

A Children's Singing Tour!

Lessons learned in starting a singing ministry with children!



L. to R. (back row): Megan (9), Pearl, Eli, Daniel (7), Michael (12), L. to R. (front row): Sans-Angé (1) with back to camera, John David (5), Joseph (3), Tara (7 mos. pregnant) with Nora-Jane (2) on her lap. Truly a happy family going strong for the Lord!

1030 From Eli, Sarah & Pearl; Europe:

JUST ABOUT 2 YEARS AGO (just before Christmas), we decided after reading some inspiring testimonies of children's singing ministries, to make plans to do some kind of a show for Christmas time & perform for a segment of society which is often lonely & forgotten—the grandmothers & grandfathers in old people's homes.

INSTEAD OF DOING THE STANDARD CHRISTMAS PLAY we felt inspired to do something which we finally called, "The Real Meaning of Christmas", the story of a young boy searching & wondering as he looks into a store window which displays the nativity scene surrounded by a variety of gifts & toys, what Christmas is all about.

SUDDENLY AN ANGEL APPEARS (played by Pearl), saying that God sent her to answer all his questions. She invites him to meet "Tommy" & then the children act out "Tommy" after which he asks if the angel knows another example. So she invites him to meet Madame Heart (Megan), & the angel gives him the key of love which of course changes her life & she sings John 3:16.

THEN THE ANGEL ASKS HIM IF HE'D LIKE TO KNOW THE SECRET & then asks

the audience if they would, at which time we all come from behind the backdrop & pray with everyone to receive Jesus. And then the children sing some Christmas songs.



Michael, as Tommy, drops his note of love to Madame LaRiche on the street below.

SO WE PUT TOGETHER A LETTER & a collage of newspaper articles & letters of recommendation as well as a group of photos of the children performing & sent them off. We received 3 responses which really surprised us because we hadn't even mentioned how much, etc. One of those places accepted to have us & it was 800 kms. from our home.

SO WE DECIDED TO CONTACT ALL KINDS OF OLD FOLKS' HOMES, retirement villages, children's homes & vacation camps along the entire coast by writing to the administrative centers of the government & asking for such addresses. To our happy surprise, we received hundreds of addresses & finally narrowed down our choice to 2 areas along the coast. So after contacting many places by mail & making arrangements, we found 15 old folks' homes & 2 vacation camps that wanted us to come. In doing this we discovered that it was much better to offer to do the show for free & just ask that they participate with our travel expenses. If we didn't ask anything, many times they gave more than we would have

asked. Not only that, but we could always say (to the public or newspaper) that the shows are done for free, etc., which makes a much bigger impression.

WE HAD ALREADY 2 VANS, one partially equipped for camping & the other completely empty. There are 13 of us (7 children & 6 adults) plus at the time 2 pregnant mommies. We had the vision to fix up the vans with real good materials. In fact, the best possible, so that they would be a good testimony & also to prepare them so that we could eventually move into them.

THE LORD REALLY SUPPLIED EVERYTHING, from top grade plywood & insulation material to skylights, upholstery material for the cushions & even down to the smallest hinge & screw. Our faithful national disciple Jonathan provisioned up a storm. We figured out that he provisioned about \$3000 worth of materials from approximately 25 different companies. PTL!

ALSO, NOT LONG BEFORE WE WERE SUPPOSED TO LEAVE & at a time when we

« LORSQUE L'ENFANT PARAÎT... » A LA MAISON DE RETRAITE



De jeunes artistes tout heureux de faire montre de leur talent. (Photo J. Roche)

WE WERE THRILLED WITH THE RESULTS of the 7-8 shows that first Christmas during their vacation. Before that, it seemed like an impossible task to get something together with the children, but having a deadline is what we really needed. TYJ! We had done some restaurant singing with them, but it was the first time that they performed as a group & the beginning of what we later called "Love-light" or "La Lumière d'Amour!"

THEN WE DIDN'T DO ANY MORE PERFORMANCES (as it was a Christmas play) until the following summer when the Lord pushed us into a commitment to do some shows. One thing that I wanted to mention here is that we learned when we tried to find places to perform at Christmas time that if we mentioned who we were, i.e. a group of Christians, then more often than not our offer of a free show would be turned down. So the second time (the following summer) Jonathan, who became our very good PR & front man, just said that he represented a group of children who do shows for free & would they be interested.

THIS METHOD WORKED REALLY WELL & even when we would perform, they would always love the show & the children so there would never be any approach made about its content or our intentions. PTL! In fact, at the end of the shows we pass out our own LIN which explains that we are missionaries & we've been invited back & received some very favourable letters of recommendation.

THAT SUMMER WE CHANGED THE THEME TO "CHANGE THE WORLD" & started out the play with 3 of the older children discussing the horrible mess that the world is in & wondering what they can do to change it when an angel (Pearl again) appears & goes through the "Tommy" & "Heart" skits, finishing by praying & then singing some Family songs to which Pearl added some movements.

WE ALSO, AT THAT TIME, WERE INSPIRED TO CONTACT THE NEWSPAPERS. The result of that was a very inspiring article & photo. After this second group of shows, we began to catch the vision more of what the Lord wanted us to do using the children's little troupe which now included Joseph (3), John-David (4), Daniel (6), Megan (8) & Michael (11).

AFTER PERFORMING AGAIN AT CHRISTMAS TIME & having 2 more articles written, we put together our own LIN & a

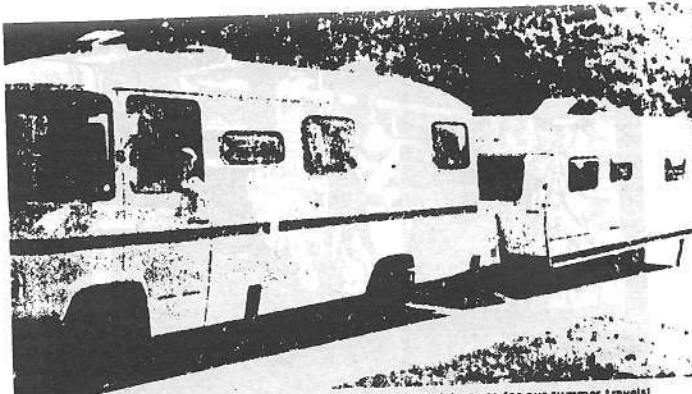
photo album which included several very inspiring letters of recommendation which we received from the old folks' homes. Because we offer the show for free, we feel rather free about asking them for letters of recommendation & we've received about 1 for every 4-5 shows. These have been a real help in presenting our work to the public, giving us some credibility, therefore avoiding a lot of questions about sects & cults, etc.

ALSO, THESE LETTERS, PLUS THE NEWSPAPER ARTICLES have been an enormous help in our provisioning & PR. So in fact, because we live in a country where there's been a considerable amount of persecution against sects, we put this social outreach, i.e. the children's performances, as our main calling card & just as Dad said, the children have become our biggest testimony & most powerful witness! PTL!

OUR MOST ENCOURAGING & SUCCESSFUL OUTREACH WITH THE CHILDREN took place this summer. Early in the spring, we met a woman who suggested that we present our little show to a group of 13 retirement homes which are very well funded. She insisted that we ask to be paid as they could afford it as well as to ask for lodging & meals which, she also explained, was very normal & acceptable.



Is money the answer to all of my problems & the key to my heart?



Ready to hit the road in the beautiful caravan Dad & Mami let us use for our summer travels!

were wondering & worrying a bit whether we'd have enough room for everyone, we received a call from WS relaying a message from Dad that he had a caravan free for the summer & would it help us in our travels! Well, what could we say but simply PTL & marvel at how in tune Dad is & how wonderful & loving this Family of Love is with such a concerned & loving shepherd. With the tremendous workload & decisions Dad has daily, he still finds time to take care of such unimportant (seemingly) details as our housing need for our summer travels—this absolutely amazed us & really touched our hearts & made us feel so loved. GBY Dad for your faithful loving tender care of us little sheep—WE LOVE YOU!

AND THE LORD HAD EVEN MIGHTIER MIRACLES AHEAD as we ventured South to arrive in the most popular resort area in the height of the season looking for someone to help us with free camping. Jonathan, who was provisioning, got a number of a camping where there was still room & when he phoned the guy surprisingly agreed to let us come. He said we could stay a few days only.

WELL, WE ENDED UP STAYING THERE 25 DAYS, 13 days for free & the rest for half price which in fact was paid for by Jonathan's mother & her friends whom we ministered to while there. It was a 4-star camping as well, which is quite a testimony as many campers

couldn't find anything of any price. So, our little team resulted in hundreds of souls & a very favourable newspaper article written.

WE ADDED TO THAT SHOW THE SKIT OF THE "ROCK IN THE ROAD" which we adapted literally from the MWM version making that the first skit in the "Change the World" theme & adding the following ending:



We had a beautifully refreshing & inspiring time alongside a beautiful mountain stream. PTL!