



Merry Christmas from Kelly and April Crull

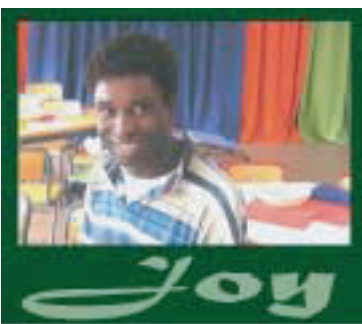
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For the last two Christmas seasons, our small group has enjoyed celebrating Advent and the reminder it is of our longing expectation for a Savior and God's faithfulness to His promises. Even this busy season, especially when starting a church, it is good to take the time to remember the amazing Gift and promises Advent symbolizes.



The last weekend in October we took a trip to an orphanage in Morocco with a group from Mountainview. Hope was constantly evident in this trip. We provided hope to the children at the orphanage by bringing them clothing, medication, and diapers. We were God's instrument of hope to the workers at the orphanage by reminding them that the rest of the world has not forgotten the important work they do. The beautiful faces of abandoned children were a reminder to us of the need to have hope that our Messiah will return again to right the world's wrongs. Finally, Kelly and I hope that Mountainview will continue to be involved with this orphanage and we plan to lead a trip there this spring.

How to find peace in the midst of major decision-making? When we first left for Europe a little over two years ago, we committed to staying with our team in Madrid for two years. Now the time has come for us to decide "what's next?" We have decided to continue working with Christian Associates to help them plant churches in Western Europe. We will be staying in Madrid until June 2005. Then we will spend the summer in the United States on furlough -- visiting churches, spending time with all of you, and preparing for our next step. In the fall of 2005, we will be moving to another part of Europe (most likely in Spain) where Kelly will continue to work with Christian Associates but now in a support role of communications and worship consultation for new churches. During this time, April will attend graduate school, studying a master's degree in Peace Studies.. We feel at peace because we already see God taking care of what we've started here by people stepping into leadership. God has also graciously been providing peace through the voices of those around us and in His subtle, whispering direction.



Speaking of Mountainview, the last year has provided many opportunities for us to rejoice. The number of people involved in our church either in small groups or by attending services has been around 100-120. These Internationals are from all over the world, such as England, Jordan, Nigeria, Canada, Japan, Finland, Holland, Ireland, Columbia, Taiwan, the United States, and of course, Spain. There are also a number of people who either come to our small groups or services who are not Christians, but enjoy being part of a community of faith and are seeking after God. Also, Mountainview's reputation as being an interesting and relevant church is growing among the International population here in Madrid. Recently we have moved to a new meeting location for our services in a wonderful school. We look forward to being able to continue growing in this new space.

Christmas is a time when many people who would not normally go to a church service are willing to darken the doorway. Because of this, we put a lot of energy into creating a brunch/Christmas service where people will be excited to invite their friends. Our service this year was on Sunday, December 12th. We hope that it was a time when people experienced the love of God through fellowship and drama. Nearly 200 people attended and about half of them do not usually go to church. Praise God for this turnout! Our other excitement about Christmas is that we will be making a trip to NW Iowa for a few weeks to spend time with our families. It has been a year since our last visit and we have a niece and a new girlfriend in the family to meet. We are greatly looking forward to spending time with those we love.

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