

A close-up painting of hands holding a large, round object, likely a bowl or pot. The object is covered with a cloth that has blue, white, and red stripes. The hands are painted in a warm, earthy orange and yellow color. The background is dark and indistinct.

On Christmas day, just before lunch there was a knock on the door. There stood one of our neighbors, holding an enormous bowl covered with a towel.

THE BEST PRESENT

*We had no food that Christmas.
We could only hope for a miracle.*

By Ailson Sales

When I was 12 years old, my family lived on a farm in Brazil, far from the city. That December my brother and

I were harvesting nuts for another farm owner when it suddenly began to rain. For days the rain continued so heavily that we couldn't work.

It was almost Christmas, and our family was running out of food. My mother was worried we wouldn't have a Christmas dinner, so she asked my older brother and me to ask the farm owner for the money we had earned. It wouldn't be much, but it would buy a little food for our family at a time when others were preparing their holiday feasts.

My brother and I walked several miles on a muddy road to get to the farm owner's house. When we arrived, the owner was surprised. "What brings you here on such a rainy day?" he asked. We explained our situation, and he said, "I don't have any cash to pay you with, but I can pay you with a check." We accepted and left quickly so we could make it into town to cash the check and buy the groceries we needed.

By the time we got to town, almost every business had closed for the Christmas holiday. We were exhausted, and our efforts to cash the check were in vain.

When we arrived home without the groceries, my

mother and eight brothers and sisters were very disappointed. All we had was the check, which at the moment was worthless to us. Christmas Eve came without any presents and with little food. We ate a dinner of rice and went to bed.

We arose on Christmas morning to the sound of our neighbors celebrating outside, but we remained inside, hoping for a miracle that would put food on our table. To our surprise, just before lunch there was a knock on the door. There stood one of our neighbors, holding an enormous bowl covered with a towel.

"I came to bring this to you," she said. My mother gratefully accepted the bowl, and when we looked inside, we found it was full of Christmas foods. To us it was a banquet, a true miracle!

That Christmas meal was the best present I ever received because it fed us on such a special day. Although our neighbor was not aware of our circumstances, I know that our Heavenly Father was, and He worked through her to feed us that Christmas. I know that when we have no other way out, the Lord in His infinite mercy and goodness sends great miracles into our lives. And as our family learned that Christmas, we can serve the Lord—as our neighbor did—by bringing miracles into the lives of others. ■