



QUE PASA

WHAT'S HAPPENING

A Publication of International Children's Care
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CHRISTMAS REFLECTIONS

as Viewed Through a Familiar Carol.

“Away in a manger, No crib for His bed, the little Lord Jesus lay down His sweet head.”

Prior to arriving at ICC, many of our children did not know the comforts of home and the love of a family. Jesus understands the plight of destitute children who are left unwelcomed and unloved by a world too busy and self-absorbed to care.

“The stars in the bright sky looked down where He lay. The little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.”

Violence has irrupted yet again in the D. R. Congo. There is concern that the peace and quiet of our Island home may be threat-

ened. If the war escalates, there may no longer be a haven of refuge for these children. Please pray for our children's continued safety. As they fall asleep under those same stars that looked down over the Baby Jesus, may they enjoy peaceful sleep, free from worry and care.

“The cattle are lowing, the poor Baby wakes, But little Lord Jesus, no crying He makes.”

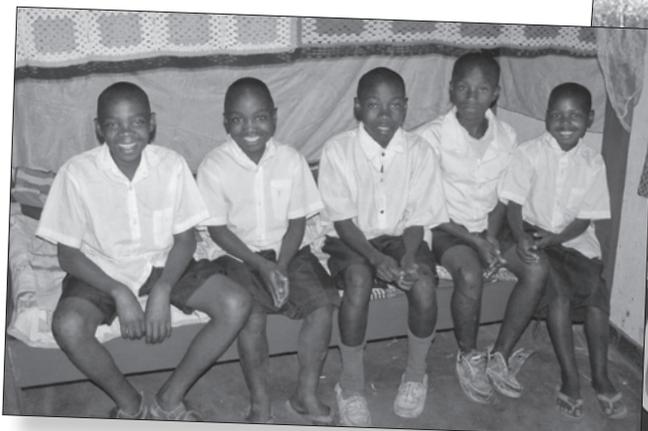
Recently, two new children became part of our ICC family in the Dominican Republic. Our finances continue to be tight, and in that sense there was “no room” for these children, yet our direc-

tor made room – in the Spirit of Christmas. These children have a new family and a new life, and will experience peace and contentment this Christmas.

“I love Thee, Lord Jesus, look down from the sky. And stay by my side, 'til morning is nigh.”

ICC's mission is to stay by the side of destitute children, not “til morning is nigh,” but until they are grown and able to provide for themselves. You can stay by the side of ICC's children by praying for them and continuing to send your financial contributions. Jesus will never leave these kids, and neither will ICC.

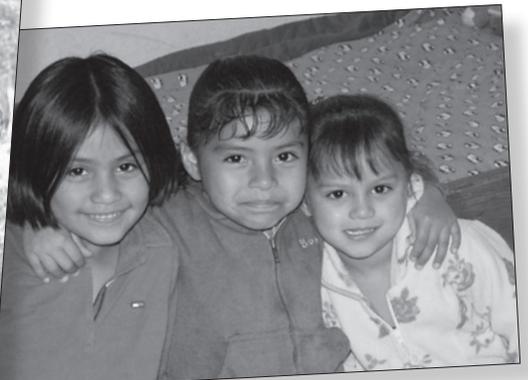
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Congo Project



El Salvador Project



Mexico Project

A Personal Note

Dear ICC Family,

In a remote village, accessible only by a river, all was quiet in the very early hours before dawn. The populace was still sleeping when a shot rang out, then another and another. Soon there were screams and pandemonium. Amelia's husband grabbed his pants, pulling them on as he ran out to see what was happening. But a bullet felled him. When Amelia was able to get out the door she found her husband breathing his last. She ran across the road to her father's house and found he had already been shot. Her sister-in-law met her screaming, "They have killed Jose!" (her husband). Amelia's sister came screaming down the path. Her husband was dead too.

The horrible truth soon became apparent. The guerrillas were in their village, killing every man they found. The news went around that when they had come seeking a haven and a center from where they could carry on their war against the army, they learned that the village elders had sent word to the army. This was their revenge.

The three women gathered their twelve little children and ran to the nearby mountain, looking for a place to hide. Three days passed. The little bit of food they had grabbed up in their haste was gone. The children were crying for food. But they were afraid to go back to the village. Somehow their pastor found them.

"You can't go back to your homes," he said. "It isn't safe yet and some of the houses have been burned," Then after a few moments of reflection he suggested, "Right now you need a place to take the children. Even if you try to go back to your village to find what has happened to your homes, it would be impossible to care for all these children. I have heard about a new children's village called The Pines, where they are taking care of children who are victims of this war. Would you like for me to find a way to take you there?"

The three mothers were glad for any help. Amelia, the oldest of the three, answered, "Yes, Pastor, "If you would help us we would be grateful. We have eaten almost nothing for three days. The children have to have food."

"Wait for me here" the pastor told them. "I'll see if it is safe to go down to the river and find a boat. If we can get to the nearest village, I'll try to borrow a pickup to take you all to The Pines."

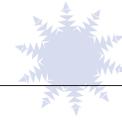
It was the week before Christmas. Ken and I happened to be in Guatemala City at the Receiving Center. Juana, our director from The Pines, had come in the day before to buy supplies for Christmas. The civil war in Guatemala was raging. We had just finished breakfast and Juana was telling us the news. "The army is bringing us children who have been left as victims faster than we can find room for them. Some of the houses now have fifteen children instead of twelve, but we just can't turn children away. The house mothers tell me, 'Don't turn the children away, I'll take another one.'"

The phone rang and when I answered it was Job, the director of construction and farming, who was taking Juana's place while she was gone. "There is bad news, Mrs. Fleck. A pickup load of children just arrived from a distant village where there was a massacre of all the men in the village. These children with their three mothers were hiding in the mountains until a pastor found them and brought them here. We don't know what to do. All the houses are more than full. What shall I do? The pastor wants to know if he can leave the children with us."

I looked toward Ken and Juana. "Just a minute, Job, give us a little time to talk. Call back in a few minutes."

We talked the situation over and considered our options. "What would you think about asking the mission school if we can use that old cabin that the Rareys built down by the river?" I asked.

"But who would take care of twelve children? We don't have any extra house parents or even helpers than we can spare," Juana replied.



Ken had an idea. “Maybe the mothers would like to stay and take care of them.”

Juana and I both thought that might be a good idea. I suggested, “If their village is in bad shape now, they might really be happy for that. I know they expected to have to leave the children. This might be a big relief to them.”

We discussed it more and when Job called, I told him, “Juana will take the next bus back. In the meantime, divide them all up among the other homes, until she gets there.”

Turning to Ken and Juana I said, “It will take some doing, but it might work out.” We talked about how Juana could get Job to help her get the cabin ready for this emergency. We had a prayer for help with all the plans and Ken took Juana to the bus depot.

Ken and I then had one of our emergency committee meetings, as we called them. Obviously, the political situation was worsening. The reason we had been called to start this program for children, the devastating earthquake, was no longer the threat or biggest reason to care for the children who were victims.

“We will need to rally more support, build more homes, raise our budgets, and get ready for the long haul of this war,” I told him. “I will be anxious for Juana’s call after she gets things under control, and to know more about what really happened.”

The next afternoon Juana called. “We’ve been busy, but I think we have things under control. You can’t imagine how happy those three mothers were when we asked them if they would like to stay and care for their children for now. Not only were they relieved that they didn’t have to leave the children, but they didn’t know what they might find back in their village.”

“So, how did you arrange things?” I asked her.

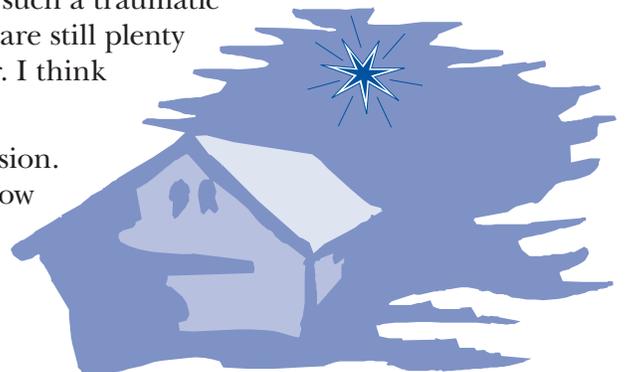
“Well, first of all, Job took some of the house fathers and went down to the cabin and gave it a good cleaning. There was a pump to bring water from the river, and they got that working. They put together some bunks and there were enough foam pads in the storeroom for the beds. Also, we found enough bedding in the storeroom, as well as clothes for all of them. You know the cabin has an outside kitchen in the back and we found enough pots and pans so they can cook on a primitive stove that is there. All in all, for now they are in pretty good shape. It was heartwarming for me to see how all the other families wanted to help. Even the children wanted to share their toys. And each one of the house mothers agreed to take their turn taking meals down to the cabin.”

“That is so wonderful!” I answered. “This will be a good experience for all of them. By the way, since this next weekend is Christmas, have you thought about what we need to do for that?”

“Yes, all of our families were full of ideas. They want to share their Christmas. The house mothers already have plans to take Christmas dinner to the family at the cabin, and the children are figuring out what they can give to these children who have gone through such a traumatic experience. Also, I have gone through the storeroom. There are still plenty of toys there that came in the last truck load from Vancouver. I think everyone will have a good Christmas.”

“Good job, Juana! I knew you would rise to the occasion. And I am so proud of all of our families out there. They know what it means to suffer. Now they can do something for other children.”

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Personal Note - *continued*

The next week, when Juana called to give us an update, she was full of good news. “You know, I am sure the mothers are still in shock over what happened that terrible morning, and they must be mourning the death of their loved ones who were shot. But, at least they have their own children with them and they are safe and cared for. It was interesting to hear the remarks of the children when all the hot Christmas dinner items began to be brought in, and then when packages were given to the children. I heard one little boy say, “This is the best Christmas we ever had!”

When I put the receiver down, I turned to Ken, “You know, this is just a sample of what ICC is all about, how God can turn tragedies into something good. When God gave us this opportunity to help homeless and hurting children, we couldn’t know all that it would entail. But right now I am so happy and grateful to be part of something so tremendously rewarding. I just wish that I could have taken our faithful ICC supporters right out there to see how this program is making such a difference in the lives of children.

As Ken noticed the tears that had filled my eyes, tears of joy, he put his arms around me and said, “Yes, my dearest. This was your dream. It isn’t going to be easy, but the rewards are beyond description. I am so glad I can share this dream with you.”

“Drying my eyes I answered, “You need to know, Ken, that without God and you, I could never have taken a responsibility of this magnitude on. But, with you by my side and God with us, and all of the ICC family, who receive my monthly letters, behind us, many children will find a safe haven.”

Since then hundreds of children have been rescued from danger, from hunger, from trauma, and yes, many from death. As time goes on, the plight of many children only gets worse. Now we are providing homes for children around the world. As natural disasters and violence increase, hunger and starvation are more common. Children are the innocent victims. We are praying earnestly that during this Christmas season, when the children’s needs are increasing, God will touch the hearts of all of our ICC family and many more. Every day we hear more about the panic of banks failing and economic disaster lurking, but God has told us that when we invest in the bank of Heaven the rewards are certain. I am so thankful for all the loving support from you in our ICC family and I am sure we can count on you again.



With my love and prayers,

Aleyon

Christmas Reflections - *continued*

“Be near me, Lord Jesus, I ask Thee to stay close by me forever, and love me I pray.”

Jesus wants children to grow up in a loving home. When a child is orphaned, all that is taken away. For our children, ICC has become their family. The love they feel at ICC remains, and many choose to come back to ICC to work, to get married, for graduations and other special occasions.

“Bless all the dear children in Thy tender care. And take us to heaven to live with Thee there.”

Through your prayers and contributions, thousands of orphaned and destitute children have been richly blessed. Yet we need you to continue to stand with us and help us care for them. The words of Christ remind us that, “as you have done it unto the least of these ...you have done it unto me.” On behalf of the entire ICC

family, thank-you for your ongoing support, and may Jesus bless you with a wonderful holiday filled with love, joy, and peace. Thanks for being a cherished part of our family!

Kent Greve

