



# Doing Good That Is Good™

The newsletter of FARMS International Formerly AGRICULTURAL EVANGELISM

Bangladesh Update - December 2007

Providing revolving entrepreneurial loans to poor Christian families – Galatians 6:10

**G**REETINGS IN THE NAME OF OUR SAVIOR during this Christmas Season!

Christmas is a sacred and joyous time for all Christians. It is easy to get caught up in the rush and festivities of the season. However, we wanted this newsletter to be a reminder of why we gather with family, attend Christmas events, and get caught up in a truly wonderful time of year.

It is also a time for all of us to reflect on how fortunate many of us are and the blessings we have. Included in this newsletter is an update on the recent tragedy that hit Bangladesh. It affected many people associated with our FARMS program. The recovery is underway with reports and assessments in their initial stages. We will keep all of our partners informed as more details are gathered.

I hope you will take an opportunity to read the Christmas story this year when you have a gathering of family or in your quiet time with the Lord. We are enclosing the story as told by Luke in this issue. In everything we do we need the quiet moments to reflect on what Christmas is all about. We also need to pray for the body of Christ here at home and around the world.

On behalf of all of the overseas committees, project holders, Board of Trustees, and the staff of FARMS International we wish all of you and yours a very Merry Christmas.

In Him,

### *The Staff of FARMS International*

Joe Richter  
Pat Richter  
Emebet Davies  
Nathan McLaughlin



## Bangladesh Update: Cyclone Sidr

Dear FARMS friend:

**C**YCLONE SIDR recently struck Bangladesh with devastating results. I am sure many of you have heard about it through the international news coverage. Many Bengalis in the western part of the nation were affected including some who are part of the FARMS program. Current estimates suggest as many as 10,000 lost their lives, and many villages were destroyed. Relief teams are still unable to get to some islands even to assess the damage. As you can imagine, the need is great in a nation where so many already have so little.



*Families homes are in ruins*

FARMS programs were affected by this cyclone and we are still gathering information. We will look at advancing funds to our current programs to get those project holders affected by this natural disaster restored and operating again. A unique aspect of FARMS is the ability of the committee to address each disaster in a way that makes financial sense for all parties.

**More importantly, it is a tremendous testimony as it reveals the true heart of Christ as Christians work together and reach out to their surrounding communities.**

We can use your help if you are able to make a gift or take an offering at your church at this time. We will be working with the committees in the future.

*(Continued on next page)*

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*(Cyclone Sidr, continued from page 1)*

More information will be available in coming newsletters and will be available on our website. We realize this is a busy time of year, but perhaps God wants to use you in this effort. We have no control over the timing of any tragedy. We believe it presents an opportunity for us to be the presence of Christ in the world during difficult times.

Thank you for your prayers and gifts!



*Business buildings are vacant*

# Christmas around the World

**Moldova:** In Moldova, the Christmas and New Year celebrations are merged. The elements of the Christian faith are blended with hopes for a prosperous New Year. Carol singers arrive during the afternoon and evening of Christmas Eve. The well-wishers are expected during the afternoon of New Year's Eve-- these are groups who extend wishes for a happy life and prosperity in the coming year. The children, who symbolize purity and hope, receive apples, nuts, and home-baked bread. (Source: Moldova Foundation 2007)



*Christmas and The New Year are celebrated together!*

**Senegal:** Christmas is about family in Senegal. A meat dish with rice is served. Juices are made from red roots (a category of plants with red roots) called Bissap. The drink is made from the leaves. You add



*Meat and rice dish*

sugar and drink it cold. Fruit, chocolate, and cakes are a special treat for the kids. After dinner the adults sit around talking and drinking coffee and the children have hot chocolate.



*Juice made from Bissap*



Banana trees

**Bangladesh:** In Bangladesh, the Christian villages cut down scores of banana trees and replant them in pairs along the paths to churches and outside their homes. They then bend over the huge leaves of the banana trees to form an arch and make small holes in the bamboo poles. They fill them with oil and tie them across the arches. When the oil is lit, the way to the church and their homes is brightly lit. (Source: msc.edu)

**Haiti:** Traditionally, a few days before Christmas, Haitians cut pine branches to serve as Christmas trees or they go to the market and get freshly cut trees brought from the mountains. They then decorate them with bright ornaments. At the base of the Christmas tree they add a fairly large nativity scene which occupies a large part of the living room.

(Source Haitiwebs.com)



Haitian children

## the Nativity Story

**Luke 1:26-38**

### The Birth of Jesus Foretold

In the sixth month, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary. The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you."

Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favor with God. You will be with child and

give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end."

"How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?"

The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God. Even Elizabeth your relative is

going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be barren is in her sixth month. For nothing is impossible with God."

"I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered. "May it be to me as you have said." Then the angel left her.

### Luke 2 ~ The Birth of Jesus

In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. (This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.) And everyone went to his own town to register.

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*(The Nativity, Continued)*

So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

**The Shepherds and the Angels**

And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that

will be for all the people. **11**Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger."



Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest,

and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests."

When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about."

So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.

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