

What a special time of year to celebrate the birth of our Savior and recognize all the many blessings He has gifted us in 2023!

As we gathered last week for our last staff meeting of 2023, we each shared some of the highlights of the year. It was an encouraging time as we looked back and acknowledged all that God has done to expand our ministry to touch missionaries all over the world. A few weeks ago, one of our team was teaching missionaries in the Middle East how to debrief and come alongside those being impacted by the war. A month before, another team member was ministering to missionaries and their families in another sensitive region. Others on our team have served in Asia, Europe, South and Central America, and The Caribbean. And the ministry on our campus in Michigan has seen so much fruit as our missionary debriefing retreats were full this past year! What an awesome impact!



Photos:

Top - Our team teaching debriefing in the Middle East during wartime

Left - Our team ministering in Bolivia

Right - Our team serving a missionary family in a sensitive country

### Celebrating the Holidays in Different Cultures

The question came up, "How do you celebrate the holidays as missionaries in different cultures around the world?"

During a season that is promoted as "merry and bright", we realize that the holidays can be a very hard time for many.

The stresses, losses, and challenges during the year can add up and affect our Christmas cheer. But this is especially true for missionaries and their families living cross-culturally or transitioning back to the States after serving overseas. As a team, we spent time sharing ways we found helpful living cross culturally during the holiday season:

Some would invite friends in the community to a special meal time while living in a nation where they could be put in jail for sharing their Christian faith.

Others would make special foods that were unique to that culture.

Blending traditions they grew up with and traditions in their host country creates new and unique celebrations honoring both cultures.

I (Kevin) remember one year we went with a few families to a big hill and cut down huge palm leaves, using them as sleds for the kids to slide down while trying to remember snow.

A team member shared how they celebrated Thanksgiving one year by raising their own turkeys, inviting almost 50 people from the neighborhood for a traditional thanksgiving meal, and having everyone share something they were thankful for. This became a new yearly tradition for all the neighbors.

Another shared how they would put a star in their window to remind them of a tradition they did growing up.

The holidays may look different this year for some, but the Reason for the season remains the same. And what a beautiful and creative God we serve who invites us to celebrate in so many unique ways!

A Special Chair

Of all the different traditions mentioned above, we found that a common theme was to find those who were alone and invite them into the celebration. During this Christmas season, please remember the missionaries you support. Send them a special email, card, or voice mail. Thank them. Pray for them. Encourage them. One person I (Kevin) talked to this week said they would leave a chair open at their table to help them to remember their missionary friends, or those who are alone or struggling during this season. Remember that God sees the "one," cares deeply for those who are alone or hurting, and goes out of His way to invite them to the table. May we do the same!

"God places the lonely in families; He sets the prisoners free and gives them joy..."

- Psalm 68:6a NLT

#### Moving into the New Year with Excitement

We want to say a special thank you to all of you who have partnered with us this past year! What a blessing you have been to us and to the missionaries that we get to encourage and equip. Our first two Radiant Life Retreats in 2024 are almost full! And we have started work on the pole barn conversion—new windows and doors are now in. The ceiling material has been donated and is ready to be installed. We are so excited to see how God will use this area when completed to minister to many missionary kids!

Can you help us to get this project finished before our Radiant Life Retreat in April? We need volunteers to help us with construction and because of all the donations of labor and material we only need \$30,000 to finish this area for missionaries to use! If you can help us with a tax-deductible year-end donation to see this happen, just use the link and you will be directed to the giving page for that project.

Give toward the Property Project

Sue and I want to thank you for partnering with us this past year! We really feel blessed.

Like all YWAM Missionaries we must raise 100% of our personal and ministry support. If you like to partner with us to continue this important ministry to missionaries and their families all over the world you can do so by using the donate link on our website or send a check to the address below.

May the Lord abundantly bless you and those you love this season with indescribable joy, deep connection, and supernatural peace.

Kevin and Sue Prins

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