

THE PENTECOSTAL evangel

NOT BY MIGHT, NOR BY POWER, BUT BY MY SPIRIT SAITH THE LORD

DECEMBER 1969 TEN CENTS

CHRISTMAS EDITION



FILE COPY

Fear Not, Mary!

IT HAPPENED IN NAZARETH. If you had been Mary, you too would have been shaken a bit, at least.

For a heavenly being suddenly appeared to the young woman and spoke to her. Just to see a vision would frighten most of us, especially for the first time. But this was not a vision; the angel was real. She saw him and heard his voice.

In fact, it was what he said that startled her the most: "Hail, thou that art highly favored, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women" (Luke 1:28).

What did he mean? What was going to happen to her? It all was so mysterious: no wonder she was afraid.

There are times when each of us is afraid for one reason or another. And within proper limits, fear is a good thing. It shakes us up, makes us alert. We cannot succeed in either our natural or spiritual lives without a certain amount of fear. A child will burn himself unless he has a wholesome fear of fire. A pedestrian will be killed unless he has a proper fear of traffic. We need a healthy fear of danger and also of sin.

But there is another kind of fear which is very unhealthy, and that is the kind that brings torment. It may be a fear of the future. It may be a fear of people, or of failure; fear of criticism or ridicule. One may live in fear of financial reverses, or fear that some awful sickness or tragedy is going to strike.

These fears will paralyze a person. They may cause a physical breakdown. These will poison the body and choke the soul. They can bind one's life into cruel knots.

The remedy for the *fear knots* of Satan is the "fear nots" of God. He has put scores of "fear nots" in the Bible to give us confidence and the Christmas story brings some into focus.

First there was Zacharias, the husband of Mary's cousin. Fear fell on him when an angel appeared in the temple, but the angel said, "*Fear not*, Zacharias, for thy prayer is heard; and thy wife Elisabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John" (Luke 1:13). God had heard his prayer. If God was watching over them, why should they fear?

Then there was Mary. She was gripped with a fear of the unknown. Why should God single her out for a unique mission? What if she proved inadequate? But the angel Gabriel said, "*Fear not*, Mary: for thou hast found favor with God. And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name Jesus" (Luke 1:30, 31). This was enough to take away her misgivings.

Joseph also was stricken with fear. The angel of the Lord frightened him by appearing in a dream; but the angel said, "Joseph, thou son of David, *fear not* to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost" (Matthew 1:20). Joseph had great forebodings due to Mary's pregnancy—but if the Holy Spirit was in control he need fear no longer.

Finally, there were the shepherds. They were terrified that night when the field was suddenly flooded with light and the angel of the Lord appeared. What did it mean? Had the angel come to pronounce judgment on them for their sins? No, he had come to announce their salvation. "*Fear not*," he said, "for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people" (Luke 2:10, 11).

This is the message of Christmas. God came down to earth to save us from all our enemies, and one of those enemies is fear. —r.c.c.

THE PENTECOSTAL evangel

December 7, 1969

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STATEMENT OF FAITH

WE BELIEVE the Bible to be the inspired and only infallible and authoritative Word of God. WE BELIEVE that there is one God, eternally existent in three persons: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost. WE BELIEVE in the deity of our Lord Jesus Christ, in His virgin birth, in His sinless life, in His miracles, in His vicarious and atoning death, in His bodily resurrection, in His ascension to the right hand of the Father, and in His personal future return to this earth in power and glory to rule a thousand years. WE BELIEVE in the Blessed Hope, which is the Rapture of the Church at Christ's coming. WE BELIEVE that the only means of being cleansed from sin is through repentance and faith in the precious blood of Christ. WE BELIEVE that regeneration by the Holy Spirit is absolutely essential for personal salvation. WE BELIEVE that the redemptive work of Christ on the cross provides healing of the human body in answer to believing prayer. WE BELIEVE that the baptism of the Holy Spirit, according to Acts 2:4, is given to believers who ask for it. WE BELIEVE in the sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit by whose indwelling the Christian is enabled to live a holy life. WE BELIEVE in the resurrection of both the saved and the lost, the one to everlasting life and the other to everlasting damnation.

GOD HAS A MOUTH. No, not like yours or mine. Our vocal organs are subject to decay, to misuse. But "every word of God is pure" (Proverbs 30:5). He speaks with an eternal voice. The God of the Christians is a *speaking* God.

Not all gods can speak. "Ye know," said Paul to the Corinthians, "that ye were Gentiles, carried away unto these dumb idols, even as ye were led" (1 Corinthians 12:2). The idols are dumb, speechless; they are mutes, they cannot talk. "But God...hath in these last days *spoken* unto us" (Hebrews 1:1, 2).

So God is a speaking God: He *can* speak, He *does* speak, He *has* spoken.

When anyone speaks, the result is a *word*. By his use of words a speaker unfolds his mind. The same is true of God.

"Is there any word from the Lord? And Jeremiah said, There is." God has spoken, and we have His *Word*, the result of His speech. If He could not speak, if He were not a speaking God, we could have no *word* from Him. Because He has spoken, we refer gratefully, using reverential capital letters, to "The Word of God."

What is the Word of God? Essentially, the Word of God is anything and everything God has said or done in expression of His nature and intentions. These intentions, and His nature we never would have known had not God disclosed them to us. God's Word is always a word of revelation.

Today we find God's Word in the Bible. The Bible is itself, as a whole and in its parts, the Word of God. But the Word of God was not always written.

The Word of God, defined as "anything and everything God has said or done in expression of His nature and intentions," is at least as old as creation. "Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the *word of God*" (Hebrews 11:3). When we turn to Genesis to read the account, how often we meet this speaking God. "And God said, Let there be light: and there was light." "And God said, Let the waters be gathered together into one place." "And God said, Let us make man." At least eight times in this beginning chapter of the Bible things came into existence because "God said." The speaking God spoke the worlds into reality.

In the course of the varied history of the children of Israel there was always a prophet on hand. God Himself had promised, "I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him" (Deuteronomy 18:18). And the promise was fulfilled first by a long line of prophets to whom repeatedly "the Word of the Lord came."

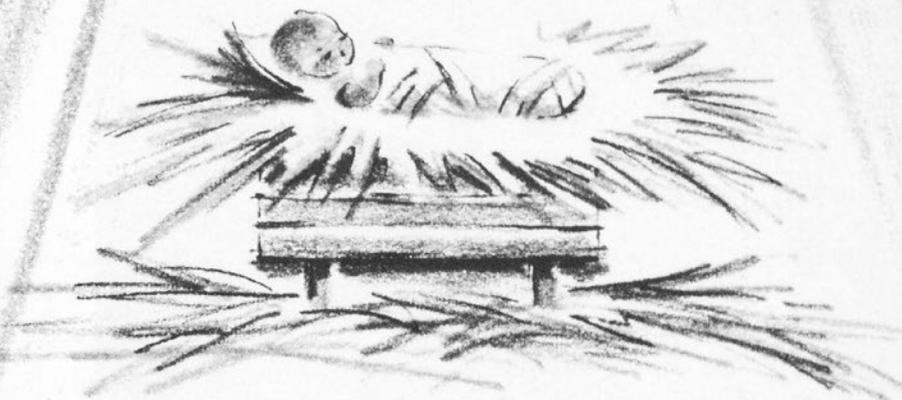
Finally, when the fullness of time was come, the Great Prophet came. The greatest declaration of "the nature and intentions of God" began with the first Christmas. The Word of God was found in a manger. The Word of God became a *person*. "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us" (John 1:14).

Jesus Christ—the babe in the manger, the Nazarene carpenter—is the very Word of God. No one has ever seen God, but Jesus, God's loudest and most clearly pronounced *Word*, "hath declared him" (John 1:18). What we should really be celebrating this Christmas

Russell P. Spittler is chairman of the division of religion at Southern California College, Costa Mesa, California.

The Speaking God

By RUSSELL P. SPITTLER



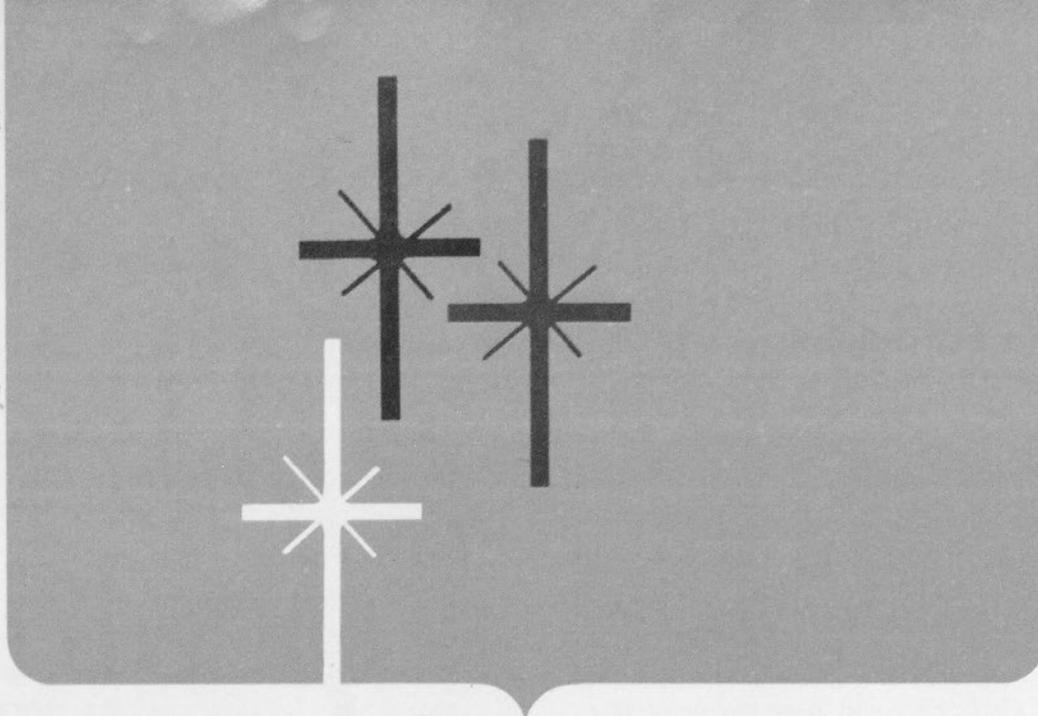
season is the arrival to our visible world of the Living Word of God.

Now this Living Word of God never Himself wrote a book, so far as we are told. He could have. But He did not. He never specifically commanded His disciples to write a book. But He had always impressed them with the constant use He made of a Book which had already been written.

That Book which He used was not called the Bible at that time. In fact, it was not even a book at all as we know books. There were several lengthy scrolls stored in cloth covers which together were called "the Law, the Prophets, and the Writings," or else simply "the Law," or quite often "the Scriptures."

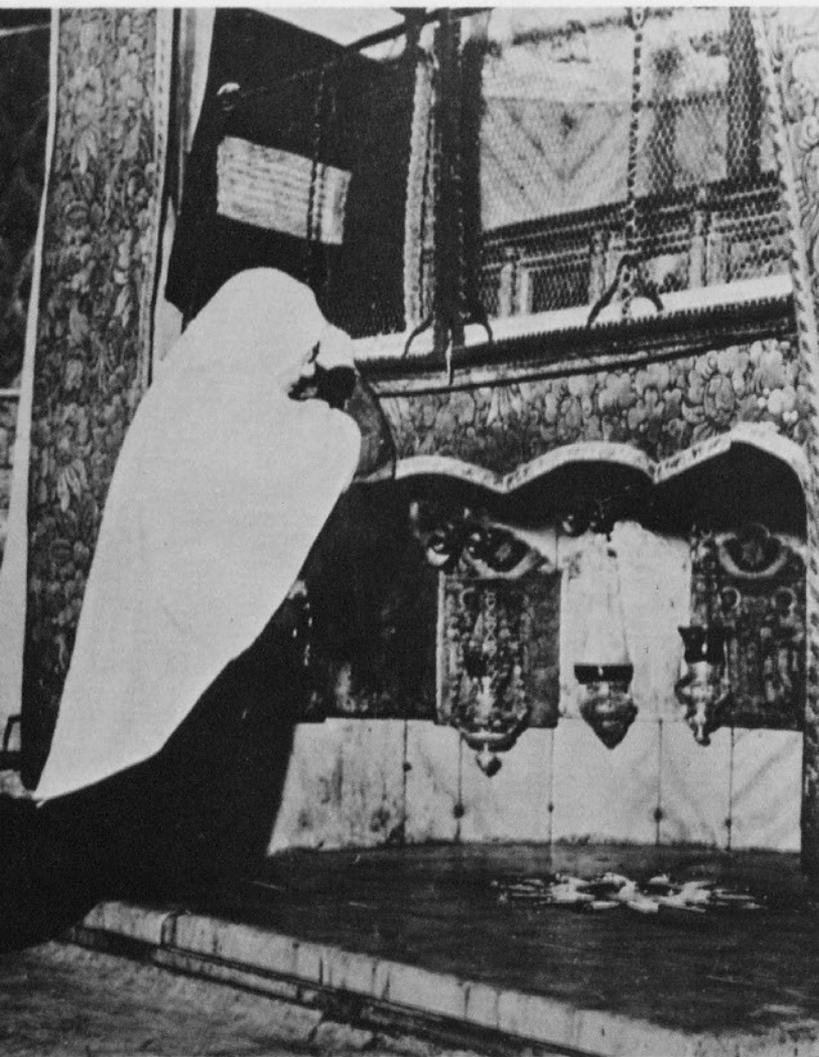
Once this Living Word attended a Jewish service in His hometown. Asked to speak, He called for the scrolls.

(Continued on page 14)



THE THREE STARS OF BETHLEHEM

By **BILL POPEJOY** / *Pastor, Assembly of God, Bourbon, Missouri*



A pilgrim prays at the cave over which the Church of the Nativity is built in Bethlehem. A silver-covered star, cut out of stone and fitted into the marble floor, is believed to mark the exact site of Christ's birth. (Religious News Service photo.)

THE THIRD STAR OF BETHLEHEM is still there. It is in a cave under a church and is probably the most authentic spot in all Israel. Jesus Christ was born there. Millions of tourists have journeyed to that quiet little village to see and touch the place where God became man. There on the rock floor is a star—it appears to be made of silver—and it marks the place of our Saviour's birth.

It is very fitting that a star should be used to designate that spot. Perhaps those who put it there were thinking of the second star of Bethlehem which the Wise Men from the East saw shining in the heavens. When they saw it, they traveled many miles for they believed it was a sign of the birth of the King of the Jews. And they were right!

The third star of Bethlehem is a silver one in a cave; it was made by man and will pass away. The second star of Bethlehem was a heavenly sign of an event that will not be repeated. It too has passed away. But there is one more—the first Star. What is it?

Many centuries ago the descendants of Jacob were returning from a 400-year sojourn in Egypt. After spending 40 years in the wilderness they finally came to the Jordan River and began preparations to cross over and take the land of Palestine.

A Moabite king named Balak hired a prophet named Balaam to curse this people of Israel. The prophet built an altar and started to do as he was bidden.

But God overruled! When the prophet opened his mouth, these are the words that came out: "How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob, and thy tabernacles, O Israel!"

The king became furious. He said to the prophet, "I hired you to curse this people, and you are blessing them."

The prophet tried again to curse Israel, but again God spoke through his lips: "There shall come a Star out

of Jacob, and a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel, and shall smite the corners of Moab, and destroy all the children of Sheth" (Numbers 24:17).

A Star out of Jacob! That is the first Star of Bethlehem! No conjunction of planets could ever fulfill that prophecy, nor could a silver star in a cave. The Star out of Jacob had to be a Person. This prophetic Scripture was fulfilled that night in a cave in Bethlehem when God's Son was born and laid in a manger. That Star has never dimmed.

Tragically, Bethlehem has been aware of only one of these stars—the third one—the silver one that is there today.

The people took no notice of the celestial body that was suspended above their village when Christ was born. They were either too absorbed in their own affairs to notice it, or too dull spiritually to see any significance in it.

But even if the people of Bethlehem had taken note of that second star—the heavenly display above them—they still would not have noticed the real Star that night. It is doubtful if there were two people in the whole village who knew a baby was being born out there among the cattle and sheep. There was no special supernatural light that covered the place. No halo encircled anyone's head. The shepherds were not there yet and even when they arrived, no one thought anything about a few shepherds going into a stable.

Though Bethlehem was small, it was proud. Anyone in town could tell you this was the birthplace of a king. Ask them "What king?" and they would be astonished by your ignorance. "This is the birthplace of King David! Bethlehem is the city of David!" The proud village had no concern at all about a woman from Nazareth who was having a baby out there in a cave.

And the people of Nazareth did not care either. As far as they were concerned, this was an illegitimate child. They could not comprehend how "a virgin shall conceive and bring forth a son."

Had we been in Bethlehem that night and tried to tell the people it was a miracle, we probably could not have convinced one person. They would have laughed at the idea of the Messiah being born in a manger.

No one accepted Him except those who were taught who He was by divine revelation. That was true at His birth; it was true in His life; and it is true today.

Once when Simon Peter confessed Jesus was the Son of the living God, our Lord said, "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jona, for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven."

The real Star of Bethlehem, the Lord Jesus Christ, cannot be seen with natural eyes. Men may kneel where the shepherds knelt and adored Him; but even when they kneel before that silver star, they may fail to see the real Star of Bethlehem. His light is a spiritual light and it must shine within the heart.

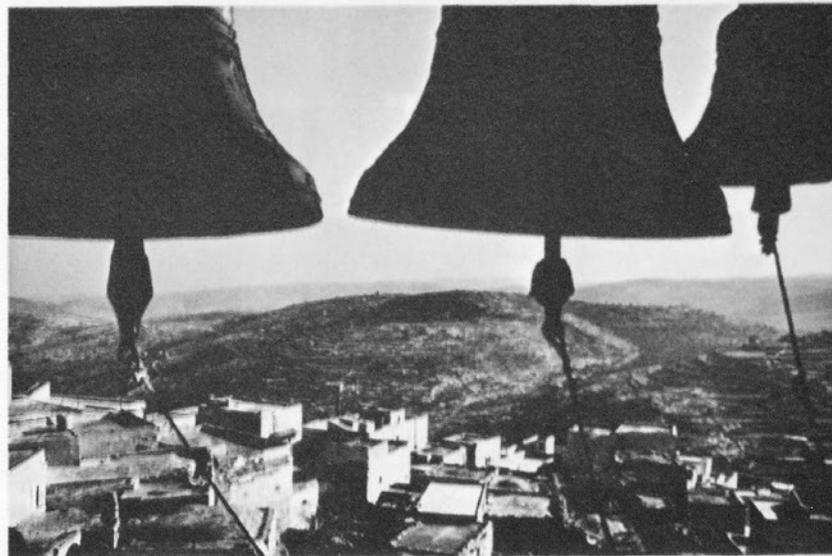
The only star most people in Bethlehem are interested in is the silver one that is there today. For it puts money in their pockets.

I had hardly stepped off the bus in Bethlehem until a dirty little Arab girl who could not have been over three met me with a mimeographed star she wanted to sell. No sooner had I given her ten agora (less than three cents) for it than I was surrounded by other children who had something concerning the Christchild for sale.

Soon an Arab man pushed them out of the way. The articles he had for sale varied from color slides of the silver star to mother-of-pearl souvenirs of the manger scene.

That man did not believe in Jesus Christ, yet he was loaded down with things about Him. His only concern was to make as much money as he could.

This tragedy is hard to accept in the Land of the Bible. For the sake of tourists they pawn all kinds of religious articles but they do not believe in the Jesus they are



The Bells of Bethlehem will ring out over this small Judean village in a chorus of gladness again this Christmas, reminding the world of the Saviour's birth. (Photo by Archie Lieberman for IGTO)

commercializing. The Arabs believe Muhammad, not Jesus Christ, is the true prophet of God. And the Jews do not believe that Jesus of Nazareth is the Messiah, the Christ.

But then we have our "silver star" in America too. We have allowed the sacred things of God to lose their sacredness. People join churches because it is the respectable thing to do or because it will help their business. Preachers have been known to preach because of the money they receive. We use the things of God to our own advantage. And we are in danger of allowing the silver star to cause us to forget the real Star.

Which star of Bethlehem interests you the most? Is it the third star—the silver star of memory—which makes you always live in the past?

Is it the second one—the celestial star of wonder, the miracle of the moment?

Or are you more interested in the first Star—the Christchild who was born in Bethlehem? He alone is the bright and morning Star, the true light to guide us to another world.

That Star still shines today. Though all be dark around us, we never lose our direction when we keep our eyes upon Him. Confused and bewildered, mankind today is searching desperately for a direction in life. Young people want a purpose in living; a meaning to existence.

The only real motivation for living is found in that first Star of Bethlehem. There is a God and the only way to be right with Him is through His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Don't let another Christmas go by without accepting Him.

FOR
THOSE 82 MEN,
11 MONTHS
HAVE NOT ERASED
THE MEMORY
OF THAT NIGHT—
NOR OF THE
11 MONTHS THAT
PRECEDED IT.

CHRISTMAS EVE IN KOREA

By
JULEEN
TURNAGE



BY ANY SENSE OF THE WORD, that Christmas Eve service was different!

If the location itself (an evacuation hospital at Ascom, South Korea) wasn't significant enough to be noted, then surely the 100 percent attendance would mark it as unusual. Strangely, this didn't evoke a bit of surprise. Even the sight of Jews, Catholics, and Protestants participating wholeheartedly in the same service failed to raise eyebrows.

For the 82 members of the "congregation," that service in 1968 was a never-to-be-forgotten experience.

Only the day before these men had been freed after 11 long months of terror and torture at the hands of their North Korean captors. Not one would have missed this opportunity to thank God for their release.

The spiritual significance of the Korean imprisonment of the *Pueblo* crew was not examined by the Naval court of inquiry, but to the men themselves it was of supreme importance.

Almost without exception, the past 11 months had moved each man to a deeper religious commitment, greater faith, and a habitual prayer life.

Behind this new faith and commitment lay the discovery of the sustaining power and peace that only God's Word can give. With the apostle Paul these men could affirm "there is no prison for the word of God" (2 Timothy 2:9, *Moffatt*).

But it hadn't always been this way.

Stephen Harris, the ship's intelligence officer and Protestant lay leader, could remember the first Sunday out of San Diego, heading for the Sea of Japan, when he had arranged a worship service for the crew. Only two men came.

Lack of interest finally caused him to abandon further attempts to hold services.

But during the long months of captivity the religious training of their youth came to the fore, and many of the men credit prayer and faith in God for seeing them through their ordeal.

Verses of Scripture learned in childhood and presumably forgotten, soon became their mainstay. (Surprising how much one remembers when he has nothing to do but think!)

Pieces of paper which were given the men to write out "confessions" were used instead to write out Bible passages that came to mind. The 23rd Psalm and John 3:16 appeared most often.

This "Pueblo Bible" was passed from man to man despite the constant presence of guards, until finally it was confiscated and the men severely punished.

This failed to daunt their spirits, however, and as soon as other scraps of paper were available, they would start all over.

A major contributor to the "Bible" was Lt. Harris. Like the rest of the ship's officers, he was in solitary confinement. He felt especially burdened to share his faith in Christ with the rest of the crew but circumstances made personal contact virtually impossible.

So at every opportunity he wrote hymns, prayers, and Scripture verses which he passed along to the others during the exercise period.

Particularly helpful to him were verses giving assurance of salvation which he had learned shortly after his conversion.

Among these were: "For the wages of sin is death;

but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Romans 6:23); and "God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life" (1 John 5:11, 12).

As the Koreans continued to find these papers, punishment increased. When it became too dangerous for the men to possess these precious scraps, they committed them to memory and recited them to each other at every opportunity.

They were fast learning that when there was nowhere else to turn for help, they could find the comfort and strength they needed in God's Word.

They weren't solely dependent on the Scriptures they had memorized, however.

The few letters from home that trickled through to them often contained Scripture verses. These never failed to renew their strength and courage, and the men shared these with each other at the risk of punishment.

In October one of the crew began praying daily that God would let the men be released by Christmas. Among other things he prayed he would be able to honor Christ's birth not in prison, but in a house of God.

He continued to pray this prayer every day, even in the midst of "Hell Week" when it seemed certain it was not God's will for them to be home for the holiday—and maybe not at all.

Lt. Harris also was praying for the crew's release by Christmas. "The prayer seemed so absurd at the time," he recalls, "but I felt I should pray for that."

"The phenomenal note is that when things seemed blackest, the sun shone through. We were told we would be released 'soon.' The next day we were repatriated," Lt. Harris relates.

Most of the men shared Harris' conviction that God had answered their prayers. This didn't set well with their Korean captors, however, and when the men thanked God for setting them free, an officer told them: "This is a matter between the United States and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, and third parties are not welcome."

Nevertheless, as soon as the men were turned over to U.S. authorities at Panmunjom, the first act of many was to seek a chaplain so they could properly thank God.

The following day a Christmas Eve service was held. Every one of the crew attended. Afterward the men boarded military jet transports for the trip home—going home for Christmas!

The smooth flight across the Pacific was quite different from the choppy crossing 11 months before. But then, the men weren't the same either.

Their experiences had given them a new maturity, a new perception, a new sense of love and loyalty for their country—despite its faults—and all it stands for.

Most significant of all, however, was their new faith in God and love for His Word.

Navy chief of chaplains, Rear Admiral James W. Kelly, summed up their spiritual experience as follows: "Every effort to take away their faith in God only caused them to move in the direction of God. Every effort to subvert their faith only caused them to reaffirm it."

And underneath this reaffirmed faith lay the surety that no matter what happens, the "word of our God shall stand for ever" (Isaiah 40:8). 



AT EASE!

THE SERVICEMEN'S DIVISION of the Assemblies of God is providing this special issue of *The Pentecostal Evangel* to officers and men on our mailing list. It carries with it Christmas greetings and the assurance that your friends in the Assemblies of God are praying for you.

We also want to express our thanks for the service you and your family are rendering for the cause of freedom. We appreciate your efforts and sacrifice.

HAPPINESS IS?

Happiness is described in many different ways. On that first Christmas the angel gave a description of happiness: "Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord" (Luke 2:10, 11).

This message of 2,000 years ago is as relevant today as it was then. Jesus Christ still offers to bring peace and joy to our troubled world and lives. This joy and peace is available to everyone and depends not upon circumstances and environment but upon our relationship to Jesus Christ.

Please contact the Servicemen's Division if you desire help to know more about this life of happiness. We'll send you a free copy of the book, *Life's Greatest Questions*.

MEET THE SERVICEMEN'S REPRESENTATIVES:

DON SCHORSCH, Servicemen's Division, 1445 Boonville Avenue, Springfield, Missouri 65802.



DICK FULMER, representative for Europe. For information regarding European Fellowship Groups or to receive the *Newsletter* write: Königsteiner Strasse 43, 6232 Bad Soden/Ts., Germany



JIM DAVIS, representative for the Far East. For information regarding servicemen's homes and fellowship groups or to receive the *Newsletter*, write: C.P.O. Box 439, Naha, Okinawa.



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I've moved!

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The Koudougou Christians present a Passion Play each Christmas.



Three Wise Men look for the star.

It Doesn't Seem

Koud

By CURTIS DEAN / Upper Volta

IT WAS HOT, and the *harmattan* winds were covering everything, including humans, with a layer of dust. There were no gaily decorated store windows, no Christmas lights, no carols being sung in the streets. In fact, it was rather difficult to believe it was really Christmastime in Upper Volta.

But in spite of the nonholiday appearance of things, seasonal preparations were in full progress at the Koudougou church, for Christmas is a vital part of that congregation's ministry.

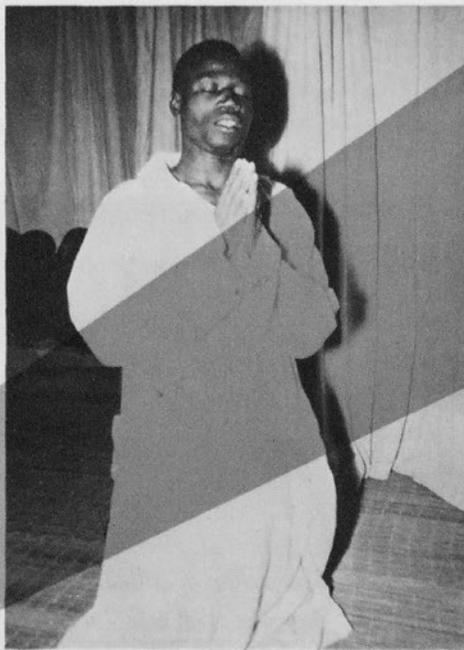
We have found that the most effective means of reaching many of the Koudougou townspeople has been a dramatic portrayal of the life of Christ at this season. We do not consider it sufficient to just tell the story of His birth; these people need to know why He came, what He did, and how they may have eternal life.

The young people of the Koudougou church rehearsed for many weeks, and the Christ's Ambassadors choir fully prepared for the two presentations of the life of Christ. It was not only presented in the church, but also broadcast over the radio in the Moré language on our program—*Kim Kweega (The Living Word)*. Throughout the many African coun-



The Wise Men present gifts to Christ.

Christ prays in the garden.



Christ is arrested.



Like Christmas At

Koudougou

tries where the Mossi people have migrated, all who speak Moré could hear the message of the gift of God's Son.

The forceful, two-hour presentation began with the Messianic prophecies, then the birth, life, and works of Christ, followed by His death, burial, resurrection, and ascension. During the silhouetted Crucifixion scene, a unanimous sob was heard throughout the audience. Officials were seen wiping tears from their eyes.

The greatest astonishment to the people, however, was when the actor doing the part of Christ began to rise from the stage and disappear above. We had never anticipated the tremendous response and reaction that the ascension scene would bring. It was something that townspeople have never forgotten. They talk about it often and wait to see it again. They were reached with the gospel message, even if they never did figure out that behind those curtains were ropes that helped lift our actor out of sight.

The Mossi have the custom of having big feasts on Christmas Day. When the Christmas service is over at the church, the people go around to the various homes. For the rest of the day they eat some at one home, then get up and go to the next place to eat

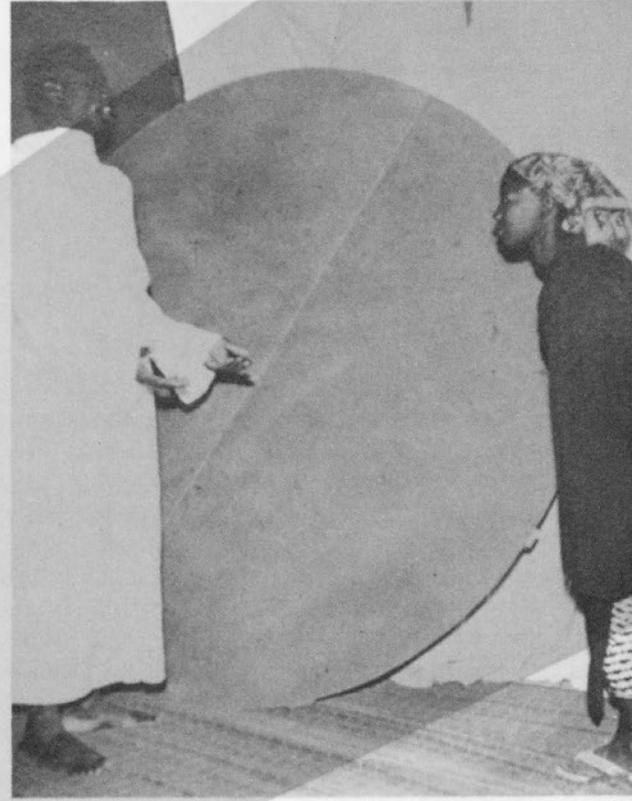
some more. The secret is to eat just a little bit at each house, but I've never succeeded in lasting longer than the fifth home. By then I'm just plain miserable! But the Mossi, who apparently have a greater capacity than I, continue on throughout the day. One church spreads its feasts out for three days!

In order to make it seem somewhat like Christmas in our own home, we used to go out into the bush and find a thorn tree and then hang all the decorations on it while trying not to get stuck too badly by the thorns. At least it served the purpose until we got a small artificial tree.

Immediately following Christmas each year begins our annual Koudougou convention. One year over 1,500 people attended. Communion was served to many outside who could not get into the church. The convention climaxed with the watchnight service—a very precious time of consecration.

No, it really doesn't seem like Christmas in Upper Volta. There is no snow, no tinsel, no sleigh bells; but there is the message of Christ the Saviour told by African young people in the church and over the radio at Koudougou. And that message is what makes Christmas! 

He appears to Mary at the empty tomb.



He suffers on the cross.



Christ bears His cross.



Christ is brought before Pilate.

OBADIAH. A PROPHET OF JUDGMENT

Sunday School Lesson for December 14, 1969

By J. BASHFORD BISHOP

OBADIAH 1-21

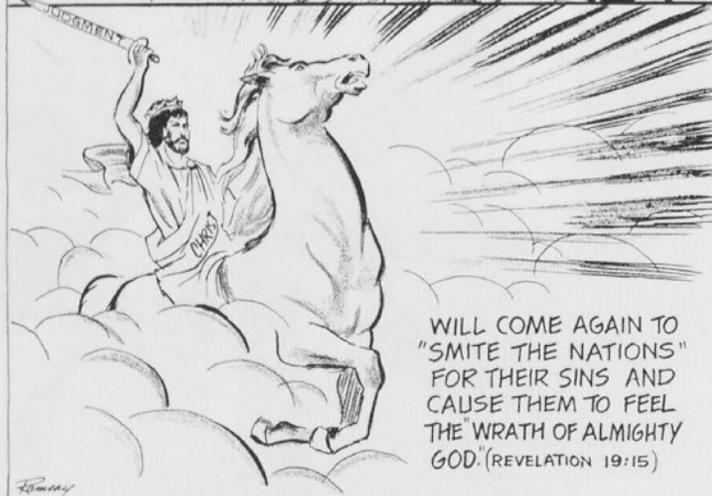
OBADIAH'S MESSAGE was directed against Edom, the little land on the southeastern border of the Jordan River adjoining Israel. The Edomites were descendants of Esau. Enmity had existed between Israel and Edom since the days when "Esau hated Jacob... and Esau said in his heart, ... I will slay my brother Jacob" (Genesis 27:41). And it was for sins against Israel, as a result of that enmity, that Obadiah denounced Edom.

His message was brief but devastating. His words were simple but stung like a whiplash. His book—one chapter long—may be summarized by three great statements.

"THE PRIDE OF THINE HEART HATH DECEIVED THEE" (v. 3)

1. *They were deceived concerning their personal safety and security.* The famous rock city of Petra, remains of which have been uncovered by archeologists, was a fortress Edom thought impregnable. "Thou that dwellest in the clefts of the rock, whose habitation is high; that saith in his heart, Who shall bring me down to the ground?"—such was Edom's boast. But God said, "I [will] bring

TWO ADVENTS



thee down." Nebuchadnezzar, Belshazzar, the rich fool of Luke 12:16-21, and many others since have deceived themselves into thinking that security can be found in something outside of the will and favor of God!

2. *They were deceived as to the loyalty of their allies.* The Edomites thought their allies would stand with them in time of war. But not so! Obadiah predicted that "the men that were at peace with thee have deceived thee" (v. 7). The time would come when Edom, trusting in confederates, would be betrayed into the hands of Israel. Money, friends, or worldly influence cannot save where spiritual issues are concerned. As it was with Edom, so it always is.

"AS THOU HAST DONE, IT SHALL BE DONE UNTO THEE" (v. 15)

This is another way of saying, "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." In verses 10-14, Obadiah delivered a scathing denunciation of Edom's cruelty and treacherous conduct toward its brother nation, Israel.

"For thy violence against thy brother Jacob shame shall cover thee, and thou shalt be cut off for ever." When Israel was invaded by his enemies, Edom had stood idly by, delighted in his misfortunes, cheering his invaders. Instead of coming to Israel's aid, Edom assisted the enemy by preventing Israelites from escaping the land. Not only so, but they took advantage of the dead and dying, and plundered their bodies and their possessions. Read Psalm 137:7 and Ezekiel 35:5-15 for other references to the brutal and traitorous conduct of Edom.

Edom would pay for all these crimes, and its punishment would fit its crime. Thus the utter destruction of Edom was predicted.

The prediction soon began to be fulfilled. Amaziah captured the rock fortress Edom had thought impregnable and inflicted terrible vengeance upon them (2 Kings 14:7; 2 Chronicles 25:11, 12). And with passing centuries Edom was repeatedly invaded until at last, after the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus in A.D. 70, the name of Edom disappeared from history. Its ruins in Jordan today testify to the eternal truth of the Word—no man, woman, or nation can escape the retributive judgment and justice of God. As we do to others, it shall be done unto us. As we sow, we shall reap, both here and hereafter.

"THE HOUSE OF JACOB SHALL POSSESS THEIR POSSESSIONS" (v. 17)

The doom of Edom is a foreshadowing of the coming Day of the Lord. The closing verses of Obadiah's prophecy look forward to the coming of the Lord, His reconciliation with Israel, their consequent reestablishment in their land, and the inclusion of Edom within the kingdom according to the terms of God's covenant promises.

We see a very practical lesson in all this for God's people today. Edom, as well as other territories, really belonged to Israel by right, having been promised to them by God. Yet in Joshua's day the Israelites failed to occupy and possess all that belonged to them. In like manner God has made possible for us "all spiritual blessings in Christ"—victory over sin's penalty and power, victory over the flesh and over circumstances, and ability to live courageously, serve lovingly, and witness convincingly. May we not let complacency, worldliness, unbelief, laziness, or any other thing keep us from possessing our possessions!

WHAT DO YOU WANT FOR CHRISTMAS?

By RUTH COPELAND

MAYBE I'LL GET IT FOR CHRISTMAS," we used to say while poring over the delightful pictures in the mail order catalog.

But rarely did the cherished dream materialize. The old beat-up doll might disappear around Thanksgiving and reappear under the tree on Christmas morning with a fresh coat of white enamel (the color of tuberculosis) on her face and hands, and a whole new wardrobe made from scraps in mother's sewing basket. Or there might be a bag of jacks, a color book, a box of new crayons, or a pair of mittens.

But mostly there was little that cost money. And yet Christmas was the most joyous time of the year! Perhaps it was because the hard times forced us to seek things which really counted but which couldn't be bought.

Some of the happiest Christmas memories are of dad getting to stay home to romp with us instead of having to work on the farm; or of mother taking time from her exhausting duties to sit on the floor and look at pictures with us; or of all of us going skating on the ice-bound creek.

"A man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth" (Luke 12:15). "Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?" (Matthew 6:25).

These verses teach that what you *are* is more important than what you *have*; it is more important to *be* than to *get*. These truths are almost buried in the

avalanche of today's materialistic thinking.

Yet this is the very reason for Christmas. This is why God sent His Son—to help us *be what we need to be*.

Jesus rarely used His miracle-working power to supply *things* for people. Oh yes, He supplied wine for the newlyweds at Cana, tax money for Peter, and bread and fish for the hungry multitude. But mostly His miracles were to make people what they needed to be.

All the social reforms in the world could never have satisfied the hungry heart of the woman at Jacob's well. She was a social outcast with a chip on her shoulder and she knew enough about religion to start an argument. Jesus went right to the heart of her problem; she needed to be a different person, and He made her that!

Blind, ragged Bartimaeus needed many things—clothing, a job, friends—but his greatest need was to become a seeing person. Jesus made him that!

The lame man at the gate of the temple looked forward to a good take from his day's begging—perhaps some extra material goods to brighten the day. But more than that he needed the ability to walk. Christ's power, through Peter and John, gave him that!

Oh, how we need to grasp the truth that it is more important to *become* than to *get*.

Our society suffers from the sores of restlessness, rebellion, and lust. The world lives under the illusion that all unhappiness would disappear if everyone had a nice place to live and enough money to buy the comforts for which they yearn.

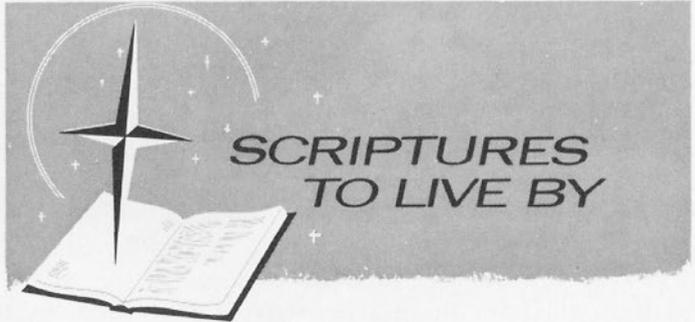
Yet what good is a better place to live if you are the same restless, unhappy person you were in the old place? What good is a better job and more money if you are still a slave to the longing for alcohol and drugs?

All the entertainment this pleasure-mad age can buy cannot bring you happiness if you suffer from an uneasy conscience. Enough money to buy material luxuries for your children is of no value if you cannot be a sympathetic, understanding parent.

This Christmas why not ask God:

- ... to make you a new person in Christ Jesus?
- ... to make you a victorious Christian?
- ... to give you victory over that painful shyness?
- ... to make you less stingy?
- ... to transform your jealous nature?
- ... to give you more patience with the children and help you be a better parent?
- ... to help you be a loving husband or wife?
- ... to make you the kind of person people will love?

This Christmas why not seek the things that will bring real happiness in this life and glory throughout eternity?



SCRIPTURES TO LIVE BY

DAILY READINGS FOR DECEMBER 8-14

Theme of the Week: **FINDING PEACE**

Mon. ... Psalm 119:161-168	Thurs. Psalm 4:1-8
Tues. Job 22:21-30	Fri. Isaiah 26:1-13
Wed. Isaiah 48:17-22	Sat. Ephesians 2:11-22
Sun. John 14:27-31	

"I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep: for thou, Lord, only makest me dwell in safety" (Psalm 4:8).

THEY SHALL CALL HIS NAME IMMANUEL, WHICH BEING INTERPRETED IS, GOD WITH US.



GOD FLIES WITH ME

By Capt. ROBERT B. ROBESON

DUSTOFF 1-0? This soldier is going to die unless we get him out in a hurry. We're still taking heavy small arms fire from the east and west. Over."

"Roger. We'll be right down. Gunnies, have you got me from north to south? We're going in at this time."

The helicopter gunships swing around on our tail, their rockets and miniguns gleaming in the late afternoon sun. "Got you covered, Dusty. Keep your head down, buddy."

The nose of our medical evacuation helicopter heads earthward as we begin our spiralling tactical approach into the landing zone and whatever awaits below.

At 120 knots and a 3,000 feet-per-minute descent, I haven't much time to contemplate the dangers involved.

I know that a GI lies waiting for us with a serious gunshot wound and my aircraft is his only link with life at this moment. We monitor the instruments, plan our approach, and as always, I silently pray for guidance from above.

At 100 feet the first groundfire hits our aircraft, but we're already committed and have to continue our descent into the LZ. As our skids touch the ground, the entire jungle explodes. We've flown into an NVA ambush. We're caught in enemy crossfire from 360 degrees!

The wounded GI is thrown aboard in the ensuing melee and I've just turned around to make sure everyone is clear when a burst of automatic weapon fire hits my medic. His neck explodes in my face. The ground troops are frozen, unable to give us covering fire. The thought of the moment is that we're going to die.

There's no way that helicopter can get us out and over those trees with fire that intense! Rocket propelled grenades are beginning to explode 20 yards to our front setting off small fires. I'm scared, but a calmness prevails within me that is difficult to describe. There isn't time for a magnificent moratorium of repentance or an

eloquent prayer of committal. I just breathe a five word request, "Get us out of here," and simultaneously pull my pitch.

At tree level they again find our range. The fire knocks out all of our radios but one, and we feel the impacting rounds as they find their target again and again. Somehow we gain altitude and manage to limp to the aid station. It's true my medic will never talk again, but he *will* live—as will our original patient.

This is only one of a score of incidents that has happened to me since becoming executive officer of a Dustoff detachment in the I Corps area of Vietnam. It's just another reminder to me of God's continual watchfulness over His own.

Many years have passed since I left home. My father is an Assemblies of God minister in Oregon, and his years of instruction and guidance helped me through many important decisions in my late teen and early adulthood years.

I've faced death many times in my travels, but the prayers of those who know me and the spiritual confidence from my personal relationship with God has motivated and buoyed me over each new hurdle.

Officer's candidate school, 10 months of helicopter training, having my aircraft "shot-up" twice and "shot-down" once in Vietnam—these experiences have only strengthened my spiritual life.

Whenever doubts approach my tired and troubled mind, I just turn to the 91st Psalm and read verses 5-8: "Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night; nor for the arrow that flieth by day; nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness; nor for the destruction that wasteth at noonday. A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand; but it shall not come nigh thee. Only with thine eyes shalt thou behold and see the reward of the wicked."

Somehow these words give me strength to view the multitude of mangled and lifeless bodies we carry each day. They provide me the courage to face ground fire again and again.

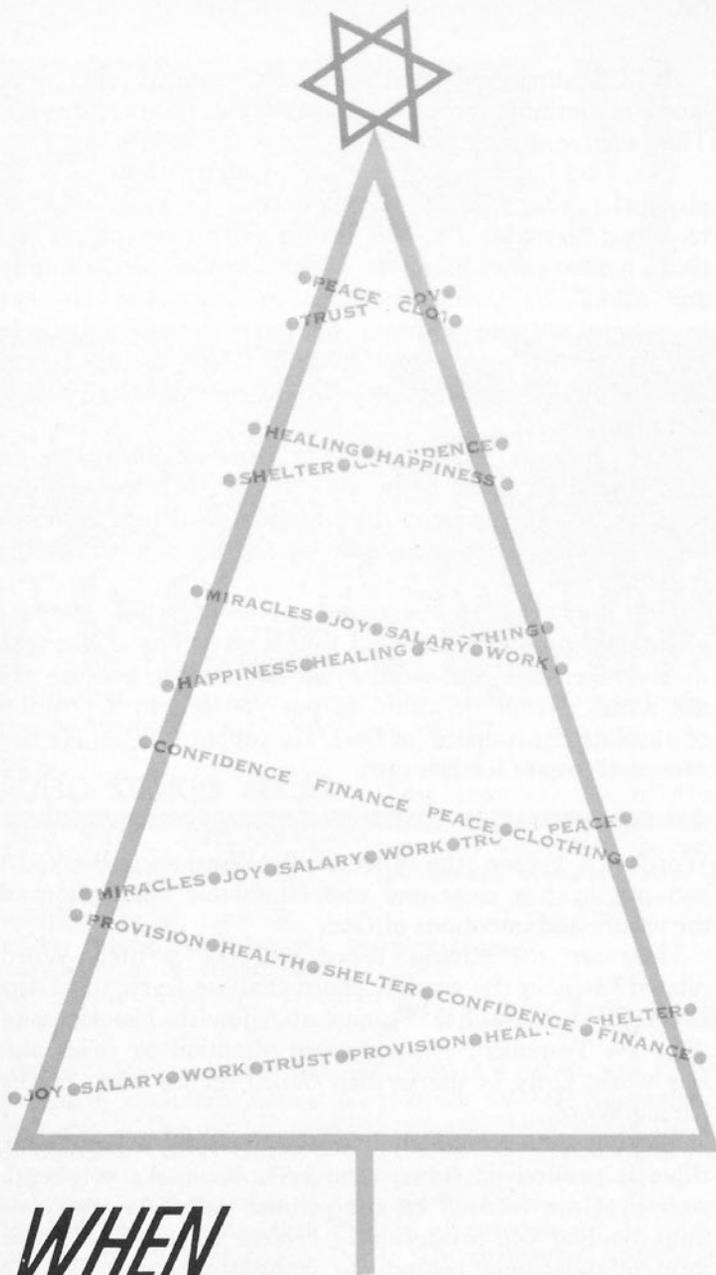
I'm here because God has directed my life along this path. I won't say I don't wonder whether there's been a mistake in judgment somewhere when those machine-guns are boring holes in our tail boom. We're still human. But after glancing at the load of wounded behind my armored seat, and seeing the relief on those faces after they've been removed from a veritable hell on earth, I know God's way is best.

It can be lonely as well as dangerous, but my sacrifice can never outweigh that of those friends and comrades who die on my aircraft every day. The mountains of their dreams will never be conquered; the candle they attempted to light in the darkness of a world full of pain and fear will have to be passed to another. This is no project for sick, lame, or lazy Christians.

We long for the "peace on earth" that the angels sang about that first Christmas, but meanwhile there's a war to fight, wounded soldiers to rescue. In the midst of my work with a helicopter ambulance evacuating the wounded, He is still with me.

God has promised to be with us regardless of locality or circumstances. Because of this promise and the prayers of many faithful friends, I'm alive today.

God flies with me, and I stand fast beneath His promises of protection. That's why I'm a Dustoff pilot.



WHEN GOD SUPPLIED THE CHRISTMAS TREE (AND MUCH MORE)

By GWEN ELLIS WEISING

IT WAS CHRISTMASTIME, and although I had enough money to buy groceries, there wouldn't be enough left to buy a Christmas tree.

Now a Christmas tree is not essential to adults, but our little girl was only three, and a tree was very important to her. So we prayed. In a couple of days an envelope came with \$3 in it—enough for a Christmas tree just the right size for a three-year-old girl.

This is only one of the many miracles God has performed in our lives since that day two years ago when we became pioneer pastors.

Gwen Weising is the wife of Ed Weising, pastor of the Assembly of God, Elk Grove, California.

We had been in the position of the majority of Americans before then. As ministers of education in a large church we were well and regularly paid.

Then God began speaking to our hearts about taking a pastorate. We applied at several established churches but nothing seemed to work out for us. Then we learned that a neighboring home missions church would soon need a pastor. In talking with the district home missions director, we mentioned several other possibilities and finally came to this one.

When we did, he immediately replied, "This is the city I had in mind for you. I just received a call that the pastor has resigned."

A few days later my husband spoke to the small discouraged congregation. At the close of the meeting he told them he would like to be their pastor.

They looked at us in disbelief. One said, "We can't pay you a salary; there is no parsonage; how do you intend to survive?" My husband replied, "God will provide."

We realized the time had come to test the claims of the Bible concerning God's provision for His own. We were to prove God to see if He could take care of us.

For the first six weeks of our pastorate, we received no salary at all. We lived on our savings and the farewell gift from our former church. And amazingly, at the end of six weeks our little church was able to begin paying us a small salary.

My husband applied to the public schools for substitute teaching, but it was several weeks before he was called to teach.

About the time his first paycheck came in, finances at the church began to dwindle. Once again it was impossible to draw a full salary. The few men of the church were engaged in construction, so as winter came, finances further decreased.

Then came the Sunday when the offering was only \$13. Now it was impossible to draw any salary. This is when the miracles really began for our family.

One morning the telephone rang. A lady who had been in our service only once asked my husband if we had any eggs. In a dream she had seen our refrigerator without any eggs in it. She wanted to send us some money.

Several days later when her check arrived, we had no eggs, milk, fresh fruit, vegetables, or meat. Through her generosity I was able to stock our cupboard for two weeks.

Miracle after miracle happened in the next three months. We came to depend so heavily upon God, to trust so completely in Him, that when our premature twin girls died, we never questioned God's plan. God had proved He was with us every moment and nothing could happen to us that was outside His will. This absolute trust and confidence in God brought great peace to my broken heart.

Before long finances increased at our little church as God gave us new families, and for many months we again drew a regular salary.

We were expecting a baby and realized we would need larger quarters with the arrival of a little one, so we began to investigate buying a house.

We were told over and over that it would be impossible to secure a loan on our salary. So we did what we had learned was the best solution to all problems—we put it into the hands of our Father.

As I write this article, I sit in the lovely home God gave us. Our loan went through much faster than normal

with absolutely no problems. It had to be God. And a strong, perfectly formed baby boy sleeps in his crib—a gift from God.

The miracles have not stopped for us. Recently my husband took another step of faith which made us even more dependent upon God. He resigned as a substitute teacher, thus cutting off all outside support.

Shortly after this we faced the biggest financial crisis of all. An insurance payment was due along with several other bills. It was absolutely impossible for us to meet them. We began praying about our need, and one afternoon a letter arrived with a check for several hundred dollars enclosed—the exact amount we needed!

Three months before our son was born, the WMC's of a neighboring section invited us to speak for their Christmas home missions rally.

My husband shared with them what I have recorded in this article, little knowing what they had planned for us.

At the close of the rally the women made pledges to completely cover my hospital expense. Each member of our family received an abundance of clothing, and there were boxes and boxes of food for us.

At Christmastime another WMC group sent more boxes of clothing, including clothes for our expected baby. They even sent baby food!

Yes, God has provided for our material needs and our physical needs. God has been gracious to us in that we have had no major illnesses. As for the minor ones, many times we have laid hands on a sick member of the family and asked the Great Physician to heal. And He has healed instantly or within a matter of hours. Our little girl has such complete confidence in God's healing power that her first thought (even before requesting a Band-Aid) is prayer.

Big problems, little ones—they are all the same in God's sight. It is no more difficult for Him to supply a large insurance payment than to fill a little girl's desire for a sandbox or a new pair of shoes or a Christmas tree.

Not only has He supplied our needs, but He has graciously provided many of our wants. The Bible tells us that we have not because we ask not or because we ask amiss. Never be afraid to put yourself in a position of absolute dependence on God. He cannot fail for He has promised to care for His own. 

The Speaking God

(Continued from page 3)

When Jesus unrolled the scroll to Isaiah and began to read, we have before our eyes a beautiful picture of the Living Word of God making respectful and authoritative use of the written Word of God.

Jesus had specific ideas about this written Word. Even though it was produced centuries earlier, it centered in Himself. "Beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself" (Luke 24:27). If people would not believe Moses and the prophets, "neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead" (Luke 16:31). "The Scripture," He said flatly, "cannot be broken" (John 10:35).

Jesus' disciples watched Him use this collection of scrolls now available to us under the name *Old Testament*. They were impressed by the power of those writings. But Jesus, the Living Word, never said a thing about their writing down anything. And He never wrote anything permanent Himself.

But in time eight men (nine if Paul did not write Hebrews), all disciples of the Lord or else associates of those who were, produced 27 scrolls about the life of Jesus and the Church He founded. The chances are that these men had no idea what purpose God had in mind when they were moved to write. It could be some of them died without ever realizing that one day in the gracious providence of God, what they wrote would be assembled into the *New Testament*.

But that is what happened. In time these "books" were collected and placed alongside the "Law, the Prophets, and the Writings." Miraculously, providentially, graciously, God—the speaking God—was putting His speech, His Word into writing.

And the marvelous thing is that the written Word centers in the Living Word. The one is God's speech—what God has to say—come in the flesh. The other is God's Word written down on paper. The one is God's

Word in a Person, the other God's Word in a Book. In both we have a clear and understandable description of the nature and intentions of God.

How are the Living Word and the written Word related? It is in the written Word that we learn about the Living Word. Secular Roman and Jewish historians of the New Testament era pay scant attention to Jesus and His work. Only in the written Word do we learn of the Living Word.

The two do not conflict. It works like this: assume your Bible is printed on transparent cellophane. As you read, your eyes are focused on the printed page. As you continue reading you mysteriously become conscious of some form of movement behind the transparent page. By the illumination of the Holy Spirit, suddenly the figure of Jesus snaps into focus and the believer sits there before his open Bible entranced with the vision of the Living Word conveyed to him by the written Word.

We sing in our hymn, "Beyond the sacred page I seek Thee, Lord."

The Bible, as the written Word of God, must be viewed as a gracious gift of God to the last 1,600 years of the 6,000 years of recorded human history. (The extent of the New Testament canon was not fixed until the latter half of the fourth century.) Now, anyone who can read can have God's Word for a few pennies. The tragedy of the hour is that so many have the written Word on their shelves but have not the Living Word in their hearts. Let us pray that God will bring their eyes into focus as they scan the pages of the written Word. And let us see to it that they at least have the written Word to read.

In this Christmas season, let us be grateful to God who has given us His Word. Unlike the idols which fill the world, He is a *speaking God*. And His speech is eminently understandable since it comes in the twin forms of a Person to observe and a Book to read.

For after all, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Matthew 4:4). 

Evangelical NEWS Digest

FROM EVANGELICAL PRESS NEWS SERVICE, CORRESPONDENCE, PERIODICALS, PRESS REPORTS



SINGAPORE—Missionettes from Faith Assembly here actively participate in their church's Christmas program.

POLIO STRIKES AUCAS

TIWAENO, ECUADOR—At least 15 Auca Indians have died from an epidemic of polio now sweeping through the tribe.

The disease first struck an Auca early in September, according to spokesmen for Wycliffe Bible Translators working among them. The carrier was part of one of the "downriver" groups that have come out during the past year to this station, location of translator Rachel Saint.

Polio has occurred during the past year in other jungle tribes. Most of the cases have been discovered in the new groups that have joined the Christians at

Tiwaeno. These have had the least opportunity to build resistance to such diseases and do not yet fully understand the benefits of modern medicine. Some have refused to take remedies offered.

In Jerusalem

Muslim leaders protest reopening of mosque area

JERUSALEM—The Muslim Council (WAQF) here has protested the reopening of the walled Harem es Sharif area which contains two mosques, El Aqsa and the Dome of the Rock, by the Israel government.

The government controls one of the 10 gates to the area. Besides

NASA official praises action

Two-and-one-half million letters support Bible reading in space

WASHINGTON, D. C.—Space Agency Director Thomas O. Paine recently praised the people who signed an estimated two and one-half million letters and petitions favoring the reading of a Bible passage by the *Apollo 8* astronauts as they orbited the moon last Christmas.

In accepting the presentation of the signatures, Paine said, "We are profoundly moved by this spontaneous voice from all over America and from foreign countries.

"Just as your response was so spontaneous from all over the country, the astronauts' decision as to

what words they would send back from the moon on Christmas Eve was also a completely spontaneous thing on their part.

"They were the ones who felt that at this moment in history and in their personal lives this was the message that they would send forth to the world."

Other "religion in space" activities have included the *Apollo 11* astronauts leaving a tube of micro-filmed prayers by Pope Paul on the moon, and an announcement that a Chapel of the Astronauts will be built adjacent to the NASA complex at Cape Kennedy.

In East Germany

Methodism survives despite hardships

NEW YORK, N.Y.—The Evangelical (United) Methodist Church in East Germany survives and continues active in many ways, despite the Communist attitude toward the church which has ranged from "passive indifference, to friendly persuasion and direct confrontation."

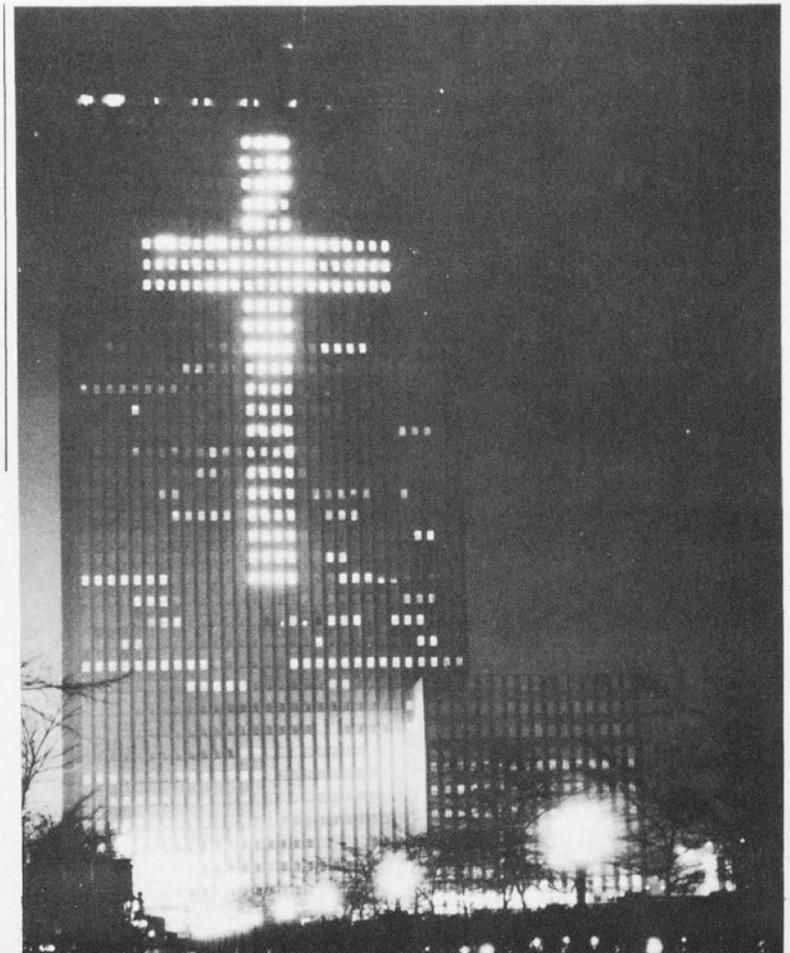
This observation was made here by Dr. John F. Schaefer, associate general secretary of the World Division of the United Methodist Board of Missions. He recently visited pastors and laymen of the Evangelical Methodist Church in the German Democratic Republic.

Dr. Schaefer said that "for the most part the Church is free to carry on its program without state interference." There is no state church in East Germany and the state—theoretically—provides equal freedom for all people to practice their religion.

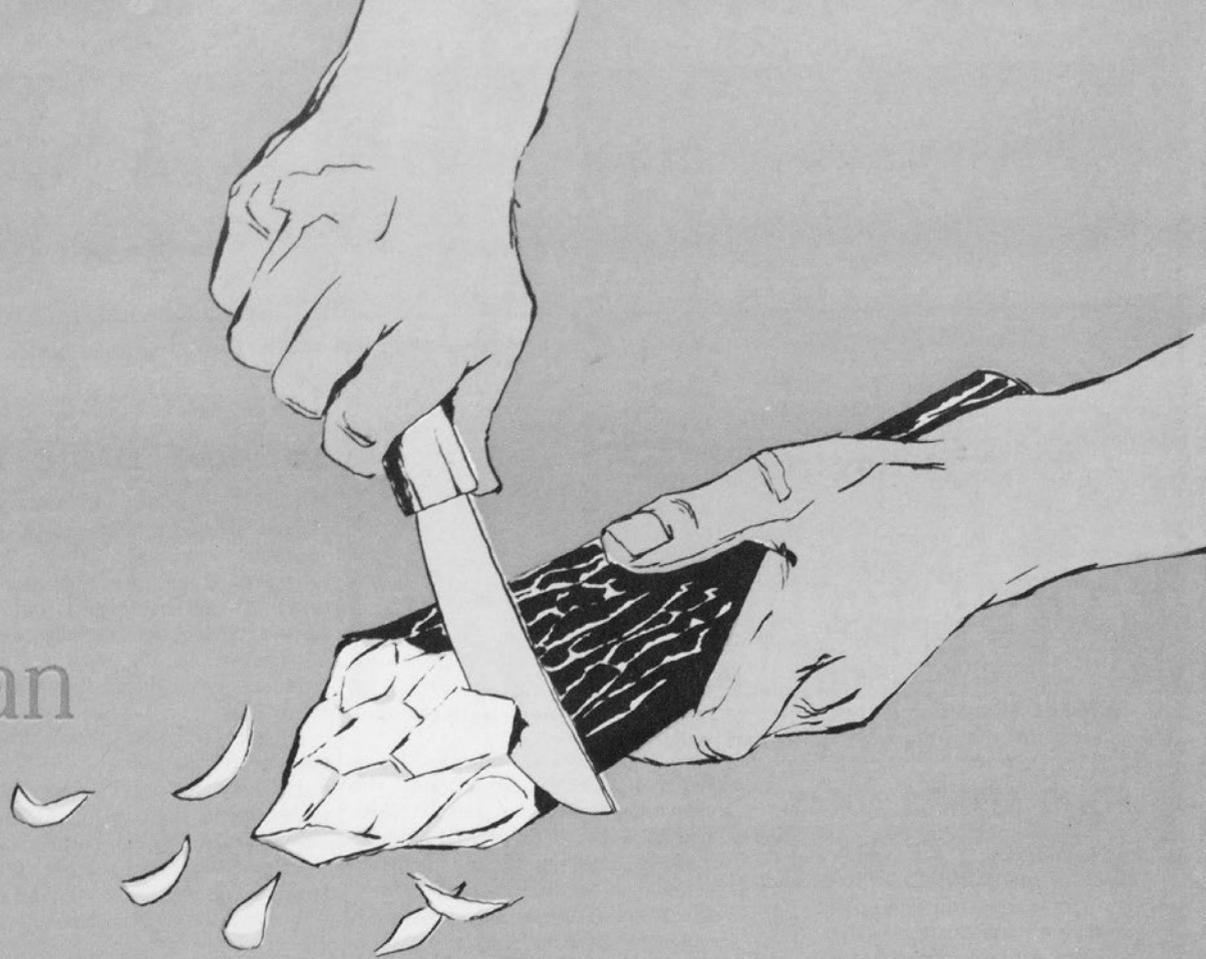
"However the Communist Party which controls the political and economic life of the nation is built upon a materialistic world view antagonistic to religion and unfavorably disposed to the institutional church," Dr. Schaefer continued.

"It is extremely difficult for the church to exert—to say nothing of expand—its influence within this environment."

CHICAGO, ILL.—A Christmas cross 275 feet tall and 150 feet across glows on the south facade of Chicago's Prudential Building as a symbol of the true meaning of Christmas. Formed by 136 lighted windows on 22 of the skyscraper's 41 floors, the spectacle is seen brightening the city's skyline nightly through Christmas Eve.



The Artisan



*They called Him the prophet of Galilee,
Son of an artisan
Abiding in humble Nazareth—
The bane and derision of man.
And He was a sorrowing, lonely one,
Despised from a lowly birth;
And He labored a while in a weary land
Till the day He hung by His gentle hands
On a tree; between heaven and earth.*

*Perhaps the child of an artisan
In Nazareth's fading sun
May oft have seen tomorrow's cross
When the carpenter's day was done,
As He would retire to His bed and lie
Gazing at stars o'er Galilee's sky.
Knowing His hour would come.*

*Jesus, the son of an artisan,
Maker of tables and stools
Was truly the ancient, great I AM
Who became the reproach of fools.
Lord and Creator of Abraham
Had come to earth to fashion man
Into the image of God;
Was hunted and hated and beaten sore,
Hanged by nails on a cross He bore
Near a city of "peace" and "love."
Born in a manger of lifeless wood,
Died on a lifeless tree,
Jesus, the son of an artisan
Was Holy Deity.*

*He suffered and died for the thing He made,
Forgotten, alone, unsung—
They lowered His form in the twilight shade,
Ere the Sabbath bells had rung.*

*What say the multitude passing by?
What tell the tongues of man,
As slowly and gently they bear away
Jesus the artisan?*

*"Oh, He was a king the world to rule;
Died as a failure and a fool."
He of the sad and loving eyes,
Unmourned, except for shrouded skies,
Unnoticed by the passersby.*

*So few there are who understand,
And few there are can tell
How He fashioned a door to a home above
From the cross by which He fell—
A narrow door that the humble find,
And a narrow way as well—
He fashioned souls for the courts of God
With a skill no tongue can tell.*

*Here I lift my eyes from a darkened room
And a light beam floods my soul,
For secretly Christ speaks to me
In a language few men know;
I meet Him here in a trysting place
And behold the glory of His face—
And He calls to mind an ancient day,
And a cypress tree in a lonely place
Where He suffered and died for ev'ry man:
Jesus, my Lord—the Artisan.*

—Leslie W. Smith