



Damaris, Brazil

Christina,
Vladivostok



LEFT TO
RIGHT Tim 12,
Ann (Live-
out), Heidi
8, Olivia 13,
Monica 16,
Heather 11,
Japan



unknown

Crossroads?
Sabine, Yana,
French Abi,
Joe, Senegal



Cover pic caption:
Cloney Tunes,
Lebanon

able

OF CONTENTS

French Abi,
Senegal



CLOWNING AROUND

By Stephanie (21) and Vesna (20), Lebanon

You might be thinking, "How did they ever manage to send something to the Zine from Lebanon? I mean, isn't the place full of camels, tents and more camels?" Okay, it might be remotely true that we are having to endure the

luxury of a tent in the desert, but this place might not be quite as backwards as you'd imagine. And, sorry to disappoint you: There aren't camels here. Lebanon is **not** a desert in the least, which is why it's one of the areas

most disputed over in the Middle East! With mountainous terrain and a coast along the Mediterranean Sea, it's technically possible on a spring day to **SKI** in the morning and swim in the sea that same afternoon. A common selling line for the Lebanese to use, though no one ever does it!

The Family has now been in Lebanon for several years, and has since greatly developed and changed and moved with the **ways of God!** Here's a little bit about our team here and what we do.

Stephanie:

Being among some of the first to be here was truly an experience like no other, putting it mildly! Our first team consisted of my mom and her four daughters (of which I am **one**), and two weeks later we were joined by two guys—David M. (YA), and Piper (FGA). (David has since moved on.)

We landed with Victor and Maria and stayed in their summerhouse in the mountains for six cold winter months. It was pretty rough; the electricity was off most of the day due to the **strikes** at the power plants. So we moved to Beirut, the capital of Lebanon. And oh what a joy it was!

We found a three-bedroom apartment, totally unfurnished, and we moved in. We were just content to be out of the cold! The first night without **mattresses** or beds was a rather rough

one, and we felt it might be a good idea to go provisioning ... so that's what we did. And from that point on that's what we did on a daily basis till we had the basics of what we needed! Basically our days consisted of outreach, provisioning, outreach, provisioning, and a little more outreach! We were of course desperate for finances and everything else. It was not long after this that we had another family join us. Andre and Crystal came from Indonesia with their three daughters. This was our **basic team** for about two years. Since that time we've had quite a few people come and go, but most of us veterans are still around.

Vesna:

One of our main ministries here is clowning. Even before my family came the team that was up in the mountains had done a couple such shows. **Stephanie:**

Yeah, we had done a couple CTPs and thought it would be nice to **add clowns** to it, but didn't have much to work with and as a result the clowns looked more like something from a Stephen King film





Vesna:

We later put together a singing team with us girls and two clowns—David M. and Melissa. We did quite a bit this way in the way of CTPs, with that program. After about a year we realized we needed to get something else off the ground that would be able to **support** us as well. We were ready to try anything, and in doing so

It was around this time that Magdalene (26) and her four kids came to join our Home. She had been doing clowning in her former Home in the ME, and had the

vision to put something together here too. So we started out with just a **team of three**—Magdalene, Sara (17), and me.

Slowly our show started picking up. But our team wasn't quite complete without a male clown. Enter Chris (6.4 ft, 25 years old), who became known as the famous, "Jumbo, the clown on stilts."

Stephanie:

After that pretty much everyone was recruited, with or without a proper costume, to join in and give it their best shot. Those were the days of having to continually wear what was then referred to as "the infamous cloak of **humility**"!

We had a team of eight, and most of us didn't have a proper costume, yet! Chris was also passing on his ballooning expertise to the rest of us, along with all of us getting accustomed to putting our hands to a brush for face painting. We started to

stand out as one of the first "professional" clown teams around. This gave us the vision to put something together we wouldn't have to be

embarrassed about. Mag got busy on the sewing machine, while some of us made wigs and others props. Slowly things started to come together. We then adopted the name "*Clooney*

Tunes."

Vesna:

I had to brush up on my French, and our show had to be in three languages—Arabic, English and French, but mainly French. I can't say there weren't woeful moments, but there were also moments of fulfillment and **excitement**.

Once I was out there, facing the kids, the Lord always did it!

Stephanie:

Over Christmas we also set up stands at fairs, doing clowning and ballooning there too.

Vesna:

We didn't see much of each other over the Christmas season, as the show team would be out early in the morning, before the other team got up, and by the time the other teams would get back, we'd be **in bed**. And that's pretty much how our entire Christmas season went.

Stephanie:

Soon after Chris and Mag left for a different field, and we were down to a skeletal team again.

Eventually two of our young people volunteered, Daniel (17) and Katrina (15). Daniel was dubbed "Dumbo" and he did a good job of taking on "Jumbo's" mantle. Katrina played the role of "Barbie." All the while I managed to keep myself out of it, till my sister, Sara, decided it was her time to move on, sob! And then I didn't have much choice! But it ended up not being as

bad as I thought.

Vesna:

Now our team is myself, Stephanie and Katrina (15), and **we're in need of a male clown**.

Stephanie:

We also were on TV a few times. Over a year ago we were asked if we wanted to do something for one of the bigger **TV** stations here. It started out being Barbie and Jumbo showing how to make the balloons, but then another local TV station filmed the show for Christmas. Both of these have a very large viewing audience and so pretty much all the kids know us when they see us now.

Vesna:

In the course of our show we tried to use songs with a *message* in them, to reach the children. However, because

we're so involved with the shows themselves and taking care of the kids, we usually don't get much of a chance to talk with the mothers. So the Lord showed us to put together an envelope of reading material on kids, and a couple of *Reflections*. This way if we felt the mother was sheepy, we had a reason to call back and ask

them what they thought about the articles we gave them, and we've met lots of precious sheep this way. We, of course, always make sure we tell people about our various CTPs that we're doing and that it's non-profit and all that, and we've always gotten very good reactions.

Stephanie:

My best shows by far have been the ones we do at the Palestinian camps. You get up on stage and there's a **sea of little faces**

anticipating what you're about to do. One particular show, that I dub the best, we did indoors, in the heat of summer. By the time all the kids got in the hall the place was already a **sauna** ... literally! So you can imagine how hot it was for us wearing the equivalent of three balls of yarn on our heads and a full clown costume. After the whole show we were drenched from head to toe.

We started giving out balloons and I guess as part of a Palestinian welcoming custom **they all swarmed us**, and for a few moments I was alone on stage with Vesna with about 200 kids all over us, knocking the tent down, along with the speakers and the equipment. It was total mayhem! But all I could do was laugh as I saw Vesna who seemed to have had enough, futilely attempting to get the kids off the stage. It was **quite a scene**, but one I'll never forget! Ha!

Vesna:

We do quite a few shows for the Palestinian camps.

One show, which is my personal favorite, we performed on a weekly basis, at a hospital for children with cancer. It's been a year since we've been going and we've grown very close to the kids, and they really look forward to it as the one special day of their week.

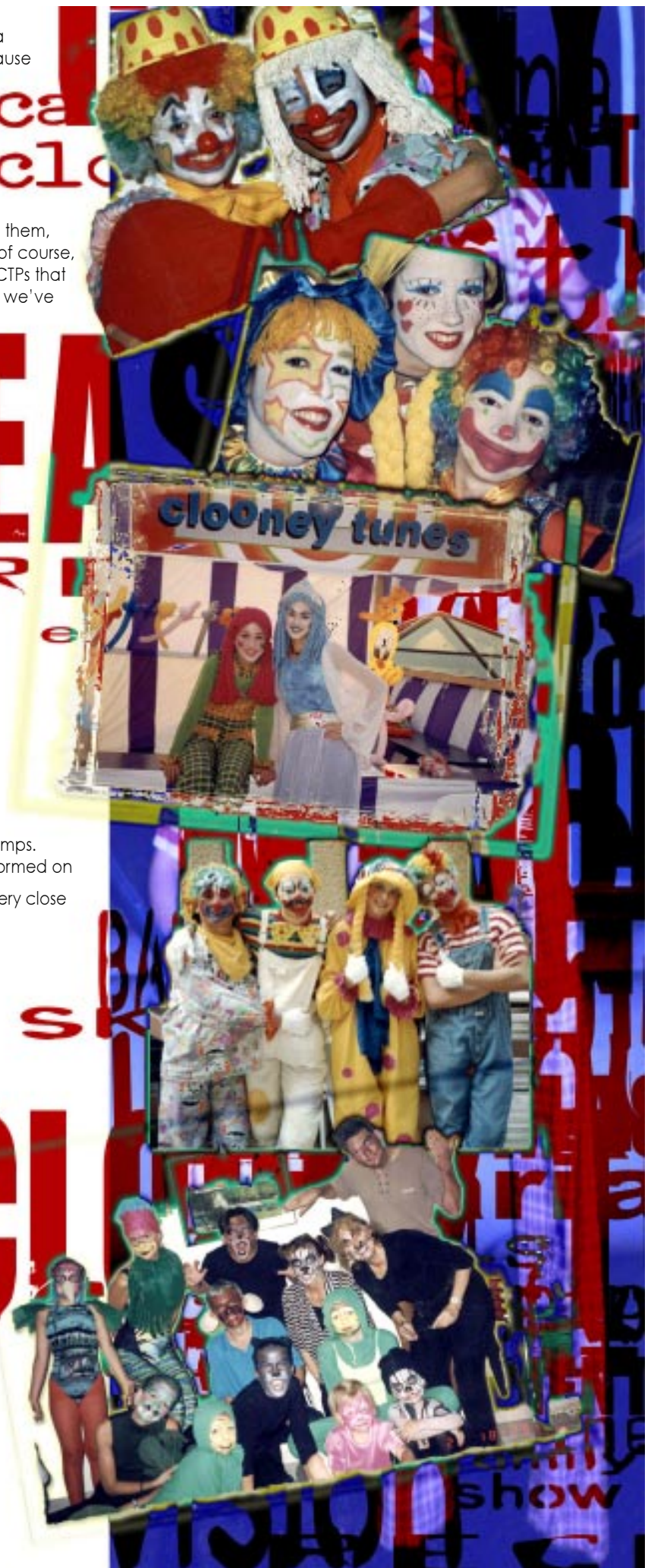
Please pray that the Lord will continue to open the doors in this country, because the **potential is great** and we've just barely skimmed the top. Only the Lord knows what's ahead and what can truly be done in this exciting field!

So to all you fellow clowns, ballooners and face painters (I think that just about gets

everybody) out there, take care and God bless!

Stephanie and Vesna

For the "Clooney Tunes"



(73: The following are a compilation of reactions from various young people who attended meetings that were held in the south of Brazil last year. Even though it happened a while ago, we thought it'd still be inspiring for all our readers.)

Juan (20), Sao Paulo: One thing that really spoke to me is the fact that you *can* make it if you want to. You don't have to be a great person—multi-talented, a super witnesser, or anything for that matter. If you want to make it and say “yes,” the Lord will help you, He'll pull you through and you are going to make it. And you can be the person He wants you to be.

Shelley (20), Joinville: I came to the meetings to get filled up on the joy of the Lord, and this is exactly what the meetings did for me. They were excellent because each meeting spoke specifically to me—especially the Loving Jesus one. I listened to the songs and I started crying.

Franchesco (22), Curitiba: When you come from a certain routine where you're busy working all the time, sometimes you don't realize how much more you should be interacting with the Lord. You get so involved with the Lord's work that you forget about being with Him.

I felt the need to change, and I was praying, “Jesus, I need to do something that will

change my life.” And right away the opportunity to come to these meetings showed up an answer to my prayer.

He said, “It's here, I'm putting it in your hand to calm you.”

For me every class was especially deep and touching. The witnessing class had the biggest impact on me, because it's my ministry, and I love witnessing.—And seeing the leadership so behind witnessing was a total incentive! Sometimes the young people will say, “Let's go out together and witness,” but a lot of times it is not to witness, it's more for fun. I like to have fun, but I felt that I was losing the vision for witnessing in my life. Even when I'd go on faith trips, it was more to sell the tools.

It all got me thinking, “I need to do something else!” So this class for me was certainly like, “Wow! I've got to get a new vision. Why can't I do more? Why do I have to be limited to only selling a few videos, when I can win that soul? I can do more stuff if I just say, “Jesus, you have to help me do this.”

For me it was like experiencing another world.

The whole crew from the South Brazil meetings.



the fire BURNS ON

I still don't know how my life is going to be when I get back to my Home. I want to change my attitude, especially concerning the Law of Love.—I *need* to change. It really hit home! I don't know how I'll do, but at least I'm going to try.

It was a sample and encouragement to see young leadership in the Family—VS trainees, etc. Sometimes I think that the young people are behind on the vision, but I saw young people willing to dedicate their lives and fight for Jesus. I believe in this fire!

John G. (18), Curitiba: The meeting on the Endtime and S2K were my favorites. The point on how the Lord is requiring us, as a Family, to focus more on our priorities was well expressed. The priorities we had in the Family were always there, but we, especially us young people, seemed to focus more on the freedoms that we were given in the Charter; it seemed we forgot a little about the priorities of maintaining a good standard, and being bellwethers and leaders instead of followers.

The class on the Shake Up clearly showed that the Lord is requiring us to be more responsible, and to uphold the standard, not only in witnessing, but also within our own Homes. S2K means pulling up our socks, in every aspect—resisting System influences, and not only resisting but replacing it with the Word, so there isn't an empty space that can easily be filled with System influences and desires. It's all about filling up your heart with the Word and increasing your desire to live the Word and be a good soldier for Jesus, so there's no room for any other things that could lead you astray.

It's neat to see how even many outsiders

are so impressed when they see the loving atmosphere in our Homes. I think it's important to realize that the Law of Love is for

Angela, Eman, and Amanda



everyone—the adults, the young people, and the children. You don't always have to think of it as needing to be friendly to the opposite sex, it's more just doing deeds of kindness and love that really makes us a family. I've admired that when I've visited different Homes, there are sometimes people I've never met, but they're always very happy to see me. They're hospitable, making sure you have everything you need; they want to hear your testimonies and share their testimonies with you. That's something special! Every Home has its problems, but this love is something the Lord gives us, and it's our job to make sure we distribute this love to

everyone in the Family. There's a quote that says something like, "When there's love, nothing can go wrong," because when a Home has a loving ambience it gives you the grace to forgive your brethren, and even to understand them and respect them all the more. When you don't look at your brethren through the eyes of love, your grace falls short at times and it's more difficult

Aichan, Flor, Joanna, and Nashelli



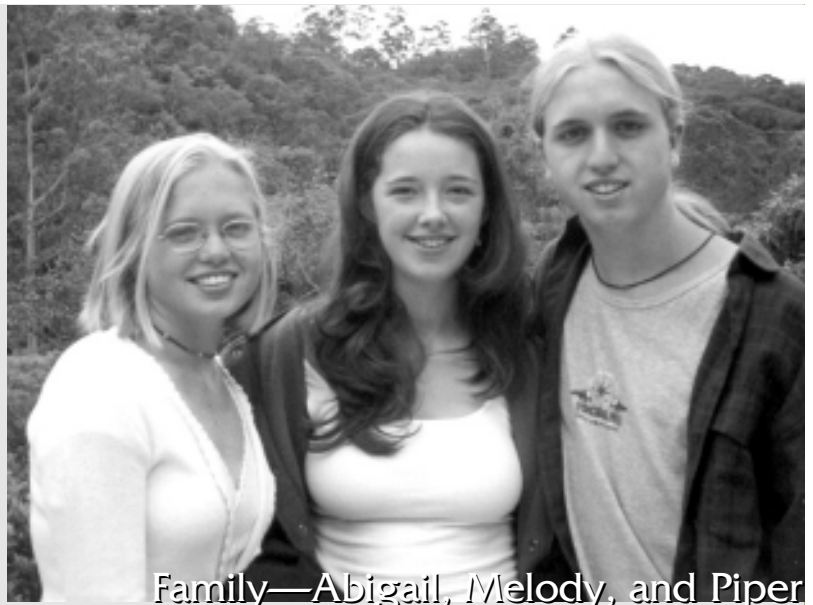
to forgive and understand. But if we can look at each brother and sister in the Family through the eyes of love, knowing that our main job in the Family is to preach the Gospel and love our brothers and sisters, then it makes life happier. You reap what you sow, so in return you receive the love you give to others, and that's very inspiring.

Tiago (21), Joinville:

The class I liked the best was the one on the Law of Love. It was really nice to discuss different situations that can come up and the proper reactions to have to them. I think the nicest thing about the whole meeting in general was that there was positive peer pressure, which really helped. It was especially helpful because it showed me different ways that I can apply the Law of Love in my life, and the importance of it is what makes us different from other church groups and Christians.

David Rocky (22), Foz: I came here with some apprehensions. But it was different from what I expected, it was more of an encouragement. It was very convicting for me, too, because I didn't exactly have the faith in myself that I needed. Mostly, it made me believe that I *could* make it. What affected me most was the class where we discussed Loving Jesus. It simplified it, helping me grasp exactly what it meant. I began to fully understand how necessary it is in each of our lives, and that in essence, it's a closer link with the Lord for the days to come. Without this closer link I'd be pretty much at a loss in understanding what's going on, or how to solve the simple problems in my day-to-day life.

Also, it was inspiring to have such a nice crowd. There wasn't any negative peer pressure.—That was nice! I started the meetings pretty unsure of myself and my commitment. I had a lack of faith in what the Lord had told me in the first place. But all that was discussed made me believe that I did sign the contract for a good reason, and gave me more faith to make it.



Family—Abigail, Melody, and Piper

In a way, these meetings were absolutely essential for me, as I believed in prophecy and I believed in Loving Jesus, but I didn't understand them very well. I knew I needed to really believe in prophecy and Loving Jesus—as it's the direction the Lord is taking us, and they're all directly linked—but at the same time I didn't see how I could make them a part of my personal life.

For instance, in my Home, we pretty much do things the right way: We pray and seek the Lord's guidance in everything we do, but it hasn't been as fruitful as we'd hoped, and I realized that it was simply that we weren't *really* applying all the new weapons in our daily lives.—The simple things like praise time and "ask Me everything." We neglected the simple things by giving them little importance, but I realized that they are essential. Our carnal efforts aren't going to change things much, but I think it will be more fruitful if we all push in this direction instead.

Karina (15), Paraguay: The best part was the time we spent Loving Jesus, having praise time and practicing the new weapons together. Where I am there aren't a lot of other young people, and when we do get together our activities are different. It was great to be here altogether practicing our new weapons unitedly.

I am going to a new mission field, Portugal, so these meetings gave me a lot of courage and strength to trust the Lord and know that He will be everything I will need. Thanks to those hosting these meetings, for all the love you gave me. I'm very happy for the time we could spend together.

BLAST FROM THE PAST

A pioneer's wedding tale

From *Asaph (of Charity)*, Pakistan

Art by Eyve

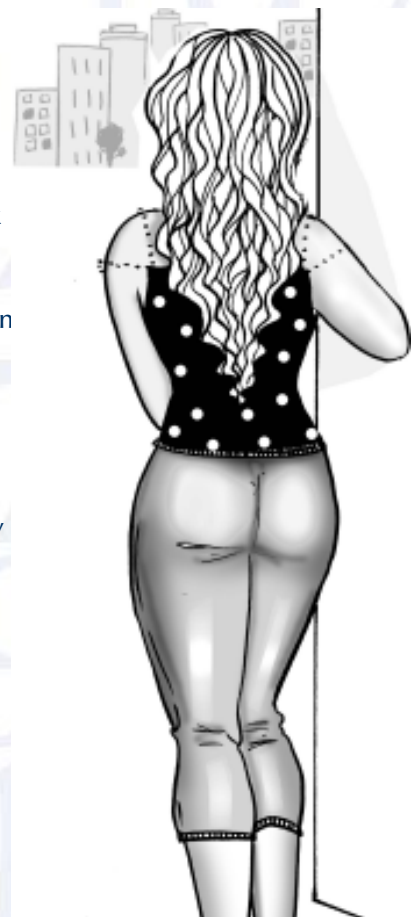


I was sick in bed when I began to reflect on things. Times past flashed in my mind, one of them being my first years in the Family. During my first three years in the Family there was a shortage of girls, and I remember from the beginning praying every night for a wife. Joining the Family was the most exciting thing I ever did. Not having a wife was a trial, but I considered it my cross for Him, like so many others did. After a number of years of praying for a wife, I kind of lost the vision and ended up simply hoping for the best.

It was early '78 and I was en route to Sri Lanka from Bangladesh, but I needed to get final clearance in Madras, India. So a brother and I took the long train journey from Calcutta to Madras. In the early morning, after arriving in southern India, we made our way to the Home with only a phone number in hand. We found the house after some exciting experiences, and when we rang the bell, a very pretty girl opened the door and let us in. Her name was Charity.

The Home was on the beach, not too big, and the boys far outnumbered the girls. After a few days I found myself attracted to Charity, and decided that I liked her (she was also the only single girl).

By this time the political situation in nearby Afghanistan was pretty bad. Russia had taken over and the war began. The Family Home in Kabul, most of whom were Babes, needed to leave and a few came to Madras. One day our shepherd called me into his room and asked me if I would pray about staying and helping to shepherd these new disciples. He told me that my clearance had come through, and I was free to go



Lord used it to give me the humility and conviction to propose to her and ask her to marry me. She was quite surprised and happy—well, I guess you'd have to ask her about that. She had also been praying for a mate for some time as she was about 6-7 months pregnant at the time, and was starting to worry about her future.

To make a long story short, we got married about one month later and thus ended my singles career. I know that He answered my prayer from the very beginning, however, it can sometimes take Him time; like the quote: "God answers prayer, but not always our way. It takes Him time to make a baby, a flower, a tree, a sunset, or even a blade of grass. You can't rush God. You've got to wait till it's God's time, until you have learned the lesson God is

trying to teach you, or the conditions are ready for the result that God wants to bring" (DM 2, page 23).

Shortly after that, persecution hit the Family in India, and as my visa was up, we moved on. At that time there were only a handful of Family members left in India. We closed down the work in Madras and left. Our first child was born in Madras, which in itself was a real experience as well.—Another story perhaps. Our next destination was Southeast Asia where we had a great time serving Jesus. We spent about fourteen years there, had eight children born in Thailand, and this land will always hold a very special place in our hearts.

So it pays to pray and trust even if you don't see the answer immediately.



Dollars grow on couches

From Matthew, WS

Before we joined the Family, Mary Mom and I, her brothers and a number of other people were living in a hippie commune in Iowa. We had already been to the Colony in Chicago and some of the brethren from there had actually been to our farm to give us classes and take us witnessing. We were getting lit from the Chicago Colony and passing it out for donations. But Mary was so radical—no matter how much money we'd get from litnessing she'd insist on sending it all to the Chicago Colony and trusting the Lord. She'd say, "We've got to help the Chicago Colony!"

One time she sent all the money away the very day before our rent

was due. We, all babes in the woods, went up to her and said, "Mary, you're a little bit odd. We have to pay our rent or we're going to have to move tomorrow! Hello!"

She said, "No, it's okay! The Lord's going to supply."

So, we all just went out witnessing that day and when we came back, the Lord had done a miracle because we found money everywhere; there was money all over the house and nobody knew where it came from. But it was enough to pay the rent! That's a lot of faith!—God bless Mary!

It's okay, really!
The Lord's going
to supply!



FZ: Alias used in this story.

Art by Evye

Mr. Somnel is a very different kind of person. Not only is he a prominent psychiatrist who is sought after by many people from all walks of life, but he also has certain spiritual gifts that enable him to see beyond the veil of this temporal world and travel into the other dimension.

Once he explained to us that when he looks at a person, he sees two distinct entities — the physical body, and the inner spiritual being. From this, as well as from seeing people’s auras, vibes and energies and getting whispers of guidance from his spirit helpers, he knows in one glance where a person is at — both physically and spiritually. His “voices” also tell him hidden secrets about people’s lives when he needs to know them, so that he can help them progress and go forward in their re-establishment process.

Since he had been searching for the truth for many years, he avidly soaks up whatever the Lord leads us to share with him. Our conversations have therefore taken on a much deeper note and after only a few visits with us, he prayed to receive Jesus into his life. (Something rarely done so quickly here in this sensitive Muslim field.)

In subsequent visits, we were able to share with him about Dad and our origins, etc., and he is always hungry for more such “secrets” about our way of life. He was both amazed and thrilled with our accounts of communal living, as that had been one of his dreams, but he didn’t know that it could be done. His reaction was, “So that means that in the future, I could come and live with you, right? Then we can change the world together!”

He caught the vision right away and reassured us that he would be behind what we are doing and with us in heart and spirit! It’s a big encouragement for us when the Lord sets such ripe and ready sheep on our path, and especially when they are already aware of the workings of the spirit world and its realities.

With time, he proceeded to tell us about his life. “My mother was a real saint,” he told us. “When I was born, she wanted Jesus (using the local language version) but my father refused. Later on, when I was 12, I ran away from home. I went to what is considered a holy place up in the mountains in our country. When I returned, my father beat me. But all the while I could only smile, because right behind my father, I could see Jesus and He didn’t let me feel the pain.”

He’s had many such experiences in his life, where he’s gone on different spirit trips with Jesus and discovered many scientific and

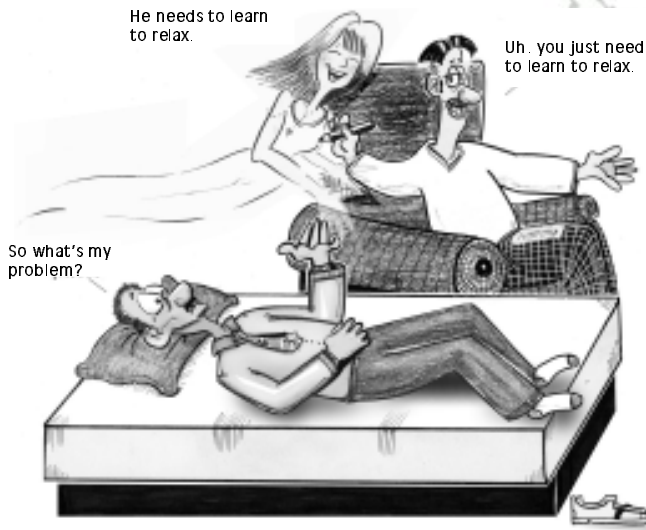


"So that means that in the future, I could come and live with you, right? Then we can change the world together!"



Hmph! You're crazy! There's no such thing as a spirit.

Heh, heh!



spiritual truths. He is a visionary, and as such, it's hard on him to be able to see and know about things before they happen. What is even harder for him though, is that he's had to keep all of these things sealed in his heart, as he has found no one in all his life whom he could talk to about these mysterious happenings.

He receives messages from beyond and uses this gift discreetly in dealing with his patients. His spirit helpers let him know what is the root cause of each person's problems and how he can best help him or her, then he carefully spells it out in medical terms and is very scientific about it, so that his gift does not become apparent and thus frighten people away.

There are many things that he has seen, heard and learned, both through the messages he receives and through his spirit trips, but he has only been able to use limited amounts of that knowledge and wisdom, because otherwise people might take it the wrong way and think that he is mentally unstable.

For a while after he got saved, he wouldn't visit us, and would always reply that he was very busy. We were saddened by this sudden change in someone who was previously so receptive. It caused each of us to desperately search our hearts. We wondered if we'd

done something wrong or gone too fast somehow. No matter what we tried, he was just not available to see us.

Then, we were out of town for two months and unable to visit him, though we kept in touch by phone, regular e-mail and desperate prayers. When we saw him next, just a couple of days ago, he said, "You prayed for me, I know it. Your prayers protected me and saved my life!" He then related some serious battles with depression and how the victories were won.

We in turn told him about the different activities that we had been up to, and the many sweet people we had met. Our accounts were peppered off and on with such comments as, "We're only normal people, just like everybody else, but He does it through us. All praise be to God!"

After the second or third such comment, our friend, Mr. Sommel interrupted: "Stop saying that. I know that God helps you, but you are *not* normal people. From the very first time I met you, my 'voices' told me you were special people, chosen by God, and that I was supposed to help and protect you.

"I know that you are human and you make mistakes, but I can see that your 'minuses' are so small compared to the powerful 'pluses' that you have been given [our Family training and the new weapons]. In God's eyes, those 'minuses' are totally cancelled out!"

We asked him if he saw any difference in us since the last time that we'd met. "Yes," he replied, "I can see that your connection with the Almighty has been strengthened."

The next day he called asking: "Could I come over and have a glass of water?" Soon enough, the doorbell buzzed and his warm, genial self was with us once again. The Lord had shown us that we simply needed to hear him out, but when we inquired, he said he was fine and had told us everything the previous day. Eventually, one thing led to another, and the Lord helped him open his heart and share what was going on inside.

"You have probably wondered why it is that I stayed away for so long," he began. An eager silence ensued. "Well, I saw that you were good people and I did not want to hurt or burden you with the many difficult things that I have been through. I decided I would rather even risk losing your friendship, than your having to endure and bear with me and the problems that I am having."

We were relieved to know that we had done nothing wrong and assured him that it was better to share the problems, so that we could seek the Lord together for solutions and let Him carry the load, rather than to try and do everything on our own.

He went on to share different *Power and Protection*-style stories of how the Lord saved him time and again throughout his life and chose him to be different.

"Once when I was very little," he began, "my mom had prepared some sausages and other kinds of meat that were usually dried on the roof. We had a very large house, three floors, like a villa. Since she had to keep an eye on me, she took me with her to the rooftop. She bent over to put her things down, and in that same instant, I fell off the roof. 'My son!' she screamed.

"We lived in a small village, and upon hearing her cry of alarm, all the

(FZ: If you experience something similar with one of your sheep, and wonder what's going on, why not ask the Lord for some insight on what's keeping him or her away? This could sure save you some worrying.)





village women came to their windows or doors to see what was happening. Today, there are only three of those women alive that can testify to the veracity of what happened next. They saw my mother on the roof of our home and me falling down in slow motion. My mother dashed down all three floors, and hurried out to the garden, arriving just in time to catch me in her arms."

All he remembers is falling off the roof and the next moment, being gathered up in his mother's embrace! What a breathtaking miracle and proof of His divine care, protection and intervention!

Another interesting happening took place when he was 13 years old. He was up on a high hill alone flying a kite, when a UFO came and some spiritual beings came out and communicated with him.

"They were kind and they loved me and petted me, but I didn't understand what was happening. They gave me an ellipse-shaped stone as a parting present. It was very hot and different from anything I've ever seen.

"I was frightened by what took place because it was so unusual. When I came home, I couldn't speak. I tried to act out, draw and write what I had seen and experienced, but nobody believed me. They thought the jinn (Islamic magic spirits) had come and cast a spell on me. They took me to many doctors, and after two years, I learned to speak again.

"I had given my mother the unique stone, and it was kept as a secret between us. She hid it somewhere and she has since passed away, and have not been able to find it.

"There is another reason I know I am special and chosen," he continued. "When I was 18 or 19 and training to be a parachutist in the air force. 150 soldiers were sent on a mission. While we were parachuting down towards the ground, the enemy caught sight of us and unleashed powerful ground fire. Every one of my comrades was shot dead, and only I came out unharmed and alive."

A little later on in the conversation, he told us another story. "About three years back, I had a painful problem with kidney stones. My doctors said that an operation was the only solution. Finally, I gathered up enough money and was scheduled to have my operation the following night.

"That evening, however, my mother-in-law came by. An emergency had come up and she unknowingly asked me to loan her the exact sum of money that I had managed to put aside for the operation. She pleaded with me to help her. My 'voices' told me to give her the money. My wife was telling me not to, that the operation was more important.

"I yielded to the 'voices' and gave my mother-in-law the money. She was very thankful and grateful, while my wife thought I was crazy for helping her instead of taking care of my health situation. I called my doctor and told him I'd decided to cancel the operation. He thought it was an unwise move but could not persuade me otherwise, so he let me be.

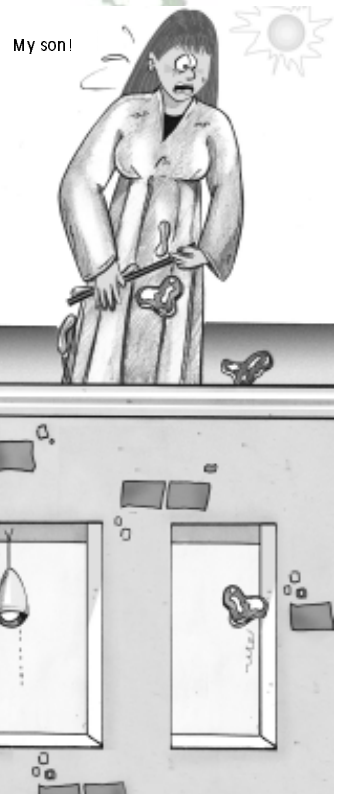
"I went to bed in pain, but happy that I had made the right decision. During the night, 'they' came and operated on me and then I was better."

"They came?" we chorused. "Who are 'they'? Did you see anyone? What happened?" we asked, eager for more details.

"Well," our friend slowly answered, "I don't know who 'they' are, but I did see them. I woke up in the night and my wife was asleep on my right side.

There were two beings on my left side, one more at the foot of my bed and one

My mother dashed down all three floors, and hurried out to the garden, arriving just in time to catch me into her arms





at the head. This one I couldn't see, but I sensed him there. They were dressed in operating gowns and had masks on their faces. I asked them what was happening and they told me not to worry. — They were going to operate on me and I would be better. I went back to sleep and didn't wake up until the next morning.

"Since I was unsure whether this had been a dream or was in fact reality, I decided to put it to the test. I asked my wife to cook me some eggs in lots of oil. She refused, protesting that the doctor had forbidden it and that I would only end up doubled up in pain. I insisted, so she finally prepared them for me. I ate the eggs and felt fine, better than I had in a long time. I ate some spicy chili peppers — still no pain! I'd had severe pain every day, and now here I was eating 'forbidden' things and feeling great!

"Now, everyone knows that when you have an operation, there is always a scar left where they sew you back up, right?" We all nodded our assent, deeply interested in the story.

"Well, I went to my doctor and asked him if he was sure that I had kidney stones. He confidently replied that he was certain of the fact. I asked him if he would do me the kindness of checking once again. He took new x-rays and could not believe his eyes! He compared them to the old ones, called in some colleagues, made sure they were the right ones, and then cheekily asked me, 'So, you had an operation, huh?'

"I don't know," I replied.

"What do you mean you don't know? Are you all right?"

"They came?" we chorused. "Who are 'they'? Did you see anyone? What happened?"



the doctor asked incredulously.

"I don't know. Are there any scars that prove that I had an operation?" I asked.

"They checked and re-checked. 'No, but the stones are gone. ... How can that be?'

"I left the baffled doctors in their office and went home. When I arrived, my wife asked me, 'What's this drop of blood on the bed? Did you hurt yourself or something?'

"Oh, I'm not sure," I answered. 'I must have scratched myself in the night.'

"To this day," concluded our friend, "the origins of that spot of blood remain a mystery to me, though I do have my guesses, as I'm sure you all do."

And so ended our friend's miraculous healing testimony on the power of giving. He had given of what cost him most to help another, and the Lord had abundantly repaid in His Own special way!

Our visit ended in prayer, as we all sat around the coffee table. For a long while, each of us silently poured out our hearts to the Lord and received His comforting Words in return. Then, we went around the circle and everyone had the chance to share what he or she had received. He took in each vision and prophecy that was shared, and was visibly moved by the messages. Here are excerpts of what was given:

—The Lord compared him to a plant (he loves plants and nature) and said that he needed to be faithful to come for watering, so that he could

continue to grow spiritually. (The funny thing is that he had called and asked to come over, specifically for a *drink of water*, ha! The Lord sure knows what He is doing!)

— There was a vision of beautiful multicolored fireworks, symbolizing how everyone in Heaven was rejoicing that we had caught the signals right and accomplished the most important purpose of the day.

—Also seen twice was a similar vision to the one received in the "Temple Time," where the light and strength emanating from the dome filled each person.

—One of us saw a picture of Mr. Somnel finally coming home and crying in the Lord's arms after having searched all his life. He had with him all the weights (resembling hurts and trials) of the past and it was difficult to just put them all down, but once he would, he could be totally free, light and happy.

"Now, everyone knows that when you have an operation, there is always a scar left where they sew you back up, right?"

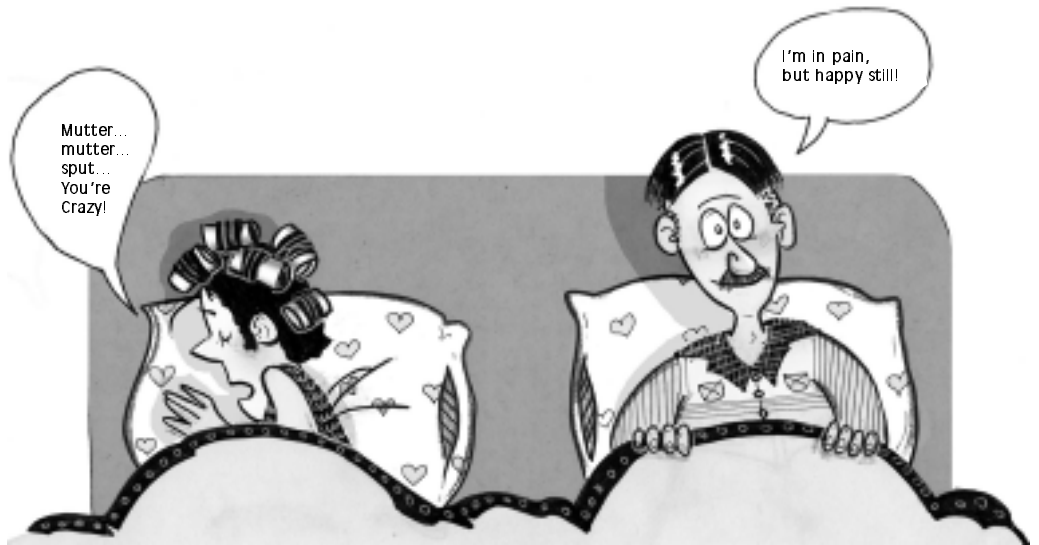
Who knows what the future holds? It's all in His hands.

That's right, Doc.
Cancel the
operation



Mutter...
mutter...
sput...
You're
Crazy!

I'm in pain,
but happy still!



He was also given two beautiful visions himself:

—One was of an underwater treasure chest, which once retrieved and opened was found to contain many important priceless documents and files. This he took to mean the many things that he would learn from the Lord through us.

—The next one was of this woman who came to him asking for prayer because she was barren, and yet longed to have a son. He beseeched the Lord to intercede on her behalf, then she received her wish and the child thanked our friend by blowing him a kiss. (What was not quite clear was if this event had occurred previously, and the woman was now thanking him for the answer to her prayers, or if this took place all at once in the spiritual realm with someone he had never met.)

He shared another message that he had received for us previously, where the Lord had shown him that we were going to go places as a team (both him and us working hand in hand), reaching many top and influential people of the country and of the world, all the while using our spiritual gifts and training. He seemed to believe that we would generate a lot of income this way.

Could it be that out of the mouth of this babe and suckling came a specially designed "Era of Action" message for us? Who knows what the future holds? It's all in His hands and as bright as His promises!



FZ: We asked the Lord about some of the phenomenal things this man spoke about, and if He had anything else along this subject, and this is what He said:

(Jesus speaking:) My children are given a link through which they can learn and see the things of the spirit. However, the intensity of the connection varies with each one; there are those who are more sensitive to the spirit and others who are not. I grant certain individuals this gift as a means to bring them closer to Me.

Though some of the things this man speaks of are almost unbelievable, they are not impossible, for with Me nothing is impossible. It does not make him more special because he has experienced these things, you must think of it as a gift I have bestowed on him. And just like all gifts, this ability to see visions of other dimensions in the spirit has both transformed his life and yet separated it, because many people cannot understand what he speaks of, and so will deem him crazy. But I too cause the separation for a purpose, that through it he may find the connection you and I share; he will long for it, and through it he will find a deeper link with Me. *(End of message from Jesus.)*

By Chandra (21), FZ

“Stop crying!” I berated myself through sobs. My body only responded with another wracking hiccup of emotion. Hot tears burned my eyes, following the path down my cheek. I floated helplessly in a torrent of confusion, a formidable, endless ocean.

I brushed the tears aside and stared back at the letter in front of me. Stinging words hit me. “Leave the Family,” they read. I clenched my jaw, denying the waiting teardrop the chance to spill.

“Not again,” I whispered. “How many times am I going to have to answer this question? Wasn’t my decision to stay in the Family determined before? Why then do I

burned their place in my memory, as I turned to face the path that I’ve known as my calling in life. My heart pained, at a loss of how to express my sudden solitude. Where once there was a shared vision in life, divided paths now marked the landscape and I felt a sense of solitude.

I fought to believe that there was still a designed reason behind it all. I often wondered why the Lord wanted me to move forward, while those I loved remained behind. When difficulties struck their lives, and I was not with them, I blamed myself. “I should be there to help them,” I would lament. Don’t ask me what I would’ve done to help them traverse their hardships. I determined that moral support would be sufficient.

However, within this whole picture there is a more distinct effect being placed on my life. It has been the tears, the decision to walk on even if I must do it alone, and the necessity of prayer, which have brought me to an understanding of this sacrifice asked of me. Above all, within I know that I have found the destiny for my life. I no longer analyze whether the Family is for me or not. I *know* it is. I also cannot regard the Family as merely a lifestyle. It is more than that. It

our Different

Different Paths

have to confront this again?”

Over the past years I have watched my brothers and sisters follow a similar trail, leading them out of the Family. The fact that I am the only sibling to remain has provoked my brothers and sisters to try and persuade me to join them numerous times. “There is so much you can experience out here. You have so much potential, don’t waste it!” These are the quotations I have heard countless times, and despite my resolute decision, the barrage continues. It’s not done out of malice, but simply because they desire the assurance of my happiness.

Independence, freedom ... happiness, these were the words they spoke that

is my life's calling to be here, my career in life. I will only get as much out of it as I put into it. If I desire happiness, then I must in turn look for a way to bring happiness into the lives of those I live with and the needy.

I have no idea how many more tears I will cry on behalf of those I love. Nor do I know the number of times I will be asked by them to reaffirm my decision of having a place within this Family. But as I chin up and accept that this is one of my sacrifices to do His work, I find peace within. For now I may find myself distant from those I love, with a separate path to walk on, but who is to say what plans He has for them in the future.

I don't have profound words to explain the peace that the Lord gives when I finally accept the sacrifices He asks of me. Once, as I faced the sadness of one of my sisters leaving, I thought to cheer myself up. "Lord, You better have something *real* good come out of this, as it hurts to see another loved one stray, while You ask me to move forward again!" I told Him. Then I laughed. Would the Lord ever require something of me that He wasn't prepared to reward me for? No!

"I don't have profound words to explain the peace that the Lord gives when I finally accept the sacrifices He asks of me."

I don't expect my sacrifices to all be rewarded in this life. I can wait on that. He will give me the grace to walk onward. My one remaining prayer through it all is that, in their desire for freedom and independence, they will lead good lives and be happy. Though each of my brothers and sisters have met with calamities along their paths—both serious and mild—I know that He has used it to bring out the best in them. He will still require for them to move forward, just as He now tells me to follow Him up another mountain. They're only a prayer away; that thought gives me courage, and the ability to go on.

Now we walk separate paths, but I will always reminisce the time we traveled the same road. Though this life may never present the opportunity to be united like that again, we will be one day. The memories will remain of the love we shared and still share—on our different paths.

Jesus

speaking:

They're like strings tied to your heart; it hurts when the tug yanks them away. I feel your pain with you, because I care for them like you do. Don't ever give up praying and hoping that you'll see them back close to you, not only in the physical, but united in your goals in life.

It's hard to have to watch them go through it. I know! I shed tears with you. Just be there when they need the arms to come running back to. Love them back in; pray them back in. Your prayers won't go unheard, I guarantee. When you feel you've come to the end of your understanding or hope, come to Me and I'll help you carry on. Just don't ever lose that hope and strength. (*End of message from Jesus.*)



"PLEASE PASS THE POSSUM!"

Postcard from Post Harcourt

By Tim E. (22)

Art by
Evey



Last March I had the pleasure of participating in a medical project in Cross River State, Nigeria. One day I was standing outside the eye clinic with some people who were awaiting treatment, when suddenly, out of nowhere, came an owl. Following closely behind it were a couple of young guys armed with a bamboo spear, a ladder, and a bag.

"Dis boys wan chop betta meat," a potential eye surgery patient explained, as we watched the boys pursue the owl into the bush. The fact that the boys wanted to "chop," or eat, the owl was apparently obvious enough for any blind man to see, but the fact that the owl had been described as "better meat" raised another question in my mind. "Better than what?" I asked myself.

Within a couple weeks I had my answer: Possum!

"Playing Possum with God," was the name of a Gospel tract produced by one of the indigenous churches in this area which provided me with this revelation. It began with the following statement: "The possum is a large, edible rodent found in America, which is often hunted for its delicious flesh."

Had this statement appeared in the form of a "true or false" question, I would have definitely answered with "false," as I have never eaten a possum, and neither has anyone else in

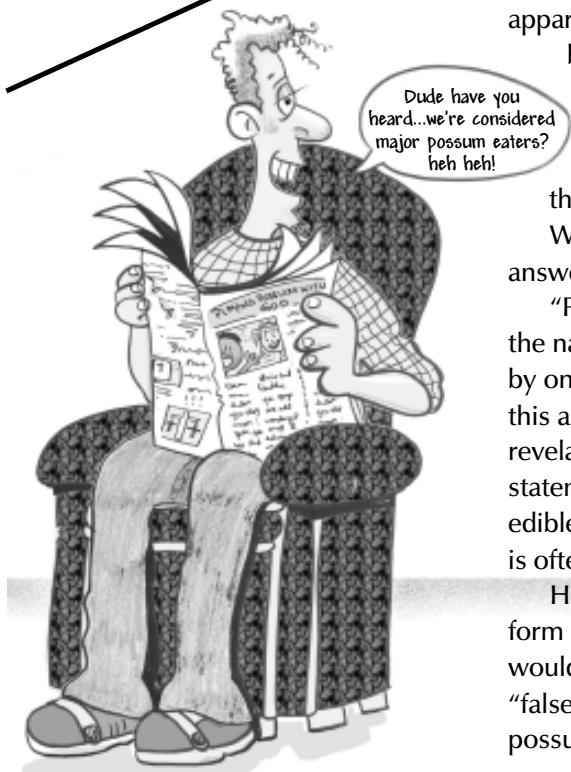
my Home. Nor have we ever hunted them, or even heard of them being considered edible before.

Although this was definitely not the first time I've questioned the edibility of a proposed foodstuff, this discovery caused me some concern, as I was reminded not only of the fact that tastes may vary between people and places, but that I may also have to, at some point, broaden my culinary horizon in order to become one in a land where it can sometimes seem like anything goes when it comes to what you choose to eat.

Fortunately, most Nigerian foods contain conventional ingredients, like fish, vegetables, pepper, etc.—things that are good for you. In fact, I often prefer Nigerian food to Western food, as it is very filling and you get to use your hands. Also, eating local food helps me to better relate to the nationals during mealtimes and I imagine it makes them feel accepted as well, thus it is a good testimony and the loving thing to do.

When looking to the Word for possible comfort and advice in this area, I was reminded of how the Lord Himself prepared the Apostle Peter's heart for witnessing to the Gentiles by acquainting him with Gentile food. According to the story in Acts 10, Peter was up on Simon the Tanner's roof one day, when he became very hungry.

Unfortunately, lunch was not ready yet, and so as he waited. The Bible tells



POSTCARD FROM PORT HARCOURT POSTCARD FROM PORT

HARCOURT POSTCARD FROM PORT HARCOURT POSTCARD



us, he passed out and dreamt of food.

This is not too unusual, as I'm sure many of us would, if we're really honest, confess to occasionally dreaming, or at least daydreaming, about food, particularly in times when:

- A) Food is scarce or unavailable.
- B) Food available is not to our personal liking (you know, like we're pretending it's ice cream).
- C) You are suffering from a severe case of malaria, inducing hallucinations of meatloaf and mashed potatoes. (Don't look at me!)

However, St. Peter's case was none of the above, although point A did sort of apply. For one thing, he was not dreaming about food he liked. What he saw in his trance was a sheet containing every kind of four-footed beast and creeping thing known to man (which would include possums) descending from the sky, accompanied by a voice telling him to "kill and eat."

Up to this point in his life, Peter had been very faithful to eat only foods that had been approved by the Mosaic Law. This meant he'd never eaten any pork, seafood, junk food or soy products, much less any of the more exotic species of four-footed beasts he now saw dangling before him. So He was like, "Lord, You know I can't eat that! Not only are these things unclean, but I've never had any before."

"Kill and eat!" came the reply, "What God hath cleansed, call not unclean!"

Again, Peter refused. By the time the Lord repeated this instruction a third time, Peter was getting nervous. "But Lord, I mean, look at this ... an owl? Do you really want me to eat an owl? ... And what's this possum doing here? That's ridiculous! I mean, seriously, Lord, who eats a possum? Besides, if I absolutely *had* to eat something unclean, I'd much rather

have a worm!"

Finally, after his third refusal, the sheet of animals was drawn back up into Heaven and Peter came to.

Why do you think it was that Peter's vision featured a bunch of unclean animals, when the purpose of it was to show Peter that it was okay to witness to a Gentile, namely, Cornelius? I'm sure the Lord could have just given him a vision of Cornelius if that had been the sole purpose of the vision. Therefore, it is my theory that the Lord was also trying to prepare Peter for having to eat the unclean food Cornelius ate, in order to reach him. Likewise, I too must be willing to "eat what is set before me" in order to be an effective witness here in Nigeria.

But fortunately, this is not a battle I have to face every day. In fact, the only questionable thing I've had to eat so far is ... periwinkle.

(To be continued.)