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I usually shop calmly on Monday mornings at 8:30 when the grocery store opens. I chat with the girls who weigh the bread, talk weather with the produce lady who has been there since we arrived in Chile, and question the fish man closely about when the fish was brought in. It doesn't matter that some of the fish are still moving. One must check these things out! There are usually only a few people who move their empty carts down the aisles quietly. I fill mine up with the best purchases of the week. I have time to think, add, divide and weigh the alternatives.

Monday morning, December 31st was a different story. We Monday shoppers were invaded! The aisles were packed with people at 8:30 AM. Chileans who normally buy small packets of things, heaved Sam's size boxes into the cart and raced their groaning carts through the aisles weaving around each other. Crazy is not too strong a word for the the New Year's Eve frenzy. I suppose the September 18 Independence celebration might be bigger because it lasts longer, but for the one evening, New Year's Eve wins. Most of Chile comes to our town for December 31st. Hotel capacity is at 100%. They have expanded the fireworks display to cover the entire bay area, so we can see the fireworks almost from our doorstep.

I would prefer to take a long bath, ring the New Year in and go right to bed. (In my more holy moments I remember praying the New Year in with Paul Anderson's family in Greenville, SC). I might be more enthused about the fireworks if they hadn't taken my special, by the door, parking space and flustered my produce lady. Ah well. If there were a grinch who arrived on New Year's Eve to steal everyone's pleasure, that would be me! Not to worry! I covered my green grinch skin and dipped strawberries in chocolate. I did not complain about the smell of Roger's special ceviche recipe. I even blew up some balloons. How's that for hiding the grinch in me?! Roger took the big kids to the sand

dunes to watch the fireworks. Hudson and I watched the fireworks display under a blanket on our rooftop. Suzy snoozed the new year in. My non-grinchiness was rewarded by some sweet greetings just after midnight from one of the families of the church with ALL their extended relatives (three car loads). Even the estranged father and skeptical brother showed up to give some rare Chilean hugs.

The summer schedule in Chile is relaxed, sleeping late, evening activities with friends. It is hardly OUR schedule though. With the beginning of the Chilean school year just around the corner in March our priority is to make sure that the fellowship of His people through worship services, kids' programs, Bible studies, mercy ministries, marriage ministry are all in place for not just church members, but also those searching. That means that there is no resting now. I might be bellyaching a bit to God because He is providing so many opportunities to be with people and there isn't enough time in the day. I suppose God puts that bellyaching right there with the sore subject of the weak dollar that we keep mentioning to Him. "Martha, Martha," the Lord answered, "you are worried and upset about many things".

Suzy says. "I want to ride a roller coaster because I'm a good screamer."

Know of our prayers for you all tonight,

Laura Dye for the Roger Dye Family, CHILE