

OUR LATIN LOVE STORY!

THE PIONEERING OF LATIN AMERICA!

by Watchman-MCV



The Gypsy Band! Puerto Rico, 1972.

PERU

This was the very first Latin American country that received a "permanent" team of Family missionaries in May of 1972 when Mattaniah, Katrina (Ruhama), Olympus & Shalmal arrived in Lima to begin our South-American "Conquest through Love". It was quite a step of faith for them to fly thousands of miles to the middle of a strange continent & commence pioneering, almost totally cut off from the rest of the Family with no other fellowship, support or communication, much like Dad outlined in ML No.151, "World Conquest Through Love!"

But, they hit the ground running, & their little on-fire team of pioneers soon began to make some phenomenal progress as they witnessed & sang their way into the hearts of thousands of Peruvians. Operating from their little two-bedroom apartment in the San Isidro area, they appeared in a number of extremely favourable feature articles in major Lima papers, two of them on the front page of the city's largest periodicals! They also appeared on a couple of TV shows & their faithful non-stop street witnessing soon won them a large & faithful following of very potential catacombs disciples who regularly frequented their apartment for Bible Studies & fellowship. Many

of these later joined the Family fulltime when they were old enough & thus became our first Peruvian disciples, such as Jordan, Ezekias, Zacharias, Nehemias & others. The Hippie movement being big in Peru at that point, they carried on quite a ministry to dropped-out youth from all over South America, even witnessing to then hippie Juan Carlos who picked Katrina up hitchhiking one day! Among the outstanding fruit of this hippie-harvest was Argentine Manases, Colombian Ezekiel Revolución & Chilean Rama.

Peru was certainly a country of firsts, beginning with the birth of Katrina's Josue Peruano on October 6, 1972, the first National-born pioneer baby in South America, safely delivered in their little apartment. Also, the first pioneers of Argentina, Chile & Colombia were won during this period (Manases, Rama & Ezequiel respectively) who then returned to their own countries to help start the Jesus Revolution there. Certainly, Peru proved extremely fruitful from the very beginning as they literally began to make "disciples of all nations" to assist in our continuing conquest of South America.

By mid-1973, about a year after the first team had arrived, Sam & his team stopped through Lima on their way further

South & were able to re-inspire & strengthen the Church there. They took Mattaniah & Katrina on with them to help begin the pioneering of Argentina, while Jonathan Archer & his wife, Trust, remained in Lima to carry on the Peruvian work. During this period many of the former catacombs disciples that had been won earlier began to join, & they also won a very wealthy king, Mario P., a local meat-industry tycoon who began to help support the work there. I arrived by the third quarter of the same year & Peru became our base for the northern half of the continent. The witnessing & music attacks were stepped-up, teams were sent out to start colonies in Trujillo, Arequipa, Cuzco & Bolivia, & we acquired new & better housing in some of the nicer areas of Lima. We also received a very encouraging note from Dad at this point, confirming what we had felt about Peru for quite some time, "Peru has a very special place in God's plan"—it has certainly proven true!

By the first quarter of 1974, I was off to help Sam in Brazil, & Jonathan & team continued to make steady progress. Towards the end of the year, however, there began to be trouble, as some of the Homes there were raided by the Federal Police & several brethren were deported. This caused us to decide to send Katrina back from Argentina on Christmas Day to help Jonathan & team in Lima, since she was an old Peru veteran, having lived there as a child as well. They soon mounted a concerted PR campaign to attempt to win the good will of General Juan Velasco's left-leaning Socialist military government. During this time they visited scores of prisons, schools & hospitals, & through these visits, favourably impressed many government officials. They sang at a religious festival for the Archbishop of Lima, an encounter that came out on the front page of a Lima paper, photograph & all. It was also during this period that they met & witnessed to Augusto Zimmerman, General Velasco's press secretary & a famous Latin American personality, who became a friend & protector of the Family for several months. He was an avid Socialist, a personal friend of Fidel Castro & quite a gallivanting & handsome international playboy. He actually visited the Home on more than one occasion & had Katrina & Jonathan over to the Presidential Palace as well. All these efforts paid off & the work was able to continue to function without any further serious incidents, TTL!

By the last quarter of 1975, shortly after the "bloodless coup" in Puerto Rico, Emanuele, Rachel, Katrina & Cephas arrived

in Lima & had quite a time witnessing to several upper-class families, many of whom were Emanuele's relatives. It was at this point that they were able to actually win two of his cousins, Luis Manuel & Javier, who were brothers from one of Lima's most wealthy families. They soon "forsook all" & returned by boat to Europe with Emanuele, while Cephas, along with Shaul & Abiah, began to reorganise the Peruvian work & get ready for a brand-new witnessing attack in the Land of the Incas.

The next period of Peru's history saw increasingly dramatic action as Faithy & team soon set up shop, as did Jethro, Deb & crew, & Lima became Headquarters for all Latin America. Although Jethro's heavy-handed, money-oriented style proved to be a detriment in many ways, Faithy & others were able to launch a witnessing campaign that reached to the highest circles of the country & beyond.

One of the major accomplishments of this era had to be Faithy's winning of Peruvian Juan Carlos, along with his wife Rosa & their children, who in turn, was able to witness to many of his wealthy friends & who was destined to become Faithy's companion & helper & eventually co-shepherd of the Latin American work! And Rosa, along with her new mate, later found a very important place of service in the Family as well. PTL! It was during this time also that Faithy was able to gather together some of South America's best musicians & singers, among them Manases, Sam, Joash, Rebecca Rumba & others, to record a popular record & eventually LP, "Todos Pueden Ser Felices". A show-group was soon put together which began doing a series of live performances to thousands throughout the country & the "Niños de Dios" became known practically everywhere.

One of the biggest impacts of all was a children's show that was assembled & organised under Sam & Faithy's direction, using Jethro's, Sam's & Juan Carlos' children. They began recording their own songs & were always the prime attraction at every live performance, starring on a number of TV shows & receiving oodles of favourable publicity in the local press. They were also instrumental in winning the hearts of many top people in the country, including Peru's First Lady, for whom they performed live at a large orphanage. The group even went international, touring Bolivia, Ecuador, Colombia & finally Venezuela, where they did a series of TV shows & even sang for that country's congress.

Finally, however, the RNR hit & with it the dissolution of the "House of Saul", &

as happened elsewhere in Latin America at this time, the remnant of the Peruvian work began to operate on a more low-key & independent basis. This general movement continued till the "Fellowship Revolution" (1980), when the arrival of stronger brethren from Europe along with increased fellowship & unity began to get the work back on its feet. Faithy & Juan eventually returned, using Peru as their base for the "String of Pearls" tours & finally as the new Home for MCV. Peru had already begun leading the way in MCV booking, however, with nearly 100 stations broadcasting the show throughout the country!

MEXICO

This great country of nearly 70 million people has received an ample witness from our Family, starting as early as 1971 when Eve & Aaron made some short witnessing trips to the Northern areas of Mexico. Later, in May of 1972, I travelled from Florida & on through Dallas with our first major team of pioneers (Julia, Titus, Proverbs, Jeremiah, Rebecca, Hukkok & Joanna--among others) to establish a beachhead near Mexico City & begin receiving the hundreds of brethren fleeing South from the US in accordance with the just-released Letter "The Great Escape" (#160). We landed first in Cuernavaca where Mexican-American Abishag along with his wife Abishai & his team, had a small Home. The Lord had already given us two very good Mexican leaders at that time, Emmor & Agustín, who were a real help in getting things established there.

Almost immediately the Lord provided us with a large walled hacienda up in the mountains of Toluca about 50 miles from Mexico City, & it soon filled up with well over 100 brethren who began to filter through the open border "tunnels" southward. We established a base there, along with a print shop & orientation centre for newcomers & also began sending out road teams from there to hit various other population centers such as Mazatlan, Veracruz, Tampico, etc. Also during this period we produced Latin America's first "recruiting" film on the old Sony reel-to-reel black & white videos, which was circulated throughout colonies in the US & served to give many more brethren the vision to come help us in the lands of the South.

In the meantime we acquired a nice large house in Mexico City itself which acted as a base & PR centre, while we also operated a coffee-house store-front affair near the famous "Zona Rosa" of downtown Mexico City, which was lent to us by a favourable lady who also operated a restaur-

ant there. Another well-to-do contact gave us the use of a nice apartment in the stylish "Lomas" area of the city & we began to have quite an operation there as the Family population of Mexico City & the surrounding area steadily grew, as more & more brethren travelled from the States & the number of our local disciples also grew. In addition, this period saw the sending of more teams to various other parts of Mexico such as Guadalajara, Oaxaca, Merida, etc. Mexico became the base for our pioneering of Central America as well & it wasn't long before our first team left by land to open up a beachhead in Costa Rica. As time went on, our witnessing activities in Mexico City began to pay off in other areas & we started to receive our first favourable newspaper & magazine articles.

Certainly one of our most memorable moments of our early pioneering days was in Merida, a Mexican city on the tip of the Yucatan Peninsula. I was returning to Merida from a meeting with Amminadab in Puerto Rico, to help the brethren in that city strengthen their witnessing efforts & also to have a meeting with two other road teams who were converging there temporarily, on their way to Guatemala & Belize. To make a long story short, a problem had arisen over a very attractive girl of 22 years who had been visiting the Home regularly for Bible studies & had just recently voiced her desire to her parents of joining the Family. Naturally, this didn't go over too well with her family, who were fairly powerful & influential in that area (her uncle was the chief of police of Merida).

Upon arriving I attempted to defuse the situation with her family as well as do some PR to bolster our image among the local community. Alas--it was too little too late. In the two days that followed we were first raided by the local police of Progreso (a nearby coastal town), involved in a high-speed chase through Merida by her older brother's motorcycle gang, raided, beaten & jailed by over forty members of the Merida police force, had our borrowed beach-house ransacked & burned to the ground, were robbed of one of our vehicles & all our money, ID & valuables, & were spread all over the front page of the Merida & Progreso papers as hippies & deranged drug addicts (with captions bearing our legal names under file photos of stoned hippies at a rock concert in California) & finally deported under armed guard by a busload of government troops. Naturally, the whole affair underscored a couple of basic lessons which we found extremely important in our continued

pioneering of Latin America: Handle 10:36 cases with the utmost wisdom & stick to larger population areas where the officials & populace are generally more tolerant & open-minded than in the out-of-the-way rural communities such as Yucatan.—Quite a lesson!

It seems in some ways that Mexico's "Family" History is almost as wild & turbulent as its actual secular history, which is one of the most violent in Latin America. Almost a year later while I was pioneering Colombia, Cephas was helping re-organise the work there & our heavy witnessing activities in the Mexico City area prompted a major bust, in which over 50 of our brethren were rounded up & deported, some being beaten in the process. (In all fairness to the Mexicans however, the use of inappropriate lit in some unwise places aroused the ire of the American Embassy, who it appeared actually orchestrated the whole affair.) After this was a long period of more or less "underground" activity by the Family in Mexico, during which open witnessing in Mexico City & some other major areas was curtailed, while more emphasis was put on personal witnessing & winning. This period proved fairly fruitful in some respects & some good disciples were won & grounded in the Word as families were forced to sort of "settle in" & quietly pastor & witness as opposed to any excessively public or showy activities. Hiram & Bileam shepherded Mexico during much of this period (1973-1975) & were assisted by other good couples such as Boaz & Kidron, Makkedah & Teth, Zerah & Beth, Job & Tekoa & single brother Servant, along with quite a few others.

Then in December of 1975, shortly after the "bloodless coup", I returned to Mexico with Katrina & a burning desire to re-pioneer & reach this country through the music ministry & really attack with both barrels. After working with Nathan & Phoenix to help reorganise the country & begin a new printing campaign of full-length Letters for street distribution, we promptly began to organise a small singing group which made its debut by winning a televised Talent Show at Mexico's major TV studios, TELEVISIA. Soon afterward we met Eduardo Manzano, one of Mexico's most famous comedians with his newly-formed production company, & shortly afterwards we recorded our first record in Mexico's most prestigious recording studios. Katrina & I actually lived in his house for a couple of weeks & were able to really witness to him & get close to his wife & children.

Shortly before this, Solomon Costa

Rican had joined us & proved to be a real key in witnessing to the upper-class Mexican youth who really began to be influenced by our message & activities. He eventually won & married Lili, a well-known up-&-coming young movie & TV actress from a very wealthy family, & who also became a singer & dancer in our show group. Hebreos, a former Mexican rock star & his American wife Maggie, who had been helping Sam in Brazil, also joined us during this period & proved to be a tremendous help in our musical & vocal arrangements. Melody, a former opera student from California arrived to help at this time & her beautiful vocals were a great asset. Of course, dear Mexican Pedro had been a real help & strength since our first days back in the country & was one of the original show group pioneers. GBH!

During this period, Melody Records, Mexico's most progressive recording company "bought" our contract from Eduardo Manzano. We had started singing in the parks, squares & streets & then continued on to radio shows, TV shows, theatres & live performances throughout the country. We continued recording & Faithy & Juan were able to visit us for several weeks, which of course proved a big boost & blessing to our witnessing outreach as she even FFed the President of our record company! They jumped right into the thick of things & in addition to helping us polish up our act & assist in some of our recordings, Faithy's witnessing had a terrific impact in the lives of many key & influential people to whom we were ministering. We continued an extremely active ministry of reaching the Mexicans via the Miracles of Music for over a year.

Then in December 1977, due to a personal audience with the First Lady of Mexico by a group of powerful Jewish enemies, a Presidential order brought "the arm of the law" upon us in a most swift & abrupt manner as our Homes were ransacked & our brethren rounded up & imprisoned in a single day & we were smeared throughout the country on front-page headlines in all the major papers. Through some tremendous miracles of God & an anointed, dedicated & influential lawyer, the brethren that had been imprisoned on serious federal charges were released & deported about two months later, & the Family in Mexico went into almost a period of spiritual hibernation during this period from 1978-1981, with very little open witnessing etc.

The establishing of the Fellowship Revolution, along with the arrival of Seek & Secundus, have helped renovate the work in Mexico, & the new unity & inspiration has

prompted a fresh attack in many areas of the work there. In addition, MCV is rapidly gaining in popularity with over 1,300 Club Members & 67 Stations broadcasting the program. The "sweet revenge" of all this is that the Yucatan Peninsula is probably the most fruitful area in this respect, topped off by the prime-time broadcasting of MCV on an extremely popular FM station in Merida. PTL!

PUERTO RICO

This beautiful Caribbean Island has proven to be a strategic point in our conquest of Latin America from the very first days all the way up until the present. Through more than a decade of literally hundreds of brethren coming & going, scores of Colonies & Homes, literally millions of pieces of lit distributed, several central offices, WS Units & oodles of Family activity, we have received almost no persecution to speak of & have always fared well on that lovely tropical isle. God bless the Puerto Ricans!

Early Family History began when Nahum Nailor & Jael, along with Jonathan & Trust, arrived in San Juan in the Spring of '72. They began witnessing on the beaches & in the parks & soon won an on-fire Puerto Rican disciple, Jocabed, who went on to help pioneer the South American continent. Then by the Summer of the same year, Amminadab & his fiery Gypsy Band of Marsena, Micah Bear, Tertius (now Miguel Volunteer) & Pethuel made their debut in San Juan. They began quite a musical explosion in the area & regularly filled the warm air of San Juan with the happy sounds of their Gypsy music. They soon acquired a large flat in Old San Juan & began performing in a local night club there as well as in the streets, buses, parks, beaches, Lion's Clubs & eventually on the radio. They soon met Puerto Rican Danny at one of the main beaches there, a chronic heroin addict who promptly got saved & delivered & added a lively tropical rhythm to the Gypsy Band beat with the addition of his conga drum. At the same time, their faithful witnessing soon won the hearts of local media who responded with favourable front-page coverage in a couple of the Island's largest papers.

During this period Sam was also beginning to "marshal his forces" & attract more helpers from the US to assist in the invasion of South America, while he helped to establish Puerto Rico as a base. More workers continued arriving during this period, amongst them Jerry Crusader, who came in November, as Sam was in the final preparation stages for the first team to Caracas,

Venezuela. I came over briefly from Mexico at this point to share notes & to consult together about our continuing push South, & by late December Sam left with the first team to Caracas.

After Sam's departure Puerto Rico continued as a base for brethren heading further South, & an orientation course was set up & operated for a time. Gibeah & Tamar were helping out with this as did Rain & Rejoice, who came a couple of years later. By the following year the Office of the Americas set up shop in San Juan under the leadership of Conny & Shalom, & Puerto Rico became the major administrative & publications centre for this side of the World. The dramatic "Bloodless Coup" took place on Puerto Rican soil in September of 1975, with the arrival of Faithy, Rachel & Emanuele, & was also the site of top-level organisation meetings at this point, which changed the course of the Latin American work & helped "shorten the cord" (See ML# 325C). It was also during this trip that our own dear Carlos Translator was witnessed to & won by Faithy & he soon became a fulltime member of God's great Family. After Conny's departure & on up past the time of the RNR, Puerto Rico continued its function as a base for the Family as Shaul, Abiah & team established & operated CROOTA through 1981. Puerto Rico later became the Home of "Musica Con Vida" at Dad's own suggestion (See No. 963) & eventually the Home for a couple of WS reporting & publications offices as well.

VENEZUELA

The conquest of this oil-rich Northern South American country began with a bang in 1972 when Sam & Marsena, along with their team of Micah Bear, Tertius, Jerry Crusader & Puerto Rican Daniel arrived at the Caracas International Airport & promptly whipped out their instruments for an impromptu concert for scores of surprised but delighted onlookers. They wasted no time getting started, & 'ne very day after their arrival they headed down to one of Caracas' major parks & proceeded to steal the show on-stage at a live concert that was taking place for several thousand people. In Caracas they met up with Venezuelan Solomon & Zichri, two National disciples that joined the Family elsewhere & had arrived to assist in the initial pioneering of their country. They stayed intermittently at Solomon's & Zichri's homes while they hit the streets with their music & thus witnessed all over Caracas, again hitting beaches, parks, clubs & even some churches. The Lord soon came through for them in a big way as they were featured on an extremely popular national

TV show, "El Show de Lenny", on which they were able to reach literally millions with their music & message.

During this period more help arrived by way of a second team, including Ruth Selah, Tirzah Joy & Magdalena (now Gypsy). The witnessing & singing continued unabated, even though there was still no permanent dwelling place for the team, which was continuing to stay with friends. Finally over three months after they arrived, the Letter "Maryknoll Fathers" came out, & by faith, Sam looked up the local Chapter there, & was warmly received by an American Maryknoll priest who proceeded to warmly welcome them into his church. They remained with him for a number of months & even started a "coffee-shop" witnessing-outreach in one of his large upstairs rooms in "Los Teques", a small community outside Caracas. Meanwhile, Jerry & Micah ventured out to Merida, a large oil-producing city on Venezuela's northwest coast, where they witnessed & sang in the town square for a number of days. However, Sam began to get itchy feet for the southernmost countries of the continent & exactly six months after his initial arrival in Caracas, departed overland for Argentina & later Brazil.

Soon after Sam's departure, much of his remaining team followed him down, while the Venezuelan work was left in the hands of the Nationals under Zichri Sweet. They soon acquired permanent housing for the work there & I was able to make a couple of trips over from Colombia & work with Zichri on expanding the work there. Several teams were sent out & soon we had bases in Maracaibo, Merida, Valencia & other smaller cities. The Lord continued adding to the church with home-grown fruit & the Lit Revolution flourished there under National leadership. The Venezuelan work continued to make good progress for the next couple of years & was assisted later by Ebed's arrival in 1975, whose close pastoring was a real blessing to the work. Jethro's arrival in 1978 was not a tremendous help, but the work survived & after the RNR there was the characteristic underground & independent tendency of the work, although Falthy & Juan's visit later in 1978 did much to encourage some of the brethren there. Later of course, with the initiation of the Fellowship Revolution, the arrival of Eli & Naomi & of course, the "String of Pearls" visit by Falthy & Juan, the work began flourishing with a renewed unity & singleness of purpose while an all-out MCV push is underway as the Stations broadcasting the Show Increase by the scores & new Members are added by the hundreds. PTL!

ARGENTINA

This expansive & strikingly beautiful country at the southernmost end of the South American continent has always held a special attraction & challenge for all those with a burden for the Latin Americans. Its uniquely European culture & heritage has set Argentina apart from the rest of the continent & its very nature as a bellwether of Latin American nations has also produced some of our most fiery & dynamic disciples, whose leadership qualities & gifts have caused them to stand head-&-shoulders above many of their other Latin brethren. These special qualities & characteristics have thus distinguished Argentina as a key field for winning Latin disciples whose drive & charisma equips them for leadership in a unique & special way.

Argentina's first pioneer was undoubtedly Manases, an Argentine musician who was won to the Family in Peru by our first team there. He soon had to return to Buenos Aires (Nov. 1972) due to visa & family problems, & when he began witnessing to his parents regarding his new-found faith, they promptly had him committed to a mental institution where several weeks of heavy medication & an intense program of shock treatments almost destroyed his memory & rendered him a veritable zombie. However, as the days passed the Lord began to restore his memory & soundness of mind & he immediately launched his own all-out witnessing campaign among his friends & acquaintances. Applying his characteristic fire & fervour, his efforts were so effective that Sam & team were astounded to find upon their arrival in Argentina several months later (July 1973) that a fullfledged indigenous church was already in active operation, with ten young on-fire Argentine disciples actively witnessing, studying the Bible & singing Family songs. Among these disciples were the brethren that proved to be the backbone & heart & soul of our Argentine work, including Jethro Siete, Sara, Haran & Pethuel to name a few. The Revolution for Jesus in Argentina was already in full swing!

The first team of Sam, Marsena, Mattaniah & Shobai &, a few days later, Katrina & Kalita, began living at Sara's mother's house. The main emphasis at this point, besides daily witnessing, was the shepherding & teaching of the precious disciples the Lord had already provided. Also, about this time the Lit Revolution first hit ("Shiners or Shamers", No.241) & an emphasis was made on printing & distributing the Wonder Working Words in Spanish. Sam & team also appeared on a couple of local TV shows, which proved very fruitful not only in getting out

the Message but also in obtaining assistance for the work as the local populace responded to the requests for help with scores of phone calls & many needed items. After several weeks, Sam made a reconnaissance trip to Brazil & brought back Tiago & Tabita (who had gone to Brazil to pioneer after joining in Europe) for a time of fellowship & training.

By this time more than a couple of months had passed & everyone was still staying at dear Sara's mother's place & there was no permanent location where the growing work could base out of. In desperation, Sam sent out a newsletter to local Catholic Parishes explaining their work & plight & asking for a place to operate from. There was only one response—but it proved sufficient—and soon the entire team moved into a rundown "Parroquia" (Parish) on the outskirts of Buenos Aires at the invitation of a kind Argentine priest who became affectionately known by the family as "Padre Feliche". GBH!

Here the work grew as the Argentine disciples were able to move in & began living-in fulltime. Various road teams were sent out periodically to neighbouring cities & the Lord continued adding to the church as more young Argentines continued to join, such as Lucas (a former Hari Krishna) & Mario (later founder of "Jardín del Cielo"—MCV). Other brethren from the US & Puerto Rico began arriving during this period also, among them Gibeah & Tamar, Remy & Boaz. Some of the former Venezuelan team had caught up by this time as well, & the population of the work there continued to grow. After several weeks Sam left again for Brazil with his first pioneer team & the work was left under the supervision of Gibeah, Tamar, Mattaniah & Katrina & eventually under Manases & Boaz. While more personnel began to filter into Brazil to support Sam's efforts, pioneer teams were sent to the neighbouring countries of Chile & Uruguay.

By the middle of 1974, shortly after the recording of the first Brazilian album, I departed Brazil for Buenos Aires. We began working with Manases & Boaz on re-organising the work & looking for a better base in Buenos Aires. The Lord soon provided us with a spacious flat in a stylish residential area not far from downtown. From there we intensified our witnessing efforts & soon organised a theatrical-musical group, "El Viento Salvaje", & we began doing shows in local clubs including a version of the Phoenix with a new musical score written entirely by Manases. During this period we also got on a number of TV shows, & started

witnessing to some important personalities who became very close to the Family there, including the Argentine singer "Jeffrey" & a famous intellectual Argentine author, Juan Carlos. We continued Holy Ghost samples hundreds strong in the main square of Buenos Aires in the evenings & through the winning of new Argentine disciples & the arrival of ever-more brethren from up North, the population of the Family in Argentina continued to increase. The Government of Juan Peron, the notorious Argentine dictator who was in power most of this time, was exceptionally tolerant of our Family & activities. Lit-nessing & cafe singing also continued unabated in the Argentine capital as it did with the other teams distributed throughout almost every major population center in the country.

By early 1975 I went back to Brazil to work with Sam again, leaving the Argentine work in the hands of Jubal & Cherith & Boaz & Remy. They continued making progress for several months until the beginning of 1976, when the forces of order, under the new US-backed military dictatorship (after Peron had died & his wife was deposed in a right-wing coup) raided our colonies & deported several brethren, even torturing one of our pregnant girls. This of course forced the work underground, & our activities there continued on a more-or-less low-key basis for some time to come. Naturally, things continued this way after the RNR in 1978 with the fragmentation of the work that generally characterised this period, up until the "Fellowship Revolution" first began to surface. Nonetheless, various brave pioneers from the US & Europe continued to filter into the country, some with amazing success. Jubal, Pethuel & Obed Buggs formed a musical group, "Harp", which met with tremendous acceptance as they rode a wave of popularity, headlining in a popular night club, recording an album & even advertising blue jeans! The Argentine group, "Jardín del Cielo", was also busy performing & witnessing at this time. The arrival of Juan & Vittoria along with several other strong brethren from Europe & the implementing of the Fellowship Revolution, topped off by Faithy & Juan's "String of Pearls" visit, did miracles in uniting & strengthening the work, which is continuing full-speed ahead presently with the establishing of their own NRO & a new MCV push headed by dear Argentine Mario.

BRAZIL

This vast country, with a population of over 100 million & stretching over more land area than the continental United States, is

Like no other country on Earth. Its combination of some of the World's most beautiful beaches, prestigious international playgrounds for the rich & some of the most ultra-modern cities anywhere, alongside pitiful extremes of poverty thriving with South America's darkest most demonic black African religions & culture, has made this nation quite a "Goliath" among Latin American countries. Add to this a completely different language (Portuguese) than the rest of the region, coupled with a repressive all-powerful totalitarian government, (at least at the time of our initial invasion) & you can see this country must have presented apparently insurmountable obstacles to our first little team of pioneers. But our little "David" & his band of mighty men amazingly was able to soothe the savage beast through the power of the Lord's music, while riding a dynamic wave of popularity of the like never before witnessed by our Family on this side of the Globe!

This astounding episode in our history began to unfold in February of 1974 when Sam, after an initial visit to Brazil from Argentina a couple of months earlier to scout out the land & bring Tiago & Tabita back to Buenos Aires temporarily, finally arrived in Rio de Janeiro with his first small team.

As was their style in those days, they wasted no time in beginning their singing & witnessing anywhere & everywhere they could, from the famous beaches of Copacabana to the ancient trolley cars that cruised the rolling cobblestone streets of the romantic "Santa Teresa" district, a breeding ground for many of Brazil's outstanding writers, poets & artists. It was there that they soon acquired an old house in the heart of this vintage neighbourhood, a few short blocks from one of Rio's most notorious red-light districts. While Danny & Jerry went on a road team to the Northern capital city of Bahia, Sam & the rest of his crew continued their hit-&-run witnessing attacks throughout the city.

When performing in a Rio park one day, they noticed an older gentleman watching & listening intently as they sang & played. He soon enthusiastically introduced himself as a music promoter & said that he thought the material was great & asked if they were interested in recording a record. Since the thought had crossed Sam's mind once or twice before (Hal), they proceeded to go with him to a number of record companies where they auditioned live & at one point even had a contract & pen shoved at them on the spot! They waited however, & soon had Polydor,

Brazil's giant among record companies, interested in hearing a Demo Tape from them. When in the studio for their pilot recording, one of Brazil's most prominent young producers, Fernando, wandered in & began listening with great interest as they went through a couple of numbers. He instantly became so excited that he took over the controls from the individual who had been working the board & helped Sam & crew produce an inspired & lively Demo Tape with real Family spirit that had Polydor's President banging his fist on his desk demanding, "Why haven't you signed them up yet?!"—And sign them up they promptly did, & a recording date for the first LP was soon set.

The emphasis at this point, aside from continuing to witness & win dear Fernando, was in picking & rehearsing songs for the recording, while calling in reinforcements from Argentina & elsewhere, as the battle was truly on! By April, Manases arrived from Buenos Aires to play the lead (many of the most outstanding songs recorded were his compositions). We flew from Lima to assist in the organisational aspect of things & the Santa Teresa house was buzzing with activity & excitement—& overflowing with personnel. Having been in a bust or two in Latin America before & aware of the anti-hippie stance of the Brazilian government at this time, we began to get a few checks that the combination of a houseful of not-so-clean-cut young people & an abundance of noise & activity at all hours might attract the wrong kind of official mention. In an effort to avoid such a possibility we had a meeting immediately suggesting that personal appearances be improved & that immediate efforts be made to improve relations with the local community & officials. As in the case of Merida (see Mexico history), it was too little too late.

The following morning at 7 AM we were abruptly awakened when the sheets were suddenly yanked off of us & we opened our eyes to look down the barrel of a gun, as a couple of burly men shouted orders in Portuguese. Although we did not completely understand every detail of their instructions, the spirit was clear enough & we scrambled to put some clothes on as we could hear them pushing their way through the rest of the house, kicking open doors while shoving & occasionally striking some of the brethren. They soon had us lined up against the wall in the main corridor of the house & as we looked closely at our tough-looking, heavily-armed captors, we realised we had been raided by the infamous D.O.P.S.—Brazil's version of the FBI, well-known for their

systematic torture of prisoners & the frequent "disappearing" of persons held in their custody. We were then hustled into paddy wagons & with sirens screaming, we were whisked away to D.O.P.S. headquarters, an aging edifice that looked like a cross between a medieval dungeon & Dracula's castle.

There we were separated & interrogated throughout the day by some of the most muscle-bound hulks of human beings we'd ever laid eyes on, who occasionally used gimmicks such as clicking the magazines of loaded revolvers close to our head to encourage us to overcome our inhibitions & talk more freely. Ha! By the late afternoon we were overjoyed to see the smiling face of dear Fernando, who finally succeeded in obtaining our temporary release, although we were tersely informed that we were under virtual house-arrest while an investigation into our group continued. A couple of days later while making a PR visit to the head of D.O.P.S. & trying to win his heart by telling him of the record we were producing to help the youth of his country, he curtly cut us off by remarking in a cold & somewhat sinister voice, "You won't be here to record the record!" & then had us ushered out of his office. Some encouragement!

Tension continued to mount as Tiago & Tertius were summoned to D.O.P.S. headquarters the following day to be interrogated, as they were not able to finish questioning them the day that we were taken in. Since they had left early that morning, we were naturally concerned when by about 6 PM they still hadn't returned. Upon going to D.O.P.S. to question their whereabouts, the response was less than assuring, "Who? They were never here!" Two days passed, then three & four & still no word of their fate. The pressure continued to build & every member of the team was forced to count the costs, fully aware that their continued presence could well cost them their lives. Some decided it wasn't worth it—one girl abruptly took a plane back to the US—another team member left Rio for safer ground. But among those who remained, a growing sense of unity & determination began to build as we stood together in a stand of faith that the Lord was going to do what He had promised & help us win the hearts of the Brazilian youth despite all the obstacles. A real co-or-die camaraderie took hold as we refused to cancel the recording date & went ahead by faith to do our part so the Lord could do His.

The night of the first recording had arrived. It had been two weeks & still no

word from our brethren in bonds. Everyone piled into taxis & Fernando's car & proceeded on to the studio as I remained at the house to do some reports. The scene at the studio was one of tense drama. Everyone was aware of the situation, from the technicians & musicians to pregnant Tabita & all our singers. Despite the pressure & the heavy atmosphere the songs were coming out beautifully as everyone sang with every bit of conviction inside & it truly sounded as though heavenly hosts were in the studio helping us through the choruses of Saint Francis' prayer, "Señor Fazem de Mim" (Lord, Make Me an instrument of Your Peace).

Back in the house there was a knock on the door. As I went to see who it was, a rush of joy surged through me as I peered through the screen door onto the dimly-lit porch & instantly recognised the shining faces of Tiago & Tertius, smiling broadly behind two-week-old beards! We embraced warmly & immediately summoned a taxi as they quickly changed & cleaned up. On the way to the studio they explained the miracles the Lord did through the ordeal, sparing them from the torture being inflicted on the prisoners around them, & even miraculously sparing the many souls that they were able to lead to the Lord. When we arrived at the studio I walked in first to find the brethren almost tearfully listening to the heavenly-sounding playback of the song they had just recorded. As they looked up rather surprised to see me there I calmly announced, "I brought a couple of special guests to see you!" Tiago & Tertius then bounded through the door & the gasp & astonishment soon gave way to a non-stop love feast of tearful embraces & joyful praises & dancing as the studio exploded into one fantastic victory celebration! The battle for Brazil was won! We knew in the Spirit it signified the defeat of the Enemy & a gigantic triumph for the Lord & His plan.

In the days that followed, the recording was completed & soon released, & had no sooner hit the radios & the stores than it became a smash hit which had Polydor scrambling to reprint the album to keep up with the surging demand. The sounds of "Hallelujah!" & "Señor Fazem de Mim" could be heard across the AM & FM bands throughout the country day & night as the popularity of "Os Merinos de Deus" skyrocketed virtually overnight. The group was besieged with offers of TV shows & began to be featured on some of Brazil's most popular national programs. Personal appearances began with acoustic performances & autograph-signing at record stores & then eventually sound equipment was

acquired & a band was put together for touring & concerts. The sequence of performances climaxed in December of that year at Brazil's mammoth "Macarana" sports stadium when the band performed before a live audience of over 300,000 persons. Thus, 1974 ended with them riding high on a wave of popularity & finally receiving an award for being the "revelacion del año" (revelation of the year) on one of the country's most viewed TV shows. What a year of miracles!

By 1975 the group was touring & doing lots of live performances while Polydor planned a second album & Jeremy Spencer was brought over from Europe to help. The second album was recorded during the Spring & released shortly after. The TV & radio shows continued & the group moved from Rio to the huge bustling metropolis of São Paulo in order to further open up that city. Cephas had arrived in 1974 & was a real strength in successfully pioneering Porto Alegre & other areas. I returned from Buenos Aires later on that year, & by August Faithy flew in from Europe to "shorten the cord" & gather the forces for the "Bloodless Coup". After the meetings in Puerto Rico, Sam & Faithy returned just in time for a special concert in Brasilia, the nation's ultra-modern capital city, & then in November of 1975 moved back to Rio at Faithy's suggestion, since this was the city that had originally received us & our message most enthusiastically. She continued there shepherding the group for a period before leaving for Peru to begin pushing a new witnessing attack there. The band meanwhile signed a new record contract (CBS) & produced a new album along with more TV shows. Sam at this point took a break from his non-stop schedule & travelled through Southwest Brazil on to Argentina & eventually Peru. The band continued to perform regularly, but by this time the great wave of popularity had come crashing upon the shore & there was never a resurgence of the group's original prominence.

Meanwhile, the work itself in Brazil continued to grow as more brethren arrived from the States & other parts of Latin America & the ranks of the local disciples kept increasing. Mathias Mountain had arrived in '74 to help Tiago & Tabita, & our population & activities in Brazil steadily grew. By the second half of 1978, a wave of bad publicity, culminated by a national bust, profoundly altered the Family modus-operandi as several brethren were deported & the work went underground. The post-RNR condition of the work was much the same as other parts of Latin America, with Homes operating on a fairly low-key & largely

Independent basis.

However, the dawn of the Fellowship Revolution brought new life & unity to the work, as Tiago & Tabita, together with Ebed & Estrella, began to help the work get re-organised & back on its feet along with the pioneering of Brazil's own Reporting Office & Publications Centre. Soon MCS started with Sam & Cephas at the helm, helped by several other of Brazil's original music pioneers, with the vision of reaching the Portuguese-speaking world with a brand-new wave of music & follow-up. Faith & Juan's "String of Pearls" visit was the icing on the cake as the work there forges ahead in a united attack on the Enemy's territory in that great country.

COLOMBIA

A large & extremely Catholic country of Northern South America, Colombia proved a great testing ground for Dad's timely new Revelation of "Are We Catholics or Protestants?" The government at the time was very conservative & extremely pro-Catholic, so much so that the Cardinal's power & influence was roughly equal to that of the President's! As always, Dad's latest revelations proved to be just what we needed to steer us through the religious & political minefields of that very volatile but potential country, & we were amply rewarded with exciting fruits & some marvellous results & experiences!

The story begins in Spring of 1973 when our first little team of Libertad, Titus, Little Foot & Canadian Justus flew from San Jose, Costa Rica to Bogota as our little music group (2 guitars, flute & bongo) sang & played in the back of a dilapidated turbo-prop plane of SAM airlines, a not-so-fancy Colombian airline with whom we had provisioned 50% discounts. We landed in Bogota & rented a couple of rooms at an older, moderately-priced hotel where we rested for the first evening. The next day was pure magic as we awoke early & looked out upon the vast skyline of that enchanting capital as our hearts leaped within us in excited expectancy of the great miracles that we knew the Lord was going to accomplish. We began the morning by reading together the newly-published Letter "Arrivederci Roma", followed by some beautiful prayers & prophecies as the Lord promised us that He was going to open doors that no man could shut through our witness to the Catholics & that He was going to turn the hearts of the Kings of that land in our favour. As we looked up from our prayers, the light entering from the dome-shaped skylights in the ceiling of our room reminded us instantly of the Letter

"Temple Time" & we all felt the presence of the Lord in a very strong & exciting way! PTL!

The day continued to be extremely eventful & fruitful as we visited a powerful Catholic priest who ran a large Social Government Agency. He received us with open arms, pledging his help in the way of a base of operations, & even monthly financial help! We then did a series of presentations for various groups of nuns & clergy, all of whom received us warmly & offered their support. We spent the rest of the day singing & witnessing throughout Bogota, finally in a central park where hundreds of fascinated onlookers pressed in to get a closer view as we played, sang & witnessed with all we had within us. As the day drew to a close we had a provisioned dinner by candlelight in a nice restaurant, all aglow with that wonderful feeling the Lord gives you when you know you're in the centre of His will & doing your best for Him. Suddenly, as we sat together, chills ran through all of us, followed by tears, as clearly over the sound system of the restaurant, Marlo Lanza's version of "Arrivederci Roma" came bursting through! What a beautiful end to an amazing day!

The following days were filled with other accomplishments & we won our first catacomb disciple during our very first week, Edgar, who we found out later, was a son of one of Colombia's most influential Senators. It was in the course of our first week also that we obtained what was to become our base of operations for months to come, a large, ancient parroquia (parish) on the south side of the city (with the address "803 South"!) under the care of a very staunchly Catholic but precious priest, Padre Escobar, who soon showed his true colours as a steadfast friend & supporter. Within days, he turned over the huge top floor of his main building with its score of rooms for our exclusive use & we slowly began to take over his entire church, eventually even singing in the Masses! He had his limits though, as we found out one day while exploring the property & ran across a perfectly preserved 1949 Chevy sitting in the remains of a downstairs garage. When Titus suggested to him the possibility of our occasionally using it, he calmly but emphatically replied, "Bestialidad!" (Bestiality)--which we later learned was his favourite term to express anything we did that went "over the line" of what he considered reasonable. In this instance he continued on in Spanish, "There are three things in life which you never lend: your

wife, your toothbrush & your automobile!"-- Ha!

During our first week we also met a very influential Jesuit priest, Father Javier, a short, bearded, jovial man in his late 40's, who was quite well-known in Catholic circles throughout Latin America for his characteristically unconventional behaviour. We were right up his alley, living the way he always felt true Catholics should, & he soon became a very close friend & supporter, being especially fond of Libertad. He helped open up many important doors for us through his many connections, as the Jesuits are quite a powerful force in Colombia, being somewhat of a "Vanguard of the Vatican" & holders of large amounts of wealth & estate. He frequented the Parroquia regularly & we soon became accustomed to hearing his familiar exclamation, "Ah, Los Niños de Dios! Wonderful! Wonderful!"--GBH!

Our witnessing in the parks & streets continued at high pitch & we were soon on a couple of TV shows that had Padre Escobar all excited, as the phone in his parroquia (parish) was ringing off the wall for the first time in history! Ha! Favourable articles followed in the major newspapers, along with a full-spread feature article in Colombia's most popular weekly magazine, featuring among other things, a large photo of us singing on the front steps of Colombia's most famous edifice, the AVIANCA building, surrounded by hundreds of onlookers. More help also arrived during this time, including Boaz Bolivar, Colombian Jonathan Nubes--who had joined the Family in New York City (now Gabriel, DJ of MCVI) & Ezequiel Revolucion, a former Communist anarchist who had been won to the Lord by our first team in Peru. We also began witnessing to a popular local Colombian TV star & cosmopolitan playboy who got saved at the parroquia & started getting very close to the Family there, along with his pretty French wife. We also began to win our first Colombian disciples, including Paloma, who later married Brazilian producer Fernando.

All was well until one day when Edgar came running up to me excitedly exclaiming that his mother was coming to see me & was very upset since he had just told her that he wanted to join the Family fulltime. I didn't become overly concerned at this point since we had no idea who Edgar's mother was & since he was a mild-mannered acne-faced young boy with a burr haircut, I had no indication that his mother was anybody special. However, a few minutes later, when a chauffeur-driven Mercedes with government plates came screeching up to the parroquia &

this elegantly dressed & bejeweled woman briskly stepped out & walked towards me with a mean look in her eye, I asked Edgar the natural question, "Who is your mother?" He calmly replied, "A senator."—Not just any senator, but one of Colombia's most powerful & well-known political figures! I put on my best PR approach, but to no avail. She promptly went on to threaten us & rant & rave, vowing to have us thrown out of the country by the end of the week. It was the beginning of what was to be a battle-royal by the Enemy to throw us out of the country.

In the days that followed, the D.A.S. (Colombia's Federal Police) were at our door constantly, sitting in on our classes, & they finally hauled us all into headquarters to cancel our visas & deport us. Our Catholic friends, led by Father Javier, the Jesuit priest, went to bat for us immediately, using every available means at their disposal & finally obtained a 30-day "grace" extension at the very last minute. A long battle then ensued that found us & our Catholic friends going from government Ministry to government Ministry & from Cardinal's office to Immigrations, constantly bumping into "Doña Hilda" (Edgar's mother) & her forces in what was always a neck-&-neck battle & a real cliff-hanger. Again we were taken down to D.A.S. headquarters for deportation & again at the last minute we obtained another 30-day extension as we desperately fought to remain in the country.

All throughout this raging controversy we had been attempting to obtain an audience with Colombia's Cardinal, as we knew he held the balance of power & was able to favourably resolve the situation if we won his heart. Doña Hilda was also working feverishly for a personal interview with him, but he steadfastly refused both of us, not wanting to become embroiled in this stormy affair. Our last 30-day extension was rapidly coming to a close & we prayed desperately for a miracle to stem the tide of the Enemy's vicious attacks—& then the break came! A Catholic friend of ours suddenly phoned us to ask if we could perform at a religious festival that afternoon, honoring one of Colombia's Patron saints, since the military band that was going to perform suddenly cancelled out. He impressed upon us the extreme urgency & tremendous opportunity this presented, since the festival was to be personally presided over by the Cardinal himself! Imagine our excitement as we hurriedly accepted, & with a prayer on our lips, boarded the transportation that our grateful friend had provided to take us to the top of a mountain overlooking the city

where the large church was located that was to be the site of the festival.

We took our places on the platform in front of the hundreds of onlookers, officials & journalists present, & in a few minutes the Cardinal's motorcade drew up, & he stepped out of the limousine, & accompanied by several aides, made his way through throngs of well-wishers to the podium at the centre of the platform. Our friend who had invited us, who was also acting as Master of Ceremonies, took the mike & began by thanking the Cardinal for his presence at the festivities, introduced several prominent personalities who were present, & then turned to us, thanking the "Niños de Dios" for making such a sacrifice to come & provide our beautiful music. As soon as he uttered that name, the Cardinal suddenly wheeled around to look at us, & for an awkward moment stood staring at us speechless as we smiled back. It was then time for him to commence his speech & he merely stuttered for a moment, looked at us again, & then spun on his heel & briskly walked back into a side room behind the podium with a couple of aides closely following, while murmurs began to rumble throughout the stunned crowds! Our startled friend finally regained his composure & announced that the Niños de Dios were going to fill in with a song. We broke into a rendition of "Tienes que ser un Niño" (You Gotta be a Baby) all the while desperately praying for the Lord to take over the situation & bring a victory out of it all.

As soon as the song was finished, the Cardinal returned to the podium & began his speech. It turned out to be a very inspired talk on total dedication to the Lord, taking up your cross to follow, & he went on to emphasise that one must become a child in order to enter the Kingdom of Heaven! We really felt the Lord's Spirit fall & soon a golden ray of sun burst through the clouds behind the mountains on the opposite side of the valley, bathing the entire scene in a beautiful amber light. Upon finishing his talk he turned towards us & smiling warmly, profusely thanked us for coming & sharing our Christian music. He then began blessing the crowd after Communion & made a special effort to push through the throngs to where we were & give us his blessing. As we excitedly began to re-group with Javier & our other friends after the festival broke up, we were suddenly interrupted by an official-looking gentleman who said that the Cardinal was in a private ballroom of the main part of the church & wanted to see us personally! Then in a scene somewhat reminiscent of the

Papal audience in the movie "Brother Sun", we were received into his presence amid the surprised stares of other church officials present as he warmly chatted with us about our goals, message & methods. We eventually bid a fond farewell & went away rejoicing that the Lord had so marvellously fulfilled His promise to "turn the hearts of the kings of that land towards His children". PTL!

Things began to change in our favour shortly after that, & a few weeks later we were all granted residence visas to continue our work! TYJ! We also learned through Javier that the Cardinal did finally receive Doña Hilda for an audience, & rather than heed her accusations against us, went on to upbraid her for her own deficiencies in being a good mother which caused her son to turn to drugs in the first place! This still didn't convince her to allow Edgar to join the Family though, & soon he ran away from her in desperation. In a state of depression one night after her son's departure she happened onto the movie "Brother Sun", with which she completely identified, & broke on the spot, having an instant & miraculous change of heart! She soon showed up at our Colony door with a basketfull of food, asking forgiveness for her past actions, explaining her new change of heart & saying that if we could find her son he was welcome to join. Edgar eventually did show up & join & Doña Hilda became a faithful monthly supporter of our work!

While all this was going on, the work had continued progressing in other areas with the arrival of the Lit Revolution, & new teams were sent out to various other Colombian cities such as Medellin, Barranquilla & Cali, to name a few. Ecuador's first pioneer team was sent off during this time, & Colombia soon became the main base for Northern South America. In Bogota we moved out of the parroquia into a nice house in the Northern area of the city, & through a combination of incoming brethren from the North & a steady influx of local fruit, Colombia's Family population continued to increase. There was a strong Marxist sentiment among the Colombian youth at this point which would sometimes prompt some fiery public debates in our witnessing, but the Lord even gave us a couple of revolutionary ballads to witness to these individuals & we began to win an increasing number of converts from this class.

Boaz Bolivar & Libertad became shepherds in 1974, assisted by our national leaders, Ezequiel & Jonathan, & the work there continued to prosper as our witnessing efforts grew throughout the country. Eventu-

ally Ebed & Leah arrived to help out after the "Bloodless Coup" in 1975, & they were able to help strengthen the work, which continued to grow with the addition of ever-more Colombian disciples. They acquired a nice new place outside of Bogota, & the Family in Colombia continued a steady outreach throughout this entire period. Jethro's hard-driving lit-machine tactics eventually caused some problems however, & this began to manifest itself by 1977 in the way of violent persecution & a wave of bad publicity.

By the end of the year the "powers that be" began to officially crack down on our activities there, forcing an exodus of foreign brethren & causing our work to go underground & increasingly into the hands of the Nationals. After the RNR, the work continued its underground movement with little open witnessing or fellowship until the start of the "Fellowship Revolution". The String of Pearls visit sparked new life & unity among the local brethren as did the arrival of Eli & Naomi along with dear Boaz Bolivar, one of the country's original pioneers. Also, with scores of stations broadcasting the MCV show throughout the country, along with hundreds of new Club Members, the MCV follow-up effort is rapidly gaining momentum in this extremely potential & exciting field.

CENTRAL AMERICA COSTA RICA

This tiny but beautiful country in the heart of Central America has long held the distinction of "Switzerland of the Americas".—And with good reason. Its neutral stance in world politics & its refusal to support an Armed Forces, coupled with its progressive democracy in the middle of a region of totalitarian regimes, has made it somewhat of a haven in this part of the world for quite a few years. Its lush vegetation, delightful climate & friendly people have added to its aura of a "shangri-la" in the midst of an otherwise turbulent area. It has also held a very special place in our own history of Latin America as we will attempt to outline in the following brief account.

The story begins in the Fall of 1972 as our small pioneer team of myself, Jeremiah Bolivar & Dabiseh, journeyed from Mexico City to San Jose, Costa Rica's capital, in our tiny Kharman Ghia sports coupe. The ride through Central America's lush jungle was exciting enough—a wild & woolly area to say the least! Our first major adventure was upon travelling out of San Salvador as we stopped to ask directions to the road that

...to the border of Honduras, the next country we were to cross on our journey south. We followed the instructions given, but soon began to have a few misgivings since the road gradually deteriorated until it became nearly unnegotiable. Upon arriving at the little border town on the San Salvador side, we approached a small immigration stand & asked the two soldiers on duty there to stamp our passports so that we could leave the country. They first stared at us in disbelief & then began to laugh as they explained that we had arrived at a closed border that had been the scene of bloody fighting in the infamous El Salvador-Honduras Soccer War three years earlier. They went on to explain that no one had attempted to cross that border since then, save one carload of United Nations officials who were fired upon & one British motorcyclist who was shot dead!

At that point Jeremiah faced me & exclaimed something like, "OK, Watchman, I guess that settles it, we'd better turn around." However, the thought of returning over that terrible road we had just struggled over for the past two hours somehow seemed hard to swallow, so with a wave of the hand & a classic statement, "The Children of God don't go back, they go forward!", I proceeded to have the border guards stamp our passports as Jeremiah looked on in horror & Dabiseh shrugged in disbelief. The guards obliged, & the word soon leaked out in this little village that these crazy foreigners were going to attempt to cross the forbidden border, bringing quite a crowd of spectators who began to line both sides of the highway. A group of local youth showed their enthusiasm by proceeding to remove boulders that blocked the road, & we drove slowly past an abandoned customs building on into "no-man's land".

Immediately on the other side, the highway condition improved dramatically so I was encouraged to begin picking up speed. A few moments later, however, the bushes on both sides of the highway began to shake violently & soon a dozen heavily-armed green-bereted troops complete with gunbelts, grenades & automatic weapons came running toward the car as we screeched to a halt. The apparent leader of the group proceeded to place the barrel of his machine gun squarely against my temple, & without altering my head position I nervously suggested to Jeremiah that he say something to help the situation. He began to stutter excitedly, blurring out some half-intelligible statement about us being tourists, etc. He was abruptly silenced by the Commander, who

began shouting something to the effect that if we immediately turned around & headed back they might spare our lives. At this point we felt it best to oblige—bad road all—& cautiously backed up & proceeded so slowly toward the Salvadorean border, praying earnestly that a hail of hot lead would not come ripping through the back of the car.

As we pulled back into the El Salvadorean side, it didn't take us long to realize that our venture had suddenly catapulted us to the status of national heroes, as the townspeople began to wildly cheer & run alongside our car. Taking advantage of our newly-acquired prestige in the local community, we promptly whipped out our guitar & proceeded to sing & witness for over half-an-hour to the sizeable crowd that had gathered, who very appreciatively & attentively listened to & received our songs & message. Many received the Lord, & as night was beginning to fall, one of the ladies of this humble village invited us for a home-cooked dinner in her house. We happily obliged, & with a score of local children gathered at our feet, ate & shared with these precious people. We then bid them farewell & headed back towards the capital city of San Salvador, rejoicing that our little excursion had actually borne some fruit for His Kingdom.

Later that evening, upon finally locating a crossable border, we proceeded on through the dense jungles of Honduras, following a dark winding road that led through the thick vegetation of that Central American rain forest. At one point in our journey, I felt compelled to relieve myself on the side of the road, which I did by sliding through the window on the driver's side James Bond-style, since the door was jammed shut. Once my necessary mission was completed, I hopped back in the car in the same manner, & we continued our journey without further delay. About 45 minutes later, we came upon the Honduras capital of Tegucigalpa & immediately noticed that there appeared to be a state of siege in progress since soldiers & military vehicles seemed to be everywhere.

We were soon halted by a group of soldiers manning a road block, who sternly commanded us to present the documents of the car along with my driver's license. I smiled assuringly at the individual issuing the command & confidently reached towards my back right pocket to retrieve my wallet which contained the desired documents. The smile suddenly faded as my hand reached my empty pocket only to discover that my wallet

was gone! I vainly tried to manage another smile with the words, "un momentito", (one moment) as we began to desperately rummage through the car seeking my lost wallet. A couple of minutes had elapsed & the situation was quickly growing tense as more soldiers circled the car, nervously fingering the triggers of their weapons & shifting impatiently. By this time we were outside the car, desperately going through the trunk, pulling up the floor-mats & even looking through the engine compartment. The ranking guard suddenly stepped forward & tersely informed us that they were taking us to headquarters since we had failed to produce the required documents. We immediately began begging for mercy, knowing that being interned under martial law in Honduras would, in all probability, be a lengthy & intensely unpleasant affair. As we pleaded with the soldiers I suddenly recalled our little stop on the side of the road earlier, realising that my wallet must have fallen out when I was sliding in & out of the car! We finally convinced them to let us go back to look for my wallet, to which they grudgingly conceded, warning us all the while that they'd be waiting for us.

As we headed back down that dark, narrow jungle road, the impossibility of finding a 4 x 6 inch piece of leather in the middle of the night on an unknown & virtually unmarked highway suddenly struck me. We had no idea where we'd stopped, no landmarks to go by & every curve in the road looked the same. Still we had no other alternative but to try, so we continued on & prayed for a miracle. Suddenly as we passed a vaguely familiar curve, we got a distinct check to turn around. We did so & as I slowly began to straighten out the wheel & point the car back in the direction from which we had just come, there on the road, clearly in the reflection of our headlights, lay my wallet! We let out a shout of joy as I quickly retrieved it & checked its contents & then we proceeded back down the road towards the roadblock. True to their word, the same soldiers were waiting there for us as we drove up & happily presented our papers. We even pulled out the guitar again & shared a few songs with them, much to their delight, & they warmly bid us farewell as we continued our journey on towards Costa Rica!

Arriving in San Jose a day later, we immediately fell in love with the country, as the delightful climate & beautiful green mountains surrounding that quaint capital city of 700,000 (1972) gave it a uniquely enchanting air. We soon met Don Guillermo, Jeremiah's father, a precious man who was

destined to become a central figure in our progress, not only in Costa Rica, but throughout Latin America & beyond. One of the country's most famous & well-loved lawyers, he is known as the father of Costa Rica's Penal Code, one of the most advanced & progressive in Latin America. The author of numerous books, he is revered throughout the region as one of the most outstanding reformists of the criminal & social law of his time. He immediately provided us with a nice, furnished 3-bedroom house for our permanent use as well as office space in his new 6-story building in downtown San Jose. He also provided us with a number of important contacts which proved to be extremely helpful.

One of the main highlights of our first weeks there was when Don Guillermo took us to Costa Rica's beautiful Presidential residence on a hill overlooking the city for a personal meeting with the country's First Lady, Doña Karen, an attractive, intelligent & outgoing Danish-born woman in her late 40's. She warmly received us & showed an immediate & intense interest in our plan to help Costa Rican youth with the Jesus Revolution, & after listening intently to one of our songs, grabbed the neck of my guitar & looked me firmly in the eye as she enthusiastically exclaimed, "This may be the answer!" She sat back & said to herself out loud, "What we need now is money!" She went on to pledge her help & asked us to come by her office at the Presidential Palace the following day to pick up two letters on her official letterhead; one to the President of Costa Rica's national airline, soliciting free passage for the next team from Mexico City, & another directed to Hubert Feder-spiel, one of Costa Rica's most prominent millionaires, requesting financial assistance & his help in obtaining a locale to use as a Youth Club in the center of the city. She also introduced us to Costa Rica's then President, a popular hero of Costa Rica's war with Nicaragua, dubbed "Don Pepe" by his countrymen. After excusing ourselves we left her presence elated at the success of our first encounter.

The rest of our first week there we continued carrying on some very fruitful PR with some top personalities of the country & also began hitting the streets singing & witnessing to get a taste of the local youth. Our efforts in this respect were rewarded immediately as we met a young boy who eventually became one of our first Costa Rican disciples, Solomon. We were also able to do a number of TV & radio shows, which proved fruitful in getting out the Message

as well as obtaining contacts to assist us in furthering the work.

I returned to Mexico for a few weeks & then came back to San Jose as we began sending new reinforcements to help support Jeremiah & Dabseth. Cephas & Conny soon arrived & Costa Rica became the base for our push further south. We soon obtained a nice club-coffee house in an upper-flat of a choice section of San Jose, which soon began to be packed with local youth every night as the sound of our music flooded the streets below. Our Holy Ghost samples & "Randy Skits" in San Jose's main square became a frequent affair, attracting hundreds of onlookers, & the local press began to give us favourable coverage—one political cartoon showing a gallant youth titled, "Niños de Dios" slaying a bear titled "Drogas" (Drugs), while rescuing another youth from its claws with the caption, "Juventud de Costa Rica" (Youth of Costa Rica!).

During this period the work rapidly expanded as we acquired more locations in the San Jose area & more brethren continued arriving from the States & Mexico. Joash, Jabesh & Rainbow of the "Heartcry" band were among the first, along with Boaz & Libertad, Jonathan & Trust & others. More local disciples began to join our ranks as well, among whom was dear Solomon Costa Rican, now known as "Roberto" of MCV & KP fame. Around this time we also launched our campaign of visiting Costa Rica's prisons, a programme vigorously supported by Doña Karen. With the Heartcry Band & their sound equipment, we toured some of Costa Rica's most notorious detention centers & many souls were saved in the process.

Not long afterwards, our first team left for Colombia, while Conny, Shalom & company continued to run the office & the pubs center there before moving this operation to Puerto Rico in 1974. The Costa Rican work continued to flourish however, & under the leadership of Eli & Eva along with Libertad, there was a dramatic influx of National disciples at a large Home in the San Pedro area, where the population of the house would sometimes soar past the 80 mark. This was a period of expansion & action, & during 1975, under Israel & Genny's shepherding, teams were formed, composed largely of Costa Rican disciples, & sent out to surrounding Central American countries such as Nicaragua, Guatemala & El Salvador. This was also a time of major media push throughout Central America headed up by Solomon Costa Rica, who led a campaign of TV shows, school invasions & Family discos throughout Costa Rica & several Central American coun-

tries. It was also during this period that Pato, the Chilean TV producer was won, who in turn brought several of his sound men & cameramen to the Family, some of whom became actual fulltime members! It was a time of witnessing & reaping throughout the region & new National disciples were won in each Central American country. In Guatemala, Obeth got off to a running start by winning his wife-to-be, Paloma, & her entire family. Don Guillermo continued to assist the Family as well, & was instrumental in arranging Faithy's now famous trip to see the King of Spain, & the "Freedom Through Law" conference in Manila.

The work continued throughout Central America right up through the RNR, when bad publicity generated from the Mexican bust drove our outreach further underground & kept things pretty low-key through 1981. Naturally the Fellowship Revolution has begun to renovate the work there, as well as an MCV push that has spread scores of broadcasting stations throughout the region, & won over 2,000 club members in Costa Rica alone.

CHILE

A long strip of land on South America's Southwest coast, Chile has long been one of the continent's most enchanting & intriguing nations. Its population of extremely friendly precious people boasts the highest literacy rate in Latin America & its beautiful green mountains & lovely beaches have made Chile a prime goal of Latin American pioneers since our early days. However, every field has its time, & although the work there is now moving along in the midst of a disciple & MCV explosion, certain critical events in Chilean history have made it a "closed" country to us until relatively recently.

The first Chilean pioneer was indisputably Rama, a National who had been won by our first team in Peru & soon was obliged to return to straighten out his papers. While in Chile he began his own little witnessing explosion, winning his wife, Rut, along with David Amor, another one of our very first national disciples there. While there, the bloody coup that toppled Allende took place & the team departed to Argentina. Soon afterwards a team was sent back to Chile from Argentina, composed of Mattaniah, Katrina, David Amor & Francisco, who returned to Santiago a scant two months after the coup. Those were dangerous times, as the repressive U.S.-backed military government continued their mopping-up exercises & one day Matt & David were hauled around blindfolded at gunpoint until they were finally released

unharméd. Nonetheless, they continued a fruitful witnessing effort in the Viña del Mar area, a coastal resort near Santiago, where they were able to win some additional Chilean disciples. A few months later they were asked to leave by Corry due to the dangerous situation which existed in the country at that time, & they packed up & returned to Argentina, bringing their new fruit with them.

The next major foray into Chile was in Spring of 1975 when I travelled with Jonathan Archer from Buenos Aires, armed with a number of official & private contacts in an effort to help open up the country to more concentrated witnessing activities. Don Guillermo (see Costa Rican story) was there with Jeremiah at that time, attending an International Penal conference which the military government was hosting there to bolster its image. This was still less than a year after the coup & the repressive atmosphere of fear was still prevalent, making most officials unwilling to do anything that varied the least bit from the norm. Consequently, as Don Guillermo introduced us to various officials present at the conference, we were less-than-enthusiastically received since they sensed we were there to help the youth while they were mainly interested in oppressing them at that point.

The local president of Polydor Records was very willing to assist us at this point, as the band in Brazil was approaching their height of popularity (on the Polydor label) & he was interested in our idea of bringing in a group to record & perform there. He did his best to help us & even gave us his recommendation to a high-ranking Colonel that took us to the very center of Pinochet's heavily guarded headquarters. But we eventually ran into another stone wall. I ended up staying with David Amor & witnessing to many of his family & friends, where I learned more of the sad tale of suffering of the Chilean people. I was also able to attend a concert of the Argentine folk group "Los Jaivas", who had been exiled during the coup but were let back in for this one performance at a seedy, rat-infested auditorium in the worst part of Santiago, while the police bullied & intimidated the young people in attendance, occasionally dragging individuals out of the crowd & beating them. It was a heart-breaking scene that reached its peak at the end of the concert when the group launched into a beautiful song extolling brotherly love that used to be the youth's theme song in the days of Allende, "Seamos Amigos, Seamos Hermanos" (Let's be Friends, Let's be Brothers), & the entire

auditorium rose to their feet & began singing in unison as the police stood back & seemed temporarily stunned by the very authority & unity with which they sang, many actually raising outstretched hands over their heads. The air was electric & between weeping & singing with them, I began to snap slides of the amazing event—a real heartcry from the precious youth of Chile.

After the concert I returned home with David, almost overwhelmed by what had transpired. Later that evening we received two songs for the youth of Chile. One, a weeping prophecy called the "Balada de Chile" (Ballad of Chile), where the Lord said He loved His children there enough to die again to save them if need be, & a happier song, "Oye Mi Hermano" (Listen, My Brother), which came with the thought that the Lord was indeed going to come to the rescue of the lost sheep of Chile & help us give them the answer, Jesus, despite seemingly insurmountable odds.—A promise which has now been marvellously fulfilled beyond our wildest dreams by the amazing MCV explosion which is presently underway full-steam throughout the country.

After our visit, Chile was host to a few small teams but it was virtually considered "off-limits" to the Family for quite some time, all the way up through the RNR in 1978. Later that year a few teams began to venture forth into Chile, including a team composed of Peruvians Manuel & Rosa, along with her children Mikol & Anin (now "Rayitos de Amor"—MCV.) They set up in Reñaca, a stylish resort-suburb of Viña del Mar where they remained several months, carrying on an active FF ministry & witnessing with the children. Dear Zichri & team also came to Chile about this time, where they remained & witnessed, as did a slowly but steadily increasing number of brethren.

Faithy & Juan's visit in March 1981 was an encouragement to many of the Family there, & brethren from Europe & the States continued to arrive throughout the year, so that by the time of the Fellowship Revolution there was already a sizeable Family population in Chile, largely foreigners. Then the MCV push began, which under the faithful shepherding of Zichri & his co-workers, has blossomed into a tremendously fruitful ministry which has helped us reach the width & breadth of that country in a way never before possible. PTL!

Special thanks to Faithy, Katrina, Solomon CR, David, & Jerry Crusader for their contributions to the history of the areas covered.