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**Special
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Winning Together

Stories of New Disciples and the Homes that Won Them

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Noel, new disciple, Japan

Guided by the Lord's Hand

By Noel, Japan

Finding hope through a book

The first time I met the Family was when I was 32 years old, 5 years before I joined. I was living in Tokyo working as a tour bus guide, something I had dreamed of since I was very young. Every day I would meet plenty of people, go to different places, and see a lot of beautiful scenery. There were difficult times but it was also fun, and more than anything I was able to learn a lot, so I thought it was a worthwhile job.

However, in my late 20s I started to feel the emptiness of my life. Even my job represented a form of inertia for me. *What are we living for? Is there a meaning or purpose*

to life? And is there true love? I had often thought about things like that during my teen years, but not finding any answers, I just enjoyed myself from moment to moment to take my mind off of such things.

However, when I got to my late 20s I found that I couldn't deceive myself any more by doing fun things to take my mind off those questions. I was no longer satisfied with the things that I had found so enjoyable before. I wasn't married, so the thought that I could continue on into my 30s without finding a meaning or purpose to life was unbearable.

I started to read books in search of answers about life, answers that I now knew I couldn't live without. Right at that time a

junior employee of the company I worked for lent me a book that she was very touched by. It was the autobiography of a Christian author, Ayako Miura*, called *Michi Aiki (The Wind Is Howling)*. In this book, she wrote about how she had been feeling so empty, to the point of thinking about suicide. But one day a Christian man came and visited her on her sickbed. It was through his sacrificial love that she came to believe and could not deny God's love for her.

I was extremely touched by that pure love. For the longest time I had thought that the true love I admired was nowhere to be found, and that caused me to despair of life. After reading this book, my hope was renewed and I cried tears of joy. It was the most profound, heart-touching book I had ever read up to that time. I was able to understand a little bit about the emptiness that I had been carrying inside and the reason I was unhappy.

After that, as I wanted to know more about the truth, over the next two years I pored over around 70 Ayako Miura books. However, after I learned about God and started to pray, I still had not received Jesus into my heart, so after a while I started to feel empty again. Even though I *knew* about God, I wasn't sure I *believed* and I didn't have the courage to go to church, so I started to feel empty again, like my life was meaningless. I really wanted to at least meet someone who was a Christian. That was my biggest wish, as I had just about reached the limit of my ability to bear the emptiness I felt within.

*Ayako Miura (1922–1999), was a very famous Christian author in Japan. Before Ayako went to Heaven, Noel sent her various Family pubs and music tapes, and was able to meet with her. Last year, when the Japanese Tool Committee got together and prayed, the Lord revealed that she is now helping the Japanese GP tool production as a spirit helper from Heaven.

A meeting on a boat in Okinawa

The first time I met a Family missionary it was right at the peak of my emptiness. I had gone to Okinawa for my friend's wedding. As I still wasn't sure if I could believe in God, before leaving I had prayed this prayer: "Dear God, please help me. Please do something special on this trip that will change my life."

The trip was to last four days and three nights, and the wedding was to be on the third day, so the rest of the time I was free to be a tourist in Okinawa. On the first day my friends and I decided to go on a sunset cruise with dinner included. It was here the Lord decided to answer my prayer quickly, and He changed my life through a dramatic meeting.

As it was a very fine day, we thought that for sure there would be a beautiful sunset, so I boarded the ship feeling very excited. On the ship there was a restaurant, and at the front was a space reserved for a small stage. After we had started to eat, a man carrying a guitar appeared on the stage to do a show. His refreshing singing and calm narration made us stop talking and listen. His smiling face was so sweet and he looked so happy—radiant! He sang and talked with his whole heart. So I thought that for sure here was someone who believed something in his heart.

I felt that he had something that others didn't have. Why was his whole face beaming with joy? Why was he so happy? For me, someone who had been so empty and despairing, his being seemed so bright and he touched my heart.

As I listened to his songs I prayed with real feeling, *Dear God, thank You so much. I feel as if You have taught me something very important. Coming to Okinawa on this trip has been worth it just to meet this man. I will do better from now on.*

At that time, I was satisfied with that. But the Lord had something more prepared for me—something wonderful that He knew was my *real* desire.

After the show, I had a picture taken with the singer, and because I wanted to send him the photo, I asked him for his address. A while after returning to Tokyo, I sent a letter with the pictures to him. In that letter I told him how when I boarded the ship I was feeling so empty and spiritless, but hearing his songs and seeing his smile had encouraged me very much.

Since musicians receive lots of letters and photos, I didn't think that he would reply, but soon I received a letter from him. Just receiving his letter surprised me, but after reading it I was even more moved. Somehow he was the Christian person I had wanted to meet! And a missionary as well! There was a tract included in the letter. *So that's why*, I thought. I now understood what made his smiles and his personality so different from normal people.

God is wonderful—answering my prayer in such a way! Hooray! I read that letter many times and was deeply moved by it. This was my first meeting with a Family member—Japanese Johnny. Later I learned from Johnny that at that time, he only did a show on the ship once a week, and it just so happened that we were on the boat on the day he was. PTL!

Growing in sweet love

After that I had contact with Johnny via letters, fax, and phone, receiving counsel about my worries and learning about Jesus. He sent me Family reading material like *Treasures*, as well as videos and tapes. Whenever I hadn't contacted him for a while, he would contact me and ask if I was okay and let me know that he was praying for me. It was his concern for me and his continuing to feed me spiritually

that helped me feel Jesus' love, even though he had six children, and I'm sure it was also difficult for him financially at times to take time out for me. There is no doubt that he was Jesus for me. In response to his sincerity, and because I wanted to become like him, I earnestly read all the material he sent me.

Not long after we met, I said something like this to Johnny: "For a long time I've wanted to meet someone like you. I am surrounded by people who are only concerned about themselves. There is no one else like Johnny."

Johnny was quiet for a moment, and then said, "Well, why don't you become like that then?" At the time I felt as if I had been hit in the head. When I thought about it, I realized that I expected everyone else to be perfect, and I admitted to myself that I never looked at myself that way. After reflecting on what Johnny said, and finding it to be totally right, I decided with Jesus' help to change.

Soon after this I prayed on the phone with Johnny to receive Jesus into my heart. That was on Christmas Eve. My Christian name is Noel, which means Christmas. I picked this name so that I would never forget the important day that I received Jesus into my heart.

“For the longest time I had thought that the true love I admired was nowhere to be found, and that caused me to despair of life.”

Meeting the local Family

When I had started to grow in Jesus, Johnny suggested I study the Bible from someone who was closer to where I lived, so he introduced me to the nearest Family Home [the Dream Field Home]. Somehow, this Home was only 15 minutes from where

I lived.—The Lord had prepared a Family Home this close for me! PTL! Strangely, I had passed this Family Home every day for the past ten years, and never once had I met a Family member. Only after leaving Tokyo and traveling 2,000 kilometers did I meet a Family member. But everything was a part of the Lord's plan. He knew me so well, and had prepared the best time and the best way for me. When I think about this, I am very moved by the Lord's great wisdom and love.

At that Home I was able to meet dear Stephen (of Rejoice, now my shepherd in my current Home), and I was able to grow a lot. Everyone in the Family was very warm and had lots of love. Whenever I visited I felt as if I had come to Heaven. I looked forward to the weekly Monday Bible classes more than anything else.

A year after I had been going to Bible class, two of my friends started going to Bible class as well. For the next four years until I joined we would go basically every week to Bible class. Stephen lovingly, faithfully and patiently fed me.

During that time another Home in Tokyo, the Manna Home, had a ministry where they would serve food and witness to the homeless, and they kindly let me help out. Everyone at the Manna Home was also very sweet and very friendly and would always warmly meet with me and share the Word with me. Sometimes on the way back from provisioning, the Manna Home would leave a bag of apples or watermelons at my door, and I can't tell you what a comfort and encouragement that was for me, coming home tired from work. I really felt the Lord's love.

My decision to become a missionary

As with the weekly Bible classes, the witnessing and CTP work with the Manna

Home was something I really looked forward to. Witnessing to the homeless gave me the first taste of the joy of being a missionary, which was very wonderful for me. These homeless with their stained clothes and thin bodies would say, "There is nothing left to look forward to." But once we gave them the Word and encouraged them, they would rise up with renewed hope. Then those same people would start to reach out and help others.

Seeing this deeply moved me, and I thought: *Missionary work is so wonderful! There is nothing better than this kind of job! If this were my profession, how happy I would be!*

However, my desire to become a missionary wavered with time, because I didn't know for sure that becoming a missionary was the Lord's will for me. The job of a tour guide gave me the opportunity to witness to the customers and tourists, and when the bus was not in service there was also time when I would be alone with the driver to talk with him. So every day I was able to witness to somebody, and I felt that maybe instead of becoming a missionary this was the Lord's will for me.

I did my very best to witness where I was, but I was also praying, *Lord, if it is Your will for me to become a missionary, please make it very clear to me.*

Well, around that time there was talk of our company doing some job reclassification. Because of the recession, they were going to shut down the tourist department that was many years old, and all the guides would be given desk jobs. When I heard that, I became very anxious and prayed: "Dear Jesus, is this a sign from You that You want me to become a missionary?" If I were to do deskwork I wouldn't be able to witness to as many people as I had been able to before.

After I heard about this, I started to pray about the course I should now take. The job

reclassification would actually take place in a year, but I was undecided as to whether I should stay. Just before my personal interview with the company, so they would know the decision each employee had made concerning our course of action, I was praying daily very desperately.

The night before the interview I was desperately praying like never before, when all of a sudden the words “Fear not” sounded in my ears. A cassette tape had been playing, but until that song came on, I hadn’t been listening. But when that song started to play, it spoke to me. The words from the song sunk into my heart like never before, and the tears started to fall. *That’s right. The road that I choose may not be easy, but Jesus will always be beside me and will help me.* The Lord helped me by reminding me of that. And so at the personnel interview the next day, I submitted my resignation and quit my job of 18 years as a tour guide.

“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shall be saved, and thy house” (Acts 16:31).

Another thing I had to do in preparation to join was tell my family. I had not been living with them for the last 18 years, and usually they would not worry about the kind of job I would take, but I started to worry that if I became a missionary I wouldn’t be able to visit my family as I did before, I wouldn’t be able to help them financially, and I didn’t want them to needlessly worry that I had fallen in with some strange religion. I knew that I had to talk with them, and then I had a dream.

In the dream I was talking with my mother, and I said, “Mother, what would you think of me becoming a missionary?”

My mother only said these few words: “I would be proud.” It was only a very short

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dream, but the Lord used it to encourage me.

So I went to visit my parents, and when I was alone with my mother, I gathered up my courage and asked her, just as I had in my dream. My mother didn’t respond as she had in the dream, but she said, “I think missionary work is very good work. You have always thought things out before you made any decisions, so I won’t oppose you. Only, how will you be able to live, and will you have food and a place to stay? That’s what I’m concerned about.” So even though she was uneasy, she gave her approval.

Incidentally, I had already witnessed to my mother and spoken on the subject of our ministry to the homeless, which she had listened to with deep interest. I think this helped her have greater understanding for this calling. My father, brother, and sister did not know about Jesus at all, and although they had a few questions about my decision, other than that they didn’t say anything and did not oppose my choice.

After that I prepared to leave my apartment. My brother and sister came to help, and for a few days they would make the two-hour round trip from my parents’ home to my apartment. When my move was almost complete, my sister commented, “If you ever change your mind, you can always come back.” I felt like crying. Was it really right for me to forsake my family and choose

this path? But the Lord reminded me of this verse: “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.” There was nothing I could do but pray that it would be fulfilled.

Something I am very thankful for is that soon after I joined, my mother and father got saved and my nephew and my niece who had gotten saved before I joined also started to pray to Jesus more often. My sister has started to read the Word, even though only a little. So when I look at my family now, I am utterly convinced that it was the right thing for me to follow Jesus.

This is how the Lord led me step by step until I joined. Right now in the Home I cook, do the laundry, and take care of children. I

read the Word and feed those who come to our Home. I go out witnessing with everyone, helping with the homeless ministry and with their Bible classes. I also answer the mail that comes to the Family’s GP mailbox in Tokyo. In spirit I am still a babe, and I make mistakes, but through them I am learning a lot. Surrounded by people who hold me up in love and prayer, I am fighting to become a faithful person for Jesus.

Right now as I write this and I reflect on my past, I am filled with thankfulness for how the Lord has worked in my life and led me along with love and patience. Also I would like to use this opportunity to give my heartfelt thanks to all the many Family people who encouraged, loved, fed, led, and prayed for me.

The Fruit of Homes Working Together —Noel Joined!

By Rejoice (regional CGO chairperson), Japan

(Taken from Japan Delegates’ Meeting ’03 Class Notes)

Last year, a new disciple, Noel, joined in our Home, the Blade Home. This was the wonderful result of a few Homes working together.

While she was living in Tokyo, Noel went to Okinawa for sightseeing, and she met Johnny on a cruise ship where he was singing. At that point, Johnny started to follow up on her through the mail and the phone.

But when she grew mature enough in spirit, for the sake of her spiritual growth he introduced “his own sheep” to the nearest Home to where she was living, which was the Dream Field Home. Stephen (my mate) and I were living there at that time and we started to feed her. She started to come to our Home for Bible classes, too.

As she continued to grow through the weekly Bible classes, she started to witness at her job. As she began to have a desire to do more for the Lord, we introduced her to the Manna Home so she could help with their CTP work with the homeless, and giving out tracts and posters there. Beginning with the homeless, she then started witnessing to the people passing by, as well as to the other volunteer workers. Not only did these opportunities give her a chance to study the Word, but also to act on it, and she saw that the Word was something to live for.

Stephan (of Maria) at the Manna Home had a complete set of GP and DFO Letters which he had kept from the time when he

was still a live-out member, so he would also give her Word classes.

Noel would come to our weekly Bible study to receive most of her feeding, and at the same time she would help with the bi-weekly CTP project of the Manna Home, attending their Bible class, their events, and their fellowships. Although Johnny, who had met her first, had passed on most of the responsibility of feeding her to us, he also continued to phone her and write her, showing that he still cared for her. So there were three Homes involved in feeding her.

Since Noel started to come to our Bible class regularly, she started to give us a monthly gift. At the same time, she also helped the Manna Home whenever she attended the special events they held. You might be wondering how we worked out the financial side of this. The reason why this worked well was because of the *good communication* and *trust* that we had between our Home and the Manna Home. The Manna Home made sure to ask us first when they wanted to ask her for financial help. We were also happy to be able to help another Home in this way.

One thing to remember is that not everybody is like her. In her case, because she had the desire to help a few different Homes and be a blessing to them, for her to help in this way was also good for her. The Lord blesses a giving heart. Especially in her case, as she was a single girl who had a good income and had enough to give, and who didn't have to save for her own family, it didn't turn into a lot of pressure for her. But depending on the financial state of the sheep, it could cause unnecessary pressure on them if they are asked for financial help by a few different Homes. It can stumble them. So it's necessary to know the state of your flock, and to maintain good communication and counsel between the Homes involved.

Besides asking for financial help, another tip for avoiding any problems when a sheep is visiting and being fed by various Homes is to have good communication between the Homes involved about what to feed the sheep and how to answer their questions. The Manna Home made sure to ask us for counsel in advance about which Letters to give her or which event they would invite her to, or about the Bible class they were planning to give, etc.

It is also necessary for the Homes and the shepherds to trust each other and to have a give-and-take attitude, a willingness to give, and a real desire for the spiritual growth of the sheep.

By this time you may be thinking, *Why bother with all this? It would be much easier to feed the sheep on our own.* But had Johnny not introduced her to our Home in the first place, she may not have made it all the way to full-time service to the Lord in the Family, as you can feed your sheep only so much through the mail and the phone. Also, had she not attended the CTP or the events of the other Homes [which started her witnessing], how do you think she would have found the joy of living the Word?

During the time when Stephen (my mate) and I were at the Dream Field Home, we were very busy with the responsibility of being area shepherds. Although we were able to have weekly Bible classes with the sheep, we weren't able to go witnessing with them or to have a CTP ministry they could participate in. So we were very thankful that there was a CTP work at the Manna Home for her to participate in, as it helped her to grow more.

In reality, it is very difficult for our sheep to continue to witness to their co-workers or to their friends on their own. Although Noel was witnessing faithfully, the process of bearing fruit was very slow and she had to face a lot of mockery, criticism, and people ignoring

her or giving her the cold shoulder. To have opportunities to go witnessing with Family members twice a month to people who didn't know her, such as the homeless and other people who were more responsive to the Word, helped her to keep the inspiration to witness. She says that's what made her want to be a missionary, and it motivated her to continue fighting even when she felt like quitting. A lot of questions came up through those witnessing experiences, and it made her want to learn more.

Noel also says that it was a tremendous support for her to know that Johnny, who was the first Family member she met, still cared for her. He kept in touch with her through phone calls and e-mail.

By the way, we have many Active members in our Blade Home, and three of them—who come to our weekly Bible class—also help with the CTP work of the Manna Home. It is helping our sheep greatly. I heard that it helps the Manna Home, too, because these sheep have become their main manpower! If they had to do all that CTP work with their Charter members only, it would take up most of their time. But because these Active members are helping them, the CMers can do other things.

For the sheep to grow spiritually, it is important that their needs are met. But even a Home that is doing very well sometimes faces difficulties in meeting all the needs of their sheep. That's why we need to help each other, so we can bear greater fruit.

Without Conditions

By Dean, new disciple in a sensitive country, Asia

After going to school for 15 years in my country, I only believed in science and, although I was not an actual party member, I trusted in the Communist Party. But sometimes I would ask myself, *What is the meaning of life?* Now, after being blessed by the Lord, I trust in God and His love. The things I learned only a little over a year ago totally overrode what I had learned for the previous 15 years. "For the Word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart" (Heb. 4:12).

About one and a half years ago, I was a third-year student at the university when I met Lisa. She talked a little to me about God, showed me some verses from the Bible, and asked me if I would like to say a simple prayer to ask Jesus into my heart. At that time, she

gave me a bilingual New Testament and a VCD of the story of Jesus. She told me she would call me the following week, after I had had a chance to watch the video, to see if I would like to learn more from the Bible. At first, I just thought it was a great chance for me to learn English and more about foreign culture.

I had read some books about the Bible, but having used my mind instead of my heart, I couldn't apply the stories to my life. The idea of there being a God was a big shock for me, as things like God creating the earth and the existence of the spiritual world were so contrary to the teaching I had received at school. Love was the key point I could accept at that time.

Still, I kept reading and my faith gradually increased. I would often pray little prayers to test God. He would always answer me; He was taking care of the little seed of faith in

my heart. To test my growing faith, God let my girlfriend and me break up. (I think it was God's preparation for my later joining the Family.) During that difficult time, I always looked up to God and asked for His help. This helped me to realize that even the love between the closest couples can change, but God's love never changes and He *always* loves us. It drew me close to Him.

After a while, Lisa asked me to help her do some follow-up. That changed me a lot. I thought I already knew how to explain what I had learned about God and the Bible, but when it was time for me to teach others, I couldn't. So in the beginning I just sat there listening—but this helped me learn how to teach others. I read the same Scriptures many times and began to try to explain them to others. The more I read, the deeper the meaning I got from the Scriptures.

Gradually God opened my spiritual heart and eyes, especially after reading some verses in Matthew, like those about not storing up things of the world and forsaking all to follow Jesus. I realized that what I was doing and planning to do with my life was totally useless. What Jesus said was to feed His sheep! I knew I should share His great love with others—not get a higher degree and earn more money.

Later, Lisa's family moved to my city and I got to know her whole family. The love and harmony in their family impressed me, and comparing it with my family, I knew that was what I longed for. I felt close to them and wanted to spend more time with them.

I usually went to Lisa's house to have Bible classes. I enjoyed having classes with their other friends, with the funny skits and beautiful songs. After studying the *12 Foundation Stones* classes and some Endtime classes, I knew that Jesus' second coming was around the corner. I knew I needed to prepare for the future and learn skills to communicate better with Him.

God was showing me more meaty things than the other students attending the Bible classes, as far as forsaking all and preparing for the future. When I discussed these things with them, I felt alone because none of them had the same calling as I did. Sometimes I thought maybe I was weird and that none of those in my country would have the same ideas. So I told Lisa that I needed someone who had the same ideas so that we could grow together. Lisa introduced me to John and Marisa. John is a national and shared his testimony, which increased my faith that it is not weird for someone of my nationality to serve the Lord. Ha!

Lisa and her family received prophecies together for me one day when I was at their Home. What was very interesting to me was how they received messages from God.

After watching a church program on TV, the Lord inspired me and helped me to receive and write down a prophecy about how He saw the people on the program. Although they looked like they had made a lot of contributions to God, they were taking the credit to themselves. Before God, there are no other gods and idols. I felt amazed and excited that I would receive a message from God. I felt I should read more to develop this new weapon of prophecy!

With my faith increasing, Lisa started to let me know about Dad and the Family. When I first heard that they belonged to a group, I didn't accept it, because I thought that real Christians only needed to stick to the Bible and follow what the Lord said. Slowly I learned the history of the Family and all the

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Bible verses about Dad and the Family, and it excited me to see prophecy fulfilled in these modern days.

Also the Lord gave me an inspiration one morning right after I woke up. He told me some heavy things—that I needed to forsake all, to even forsake my father and mother to follow Him. I knew I should follow Him without conditions and without worrying about any other things. I wanted to join right then, but Lisa said that there were still lots of things I needed to know before joining.

Later, Lisa told me more about the Family, about Family rules and some persecutions the Family has experienced. The Devil fought me a lot at that time. I was scared of persecution and I was tempted to give up at first, but after reading stories from the Bible, I realized that persecution is good for us and God will always protect us and not give us more than we can bear. Some of the sex issues were

a surprise for me, as in our culture, we are ashamed to talk about sex, let alone meaty concepts like laying down your lover for others. But thank the Lord for Dad's Letters, as they gave me the strength and let me see the truth and the principles behind the beliefs. I started to accept these things and decided that I wanted to become a member of the Family.

After Adam and Lisa returned from a visit to the States, we prayed together about me joining the Family and the Lord showed us that it was the right time and to take things a step at a time. So finally, thank the Lord, I joined the Family and have almost finished my six months.

When I look back at how I have changed, I can't believe that I went from being an atheist to becoming a disciple in less than two years. I know that it is the Lord's will, the Lord's love, and the Lord's power.

How the Lord Won Dean

By Lisa (of Adam), in a sensitive country, Asia

I have known Dean for about a year and a half. He was 22 years old and a third-year university student. After he got saved, I met with him weekly to read the Bible, and we covered John and Matthew, verse by verse. I gave him *Activated mags* and *Treasures* portions, which he read on his own.

During that time, there was nothing particularly outstanding about him that gave me the impression he would ever join the Family, other than the fact that he didn't care what others thought about him believing in Jesus! Whenever he faced problems or difficulties, he would ask for counsel and advice.

After about six months, we moved to the same city where he lives and from the

first day we arrived, he was at our Home, helping us move in, etc. From then on, he came over regularly and gradually it was no longer, "Quick, straighten the house! A visitor [Dean] is coming over!" It changed to, "Oh, good—it's Dean! He can help us with the kids [or the dishes, or whatever]!" He seemed to naturally fit in with whatever was happening—from making peanut butter sandwiches to praying about what Bible class to give the sheep.

He soon began going with me on follow-up, and I think that was a major turning point for him. He realized how important it was for him to know and understand the Bible to be able to explain it to others, and he saw the need to have key verses memorized—not to

mention learning to hear from the Lord in prophecy.

It kept me on my toes how he would always remind me, “Well, let’s pray about it,” whenever something would come up or a decision needed to be made. The only problem was that he hadn’t really developed the gift of prophecy himself yet, so I had to be desperate and get the answers from Heaven.

Of course, the Lord never failed and it wasn’t long before Dean was receiving answers from the Lord as well, and writing them down. Needless to say, he became a very valuable blessing and partner in following up on the sheep—a real godsend and answer to prayer.

After about a year, I introduced him to John and Marisa, who gave him their testimonies. Soon after that he started talking about how he would like to serve the Lord and do what we do. We realized he needed to know that we were with a group, so that there was a way and a means for him to join in our work—that we weren’t just individual families.

Editor’s note: The Lord has led those in this particular sensitive field to not operate openly as the Family, because of the risk of imprisonment or deportation for doing so. For those of us who are not in such fields, however, He has made it clear in the “Conviction vs. Compromise” series that we should be up front and open about being members of the Family, and He has promised His blessings on Homes that do so.

Also, it was becoming clearer that he needed to be fed more deeply. In order to begin feeding him the meat of the Word, we felt it would be good for him to know

more about us, so that we could tell him about Dad.

So after hearing from the Lord about it, I told him some things, although at that time I didn’t tell him we were the Family. It was a little difficult for him to accept at first, as he knew how we felt about the church system, so he wondered what made us different from any other church. But after our explanation, he was able to accept it.

A few days later Dean and I went on an out-of-town follow-up trip for the day, so there was plenty of time for him to pump me for information! He wanted to know everything about “the group,” and it seemed one question led to another until we had covered everything from Dad to Family rules to sharing to loving Jesus intimately. I think the Lord put it in his heart to ask about these things, because I was going through lots of trials about how I was going to tell him, especially about the hotter topics. So the Lord made it easy, because He knew Dean could take it. (Please don’t take this as a how-to type of testimony, but take it as how the Lord led us in our particular situation with this particular sheep.)

When Dean started asking me questions, the Lord told me to just be honest with him. It seemed the most difficult thing for him to accept was the fact that there are Family rules, because in his mind if we live the Law of Love, why do we need rules and guidelines? Good point! So it took quite a lot of explaining, clarification, and examples to help him see the rules are for our good and help us in our service for the Lord. (And of course, prayers in the power of the keys made the difference in his understanding and acceptance.)

It was just a short time later that Dean said he wanted to join. At that time we started letting him read the official Family statements and told him we were the Family. We were not sure how to go about letting

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It was really the Lord Who showed him from the Word to follow Him, and Who put the faith in his heart. Our part was to just faithfully feed him the Word and pray for him—the Lord did the rest.
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someone join here in our sensitive field, so we kept stalling, not being sure how to go about getting permission. I asked at a CGO board meeting and got the go-ahead to pray about it. If the Lord confirmed, and if it was okay with the area, then we could go ahead and let him join.

As Adam and I were going to our home country for a month, I told Dean we would see about it when we returned. The day I got back, he came over, asking us to pray about it. So, we did, the Lord gave the okay, and he joined that night. Thank You, Jesus!

There was one issue still to be resolved: What about his parents, who expected him to go abroad next year to get his Master's degree? That would mean a good job, which would mean good pay. Well, they don't know he has joined a religious group, but they do know he is living with us and they accept it, as they know and like us. When we prayed about it, the Lord told us to take things a step at a time, so that is what we are doing. We are praying about him going abroad, as it seems it would be a good opportunity for Dean to be able to live and witness on an open field. But we are looking into the possibility of his going on a different type of visa, as with a student visa he would have to study a lot and wouldn't be free to do much witnessing or have time to experience Family life.

God bless Dean for his faith—he knows that someday he will probably have to dis-

appoint his parents' dreams for him, but the Lord has already prepared his heart for that.

I just want to clarify here that winning Dean has been all the Lord's doing. If I were to break it down into key points as to what seems to have helped him most, it would be the following:

- faithfully feeding him the Word and praying for him daily, using the power of the keys,
- his becoming a very needed and important part of our follow-up and outreach,
- including him as a member of our family and Home life, and not treating him as a visitor.

We've learned a lot of lessons—mostly of what not to do! At times I would lean to my own carnal reasoning, and things I thought he wouldn't have a problem accepting, he did; while things I thought would be difficult for him, he accepted easily. It was really the Lord Who showed him from the Word to follow Him, and Who put the faith in his heart. Our part was to just faithfully feed him the Word and pray for him—the Lord did the rest. We just flowed along with the way the Lord was leading him and tried to help meet his needs as they came up, according to how the Lord showed us.

Here is a prophecy I got one day about our ministering to him:

(Jesus:) In your care of the sheep and search for disciples, always carry in your forethoughts how it is My hand leading and guiding. Look at Dean—it has all been a work of My Spirit in his heart, teaching and showing him the spiritual truths. Yes, you can guide and pray for them; that's your part—to give them the Word and prayer. But in the final analysis, it's Me doing the work. "Except the Lord build the city, they labor in vain that build it." So don't try to make them disciples if that is not for them. Let Me do the work in their hearts and lives and open their eyes to the truth and the way.

Our Dream Team and Winning Jimmy

By Phil, Cindy, and team, USA

It all started through a series of miracles a little over five years ago. First the Lord led us to the hippie hangout of the world, the drug mecca on the West Coast of California, USA—Haight-Ashbury, San Francisco. The place where Jimi Hendrix, Janis Joplin, and the Grateful Dead hung out.

We were an inexperienced outreach team with a handful of Family-bred teens. The oldest was 17 years old, and all had very little experience on the front lines of witnessing. These teens had plenty of experience in running a CC group, doing JJT, or helping to run Combos, and in fact half of our team were FM returnees whom we had handpicked to make up our team of “all-outers for Jesus.” We didn’t know exactly where we were going or how we were going to get there, but we did know that so far, the ride was exciting! We enjoyed working with each other.

In our short time together, we had taken trips to Yosemite National Park, the Marin Headlands, the Oregon wilderness, the Great America theme park, the Sacramento River (for rafting), and the Golden Gate Bridge. But the most exciting rush we were to experience was in soul seeking—coming face to face with real, live hungry souls as we learned to witness to truth seekers on the streets of San Francisco.

When we first started, our young guitarists and inspirationalists had hardly any experience leading music in devotions, let alone Holy Ghost samples late at night on the strip of Haight-Ashbury. I remember the first time we arrived there at about nine o’clock at night. When we finally climbed out of the car, our teens just stared at one another, waiting to see who was going to make the first move to lead the team.

Mind you, it was the teens themselves who were leading this thing. Cindy and I (Phil) were just there to give them a little support and encouragement and to point them in the right direction. This witnessing push had to be a work of the youth, coming from the love they possessed or were beginning to possess, motivating them to reach their generation.

Some of the favorites, songs that we became known for, were the “Ya Ya Song” (as one of the street people called it—the “Revolutionary Children of God”), “Famine for Love,” and “Set Me Free.” We also sang some old songs, like “Bye, Bye, Miss American Pie,” “Cotton Fields,” and others. But we found that we had made a connection with this new wave of wandering youth on the streets. We realized that music was the tool to reach this generation, just as it was when we FGAs were young.

In fact, the very month that we came to San Francisco to start this wonderful wave of witnessing, the Grateful Dead leader, Jerry Garcia, died. During our weekly P&P meeting at home, a couple of the teens received visions of Jerry Garcia passing on his guitar to us to continue where he left off in trying to reach the youth, and others got prophecies confirming it. Heavy!

Our very first baby step in that Holy Ghost sample proved to be a *key* step, as some of the local merchants got a pretty heavy witness from the start. What started out as humble beginnings caused no small stir, and many hearts were won and turned toward us.

A local restaurant owner saw our band of about nine teens standing on the street in a semi-circle, singing to the passers-by as we handed out sandwiches and hot cocoa.

He noticed that we had run out of the brew, immediately saw our need, and filled up our five-gallon water container with freshly made hot chocolate from his restaurant.

He turned into a regular contact of that favorite drink. And not only that, but he eventually turned into a tither, and brought over his leftover croissant rolls, bagels, and bottles of wine every night after closing. He actually made about a five-mile detour on his way home to drop these things off at our place almost every night.

Another revolution took place our very first night of Holy Ghost sample type witnessing. A man in his mid 40s had been walking on the opposite side of the street, when for no apparent reason he crossed the street to see what was happening. We got to know each other, and he spent the rest of the night with us. We talked to him later and asked where he was going and how he ended up on our side of the street. He testified that as he was walking up to McDonalds, he heard our music. When he looked over to see where it was coming from, he said that he saw a light on our faces, was attracted to the light, and had to come see what it was. He knew as he approached us and heard the music that we were the real deal, the real thing, true Christians out doing our Father's business.

From that time on, he would bring street kids over to our house for Bible studies and fellowships, and he also sponsored quite a few of our fun excursions and outings. We turned into quite a team, as he would meet kids on the street, screen them for us, and then if he thought that they were sheep, he would introduce them to us and we would take it from there. Thus he acted as a buffer between our Home and the street. We became a good teamwork.

About that time, we were donated an ambulance complete with emergency lights and siren. In that we became an attraction at the Haight for obvious reasons. Many times

kids would stop us and ask if we were handing out free needles. (In San Francisco, the way they combat drug abuse is to hand out free needles. Then, at least in their minds, the kids are using clean needles and not contaminated ones.) But after asking, many would recognize that we were the Family and not a health service for drug addicts. It would become an opportunity to witness.

Sometimes we would give rides to folks who were hitchhiking and they would get into an ambulance half full of our dedicated witnesses, end up getting saved, and from then on they would recognize us when we came to the Haight for our night witnessing.

We all got so turned on to witnessing and to spending hours sitting on the sidewalk with hungry souls, answering their questions and letting them cry on our shoulders and pour out to us. We became known as the angels of the street.

We also met some old-timer former Family members, and they were thrilled to see us out there doing Holy Ghost samples and lovin' the lost, just like the old days.

One night, "Fast Ed" (who is an old hippie and leader of many of the street people there) came up to us after we had not been out on the street for about a week. He asked us, "Where the hell have you been? Man, things have been crazy here this past week. It seems like demons have been all over the place here. Things have just been a mess. I was up on Hippie Hill meditating, and I knew you were here on the street 'cause I felt like light had come upon the Haight. Then, when I saw you it made sense that the demons are freaked out that you are here. We can have peace, cause the Family is here."

It was about this time that we met Jimmy. He and his girlfriend were sitting on the sidewalk, and he gratefully smiled as we handed them a sandwich and sang them a song. He didn't say much, but just smiled. We saw him again the following night.

Then one night as we were pulling up, a couple of Jimmy's friends recognized the ambulance and ran up to us. They were really freaked out and told us that we had to go right away and help Jimmy, as he was O.D.ing (overdosing) on some bad drugs.

So we went up the hill looking for him and, sure enough, found him in the middle of a group of people. He was really tripping, trying to take his clothes off, and not making any sense in what he was saying. But all the while, he was smiling. We finally managed to help him into our ambulance. Our teens sang to him and stayed up with him during the night to help him come down and to make sure he was safe.

From this time on, Jimmy became a part of our daily prayers. We assigned Jimmy to a couple of our teens to follow up on, visit, and check that he was okay. Jimmy started coming over for regular Bible studies. We assigned a memory project to all of the young people who came over regularly, and Jimmy started really shining in this area. You could tell which of the kids coming over were growing the most and were serious about their relationship with Jesus by whether they were faithful to memorize.

And boy, were they drilled by our teens when they came over! The moment they came in, our teens tested them on their memorization assignment. Many of the young people who visited were pretty strung out

on drugs, so we would situate our teens so they could sit with them and help them follow along in the Bible studies, reading with them and helping them read and explaining the verses.

Our teens were great! They didn't hold back, especially the girls! They would prod and poke and cajole and convict these guys to pay attention and tune into the reading or prayer or singing or whatever the activity was when they came over. And everyone in our Home knew that when visitors came, it was time to leave everything and tune into our sheep.

We tried to live the missionary's creed: Never forget a sheep; never let a sheep forget you. Each of our teens would be assigned a sheep, and it was the responsibility of each one to phone and follow up on his or her sheep throughout the week. Then when the sheep came over for Bible studies and fellowships, it was just an extension of the contact, so there was a real connection there. The things they were going through, we were going through with them. Many of these precious sheep told us that we were their family and that they needed us and looked forward to the time when they could come over and spend time with us.

Our girls were learning lessons about using their charm and beauty to bring the sheep into the Kingdom and closer to Jesus. More than once, our girls would come to our room late at night and share their lessons about feeling inadequate, or feeling like the sheep were falling in love with them, and how they were concerned about what to do and battles like this. It was inspiring to see the focus of our teens change from what *they* wanted to do, to what was best for the *sheep*, what was the next step to take for their progress. They were concerned about filling the needs of others.

As shepherds, we had an open door policy of being available to our team 24 hours a

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day to pray with them and counsel them and help them through their trials. These were valuable lessons and we were seeing our teens grow by leaps and bounds.

We learned a lot of lessons on really watching out for our beautiful girls during the personal witnessing. One of the first times we all jumped out of the van and poured out onto the streets of Haight-Ashbury, there was a crowd of street kids nearby, some of them tripping on drugs. One of them was high and a sort of ring-leader of the group there on the sidewalk. When he saw our girls, he started saying, "Whoa! Wow, you girls are goddesses! You are really goddesses!" The whole crowd came and gathered around us. They were actually seeing them in the spirit, and of course, our girls weren't used to that.

With all the attention and focus and praise that they often got from these young men we were witnessing to, we had to be careful that our girls were pulling them *in* and not being pulled *out*. So Phil and I (Cindy) spent a lot of our time just standing back and praying and discerning what was happening in the spirit, as we were on the front lines and needed to stay focused on the whole battle and our team. We couldn't get too involved with just one person to the point that we lost track of what was going on.

Every once in a while, the Lord would lead us to gather our team together, stop our personal witnessing, and unite for a song and Holy Ghost sample. Often that would happen when a member of the "Cast-Out House" would come up and begin interfering with our witnessing and causing trouble. This was the name we gave a group of Jesus People who looked radical, but were in reality very self-righteous. They had a big house on the street and were trying to win "disciples." They constantly interfered with us, and spread lies about us—you know, the same old same old. So when we received interference like this,

we would often just start singing and stage a Holy Ghost sample.

Getting back to Jimmy: After about three months of follow up and feeding him, we were all feeling that we needed to challenge Jimmy a bit more. He was showing signs of being discipleship material, as he was faithfully memorizing, entering into the classes, singing, and participating more than the others who came by.

So we prayed and counseled together about it as a Home. We were constantly doing things as a Home; it wasn't just we who were praying and then passing on to the flock what we were getting, but we valued input from our team and were constantly asking for it. We prayed together, we heard from the Lord together, and we acted upon what the Lord showed us to do together. We tried to acknowledge the Lord consistently together, to see what the Lord's will was for us as a team. I think that is one of the things that helped our team grow. In fact, we stayed together as a team for almost four years. We got to the point that we were very in tune with each other, and we were tight.

We challenged Jimmy to come and stay with us, like Jesus told some who wanted to follow Him. We asked him to try it for two weeks so that we could get to know him better and so that he could get to know us better. There is no better way to get to know someone than to live with them for a while and then you know them quite well, and vice versa.

When he moved in, we found that we were being tested as much as Jimmy was! This was a first for us—to bring him in to our personal home and private lives. We had to change some of our habits and the way we just let our hair down—and we had to think about the babe that was among us now. Wow! Everything changed.

What if it was W&R for our teens?—Sleep in? Don't think so. Jimmy was used to getting up at the crack of dawn. After sleeping on the

streets for so many years, he was used to getting woken up by the cops at about five in the morning. In the beginning we had to go around and remind the teens that they had to take care of Jimmy, even though it was the morning after a late video and a long week of work.

Another thing that changed was getting Jimmy to work and follow through with his jobs. The teens were not used to helping a raw recruit get going and be faithful with his responsibilities. This was so good for our teens, as they began to realize that correction and shepherding really is a way of life in the Family. But in the beginning it was a real trial for them, and many times they would come and pour out to us and cry on our shoulder, as having to be the hatchet man didn't come naturally for our young leaders.

Pretty soon we were able to step back a little more, as they were getting used to shepherding and correcting not only Jimmy, but each other as well. For the most part we all were pretty good friends and this was the next step in our relationship together. As a result we became even tighter.

The Lord's blessing was very obvious, and we gained a couple more kings and supporters, which freed us up to do more witnessing. Our whole Home was focused on witnessing and following up on sheep. When in the past we would talk about videos,

music, and other things, now we were talking about Jimmy, Eric, Gabriel, Mark, Eddy, Vatali, and a host of other sheep and their progress and needs. We would have P&P almost daily for the sheep and for our operation and how to be more available for them. We would dream of a storefront and other means to be closer to them and more open for them to come over. The whole focus of our lives changed, and we were fully involved with these real lives and lovin' it.

Not only that, but the Lord added a little variety and fun to our lives because of our commitment to feed the sheep and put them first. Our king took us to his time-share [jointly-owned property] in Tahoe for two years in a row and we enjoyed skiing and snow fun—all expenses paid by him. We went river rafting—not only our Home, but the Lamb Home also enjoyed this with us. There were sponsored trips to national parks, to a theme park, and on SWIFTs. Apart from these fun trips, most of our kings and supporters were tithing, supporting, taking us to do weekly grocery shopping, and buying the kids clothes and other personal needs. In short, we were fully supported.

Those were like days of Heaven for us. I think we will always cherish and value the days that we worked together with our dream team. We love you!

Telling It Like It Is!

By James (22, formerly Jimmy), USA

(Taken from an interview)

I am so thankful the Lord engineered my meeting the Family. It is a miracle that I was born to live in these times of the End.—I can see that! Before I was on a path of destruction, living on the street, doing drugs and crime, trying to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season.

But the Lord changed my life in a heartbeat. Then once I started getting Bible studies from the Family, I knew that the Family was the best place to serve the Lord in the whole world.

I was pretty hardheaded, as I had been on my own a lot, and nobody had ever told

me what to do. If anyone did, I usually went against it and did the total opposite. If I didn't like the way things were going, I would just leave! I would thumb my nose and split! So initially when I joined the Family, I had a difficult time taking correction. I had had some bad relationships, so taking correction from girls or women was really, really tough.

Thank the Lord, He set me up with two shepherdesses of the babes (which is what I was), and that taught me a lot. They had to correct me and hear from the Lord for me and give me the Word and feed me, and it was challenging for them and for me. But step by step, prayer by prayer, the Lord did it. The Lord punched through, through the Word and when I asked for prayer.

In the end, I ended up getting married to one of those shepherdesses! It was because she had so much love for me, I guess. I figured anyone with that much love for me—and who could handle a hardhead like me—was somebody I wanted to be with. God bless Gen! She has been my strength and my better half, and now we have three kids together.

I think the thing that kept me during the rough times was personal witnessing—getting out there and telling others about the Lord, meeting the sheep, preaching the Gospel. It was my main focus and vision. When I first joined I didn't want to do anything but read the Word and witness. It wasn't drab and boring, and it was something I was doing all the time.

Something that impressed me was getting a Bible study about faith from a guy in our Home named JD. He was only 13 or 14 at the time and I thought, *Wow! 13 years old and he can give a Bible study!* I wanted to know more, I wanted to grow, I wanted to learn more about the Family and witnessing and winning souls and giving Bible studies. It was encouraging to see young people like JD who knew the Word and were full of the Word.



Before and after

The older generation in our Home could also really relate to the young people, as far as making things fun and inspiring. God bless Phil and Cindy, who helped me through a lot of battles.

Because I was around everybody who had had this amazing training—the best anyone could get in my opinion—I often would wonder, *Am I good enough for this? Am I up for this? Can I make it?* The Devil would come in with those little doubts, telling me, "You're no good! You'll never be able to do this!" Phil and Cindy were humble enough to stoop down to my level to bring me up to theirs and to teach and train me. I admire them for that!

Overall I received the Word very well and it was hard to break my bottle. There were a few things that I did go through, though. Loving Jesus was a good bottle-breaker for me. At first I tried to think of it carnally, which obviously doesn't work. But the Lord punched through and did amazing things for me in that area.

“The Family had spirit and life, and they weren't afraid to talk about the whole Bible and not just what they thought was good for the public. They told it like it was.”

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People I give Bible classes to ... often ask me, "In this day and age, how can you live communally? How can you do it?" With people living so selfishly these days, it's a miracle that we can live communally and that it works.

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I've been in the Family now for five years and I'm still going strong. Of course, I have my battles and fall short, but I'm learning and will continue learning and growing. Now I am leading Bible studies and witnessing to university students and professional computer technicians here in the States. Thank the Lord for Family training!—If it wasn't for that, I don't know what I'd be doing!

Another thing I was surprised about but which won me to the Family was to see people these days that can live communally. I could see the fruits of living communally and how it helps others, and I was awestruck! People I give Bible classes to are attracted to that as well, and they often ask me, "In this day and age, how can you live communally? How can you do it?" With people living so selfishly these days, it's a miracle that we can live communally and that it works.

Another good thing that I saw in the Family was the abundance of the Word, hearing from the Lord, and prayer. It wasn't wishy-washy! They called a spade a spade, and when something was wrong they'd bring it up.

I went to a few churches before I joined because I knew I wanted to be a Christian, but I was an extremist, so when I became a Christian I wanted to be the best Christian I could be. I'd searched a lot of places and all I'd found were dead words and people who only knew the Word a little bit. They didn't

have the Spirit. I saw the Lord's Spirit in the Family, and that is how I knew the Family was the best place to be.

The Family had spirit and life, and they weren't afraid to talk about the whole Bible and not just what they thought was good for the public. They told it like it was.

When I was younger I had a lot of dreams about the Endtime, and when I tried to tell people about my dreams, they would tell me I was crazy. So when I met the Family and they witnessed to me about the Endtime, that won me. They didn't pull their punches, no matter what it was about. If it was contrary to public opinion, then so be it! And I liked that!

Through the Family, I found that it's possible to live the Bible. It is not a thing of the past or something you can't follow anymore because times have changed.

Now that is what I am doing—turning around and using my training to train others to train others, to give Bible classes, win new disciples, and have an Activated ministry!



James, Genai, and two of their three children