we sang and spoke with them. The end of our concert was crowned with one of us leading everyone to repeat a prayer to receive the King of kings into their hearts and lives, and thus receive the peace they so much desired and yearned for.

Now all the officers of the army that accompanied us during that concert, as a form of preventive protection for us, are asking us to perform concerts to encourage their troops who are spending this Christmas far from their homes, to be soon shipped off into the jungles where they will be faced with hand-to-hand combat with the guerilla troops. (We've since been able to perform two Christmas concerts for two different battalions where hundreds of soldiers and officers of the army received Jesus into their hearts, and received tools and the beautiful Christmas *Conéctate* magazine.)

Once more, the Lord provided a free reception hall at a very nice hotel in the city to hold our Christmas meeting for friends, kings, and supporters. It was nicely organized and programmed, thanks to the power of the keys and the help of our dear friends, coworkers, and brothers in the Lord: our live-outs and Active

members. Our Home is the only Home in this city, so we honestly can say that we couldn't have made it without them!

Besides having time to appreciate and thank our donors, sponsors, and friends; read some Word; having the young people and kids of the Home sing some songs; pray and commit unto the Lord our lives and families; give a brief account of victories and activities done during 2002, we also brought a special surprise to this meeting. The Lord told us while praying about the planning of this very important event for our kings and supporters that we should bring them a closer look to the proof of the pudding of all their loving gifts, support, and good will shown to us through the year. Even though these people received in a very regular manner spiritual feeding—be it through personal visitation, follow-up letters or meetings at their homes or offices—the idiosyncrasy of the wealthy here is that in order to help a group—be it religious, humanitarian or whatever—they have to “see” it work first. They're quite business minded! And they're right! Still, most of our friends and supporters have been more than willing to help our missionary work here without having “to see” much works. They felt the Spirit, saw the changes in their lives through the Word, and that was enough. But many of them help us so that we can continue doing a CTP work we've performed for quite some time now at a very needy neighborhood in this city. Because of the circumstances here—violence, kidnapping, and assaults—hardly any of these sponsors have ever been able to go and “see” the good works and fruits of their love gifts. The Lord showed us to bring a little sample of what we do to them via video, and by bringing some of the kids and young people

that we've been helping through the years of having the *Casita de Corazones* (name of the Project, Little Home of Hearts) in a needy neighborhood.

With the help of a professional cameraman, we made a 12-minute documentary on all activities done by the Family in the city: Word classes, CTPs, seminars, shows, and some short interviews with Home members sharing more about our work, message, etc. During the slot of time given in the video to the *Casita de Corazones*, some of the moms, young men and kids that have been very positively affected by our visitation were able to share their testimonies, good comments, and words of admiration on the work we do. That was very touching. This cameraman friend used as background the music of some songs such as the “Song of Victory,” “Famine for Love,” and others that helped to highlight the point.

During the hours of editing all the footage filmed, the people helping our friend to edit the video—also professionals in the screen world—were super touched and nearly cried from watching the clips. These people later called us because they wanted to meet us personally. We went to their studio and there, after some witnessing, we prayed with them to received Jesus into their hearts! They looked like the type usually behind the cameras that you'd never think would easily be touched by such matters, but the Lord did it. When we went to visit them, they even had prepared a donation for us. GBT!

The showing of that video was a highlight during our Christmas meeting. Right after the video we had a group of kids and young people from *Casita de Corazones* perform two songs: “Open up the Window of Your Life,” and “Long Live Love.” They also shared a

few words of appreciation and love. One of the kids had memorized a short verse and words of appreciation for the attendees that touched everyone.

The kids that we took to the hotel with us had special permission from their parents or relatives for us to take them to the city. This may sound like a very easy thing to do, to just bring a group of kids that we've been helping and ministering to for years to one of our meetings. But there's more than meets the eye in this situation!

In this country, the gap between the people living in the mountainous areas surrounding the city (mainly low class or very poor—all the war refugees, urban guerrillas, thieves, killers and generally speaking, all the “dangerous or bad people”) and the middle/upper class living in the city, is a gap like the one you find between the evolutionists and creationists.

In these polar extremes, kids are born hating the other group, so to speak, without knowing their hearts or their inner needs. There's much hatred in the hearts of the poor and the rich here against each other. The rich hate the poor because they are killing or hurting their

own to steal or take their material possessions. The poor hate the rich because they are hungry, they don't have any possibilities for education or healthcare, and receive very little or no help from them. Many people in this city do not go to those poor areas and don't even know the names of their neighborhoods. Many of our donors are shocked when they hear all the places we go to preach the Gospel, as in all their lives they've never gone to those types of places. Because of the violence in the country—one of the highest in the world—middle- or upper-middle-class citizens haven't traveled by car between cities for years, for fear of being taken by the guerrilla, or being kidnapped by common criminals. So getting close to those “dangerous” neighborhoods is a common no-no!

So for these wealthy people to sit there and have face-to-face interaction with young people from those neighborhoods, the kids singing to them, and hearing firsthand how their lives are changing with the love of Jesus, was quite something. TYJ! Friends and donors attending this gathering committed themselves once more to continue helping our missionary work.

Activate Christmas party

By Julian and Jo, East Japan CGO members

On December 22, the East Japan CGO board organized an Activate Christmas celebration for the Active members and *Activate* subscribers in Tokyo. We worked together with nine Family Homes around Tokyo for this event.

There were about 90 visitors and 70 Family members, including staff and performers, celebrating our first Activate Christmas party in Japan. We launched the Japanese Activate course a year ago, so this was a real celebration for



Amy and daughters perform

the Family and sheep in Japan!

The party was open to Activate members and subscribers and all friends



Kenny sings



Audience at party



Hiromi, with daughters Rejoice and Crystal with relatives

of the Family, and everyone was encouraged to invite their friends and family. So new sheep attended, too. Through this event, we got 11 more subscribers!

We held this event on a Sunday afternoon, so guests could bring their mates and children, and to make it easier for older folks who came from far way in the cold weather. Some visitors were crying while listening to our music, and all enjoyed the show.

The music started with the *Infinity* band (Martin, Keiko, and John Listen). Teresa read some Christmas stories between the songs. Next, there was a skit performed by "Apple Seed" (the Blades Home skit team—all 20 Home members ages 4–78 years helped in this skit—it's a real family skit team). The skit was based on a story received in prophecy entitled "Christmas in the Heart Forever." It was a funny but meaningful skit for all ages and easy for all to apply to their lives.

The audience was touched by all the performances by the children. After the skit, the narrator explained about salvation and the kids sang the salvation song. After a short break there was some more music, this time by the "Strange Truths" band (Kenny, Amy, Mac, John, and Jun).

Then we gave the Japan Family's Activity Report via video showing. The Japan PR board made a special video, collecting footage from field Homes in Japan to introduce the

Family's different activities and CTPs here in Japan.

We closed by singing "Silent Night." This song is very well known to the Japanese, so some came and sang on stage with us. Some Downs syndrome children who had been invited from the Blades Home ministry also got up on stage and sang.

It was a very inspiring program for all who came, and we've seen that a lot of good fruit is borne from area united GP events.

Monterrey Family serves 3,000 meals

By Morningstar, for the Rescate Home, Monterrey, Mexico

Thanks to the help of the eight Homes and many friends and Active members in the Monterrey area, we were able to have a successful event that fed over 3,000 for the Day of the Kings (January 6th, which is a continuation of Christmas here in Mexico).

Christina (of John P.) got a hall that held 1,000, and the idea was to start the serving at 10 AM and end at 6 PM. Joy and Peter's Home was instrumental in getting the military to do the cooking for us.

Since everyone was so busy with the Christmas push, we didn't have a lot of time during December to work on this project. So after Christmas we started calling friends and the response was incredible! One Active member family printed up 4,000 tickets to give to the needy to get them to come.



Phoebe (from the *Conectate* Home) getting the bread together for the event



Morningstar, Ella, Amanda, and Andrew (some of us from the Rescate Home)

God bless our JETTs, teens, and Active member who went to the needy areas to pass out the invitations.

This year the Lord did something different for us. He didn't want our supply to come in through the normal means of provisioning, but wanted to use our Active members, kings, and supporters to help us to pull it off! For two reasons: One, it brought them in closer to the work as it says in "Mexico—a Needy Mission Field" (that CTPs would be the key to reeling in the top). Second, it increased their faith for miracles as they saw the main bulk of things come together within five days before the event!—Only in the Family! They all were amazed by our crazy faith!

Thank the Lord for this Activated vision, as our small flock really came through. One *Activated* subscriber and friend and his workers donated 75 kilos of meat; another person that had subscribed and passed on our tract to a

friend donated another 30 kilos of meat; another friend donated 25 kilos of beans, 25 kilos of rice, paper plates, 3,000 pieces of bread; and another friend donated US\$200 worth of coupons to get needed items from Sam's Club, and on the list went.

In all we collected: 300 kilos of rice, 200 kilos of beans, 150 kilos of meat, 2,260 drinks, 3,000 paper plates, 3,000 paper cups, 3,000 plastic silverware, fruit, cakes, and bread, not to mention all the clothes, toys, and staples that were collected. We still had clothes left over from last year's big CTP that David and Claire's Home in Houston had collected and brought down with the help of Joy and Phoebe working on getting it across the border. The organizational

team of Ella and Andrew (Rescate Home) put everything together and kept us all on our toes.

The day arrived: 5:30 wake up for all of us. By 10:30 we were ready to serve our first plate. The band began to play. It was rainy outside but inside the atmosphere was warm and cozy. We had music, we had Yoyo the Clown (Josiah), and there were tables and chairs for everyone, and hostess escorts to show each one to their seat. Each person that arrived was treated as a king.

All through the day our friends and Active members visited and they felt such love. It wasn't at all formal. We had a soccer game going on, we had music, and people even got up to dance.

One of the highlights of the day was when an orphanage with forty children arrived. We were able to serve them a yummy meal. Then Migi and Audrey did the heart skit for them, with participation from the little ones, and then they all received Jesus in their hearts. David broke our bottles and called some of us girls on stage to do the "Shake," "It's Bubbling," and other fun songs. We had all the kids rocking and rolling!

After each person finished eating they were given a bag of clothes and each child was given a toy, plus a bag of staples such as beans, rice, oil, sugar, etc. Lirio, Ruth, and others kept things in order on that side of things.

And we can't forget our witnesses who on the way out gave each person a

Christmas poster (thank you, *Conéctate Home*) and wouldn't let anyone leave without giving them the opportunity to receive Jesus into their hearts.

Our goal was to serve three thousand but because of the rain, people were too scared to come out of their homes. But no worries! After 6 PM we had two teams distribute the rest of the food. We went to the neediest neighborhoods and or mountainsides and there we called all to come and partake of the feast. By midnight all was finished and we drove home happy, thanking the Lord for all the great miracles He had done.

(Editor's note: A special grapes of thankfulness entry relating to the above event will be printed in an upcoming grapes of thankfulness flier.)

Taipei city Christmas Party 2002!

By Esther Claire (SGA, national CGO board co-chair), Taiwan

Have you ever found yourself uttering the following solemn words: "Next year, we vow to start preparing for Christmas events way in advance, to be one step ahead and not be caught by the rush of the Christmas push."

Sound familiar? Well, maybe not that exact choice of words, but perhaps. Seems like there's never quite enough "prep time" or "advance warning" as far as Christmas prep goes—time just goes on regardless of how ready we are for what comes next.

Last year the Homes in Taipei joined forces and held a Christmas party (2001) for all the Homes' sheep and friends, which took a lot of careful planning, lots of teamwork effort, and many desperate prayers, but the Lord (as always) came through for us and it turned out to be a real blessing to the 70+ guests who attended. That was before Chinese *Activated* had come



Christina and Joanna

off the presses, and the Lord told us in prophecy that the event would be a springboard for *Activated* in our field of Taiwan. We took the opportunity during the party to announce the exciting prospect that *Activated* was in the works and would be released the following year. We showed some magazine samples, as well as put in a plug for financial help towards the printing costs, etc., and a number of friends generously responded. GBT!



Esther witnessing

Looking back now, it sure seems like more than a year ago, but no, it was exactly one Christmas ago. Time flew by with all that happened in 2002 ... you know, the boards operating, holding meetings and taking initiatives, the keys working miracles in our lives, summer witnessing, road trips, moves, changes, travels, Autumn festival (Chinese version of Valentine's), and then we realized that, "Yikes, Christmas is around the corner once again!

Let's hold an emergency city council meeting to pray about whether or not we are up to hosting another such event this year."

And so it came to pass that a rep from each Taipei Home showed up at the city council and brought the question before the Lord and got an encouraging: "Go ahead, guys! And don't worry, even though you're a bit pressed for time, I will open doors and provide. Just claim the keys and proceed as if possessing."

That was the reassurance we needed, as looking at it practically it seemed too late to try and find a hotel that would have an available conference room that we could use during the busy Christmas/New Year's season, not to mention asking folks to help with provisioning and organizing such an event in the midst of the Christmas outreach-tooling marathon that had just begun.

We divided up the responsibilities amongst Homes and GB Taiwanese Vicky (of John B.) who got on the phone soon after to find an available location to hold the event in, while the Homes prayed and beseeched the Lord for a miracle. Nothing holds a chance against the keys and so it was that a couple days later, Vicky and Johnny (of Taiwanese Sunny) were on their merry way to go check out a couple of possibilities at fancy 4-5 star hotels in Taipei.

The first place they looked at seemed ideal: Cozy atmosphere, beautiful setting, already decorated for Christmas, accessible location and to top it off, the sweetest manager, Jane, who when told she was speaking to two missionaries broke into a big smile and hugged them both (to their surprise as Chinese

people don't normally show affection in public, and especially not the manager of a fancy hotel to two strangers, ha!), excitedly explaining that she too was a Christian.

She enthusiastically encouraged them to hold the event at her hotel and promised to help as much as she could. Normally hotels here don't allow outside refreshments and snacks to be brought in; the hotel provides that at an additional and usually high cost.

When Vicky and Johnny explained how we would have donated drinks and snacks that we'd like to use for the event, Jane assured them: "I am the manager on duty on the day of your program. I'll just look the other way, don't worry about it!" Wow, another miracle!

Just when Jane was putting together some info on the hotel and its facilities for our guys to take back with them, her boss showed up and greeted our folks and inquired as to when they'd be coming. He asked if they'd be using the buffet lunch on the day of the event, to which Jane explained that we didn't need the buffet lunch, as the program would be held during teatime (2–5 PM). At that, her boss turned sour and bluntly stated that the hall we wished to rent was not available on the day we had asked for. Jane was

surprised and checked the hotel's calendar of events only to find out that just as she had thought, the day we were hoping to come on was indeed available. She tried to insist, but her boss would not be convinced and walked away.

Jane turned to Johnny and Vicky and said: "Don't worry, if whoever is supposedly occupying the hall on that day cancels, I will give you a call immediately and reserve the place for you." The team thanked her and moved on to see the second possibility. It seemed nice enough and considerably cheaper than the previous one, but it just didn't *feel* like the one.

When we prayed, we asked the Lord that if the first hotel was *the place* He had for us, that He would open the doors and do a miracle. We decided to go with the second choice, as it was cheaper and available and all the other possibilities were not quite what we had in mind, but we all hoped and prayed for a miracle.

A few days later, true to our Miracle Man's nature and just before Peter (of Crystal) was about to send out the official invitation file to all, we got a call from Jane. She enthusiastically announced that the place was free, available, and it was ours to use!

And so began the preparations to put together a program, provision snacks and drinks, send out invitations, putting together a year end report (PowerPoint presentation), and the myriad of details that go into such a production. The Lord told us to keep the event simple, warm and cozy—a Family event/fellowship of sorts for our friends and sheep.

The awaited day arrived as expected on Sunday, December 29, 2002 and at 12 PM, Family members started showing up at the hotel conference hall from all corners of Taipei.

We tried to discreetly smuggle in boxes of cakes, biscuits, chips, cookies, drinks, 60 trays of donated fresh sushi, etc., which by the looks of it seemed like a banquet and not exactly "tea time."

Dear Jane had asked us to not flaunt the food and drinks too openly, as the workers knew the rules well and she didn't want them ratting on her to her boss. So we happily complied, but you can only hide big amounts of food for so long; sooner or later it has to go on the tables and the sweet waiters and waitresses on duty that day ended up helping us to arrange it nicely.

As we merrily hummed along to the *Rhythm of Christmas* CD that was play-

Christmas dinner for 1,500!

By the Veracruz Home, Mexico

Our Home is a mix of nationalities, some of us new to Mexico, and some not so new, but all of us with the desire to do all we can to reach our part of the world—Veracruz, Mexico! As Christmas approached, we were all wondering how we could best be of service to our city. Someone in our Home suggested, "Why don't we serve a Christmas dinner to 1,500 of our city's underprivileged?" some of us weren't so sure if we were the right team for the job.

But we know that if it's God's plan, it will be successful and He will use whoever He can to get the job done! What began as an idea to serve a simple Christmas dinner, soon grew into a plan for a Christmas *Posada*, a traditional pre-Christmas party.

First step: What to serve and where to get it

So the decision was made and our task began! We had decided on a very Mexican menu of *pozole*, tamales, fruit, soft drinks, dessert, and piñatas. We began to approach different businesses and companies in our city, sharing our idea with them. The response

was tremendous! Many of them mentioned that nothing like this had ever been done before on this scale in this city (at least not for a long time), and they were so happy to see people caring about others during Christmastime.

We made a list of everything we would need for this event. It was very exciting to check things off of the list every day as different companies decided to help us. When you really think about it, it's a miracle when someone decides to donate a product, knowing that they will receive nothing in return, save the satisfaction of knowing that they are help-

Here's a shot of part of the neighborhood where we held the *Posada*



ing someone in need. In the end, we lacked none of the many ingredients to make this meal delicious.

ing in the background and helped each other and the workers set up, one of the waitresses walked over to me and asked: "Who are you people? The atmosphere in this room is so warm, loving and happy. I would like to stay for the program if that's okay with you all." To which I, of course, wholeheartedly agreed.

A while before the program was scheduled to begin, Johnny, Peter, and Jason were adjusting the mikes and testing the sound equipment we had borrowed from one of the Homes, when they discovered that it was faulty. The sound was muffled and unclear. What to do? We could borrow the hotel's sound system, but that would require an additional fee and all the Homes had already paid their share of the renting bill.

We shot up a prayer. The Lord indicated that we should trust Him for the extra funds and go ahead and rent the hotel's equipment. Jane had some of the hotel's technicians help to bring in the needed sound system, while Jason was hard at work figuring out how to use the 170,000 NT (over US\$5,000) projector camera we were renting from the hotel at a low cost (courtesy of Jane) to show the PowerPoint presenta-

tion. The portable display screen was perfect for the presentation, placed right smack in the middle of the room where all guests could see. The presentation was one of the highlights of the program, and Taiwanese Crystal did a great job narrating and explaining the slides and charts being displayed, while Jason manned the beautifully arranged slide show.

The presentation was divided into five sections:

- CTPs in Taipei and the rest of Taiwan
- Christmas CTPs and outreach activities
- Weekly Activated meetings with our sheep
- The history of the Chinese *Activated* magazine and subscriptions stats to date (430 subscriptions in three months)
- The city's Youth Club ministry

A touching part of the program was when three of our very close friends (Active members) got up and testified before all how the Lord has changed their lives, and how knowing the Family has helped them to learn to serve the Lord and reach out to others. A couple of them were moved to tears while speaking. One of them

is a young on-fire club member who is praying about joining the Family full time.

Next, the words to old time favorite Christmas carols (in both Chinese and English) appeared on the screen and all joined in singing along with our guitar playing minstrels Titus, Johnny, and Dan. This was followed by Taiwanese Crystal who acted out and told the story of the "Geese and the atheist man on Christmas Eve" from *Reflections*, while all attending children and adults listened intently.

The children (ages five to eight) from the Taiwan Activated Service Center performed three Christmas numbers, which were loved by the audience. They ended their performance by leading everyone in the salvation prayer.

We ended with a prayer thanking the Lord for the past year and dedicating the New Year to Him, as well as thanking and applauding all our friends in attendance for having been such a support and help the past year. They were touched by this gesture and one of our friends sitting next to me commented: "It is you guys who have been working hard all year long helping our people. Thank you for letting us be a part of it!"

We had set up a couple of tables with the tools

displayed as well as the *Activated* magazines and a donation box strategically located in plain view. Ha! Well, the Lord was faithful and we got in enough donations to pay back each Home part of the money they had forked out to cover the renting of the hall, and we later found out that Jane had not wanted to charge us for renting the sound equipment. She subscribed to *Activated* herself and ended up buying tools for her daughter.

I'd say we had about 45–50 guests show up not counting the 25–30 Family members in attendance, which made for a nice warm atmosphere. I just want to state for the record that I am so very proud of our precious Family members. Even though it was a sacrifice of their time, personnel, finances, and effort, everyone pitched in cheerfully and wholeheartedly for the sake of the sheep, and the Lord kept His end of the deal and made it worth our while. Whatta Family! I'm already looking forward to Christmas 2003 and do I think we will start preparing earlier this time? Oh yes, let's see ... how about July?

(Editor's note: A special grapes of thankfulness entry relating to the above event will be printed in an upcoming grapes of thankfulness flier.)

The Lord not only provided all of the food that we needed for the event, but even some "extras" which helped to make the event special. We had three brightly colored banners with our "The Family in Veracruz" logo on them and Family T-shirts and hats. Each of the 800 children that attended the event received a small bag of Christmas sweets. And what's a Mexican party without a *piñata*? Fifteen *piñatas* were donated, as well as the candy to fill them.

Second step: Location and logistics

We approached the DIF (Department of Family

Integration) and shared our idea with them. They loved it and agreed to help with the logistics—the stage, sound equipment, tents (for serving the food), and personnel for crowd control. They helped us find a beautiful location in the heart of the neediest community in our city. We opted to hold the event there, instead of in the *zocalo* [main square] of Veracruz, as many of the people who were invited would not be able to afford the bus fare to the center of town. So we brought the party to them! The whole community got behind this event and we didn't lack for volunteers.

We wanted to make sure that those attending the event were indeed the neediest, so we printed up 1,500 tickets that were given to each guest beforehand. Entrance was only granted to those with a ticket.

Third step: Finding the cooks

Although some of us in our Home would like to think that we've mastered the art of the Mexican cuisine, we knew that trying to make a dish for so many people was biting off a bit more than we could chew (pardon the pun!). A large company had told us that they would *probably* be able to cook all

of the food for us. But just two weeks before the event, they sadly informed us that they would not. Whoops! We were beginning to wonder if we would have to beat our plowshares into pots and our pruning hooks into cooking utensils and cook the food ourselves. Then it dawned on us, "How about asking the navy if they could help! After all, they prepare food for thousands every day!" The vice-admiral was very kind and told us that although they wouldn't be able to cook the food for us (as they had other events planned for that day), he could put us in touch with those who could.



Pouring the *maza* into the big pot for the tamales



A happy crew making tamales! We worked for 10 hours straight that day on the tamales.

The next thing we knew, we were attending the meeting for the “Association of Restaurants in Boca del Rio” (ARBR). After explaining to them our need, they told us, “We’ll take care of it, but you need to find the pots.” Great news ... but what do we do about the pots?! So we went back to the vice-admiral. Amazingly enough, he happened to be good friends with the mayor of Alvarado, a nearby city that holds the Guinness World Record for the largest rice dish ever made. They were happy to lend us their pots and the navy was kind enough to transport the pots for us. We knew with these cooks and famous pots, the meal was sure to be a success.

The ARBR had also asked if we could find 10 volunteers to help with the tedious job of tamale-making the day before the event. So the “aspiring cooks” in our Home that we referred to earlier were able to lend a hand with the meal after all.

Fourth step: Feeding their souls as well as their bodies

Since music can be a great way to share the message of the Gospel with oth-

ers, especially at Christmastime, we felt it was a good idea to put together a Christmas show for the event. Easier said that done, as one of the main dancers in the Home sprained her ankle and that just left three teen girls. But where there’s a will, there’s a way! We incorporated the help of one of our neighbors, which helped to add a wonderful Mexican flavor to the show.

Our show was a real “family affair” with mommies and kiddos participating in the songs. Our five

little ones also performed some Christmas favorites such as “I’d Like to Be a Christmas Tree” and “What Can I Give Him?” To be honest, we weren’t so sure how they would do on their debut in front of 1,500 people! But they amazed us with their talent and shining smiles!

The *Conéctate* desk in Monterrey also kindly provisioned the printing of 1,500 posters for us so we could give them to all of the guests at the event! Thanks so much, *Conéctate*!

In conclusion

On the day of the event we were all excited, nervous, and curious to see how everything would go. We couldn’t have dreamed that things would go better! Our main goal in doing this event was to help each of the guests to know that Someone truly does care about them, and they aren’t alone at Christmas. We wanted the guests to enjoy themselves, and from all that we could see on their faces and by their words, it was something they will never forget. But aside from the food, show, and fun, we were able to give them the best Christmas gift they could

ever ask for—something that will never fade away—and that’s Jesus. All 1,500 guests asked Jesus to come into their hearts and be with them forever!

Special thanks

We wanted to give special thanks to the New Day Studio Home in Mexico City for allowing Sammy, Robin, Andrew Vee, and Agnes to come and help us with the

event. We couldn’t have done it without their invaluable help in emceeing the show, making tamales, serving the food, taking care of children, filming, photo-taking, and overall inspiration! Thanks, guys!

(Editor’s note: To read more about this event, check out the MO site at: <http://www.familymembers.com/newswire/1672>)

Love in Action Guadalajara

By Cush (of Zara), Guadalajara, Mexico

Love in Action (Guadalajara), a project of The Family, and Family Care Foundation, with a staff of five full-time members, held its seventh annual Christmas banquet for 3,000 needy persons on Christmas Day 2002, getting city-wide coverage, and made news again when the local TV station and two newspapers covered this mammoth event.

This special meal, as in previous years, went beyond the soup-kitchen menu, to offer all-you-can-eat roasted chicken (close to one ton of it), beans, rice, tortillas, and drinks to the multitude of poor families gathered together for this annual charitable happening. Three of the most reputable restaurant chains in the city prepared the meal.

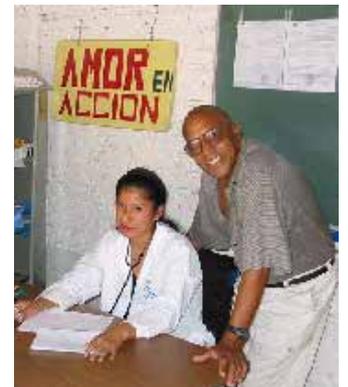
Specially trained volunteers and entertainers from The Family sacrificially served the gathering and provided live meaningful performances for this large multitude, who enjoyed the dances, songs, music, and wholesome clown shows, aimed at bringing to the sad hearts and lives of these economically ostracized class the love, joy, and peace that Love in Action wanted to share with them that day.

On one occasion, a wheelchair-bound beneficiary of the free meal commented when interviewed: “It is not only the food, or the drinks or the entertainment—it is the love that you

feel from them!” To us, this comment meant that we were achieving our goal.

Here is what the Lord did for our team in December:

- 25.6 tons of food distributed to 350 needy families
- US\$81,000 worth of medical attention and medication donated to 1,272 needy families at our free clinic (open Monday–Friday year round)
- 6,240 people received Bible classes
- 4,500 pieces of devotional material distributed
- 22,680 pages of Gospel-related material distributed
- 8,231 plates of food served to the poor
- 4,516 plates of hot food served to poor children at the free kitchen (open Monday–Friday year round)
- 32 Active members received weekly Bible classes
- 180 selected poor children received new toys
- 232 individuals received a regular Bible class at least every two weeks →



Cush with doctor at the free clinic and pharmacy which the Home operates; 25 families are attended here every day, Monday–Friday

On December 13, 2002, The Family, in collaboration with DIF (the Department of Family Integration) of Boca del Rio, the University of Veracruz, neighbors of Manglar, and the Miguel Alemán Middle School, organized a Christmas Dinner for the residents of the neighborhood of Miguel Alemán and the surrounding neighborhoods in Boca del Rio. Over 1,500 persons of low-income families attended this event which was held in the Community Plaza of Miguel Alemán.

It was the responsibility of "The Family" to provide the food for this event. Thanks to the help of a variety of contributors, a delicious traditional meal was served which was comprised of: *pozole*, *tamales*, fruit, soft drinks, and desserts. Special thanks to the Association of Restaurants of Boca del Rio, and many volunteers, who prepared the *pozole* and *tamales*. Not only was a delicious meal served, but "The Family" also performed a sensational Christmas program full of music and dance. Upon leaving, each of the 800 children who attended was given a small bag of Christmas goodies.

Delia Maza d'Avila, the President of the DIF of Boca del Rio said: "What I love the most is that there are people here on my left and on my right who are the ones who had the idea to do such a big event and said, 'Let's do something. Let's do something together for all of the families in Boca del Rio.' As for me, I never could have done this alone if it weren't for these ones here who prompted me and shared with me their desire to do something for the residents of Boca of Rio. ... I thank 'The Family' infinitely. Because of them, we were able to do this great event."

The Lord did something real sweet too in answer to prayer about the Active members. My request at the beginning of 2002, at the candlelight service, was for the Lord to at least triple the number of Active members (seven at the time) who were receiving weekly Bible classes. We watched the numbers grow steadily throughout the year, and to make a long story short, at the end of 2002, there are now 32 weekly Bible students, in three classes, plus their 15 MC to JETT-aged children who are also ministered to by our teens during the Bible classes. (There is also a larger group which varies between 150 to 225 of adult CTP recipients who receive an hour-long Bible/Activated class every two weeks, plus about 65 children who receive Christian education during this time.)

Our own band

By Jewel, Nepal

We had a great Christmas and helped host two children's carnivals held at five-star hotels on the Saturday and Sunday before Christmas. That was a lot of fun with face painting, balloons, games, etc. Plus, this was the first year we have done our own music with our family band, which was exciting and challenging!

Most of the set was played by the kids, then they danced to "Jingle Bells" and a couple of other upbeat carols while the teens backed them up on the vocals. Then Nina, Sara, and Anita got on the instruments for the grand finale of "We Wish You a Merry Christmas." It was quite impressive, and we also performed at the biggest and newest hotel in town on Christmas Eve.



Performing at a hotel

The general manager told us afterwards, as we were enjoying their five-star buffet, "Let's make this a Christmas tradition."

Another of our Christmas traditions is inviting close friends over for Christmas tea and homemade goodies. We also celebrate every year at Mother Teresa's Sisters of Charity with songs,

drama, snacks, donated clothing, and toys, etc.—undoubtedly our most appreciative audience. We do the same program at the schools we help at on a regular basis, but the first CTP show we did was a disaster! Fortunately they loved us anyway, and it helped us work out a lot of snags with our equipment.

Annual Christmas function

By Sara, Islamabad, Pakistan

Each year near Christmastime our Islamabad Home organizes a sponsored function for friends and supporters. From humble beginnings several years ago of a greatly discounted tent pavilion, and each item provisioned—from teaspoons to neon lights, to charcoal heaters to ward off the winter cold. This year's program was set in an attractive function hall,

all the trimmings included, the entire cost footed by local sponsors. Oh my, we've come a long way!

Our show opened with a mini-Christmas pageant performed to the strains of "Silent Night" being sung by Arthur (14), Abi (9), and Liz (12). Many lively numbers were danced, accompanied by vocalists singing some songs in Urdu, others in English. Always a great hit with the Pakistanis are some of their favorite contemporary local songs being sung in the local language.

The program was intermingled with anecdotes, compliments of our delightful emcee Daniel, and a seven-minute PowerPoint presentation, which we played on a big screen. This is a computer-generated slide-show review of our country's projects (including Karachi and Lahore) and contributions to Pakistan, very professionally put together by Richard (15) and Arthur (14).

The buffet served following the show gave us opportunity to get to know our friends better in an

amiable, casual atmosphere.

One visitor was a man who has authority to approve our long-awaited long-term visas. He was thrilled with the program, and wants to do his best to help us remain in the country!

Similar to the overwhelming reaction to *Motivated*, all our attending friends could only give words of praise for the program. These reactions really underscore that we have love, peace of heart, and answers to offer that the people here are longing for.

homeschooling corner

CVC study records

BY JOY, ISLAMABAD, PAKISTAN

Tip: In the past we used to keep the students' courses in loose pages in a portfolio; however, it didn't look very nice and wasn't always easily accessible, the papers got lost, and it wasn't so presentable. So we have changed this. We have made books for the students' Vocational study courses and General High School study courses, containing the courses, experience log, if needed, reading list, CLE reports form, and any other necessary forms that are related to the courses of their choice. Then, with labeled and laminated separators and a nice cover page, it is all kept nicely in a spiral-bound book. This has done wonders for our students:

1. It's all in one book, easy to refer to for as long as needed; some courses go on for 1–2 years and more.
2. It helps student and Course Supervisors keep accurate records.
3. It shows our students our personal involvement and care in their studies, and motivates them.
4. It increases their self-confidence in their homeschooling and the CVC program.
5. Students learn the proper terminology for their courses in terms they can tell their friends, or answer System inquiries.
6. It is good persecution prep, to show any officials.

The possibilities are limitless

BY CRYSTAL HOPE, USA

The Lord worked it out for me to attend a "how-to" CVC meeting given by Sara and it answered a lot of questions I had. My apprehensions at starting were mostly based on my lack of understanding concerning how the CVC program works. GB Sara and the CVC team; I came away with a much clearer vision and definite enthusiasm for the program!

On both sides of the coin I was convicted (at how poorly motivated and shortsighted my perception of schooling has been) and encouraged (by the confirmation of ideas and approaches reiterated by Sara that I had always believed but lacked the conviction to implement). LEARNING CAN and SHOULD BE FUN!

It seems to me that using CVC goes right along with the Family way of pioneering and changing the world. I came away feeling excited, challenged, and that the possibilities are limitless—as opposed to the dry, packaged, overpriced, overrated System conformity training that can't even guarantee that your investment will pay off in a better life or even a better paycheck!

I would say to anyone who has any misgivings about using the CVC program with their kids—if you were to compare it with, say, the Activated/Aurora products, it takes faith to field your product, but it's our faith in its Word-based nature that assures us that God will mightily bless our

investing in it and promoting it to others. How much more so should we have implicit confidence that this Word-based education will not only satisfy our children's needs for challenge and recognition, but will also (highly!) impress anyone requiring documentation.

The importance of adequate and documented schooling

BY ROSEY, MIDDLE EAST

I would like to comment regarding the importance of redeeming our schooling hours and giving children an adequate education. Having worked with our children's education for quite a number of years and also having seen some of our children leave the Family, I feel that it is very important to make sure that we give them every opportunity to receive an adequate education.

I've spent a great many hours helping young people work through their CVC courses, having them do their high school exams, CAT tests, and advising them on their CLE high school projections. During the course of my work I have also heard many older SGAs comment on how they wish they had completed their schooling and gotten certificates to show that they graduated. Many of these SGAs are now married, with a number of kids, and involved in full-time ministries, so it is more difficult for them to find the time to study. GBT, they've gone on for the Lord, but many of them would still like to be able to fulfill this

The Big Lie Exposed in Portuguese

By Barz, Portugal

After long hours at the computer, running to the printer and back, fighting all odds, finally we have *The Big Lie Exposed* in Portuguese in a handy A5-size, 36-page color book! We have 8,000 copies ready to get into the hands of all interested sheep in the Portuguese-speaking countries of the world. Just let us know how many you want and we'll do everything in our power (and that of the keys of the Kingdom!) to put them into your tool closet. Price: Only US\$0.70 per piece, plus shipping costs. Waiting to hear from YOU Write us to: jr.ama@clix.pt

kidbits

Keegan Li Ming, born to **Mercy Hawaii and Andrew Kentucky** on October 26.—PACRO

Kayleigh Andrews, 4th child, born to **Paula and Michael** on November 6.—Canada

Lilly Danielle, 1st child, born to **Naty and Chris** on November 16.—Mexico

Sheila Samai, 1st child, born to **Irene** on November 17.—Mexico

Kathleen Pearl, 5th child, born to **Rejoice and John Morning** on November 19.—Indonesia

Fiona, 6th child, born to **Esther Almond Tree and Tom Steward** on November 25.—Australia

Miyuki, born to **Mercy and Gabriel Little People** on December 8.—Japan

Kevin, 1st child, born to **Felicia** on December 10.—USA

desire to complete or document their education. They are smart, incredibly talented people, who are far ahead of the average System person their age, but there are times when the Enemy attacks them with “your education doesn’t count because you have no documentation to prove it.”

I have also talked with young people who have left the Family and initially have had a hard time because they didn’t have any formal documentation of their education. There are those who harbor bitterness over this, which makes it difficult for them to move forward in a positive way.

When my kids were young, I had this very idealistic idea that they would naturally follow the Lord. Well, I was pretty idealistic but a bit naive at the same time. My son left the Family at 18, and because his education wasn’t documented, he had a difficult time finding decent employment. It took him and his wife some years to get their feet on the ground and thankfully they have gone on from there, but I had to do a lot of soul searching and genuine apologizing. I could and should have done better.

So, from my own experience, if you want to save yourself the pain of having to see your child who leaves the Family nest struggling to make it, do all you can to help them move ahead with their education now while they are young and they have the time. Don’t be naive in thinking that it won’t be a problem. It is our responsibility as parents to give our kids a good, well-documented education, and to help them be the best

of whatever they can be. Whether in or out of the Family, the Enemy won’t be able to lie to them with the “you’re not educated” line, and they’ll be able to move on in a positive way into a constructive life.

Successful exams

BY ESTHER, BRAZIL

During this last year we have had a program going to prepare the young people both in the Family as well as those who have left. We prepared our young people in the Family to take the *supletivo do primeiro grau* and the ones that have left to do *supletivo do segundo grau*. TTL, this month many of them went to take the test, and those who we have already received the results for, have passed and will be getting their certificates. PTL!

Fruitful visitation and favorable report

BY REJOICE, JAPAN

We were visited by the city Board of Education this month. Since I registered here and explained to them about our homeschooling, they were very curious because they said that they had never faced this situation before. Even though I remarried an American, all my children are Japanese. So they didn’t want to say that we couldn’t homeschool at first. After I wrote to them more about homeschooling and its benefits, they wanted to come and see what kind of a situation we had for our kids.

We had good prayer time with the children for this visit, calling on the power of the keys. We invited them around 11 AM, which is during our regular school hours. Two men came. One of them is a former principal of a nearby junior high school and the other one is the vice-principal of the nearby primary school. Our Home is located on top of a hill and is surrounded by lots of forest and natural surroundings. It also has a big yard for the kids to run and play in.

They seemed surprised to see what a nice area we are living in and when they entered the school room, which is our dining/living room, they saw we had five computers set out for the kids to do their school on, and some of the kids were working on their CLE at the table. The computers are used for the SOS *Switched-On School* program we are using now, which is great. The Board of Education men were impressed that the kids were studying so enthusiastically and that three adults were there available to help them and give them personal attention. They had a few routine questions like, “Why don’t you send your kids to school?” and “Do children who can’t adjust to school also come here to study?” But they were happy and satisfied to see our homeschooling situation. The former principal said that he couldn’t understand how you could teach at home until he came and saw it personally. He said he had nothing to say after seeing the children’s shining eyes and faces. He said he would give a favorable report to his office.

William Eman, 1st child, born to **Heidi and Emmanuel** on December 14.—PACRO
Michael, 8th child, born to **Crystal and Paul Dust** on December 18.—PACRO
Alina Beloved, born to **Dove and Mark** on December 22.—Russia
Baby boy, born to **Pearl and Francis** on December 23.—Japan

tidbits

disciples joining/rejoining...

Percy Lawrence (28, Zimbabwean) joined in Zimbabwe.
Joshua (20, English) rejoined in England.
Susan (22, American) rejoined in England.
Meekness (21, French) rejoined in Romania.
John Santhosh-Kumar (31, Indian) joined in England.

backtracking

In “2003, Here We Come!” (GN 1021) in the text box between pars. 158–159, reads, “Every month the Letters that have been edited and included in the *Wine Press* are also laid out individually under the masthead “New Wine” and posted on the Members Only site for downloading. These can be used for follow-up and feeding of Active members and potential disciples. These ‘New Wine’ Letters are also translated into Spanish, Portuguese, and Japanese.”

We’d like to clarify that **the New Wine Letters are not available at this time in Japanese**. Our apologies for this misunderstanding.

In the same GN, listings of each international board were printed. **The CGO international board listing was incomplete, as Lorie (WS) was mistakenly left out of the listing**. Below is the correct listing, in full. Our apologies, Lorie!

Church Growth and Outreach Board (CGO)

Chairperson(s): Francis (WS), Jenna (WS)
Board members: Cassie (NACRO), Cephass (ASCRO), Lorie (WS), Magda (EURCRO), Pedro (SACRO), Rachel (PACRO)

Pray!



Healing key: Unleash the miracle-working power of healing by calling on the keys.

Testimonies of Answered Prayer

By Joan (of Davide), Italy: Our daughter Kristen (former member) had a very serious car accident in June 2002. Just to give you an idea of how bad it was: The roof of the car was flattened all the way down to the hood; the seventh vertebrae of her neck was dislocated and though badly injured, she was alive.

The first thing the doctors said when she arrived at the hospital was that it was lucky that she wasn't paralyzed. A team of 16 doctors counseled together to know how to go about the very delicate surgery. She underwent two operations, the first one to remove some bone from her pelvis, to use in a bone graft; the second to align her spine and repair the seventh vertebrae. The urgent prayer request for these operations was sent out at that time. Both operations were miraculously successful. PTL! It took the doctors an hour to get all the glass, dirt, and dried blood out of the multiple cuts at the top of her head. Her left hand was badly cut and she couldn't move it properly. She also had a cut under her right eyebrow, which went to the bone. She was dismissed from the hospital and had to wear a collar around her neck for two months.

Just recently I asked her how she was doing. She answered: "One thing that helped me go through the whole accident, the operation and the months of having to wear the neck collar and not being able to sleep at night because of the pain, was the special peace and strength the Lord gave me. Even when the doctors said I could be paralyzed after surgery I felt this presence, this power near me. I felt Him so near! I know it was because of your prayers that I recovered from this accident. My left hand and arm are doing really good. Feeling has returned to my arm. I can move my hand fine and even if I do have scars on it, every day they get less noticeable! I think the Vitamin E oil did help a lot!

"Regarding the cut under my eyebrow, you can't even tell I got cut there. My hair has grown back and even in the scars it's growing remarkably well, TTL! I can move my neck very well; it's completely healed, like new! You can tell the kids that I know their prayers saved me. I am very thankful to them, the rest of the Family, and the Lord! I'm so happy to be alive!"

Kristen was supposed to do some physiotherapy after she took off her collar, but due to lack of funds, she had to do without it, but the Lord did the miracle just the same! Thank you, dear Family, for your intercessory prayers. Kristen knows the Lord spared her for a reason. Please pray that she can find out what it is and can continue to stay close to Him.

By Jan, Eva, Gloria, Ben, and

Faithy, Russia: We want to testify to a miraculous answer to prayer for a vehicle for our Home (GV #145, help wanted). When our old car suddenly broke down four months ago and we had to junk it, we had no idea how we were ever going to get another one. But as we started to pray, the Lord gave us some ideas about how to raise the necessary funds. He led us to send a two-man team to Western Europe for three weeks. We bought newly printed German "Mottos" and other Christmas tools (GB the German PC!), claimed the power of the keys, and went by faith. Time and space would fail us to tell of all the big and little miracles the Lord did, but suffice it to say that at the end of three weeks we had enough funds for a vehicle as well as two other desperate needs—children's school books and Eva's soon-to-be delivery.

But it wasn't the end of the miracles. We had only one week left before Christmas to buy a vehicle in Poland and take care of the paperwork, so Jan could be on his way home. His speedy return was necessary not only because of Christmas, but mainly because all the other Home members were also away due to some unexpected and unavoidable reasons, and eight-month pregnant Eva was left alone with five children. (She deserves a medal for faith and courage!) The Lord did miracles again and five days later we had the perfect nine-seater van we only dreamed of four months earlier!

But it wasn't yet the end of the Lord's faithfulness to answer our desperate prayers. Jan had to travel alone through 3,000 km in freezing weather of more than -20°C, passing two infamous borders with a lot of provisioned goods. (Mind you, there are no motels on the way to stop for the night, but there's the ever-present danger of being robbed by the mafia!) During the three-day and night trip, he saw tens of cars and big trucks overturned due to very slippery roads, yet he made it home safely two days after Christmas Day. It was a happy reunion and a wonderful Christmas celebration! Thank you, dear Family, for praying for us, and thank You, our wonderful Husband, for answering those prayers!

By Vas and Joni, Mexico: We would like to thank everyone so much for their prayers. The Lord has done so many

miracles for our children, Rowen and Chad. We sent in a prayer request for the holes in their eardrums to close up and against infection.—Rowen's eardrum is now completely closed up and she has no more infection and leaking, and Chad's has now been dry with no leaking for six months or more with only one flare-up! The Lord is doing the miraculous healing through prayer! Thank you so much dear Family for your prayers. They work wonders!

By Dulcinea (of Aaron), Mexico:

Thanks to everyone's prayers, Aaron is back with us and in very good condition! It was such a miracle how the Lord kept and protected his life from the bomb blast in the commercial center in Finland. It has been a great testimony, especially when you consider that the explosion occurred only four meters away from him and people fell dead and were badly injured around him. He has recovered very well from his face and ear injuries and the only thing he has lost was his left eye, which has been replaced by an artificial one. It looks pretty much like his other one.

Thank you, dear Family, for your prayers and support during his time at the hospital and recovery. Through all this, Aaron has been able to be a big testimony and inspiration to lots of people he met in and out of the hospital.

By Philip Handyman, Europe: Thanks, everybody, for your prayers for me. I'm healed! Thanks to you and our dear Husband and the miracle-working power of the keys! I don't have any medical proof yet, but there's no way to get that without letting them slice me up like a cucumber, so I said forget it. "Hath He said, and shall He not do it?" I've never felt better. I would like to ask that you keep me in your prayers a little longer, until April when it's my 58th birthday, which will make it about a year since I was diagnosed with melanoma. I love you, and thanks again!

By David (of Susana), Mexico: Thanks to your prayers and the keys, I'm a lot better. At my last checkup they said I was recovering very well and if I don't feel any pain then I won't have to have a second operation. That is a big miracle as before the doctors said it was impossible for the clot of dead cells around my pancreas to heal naturally. Thank the Lord and the power of the keys!

By Ester, Brazil: My son, David (6), was climbing on some rocks and fell and hit his head. He lost his vision for five hours and had mental confusion. After prayer, the tests showed nothing was wrong; he only has a broken finger and is all normal and active now. Thank You, Jesus, for the keys!

Asia

Jewel: Most recent MRI and CAT scan and visit to the top neurosurgeon here confirmed that something is causing pressure on the optic nerve—reoccurrence of the tumor, scar tissue build up, or an air pocket, or possibly all of the above. For the Lord to reverse the condition of the tumor and completely dissolve it, along with the scar tissue and air pocket, without the need for an operation.

Thai James: Serious heart problems, as well as pneumonia. His heart surgeon is giving him the option of heart-and-lung transplant only if this is done within a year from now. There is also the option to just leave his condition as it is and pray and hope for the best. We know the Lord is not limited either way, so please continue to keep this in your desperate prayers, and for the Lord's miraculous supply for whatever is needed.

Europe and Africa

Alexander (2½): Complication with his lungs came very suddenly and he is in intensive care, with water in his lungs. The doctors first thought it was asthma and treated him for that, and then realized it was something else, but are still not sure what.

Mary (of Jonathan): After a very busy Christmas push she was rushed to the hospital in what seemed like a need for an emergency operation for her appendix. However, the doctor now thinks that it is kidney stones moving, which is very painful. Please pray for accurate testing and diagnosis, that there will be no need for operation and that the pains will not recur; against dizziness and vomiting.

North America

Marie Mountain: Scoliosis, poor eyesight, and fibroids on her uterus.

Stephen B.: Healing from cancer.

South America

Argentina: For the reopening of the impeachment investigations against Marquovich to expose him as a corrupt and incapable judge, and that we may be totally vindicated. Also for protection and supply for all of our Family and friends there.

Juan Pablo (of Sam and Rosita): Recovery from an emergency appendectomy and for supply to pay the hospital bill.

Kristen (4, of Cristal and Phil): Calcium deposits in her brain, which cause convulsions and blackouts.

Venezuela: A general strike has been in force for two months. While it seems to be ending now, please pray for calmness, against violence, and for supply and protection for the Family.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Re: "A Reluctant Missionary"

(HL #135, 137, 139, 141)

BY NADIA (SGA), FRANCE

It's amazing how much the Word speaks to me, even *Heaven's Library*. Normally I would just read *Heaven's Library* for the fun of it (I'm a real bookworm and especially like to read stories). Lately I've been skipping them altogether, as I had so much to catch up on. But as I started reading this story, it was like it was written just for me. I was able to apply it to my situation and learn from it. The battles that Jonah went through and the lessons he learned were so similar to what I am experiencing now. He ran away from the Lord, as I did for a while. And it was in the belly of the whale that he found perfect peace and joy in serving God.

The Lord gave me a dream a long time ago in which I had a real joy in serving Him, the kind of feeling where you are fulfilled and happy and you know that you have finally found your place of service. I've spent all these years trying to attain that goal, except that I went about it the wrong way. I was looking for the perfect Home, the perfect people, where I would fit in, where I could be happy. Now I realize that apart from the fact that there is no perfect Home, it's not the *place* that matters, that's not where real joy is found. Like Jonah, who found the joy

of the Lord in the whale, I found joy and happiness in my heart, in one of the most unlikely places. Nothing in my circumstances changed. *I* was the one who changed.

Re: Visiting the Family via the Grapevine

BY TENDER JOY, ISLAMABAD, PAKISTAN

I just finished reading *Grapevine* #146. It was so interesting and thrilling to read that I couldn't put it down until I had read it from cover to cover! It was somewhat like taking a trip in the spirit, visiting different parts of the world where the Family is, and "nearly" experiencing what we are doing and accomplishing! Wow!

I "went" to India as I read about Scott McGregor's miraculous experience promoting *God on God*, "hearing" the heartcry from sheep in the GP e-mail response, knew who to pray for through reading the prayer list, tips about schooling, and even gleaned tips regarding video watching.

And even though my part is just a little jigsaw puzzle piece in the whole picture, PTL, we are *all* working together for the same goal—to spread the love of Jesus all over the place, in whatever capacity we can. TTL for this wonderful place of service in the Family where we can do something meaningful and worthwhile with our lives!

HELP WANTED

Hi! **We are Peter, Veronica, and Meekness (Russian nationals)**. We're pioneering a new city in Russia. The Lord has given us His blessing and a lot of promises of supply, protection, and fruitfulness. He is already doing a lot of miracles for us, but because in general it is very difficult to raise funds here, we would like to ask for financial help. We have already begun to provision things and are looking for contacts and the Lord is answering our prayers. TYJ! But since we're just beginning we would appreciate any help and we are sure that the Lord will bless you for it. Our Home number is RU016, through the Russian ABM. E-mail: miraclehome@safe-mail.net

Hi. My name is **Mercy**. I am going to India, and I need your help to get there. It is not possible for me to fundraise in the situation I am in here in Romania, so any amount, small or large, would be a blessing. I need about US\$1,000. You can send your donation via the TRF to RO007, and specify that it's for my trip. Thank you so much. GBY!

Dear Family, I love you! Whenever I feel a bit isolated in the Service Home I've been living in for the last year, I read the *Grapevine* and it moves me to think of those who have given all, forsaken all, and sacrificed so much to take part in a Revolution that is changing the world! ... We've gone universal and we're never gonna stop! The Lord has shown me that **He is leading me to serve Him in Africa**. But because of the nature of my Home, there isn't a big way for me to raise the necessary funds to get there. Can you help? (I need about US\$600.) Thank you so much for considering this request. You can reach me at: eztel@loxinfo.co.th. Or contact me at TH07 via the ABM.

Or ... if you can help me through your PRAYERS, that would mean so much! Thank you! Love, **Nyx (21, Thailand)**

news from your Activated desks – December 2003

BRAZIL

Brazil's best month ever for subscription sales! Due to the hard work of our dear Homes and dedicated *Contato* staff, December was our best month yet for new subscription sales. We signed up a total of 822 new subscribers! This also helped our shiners, the Niteroi Home, to become the world shiners, winning the top final WS cash shiner prize!

Best month ever for *Contato* tool sales! December 2002 was also our best month to date for tool sales direct to the GP and subscribers via our toll-free number. (The previous month, November 2002, had already been our best month ever, so this is continuing progress.) We made a total of 143 individual sales, selling a total of 167 videos, 623 CDs, 118 books and 4,718 *Contato* mags!

CEAD

Romanian *Activated* is launched: After much prayer and counsel, we have started to produce a second year of *Activated* magazines in Romanian—kicking the New Year off with the January 2003 issue!

72 new magazines produced this year: During the calendar year of 2002, we translated 99 magazines and of those we laid out and printed 72—or almost 1.4 magazines per week!

CHILE

Including more feeding: December was a wonderful month for our desk! We sold the 5,000 Christmas mags we ordered and we ran out of "Mottos." The Homes responded very well to our suggestion of including a *Conéctate* magazine with every tape, video, and book sold this Christmas, thus ensuring that our friends and sheep would get a more solid deeper feeding during this holiday season. **(Note from WS: This is a great idea for any country, at any time! Give a copy of the latest *Activated* issue to each person you sell a video or CD to and feed their soul!)**

EAD

Big sales: We were able to sell a sizable stock of kids' books this Christmas as we received a very large order from a Home in London who had gotten a contract to man a Santa booth, and each child that came into see Santa received one of our books as a present. This was a tremendous way for the tools to go out this Christmas.

INDIA

"Mottos" keep rocking: The printing of the "Mottos" by the new company went very well. Not only is the quality very good, but they also were able to keep a very good timetable. We are very happy with the results. Another victory is that "Mottos for Success" continues to be our best-selling product and is still going like hot cakes!

E-mails coming in: We received over 80 e-mails last month from the GP enquiring about either a subscription or our products. Thirty-three of these were sent from the Aurora Web site, while the rest were direct e-mails to us. A few are also from people requesting prayer or counsel. It's really inspiring answering all of these!

JAPAN

Christmas sales: Our Christmas sales were very high this year, thanks to the enthusiasm of the Homes and their faithfulness in getting out the message.

Activated Family Christmas party: The Activated/Family Christmas party for Active members went very well, thanks to the help of the CGO board, the many Homes that sent their bands, show groups, skit teams, staff, etc., as well as some Active members who helped out by performing. There was a tool booth and a stand to promote both our existing Bible study course magazine subscription as well as the new bi-monthly magazine subscription system.

"Mottos": The Japanese "Mottos for Success" has gone over very well throughout the Christmas season and the lead up to new years. We'll probably need to have them printed again soon.

New books: *Hearing from Heaven* and *Obstacles Are for Overcoming* (in Japanese) have been made available to the Homes, as well as directly to subscribers.

MEXICO

Shiner prizes: One Home in Mexico took up the challenge of winning the shiner prize our desk instituted for the sale of subscriptions for the last quarter. The shiner prize, which we announced in our August newsletter to the Homes, was US\$200 worth of tools to the shiner Home (with over 60 subscriptions for three months), plus an extra US\$100 for the Homes who topped 100 subscriptions. God bless the dear Rescate Home (a Home made up of all young people in Monterrey); by Christmas they'd reached 101 subscriptions!

Customized CD cards: Josue received an order for 2,500 customized Christmas CD cards, with the logo and a message from the company who bought them.

TAIWAN

Tool sales: We had a great month in tools sales, most of the Christmas tools we ordered sold out. We conducted some mass-marketing experiments over the Christmas season, and all initial reports indicate that it went very well. We are planning to spend a lot of time this year pioneering more ways to get our tools sold commercially all over Taiwan, and eventually in other areas of greater China.

On the marketing front: We're getting a better picture of the Taiwanese market from the deals we conducted over Christmas. Some of what we've found out in regards to what products sold has been quite surprising. Some of the CD cards that we thought were the least likely to sell ended up being the best sellers, while some items that are best sellers with the Homes didn't sell commercially. We should get the final results from all the companies selling our stuff this month and that will give us valuable information to help us better plan our attack this year.

Have you checked out the latest **Aurora Product Catalog 2003**? If you have any questions about it, see the MO site for a FAQ notice about it. <http://www.familymembers.com/activated/qna/19>

entertainment

Movies Rated for Junior Teens and Up

CATCH ME IF YOU CAN (2002)

Leonardo DiCaprio, Tom Hanks

Drama set in the '60s based on the true story of Frank Abagnale, Jr.—a young con artist who managed to pass himself off as several identities, and the FBI agent hot on his trail.

(Dad:) This is an interesting movie, because it's based on a true story and sticks quite closely to what actually happened. It's a good drama and character study. It keeps you guessing and it's good entertainment. This is probably one of the better movies that deal with conmen.

This movie has more to it than first appears, in that it shows the loneliness and yearning for recognition that the main character experienced, which in part contributed to the lifestyle that he started to live. He had a dysfunctional family and had to learn to cope with life on his own as his parents had not prepared him for it, due to their own compromises and shattered dreams. There are good lessons on finding the true values in life, and how fame and fortune are fleeting and don't bring lasting joy.

TWO WEEKS NOTICE (2002)

Sandra Bullock, Hugh Grant

Romantic comedy. A brilliant lawyer—whose self-absorbed boss treats her like a nanny—decides to quit, making for results she didn't expect.

(Jesus:) *Two Weeks Notice* is predictable, but cute. It shows that "what everybody needs is love," and also exposes the selfishness of people in the System. It's a good example of how the wealthy are often some of the neediest people in the world spiritually. They may have everything in the flesh, but when it comes down to it, they need love, understanding, someone to share and pour out to, and most of all, they need Me. It also shows how compromise can drain you and make you ineffective, to where you lose your joy, idealism, and fulfillment in life. Overall it's an upbeat, funny, entertaining watch for those who enjoy this type of movie.

CAT'S MEOW, THE (2001)

Kirsten Dunst, Edward Herrmann, Cary Elwes

Drama about the events leading up to an unsolved death of a guest amidst a star-studded gathering aboard William Randolph Hearst's yacht in 1924.

(Dad:) This movie pretty well depicts the opulence and lack of moral values

of the "roaring twenties." It was an era of hedonism and people experimenting with new things—new values, music, dress, and forms of entertainment, with an "anything goes" spirit. Many people made a lot of money very quickly, and money was power.

This movie is based on a true story, albeit the true facts never came to light and went to the grave with those who were involved. It clearly shows the fruit of yielding to jealousy and how an unguarded moment can lead to tragedy.

Movies Rated for JETTs and Up

TUCK EVERLASTING (2002)

Alexis Bledel, William Hurt, Sissy Spacek

A young woman meets and falls in love with a young man who is part of a family of immortals.

(Jesus:) This is a thought-provoking movie. It makes you think, "What would I have done in her position?" Issues of life, death, destiny, and immortality, which are hard to cover in a movie, are handled quite well. Of course it's a fantasy, and what happens to the people in the movie is not possible in real life, but it does get you thinking.

I have set every person on this Earth here for a time. I have a plan for each one of My children. While you can choose certain paths on the road of life, you cannot change your existence. I have made it so that during your time on Earth, you must move forward and continue to walk the road of life or you will become stagnant, lifeless, unhappy, and bored.

The Tuck family in the movie in a way resembles the Family. They're kind of radical, and have a certain freedom. They separate themselves from the busy world because they are different than everybody, and they have something they wanted to keep special. Their special "gift" is like salvation, but only earthly salvation. The gift that you have, which you can give to people, is salvation and eternal life forever, which is so much better.

Movies Rated for MCs and Up

AIR BUD: SEVENTH INNING FETCH (2002)

Caitlin Wachs, Chantal Strand

Josh [star of previous *Air Bud* movies] has gone to college, and his little sister Andrea enlists their dog Buddy in her baseball team; meanwhile Buddy's puppies are kidnapped.

(Jesus:) This is a pretty good movie for this day and age. The main family is sweet, and get along well, and though

they have their trials and difficulties, the children are respectful to their parents, get along, and help with their baby brother. There are good lessons about friendship and loyalty, comparing, perseverance, and not giving up even if you're having a rough time, and there's some fun action as well. The bad guys are obviously bad, though somewhat foolish. It's something My children can watch for fun and entertainment without having to worry about picking up tons of bad attitudes in the process. This movie could even be shown to the whole family with parents or teachers' previewing and approval—very small children might not "get" everything, but at least there's nothing in it that would leave bad pictures.

NON-RECOMMENDED MOVIES

TRAPPED (Charlize Theron, Kevin Bacon; 2001)

(Jesus:) There is nothing in this movie that makes it worthwhile. It's about a family who goes through horrible things for no reason, and you're dragged through two hours of watching psychotic people tormenting the lives of others. It's not especially violent, but for some, especially parents, it could cause them to fear and worry, as the subject matter is kidnapping children. It's a waste of time, and I do not recommend the Family watch it.

OTHER MOVIES

INSOMNIA (2002)

Al Pacino, Robin Williams, Hilary Swank

Two Los Angeles homicide detectives are dispatched to an Alaskan town—where the sun doesn't set—to investigate the murder of a local teen girl.

(Jesus:) This is a heavy movie. It is interesting and suspenseful, and some would get good things out of it. However, it's also a little dark and it has some repeated unpleasant scenes, as well as some graphic descriptions of murders and abuse, and a glimpse into a very deranged mind.

While it does not show graphic violence, it portrays images that make it real and apparent. It's not appropriate for those who are troubled by violence, in particular violence against women. What is worthwhile about this movie is the message about compromise, honesty, and the bad fruits of covering up. It's a movie with an intense plot, but a bit disheartening. However, it clearly shows how futile it is to take something into one's own hands, no matter how "good" the motives seem to be.

TEAMWORK	Per Adult	Total
SOUL SHINERS FOR DECEMBER 2002		
Claire/Crystal/Daniel/Mark/Steven, India	3,556	17,780
Faithy/Mark/Premika, India	3,111	21,783
Rejoice/Simon/Stephen/Sunny, India	2,518	12,592
Rosita, Mexico	2,250	4,500
Elkanah/John/Joseph/Vijaya, India	2,148	15,038
Andy/Irene/Maria/Sara, Columbia	1,668	10,010
Christie/Daniel, Columbia	1,500	7,500
Josue/Maria, Mexico	1,034	9,308
Salomon/Belen/Cristal, Mexico	750	3,000
Daniel/Maria/Rut, Mexico	747	5,230

POSTER SHINERS FOR DECEMBER 2002		
Jeremy/Milah/Sarah, USA	3,141	9,423
Jonathan/Sarah, Japan	3,050	6,100
Eli/Tirzah, Japan	2,523	5,046
Serena/Stephanie/Tommy, Cambodia	2,312	11,560
David/Faith/Philip, USA	2,108	12,650
Claire/Crystal/Daniel/Steven, India	1,931	9,655
Charity/Daniel/Happy, India	1,814	12,700
Dust/Joy/Nathan/Rejoice, Japan	1,337	6,688
Rejoice/Simon/Stephen/Sunny, India	1,053	5,268
Faithy/Mark/Premika, India	955	6,688

TAPE SHINERS FOR DECEMBER 2002		
Josue/Luz, Mexico	2,433	4,866
Pablo/Pedro/Daniela, Argentina	1,041	2,082
Consuelo/Jeho/Juan, Brazil	658	3,948
Abner/Pedro/Susanna, Brazil	420	2,939
Aneta/Ben/Kelvin, Botswana	400	2,000
Chloe/Esther/Isaac/Jennifer, South Africa	374	4,482
Faithy/Lalo/Ruth, Mexico	368	2,210
David/Esperanza, Peru	325	1,300
Grayce/James/Janai/Jay/Rose, USA	319	1,594
Spring, Mexico	311	621

VIDEO SHINERS FOR DECEMBER 2002		
Pablo/Pedro/Daniela, Argentina	307	613
Pablo/Solomon, USA	146	878
Peniel, Mexico	117	350
Angie/Ruth, Burma	75	450
Andre/Marie/Mary/Samuel, Burma	68	274
Alex/Ama/Dove/Jerry/Marianne/Philip, Mexico	67	1,202
Jewel/Micah, Japan	59	118
Meekness/Philip, Namibia	53	105
Ana/Cristal/David, Ecuador	46	456
Consuelo/Jeho/Juan, Brazil	44	264

Personals

Paul Francis, where are you? Your friend from Romania is looking for you. Please write Isabelle (Grace) at: newday@gmb.ro.

My name is Ben (of Andrew and Esther, India). I'm looking for **Anna**. I don't remember her parents' names but she has a younger brother named Gabe. Last I heard they were in Africa. I met you in Madras about seven years ago. Please contact me at: zorsharp_spoon@yahoo.co.uk.

I'm looking for **Leilani** (of Arthur and Becky). This is Pandita (Ukraine) who's dying to hear from you. Also **Nicky, DJ**, and **Chris**, please write to e-mail: kirk@art-service.ua.

John (Canadian) and Ruth (Japanese), I'd like to write you. I believe you're still in Japan? Please send me your e-mail: dimmrayne@yahoo.com

We (David and Angela, Holland) lost touch with **Seek** (Morelia, Mexico). We'd really like to get in touch again. Our e-mail address is: openeyes@yahoo.com.

The ripple effect

By Ruth, India

One person we got activated a year and a half ago has renewed his subscription. We ask him every time we meet him if he is reading *Activated*, and he always tells us that he passes it on to the old folks home that he sponsors. We have been trying to get him to read it himself, as it would help him to grow. The old people's home is way out in the boonies and we had never gotten to visit it. One day I was going by that same area and I thought I would look in to tell our friend that I had been there. As I walked in, the doctor in charge was so happy to see me. I had met her a few times at our friend's house, but our connect hadn't been too deep.

"Today the Lord has answered my prayers!" she said. "You are an angel sent by the Lord." She is so turned on with the *Activated* mag. She has devotions with the old people and makes sure they read the *Activated* mag, and for the ones that can't get out of bed, she will go to their rooms and read it to them. I can see the Lord's wisdom in letting this friend pass it on to this doctor, as it is bearing so much fruit.

"It's why I'm still here"

By Stephanie Fighter, South Africa

We had just finished setting up our table when a lady came by and picked up an *Activated* mag. "Is this *Activated*?" she asked. Immediately she took all three of them and said, "I'll buy them." After explaining to her that she could subscribe for the year she said, "Oh, I definitely think I should do that." After thanking her she said, "Well, that's what I came here for—to get the mags. Thank you!"

At one of our witnessing spots I regularly meet a 19-year-old girl. She has taken different tracts and *Activated* mags over time. The last time I met her she said, "It's amazing, you guys really reach into a lot of people's hearts with what you do and what you give out. The first tract you gave me ("Deal of a Lifetime") really motivated me, and to be honest, it's the reason I'm still here today."

Not as tough as it seemed

By John Meek, Albania

When we were faced with the *Activated* challenge, some of us had some reservations as to how it would go in Albania. We decided to challenge ourselves and ordered 1,000 copies.

In one month, with not very much time invested, as we are busy with a number of other things, such as taking care of our catacombers, provisioning, shows, follow-up, new disciple, home life, etc., we got 20 subscriptions. We are encouraged and are going to explode by God's grace.

Contatto rocking

By Rose (of Aaron), Italy

This is the first month (December) that we have the *Activated* mag in Italian (*Contatto*). We offer it shop-to-shop, while ballooning, personal witnessing, etc. I was so surprised and thrilled at how easy it was to get out. Many times people start reading it right on the spot. Our Home got out 368 mags in two weeks, and had to order more from the PPC in order to make sure we had enough to last through the Christmas season, and to send to our friends and contacts.

Christmas booths for Activated

By Joanna and Nick, Japan

It's not an original idea and it has been done before ... but not for a while! We took the opportunity to set up a booth at a couple of International School Fairs. We went as an "Activated" booth with mostly Christmas tools in English, being that all who come to these international events have to communicate in English. We set up the table with our CD stands and laminated signs and posters. We didn't get out a phenomenal amount of tools, but we had some immediate follow-up fruit from it. For example, one lady who bought a video asked us to call her and promised to buy more. Nick has since witnessed to her and she wants us to tell her children about Jesus and meet us again, and she wants to order every video that we have.

At the second fair I met a man who is in mass marketing of calendars and such. He wanted to help me as I am a foreigner and he has contacts with all the main companies here and would like to introduce me to them all. We had so much fun and enjoyment meeting people through it and it was wonderful to see the reaction and appreciation from the public to our *Activated* tools.

Activating my friends

By Johnny, Taiwan

I sent all 80 of our friends *Activated* mag #1, as well as an intro letter to the mag. I also offered to visit each one and help them to subscribe, if they preferred, as I know most people consider ordering by mail to be troublesome. I have found that it helps when I make the effort to see each one and secure each subscription.

Another thing we as a Home have been doing has been to encourage our closer friends to also help us to get their friends subscribed, etc. A number have done this, signing up two or three of their friends. One supporter even signed up 20 people for us, and bought their subscriptions himself to begin with!

A four-day senior teen camp was held in Chile from November 14-18. Don't miss reading about their activities, classes, and fun! Pictures too! <http://www.familymembers.com/newswire/1693>

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