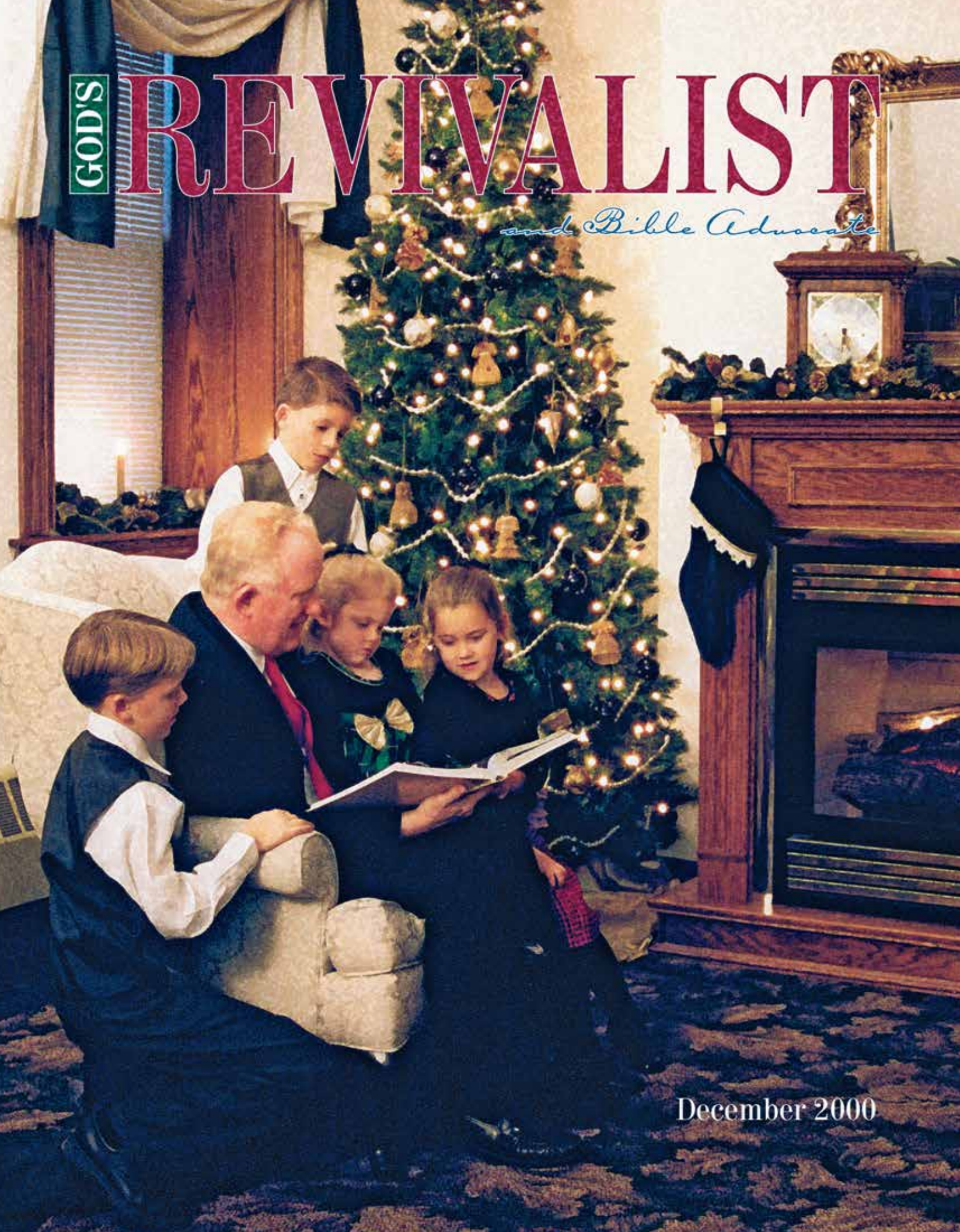


GOD'S

# REVIVALIST

*and Bible Advocate*



December 2000

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December 2000  
Volume 112 No. 9

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Christmas again! Time to celebrate the Saviour's birth in an atmosphere of warm and loving tradition. Our cover photo, taken in the Revivalist Memorial Building's entrance parlor and given an impressionistic effect, shows Don Hubbard (veteran GBS teacher) reading to the children of Mr. and Mrs. David Frederick—David, Anthony, Alicia and Christiana.

**PEACE ON EARTH***by Michael R. Avery, president*

This month thousands of pilgrims from around the world will descend upon the ancient town of Bethlehem and its surrounding shepherds' fields to celebrate the birth of our Lord and sing the beautiful words of the "*Gloria in Excelsis!*"

Most of us in America will celebrate Christmas watching our children timidly parade in front of church congregations, re-enacting the Christmas story. Our brave little ones will be transformed into Jewish shepherds, wearing oversized bathrobes and white towels draped about their heads, or angels, wearing white sheets with tinsel-lined wings. We will all smile proudly, nod our affirmation vigorously, and listen carefully as they join the pilgrims of Bethlehem, saying, "Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace, good will toward men." (Luke 2:10)

The words "peace on earth" will slip by most of us without notice. Yet the cynic, as well as the serious saint, will recognize that the world has not found the formula for peace. The god of war continues to stalk up and down the earth, threatening men and nations with bloodshed and destruction. The Balkans are still trembling from the horrors of ethnic cleansing and falling bombs. The Middle East is a boiling cauldron of tension, spilling over in outbreaks of violence. Here in America broken-hearted families will stare at empty chairs this Christmas because of loved ones who lost their lives in the terrorist attack upon the *USS Cole*.

The god of this world also goes about seeking whom he may devour. He has wrought havoc in a world now haunted by demons, disease and death. Sin has ruined men by violence and squalor, misery and hatred. The piercing words of the prophet, "There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked" are painfully accurate.

Is there any hope for meaningful peace in our world? Can we find calm in the midst of such chaos? Oh yes! The Prince of Peace has offered it, but it will be realized only in obedience to the divine formula for peace. The divine formula is expressed in the form of a cross. Paul said, "He has made peace through the blood of His cross." The cross of Christ has made inner peace possible now. It can bring about an end to inner warfare and outward misery in anyone's life. The prospects for world peace look dim to those who gaze with a temporal eye. But the Saviour who came as a babe in Bethlehem's manger will one day return as a mighty King. He will put all

His enemies under His feet and usher in the time when it can truly be said that there is "peace on earth, good will toward men." ■

## Our Readers Respond

*It is a privilege to hear from readers of the Revivalist. Names and locations of writers will be withheld at their specific request or at the discretion of the editor. We reserve the right to edit and condense all letters selected for publication. They should be addressed to the Editorial Office, 1810 Young Street, Cincinnati, Ohio 45210, or e-mailed to revivalist@gbs.edu. Letters reprinted here do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the editor of God's Revivalist nor those of the administration of God's Bible School.*

### "WEST POINTS" TO TRAIN SOLDIERS

Your college and Bible school is making a difference, as the recent issues testify. When I was only 15 years old, my father said to me, "George, would you like to attend Bible School this fall?" To which I promptly replied, "I surely would." The nearest Bible school was Beulah Park in Allentown, PA. No sooner had classes begun than I realized that now I was being fed with the "pure milk of the Word." Next to my conversion, that was life's greatest decision. Father had attended GBS in 1902-03. He knew. Since then I have thought of Bible Schools as "West Points" where soldiers are trained for battle against the "world, flesh and devil." Be encouraged.

I simply must express appreciation for President Avery's article, "The Battle for Truth" [October 2000]. As an ex-editor, I was grateful for your courage and wisdom.

GEORGE E. FAILING  
Easley, South Carolina

*Editor's note: Dr. Failing, formerly editor of the Wesleyan Advocate, is a general evangelist of The Wesleyan Church*

### KUDOS TO DR. ALLAN BROWN

I enjoy Dr. Allan Brown's pulpit messages on God's will and dating, and also [the series of articles by A.W. Tozer titled] "Those Amazing Methodists."

JOHN D. FOWLER  
Hanover, Pennsylvania

I enjoy Allan P. Brown's messages so much. Has he written any books?

ETHEL ACKELSON  
Chariton, Iowa

*Editor's note: For materials available from Dr. Brown, please contact him directly at GBS, 1810 Young Street, Cincinnati, OH 45210.*

### EVEN MY THREE-YEAR-OLD

You all do such a superb job! Keep up the good work. Even my three-year-old son likes looking at the *Revivalist*!

WENDY J. SPITLER  
Myerstown,  
Pennsylvania

# Missions Around The World

*Each month we publish brief "field reports" from missionaries around the world. Missionaries are invited to send us their newsletters and other information about their activities. GBS graduates are especially urged to respond, but we also wish to include others who uphold our vision and our commitment.*

## AFRICA

"Eritreans are suffering from the recent war and from famine. Our national chairman Solomon Tesfamichael tells us that a metric ton of wheat sells for \$400 U.S. Dollars. **If forty people would send ten dollars per month for six months, it would greatly help with relief efforts in this poor country in eastern Africa.**"—*Missionary Herald, Evangelistic Faith Missions, P. O Box 609, Bedford, Indiana 47421.*

## CHINA

"Just the day before leaving to return to China, tentmaking missionary Elverne Asbury delivered an impassioned appeal: **'China is wide open for English teachers. Surely there are those among the holiness people who will respond.'** Missionary Asbury went on to tell of the unprecedented opportunities for presenting the Gospel. In a class period that turned into an amazing open discussion, one student said, "None of us believe in communism anymore; our hearts are so empty."—*Ropeholders*

## HAITI

"Forty years on the frontier of God's kingdom has made her a person who by her very presence urges commitment, holiness, missions, and Christlikeness," writes James Plank of **veteran missionary Bonnie Cleaver**. Plank is editor of *God's Missionary Standard*, which in a recent issue paid tribute to Miss Cleaver, noting that although she began foreign service in Africa, most of her career has been spent in Haiti. "Many a suffering soul has been helped, succored, and lifted by this missionary's heart of compassion and love," added the Rev. Arlan L. Kratz. "For over twenty-five years she directed the Theological Seminary of Haiti."

## ROMANIA

**Andrea Whiteman, FEA missionary to Romania, has returned to Bucharest in mid-September** after furlough in the U. S. She teaches English to medical professionals and otherwise ministers to both children and adults. ■



## TO THE INN OR TO THE STABLE?

by Larry D. Smith, editor

Slowly old Reuben shook his head. It was not that he meant to be unkind to the broad-shouldered young man who stood so anxiously at his door. And, yes, he did feel a twinge of pity for the girl who sat wearily on a small, gray donkey by her husband's side. Her gentle face was marked by the rigors of her long journey; and as he observed, she would soon be delivered of a child. What a shame to turn them away! But, alas, there was simply no room for anyone else in his inn that night.

Far away in imperial Rome, Gaius Julius Caesar Octavianus—*Augustus Caesar* since his enthronement as emperor over two decades before—had decreed a census throughout his far-flung provinces.

Like thousands of other villages in the Mediterranean world, Bethlehem was now thronged with bustling travelers returning to their ancestral home for the registration. As a loyal Jew, Reuben despised the hubub, for it was all to raise taxes for the usurping Gentile government. Still, as a shrewd businessman, he was glad enough for the extra coins pouring into his till. After all, this

was what a hostelry was all about—the more people in his rooms, the more money in his pocket!

And as he had explained to these travelers at his doorstep, every crook and cranny was packed to the very walls! They had said they were from Nazareth. Nazareth? Why, that was up in Galilee—at least a week away!

No wonder they looked so exhausted. But, then, as Reuben told himself, this was their problem, not his. “I am sorry,” he repeated firmly. “There is simply no room for you here.” But then his eyes fell upon the stable. The stable, of course—why hadn't he thought of that before? Rubbing his beard, his voice softened as he pointed to a rickety shed. “If you wish, you may stay there,” he said. “At least there is enough straw to keep you warm.”

*Bethlehem, the innkeeper, the stable!* There are the components of a thousand Christmas pageants, as well as the graphics of a thousand Christmas cards. For they are also the components of the familiar Christmas story recounted by St. Luke. We cannot say, of course, that the innkeeper's name was Reuben, nor that Mary rode upon a donkey, nor even that the stable was a shed, since the scholars say that probably it was a cave. But this we know—Almighty God pierced the darkness of that holy night, and sweeping by myriads of celestial bodies swinging in (p23) ➡

REUBEN DID  
NOT KNOW  
THAT HE HAD  
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LIFE.



respond to God's offer of salvation; and at the end, President Avery will add his call to Christian discipleship. Clearly evangelism is first in priority, but education is a close second. "I want to show students how they can produce in church or school a Christmas program that is beautiful and God-honoring." In other words, the drama is also a hands-on teaching experience, equipping students "to serve the present age" in future ministry.

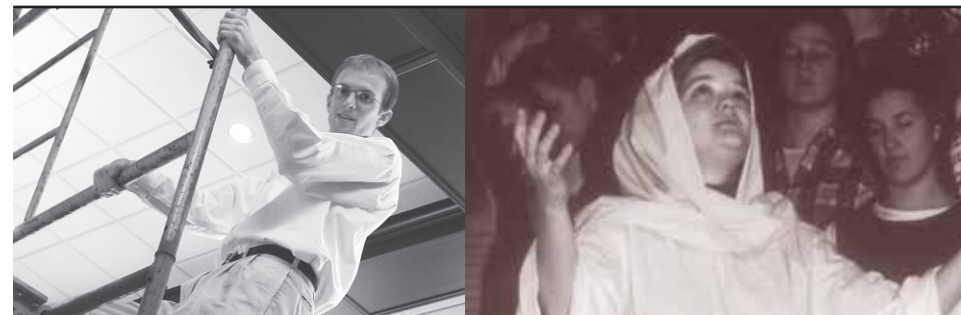
Usually the process is the same. In early summer, Professor Wolf begins his selection of choir and orchestra music and then fits it into the sequential structure that he has created. He writes the narrative and stage directions for the acting parts; selects soloists, actors, and production assistants; and finally begins the exhausting round of rehearsals. At first, it all was to be "a ministry showcase for the choirs," but as the school's orchestra has grown in quality, he has added it to the production. On December 8, 9, and 10, over 100 college and high school students will stand on the 32-foot-by-12-foot choir risers and sing their soaring "alleluias," supported by the brass, woodwinds, strings, and percussion of the Symphonic Wind and String Ensemble. You can be sure it will all be in "natural acoustic balance" under the professor's vigilant eye and sweeping baton.

Cutting-edge technology lends excitement to the performance. "We've been afraid of this too long," Mr. Wolf declares. "We must teach students to use technology to the glory of God." This explains the highly-sophisticated light and sound effects which he has added, especially since the recent chapel renovations. Included in the new equipment is a "64-channel, computerized memory-light controller" that memorizes 256 scenes, including both "multiplex and DMX addressing," and causes colored lights to come up and fade out in perfect precision as a technician punches in the proper cues. (p25) ➡

# Leading People to the

# Christ Child

Garen Wolf  
Creates Another  
Christmas Pageant



by Larry  
Smith

*Is it worth it? From a natural viewpoint, no! But spiritually—yes! It's unbelievably valuable!* Professor Garen Wolf is emphatic as he leans back in his office chair, surrounded by the mementos of his crowded life—books, artwork, musical scores—and, of course, a six-foot grand piano. He's been chair of GBS's Division of Music since 1976, and his vibrant energy and focused commitment have made him a Hilltop legend. This autumn afternoon, a quartet practice has been canceled; and so he's sandwiched in a bit of time for a favorite subject—the massive GBS Christmas pageant which he's producing for another year. It's been customary to offer it twice each season; but in 1999 the free admission tickets went so fast that there were 450 fewer seats than there were people who wanted to sit in them.

That's why the pageant will be given three times this December; but at that, the ticket supply will soon be exhausted. Entitled "He Came All the Way for Me," it adds minor variations and imaginative details, but its theme is the same—Jesus' birth in Bethlehem, the wonder of the shepherds, the coming of the Wise Men. "I've had a dream all along of producing a high-quality musical and dramatic presentation that has a gripping, Christ-centered message," Wolf explains. There always have been holiday activities at GBS, of course; but today's "Christmas drama with choir and orchestra"—as it is described in its red and green advertising poster—is a finely-tuned, high-tech, first-class production which takes hundreds of hours to produce.

Still, "it's not a show," as its producer insists, but rather a deliberate evangelistic tool which "not only tells the story of the Christ Child, but also leads people to that Child." With inner-city missions, annual camp meetings, and Thanksgiving Dinners for the poor, GBS has always been a center for Christian outreach; and the pageant is offered in the same tradition. Jonathan Phillips, the narrator, will urge the hundreds crowded into the Adcock Chapel to



by Ben Durr Jr.

**“...Be it unto me according to Thy word.” (Luke 1:38)**

Why did Joseph take Mary on the arduous journey to Bethlehem? Surely Joseph realized that his expecting wife was in no condition to travel the seventy-plus mile trek. Furthermore, she was not required by law to go; a male head of household would have sufficed for the census.\* Did Joseph take Mary with him so as to spare her the ignominy of giving birth to what Nazareth townsfolk would have judged to be an illegitimate child?

This intriguing question is speculated upon by Phillip Yancey in his book *The Jesus I Never Knew*. Now scripture does not specify why Joseph took Mary along, and this writer recognizes the danger of “reading into” the text something that is not explicitly stated. However, the scenario is certainly not beyond the realm of probability. And the idea certainly underscores a forgotten subtext in the Christmas story, namely that Mary certainly experienced and endured the stigma of being an “immoral girl” in the public’s opinion in order to give Jesus to the world.

Most readers of this column readily accept the account of the Virgin Birth and admire Mary as the submissive bearer of Messiah. But first-century residents of Nazareth would have been very disinclined to believe that a pregnant girl was still a virgin. Her story was judged to be preposterous in the court of public opinion. Mary knew better, however; and with joyful submission she exclaimed, “Be it unto me according to Thy word!”

Mary discovered that full resignation to the will of God was a bittersweet experience. Sweet because her Child would be Redeemer and Savior; bitter because most people would never understand, at least not until many years had passed and her story could be judged by objective history rather than immediate public opinion. But in the meantime, it was her duty to simply obey and wait—to savor the joy of God’s perfect will while courageously enduring the piercing sword of public misunderstanding.

And it is often so with those who are abandoned to God. The crowd just doesn’t get it. A Moses despises the pleasures of Egypt, choosing rather to suffer with God’s children. A Luther throws himself into harm’s way, remonstrating with corrupt religious authorities when political advantage might have been gained by quiet compliance. An Oswald Chambers walks away from a promising career in art to enroll in an upstart Bible school with a handful of students. A Charles Cowman leaves his lucrative post at the telegraph office to take the gospel by faith into Japan, moving into a small apartment where (in Cowman’s words) “the rats held a nightly carnival on the walls and floors.” The dumbfounded masses have never understood and scornfully dismiss such heroics as “extremism” or “lunacy.”

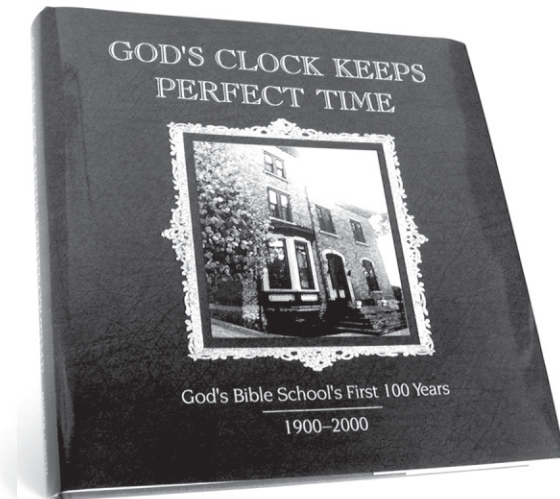
Mary stands among a saintly host who have quietly endured the piercing sword of criticism and misunderstanding in order to savor in secret the delight of experiencing the will of God. Most of us desire the joy of finding God’s will. Are we also willing to be misjudged and misunderstood by others in the process? ■

*\*This statement is not affirmed by all New Testament historians. However, it does not alter the fact that Mary’s predicament would not have been understood*



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# NEWS FROM THE HILLTOP

## GBS ELEMENTARY ACADEMY RECEIVES MODEL STATUS

“God’s Bible School’s academy is everything School of Tomorrow stands for.” With these words Keith Hill, head of school visits for the Lewisville, Texas, Christian curriculum publisher, awarded the GBS elementary academy “model accredited status” again on September 19. Under the direction of Principal David Crosley, the school was established in the early 1990’s and is housed on the first level of the Revivalist Memorial Building.

In related action, School of Tomorrow has appointed Crosley as Ohio state coordinator. In addition to his GBS duties, he will make annual evaluation visits to 42 Christian schools located in the southern half of the state. In cooperation with his wife Tamarah, Crosley also conducted the annual School of Tomorrow supervisor training sessions at GBS’s Mt. Auburn campus in August. The Crosleys are both 1987 GBS alumni.



*David and Tamarah Crosley*

## DORIE JOHNSTON FIRST “STUDENT OF THE MONTH”

Dorie Johnston, senior Christian Teacher Education student, has been awarded the October “Student of the Month Award,” the first of the current school year. Selected by the student affairs staff and the student council president, persons receiving the award are cited for “possessing a steady Christian character, for involvement in Christian ministry, and for being a positive influence.”

Highly respected by students, faculty, and administration, Dorie is from Mansfield, Pennsylvania. Her home congregation is the Pilgrim Holiness Church, Sayre, Pennsylvania, where the Rev. John Lum is pastor. “Her positive attitude brightens the GBS campus,” comments Richard Miles, Vice-President for Student Affairs. “She exemplifies a total commitment to God and a love for children’s ministry.”



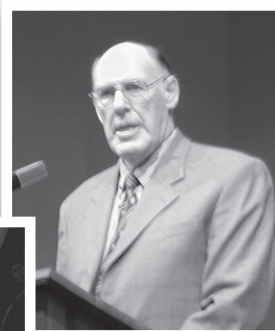
*Dorie Johnston*

## MISSIONARY CONVENTION FOCUSES ON MINISTRY, NOV. 8–9

“Seeing all those who are doing something for God really encouraged me and made me want to do more for Him.” This was student Jeremy Glass’s response to GBS’s missionary convention, November 8–9. Beginning Wednesday morning with Douglas Crossman’s call to revival, activities focused on undivided commitment to ministry. Addressing plenary sessions Wednesday and Thursday evenings was South African pastor, Hugo Lategan, now of Binghamton, New York, who also spoke in two morning sessions. “I was immensely challenged in Hugo Lategan’s workshops,” commented student Angie Burton. “He brought mission work alive to me.”

Workshops were also held by Steven Manley, EFM; Mark and Janene Dubbeld, EBM; Rusty and Isabelle Rundell, EFM; and Sidney Grant, FEA.

“Leaving a Christian heritage for Hispanics—what a vision,” said Myra Brown, who is *Revivalist* production manager as well as an education sophomore. “Sidney Grant’s talk about the Hispanic outreach impacted me in a lasting manner.”



*Hugo Lategan*



*Mark and Janene Dubbeld*

**BRIEFLY NOTED:** Dr. Kenneth Farmer, Vice-President for Academic Affairs, announces that **internet workshop scheduled for November 17-18** with Dr. Barry Hamilton has been postponed until spring 2001....Recent **student elections** have named the following as presidents of their classes: Lisa Burton, senior; Chris Ryan, junior; Aaron Terry, sophomore, and Josh Avery, freshman....The **Rev. B.J. Walker served effectively as evangelist for fall revival services**, August 29—September 3. His forthright holiness emphasis was deeply appreciated, and student response was gratifying... .The Office of Academic Affairs has diploma certificates on file which it will send to **the following persons whose addresses are needed:** Robert DeWitt Keith, Lydia Flunoz, Charles Ross Good, Herman R. Linn, Marrella E. Canter, Sara Rebecca Gaul, Samuel Milton Leach, Nola Irene Rowley, William Calvin Martin, Alma Self, Myron Barrell, and Marley A. Carpenter....**Recent chapel speakers** include the following: Kelly Copeland, Jack Hooker, John Wilson (representing Wesley Biblical Seminary), Allen Coppedge, Douglas Crossman, and Melvin Adams. ■



*B.J. Walker*



## 1000 Prayer Intercessors Needed

Pictured here in late August are current GBS ministerial students and faculty under the direction of Dr. Allan P. Brown. Dr. Brown's goal is to form a band of 1,000 intercessors praying regularly for these students as they prepare for ministry. If you are interested, please contact him today: Dr. Allan P. Brown, 1810 Young Street, Cincinnati, Ohio 45210; (513) 721-7944 ext. 238; [abrown7777@aol.com](mailto:abrown7777@aol.com).

On these pages, we feature items about GBS alumni, vital statistics, significant events scheduled throughout the "Revivalist family," and brief news notes from across the holiness movement. Items for inclusion in the "Revivalist Family" should be addressed to the Editorial Office, 1810 Young Street, Cincinnati, Ohio 45210; or [revivalist@qbs.edu](mailto:revivalist@qbs.edu).

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## CORRESPONDENCE

"At the age of 15, I came to GBS to take my high school work. It was 1920, and I got to graduate in 1925. My name then was Dorothy Slawson from Indiana, and I worked to pay my way through school. My future husband, Thomas Manuel, went to GBS in 1924 and finished high school. We married in the fall of 1925, and we went to Kingswood, Kentucky, for him to take more schooling for the ministry. Over the years he pastored five different churches. We had been married 61 years, lacking 13 days, when God took him home.

"I love to read the *Revivalist*. I see a name once in awhile I used to know. Of course, Sister Peabody and Mother White are enjoying their home in Heaven. God bless the Hilltop! —**Dorothy S. Manuel, Lawrenceville, Illinois**

"I am so grateful for the *Revivalist* and your editorials. I am a retired pastor in my 76th year, and my acquaintance with God's Bible School goes back to the 1940's. I desired to obey the Lord and came to GBS in the fall of 1948 to try and finish high school. I was married, had two children, and was farming. I found it impossible to meet all those requirements. In the Lord's providence, I was able to go to Bible school in Mishawaka, Indiana, 18 miles from my home. My Bible teacher Rev. S.I. Emery helped get me straightened out in my mind on the wonderful doctrine of heart purity.

"In those four years of Brother Emery's teaching, I learned he too had a special place in his heart for God's Bible School. My respect and gratitude for GBS has grown over the years, because of its faithfulness to the wonderful teaching and experience of heart holiness." —**Williard E. Beron, Bremen, Indiana.**

"I enjoy the paper very much and am proud of the school and all it meant to me. I attended four years and graduated in 1943. I have served in various ministries of God's work and was a missionary in Haiti and also South America in Guyana. All totaled was 55 years. I am now 82 and not very well. I love old GBS and still correspond with several friends." —**Rev. Francis A. Taylor, Frankfort, Indiana.**

"We had the pleasure of hosting Darrell Stetler and David Fry after the wonderful, spiritually-uplifting concert performed by God's Bible School choir on April 11, 2000. Darrell's and David's parents must be very proud of them. I just couldn't let this opportunity to express our deepest gratitude and heartfelt thanks for their encouraging words and compassion to go untold." —**Ray and Pat Buck, Endicott, New York 13760.**

"My parents, the Rev. and Mrs. John A. Giles, formerly of Jacksonville, Florida, are both now in heaven. Their new address—*One Glory Blvd., Apartment Praise, Heaven, God.* Thanks for your faithfulness in sending the *Revivalist*." —**Mrs. Faith Sistare, E-Mail Message.**

"An evangelist Harry Woods was holding a revival in 1940 when I was sixteen years old, and in that revival I was saved. Uncle Sam called me in 1943, and I served as a machine gunner in the infantry and fought on several islands in the Philippines; and in so doing, I experienced several miracles. Thanks for the *Revivalist*. May God bless you every one. —**Roy H. Welch, Tampa, Florida.**

• • • • •

## PERSONALS

To the *Revivalist* Family we wish to express our gratitude for the many prayers, phone calls, cards, and gifts during the past months. Sharon (GBS '79) had a below-the-knee amputation in late April due to a malignant tumor on her left foot. She has healed well and is awaiting a temporary prosthesis. God has been very near to our family, and His peace abides in our hearts. Our love, **Joe and Sharon Smith and Family, Shelbyville, Indiana.**



## BIRTHS

To **Mark and Jana (England) Burley**, a daughter **Khara Mackensie Burley**, born July 6, 2000, El Dorado Springs, Missouri.

To **James and Marie Plank**, a daughter **Jennifer Deanna Plank**, born October 3, 2000, Lewisburg, Pennsylvania.

## ALUMNI FOCUS

The **Rev. Glenn D. Black** (GBS '69 HS; '74 BRE) has been recalled by a 91% vote to serve another four-year term as superintendent of the Kentucky District of The Wesleyan Church. Black, former editor of *God's Revivalist*, has served as district superintendent since 1990.



## SPECIAL INTEREST

"Your [musical] group did a fantastic job at our church, Sunday morning, October 22nd. Jason Baker is a wonderful addition to them. His smile, as he is ministering in song, is absolutely infectious. Seth Wetherald did a tremendous job with the PR. Aaron Terry was very good at song leading, and Jonathan Hood was outstanding with his brief sermon. Heidi Jones is great at the piano and is a very pleasant and sweet girl. You should be very proud as you send this group out to represent GBS. Their singing was tops and will only get better the longer they are together."  
—Bob Leach

The **Rev. Deron Fourman** has been installed as pastor of the new Bible Methodist Church, Port Clinton, Ohio. Mr. Fourman (GBS '85 HS; '90 BA) and his wife, the former Kimberly Jewett (GBS '89 BA) are the parents of three children, Alex, Courtney, and Kaitlyn. They

moved to Port Clinton from Fairmont, West Virginia.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

Don Davison, GBS Director of Public Relations, announces that the school's **Symphonic Wind and String Ensemble** will appear in concert at the Central Church of the Nazarene, Ft. Wright, Kentucky, at 10:00 A.M., Sunday, January 21, 2001. The SWSE will appear at the Noblesville Pilgrim Holiness Church at 6:30 that evening.

## OBITUARIES

**Opal M. Helphenstine**, age 74, died June 5, 2000. A faithful prayer warrior and friend of God's Bible School, she entered the ministry at the age of 16. She was a happy and enthusiastic Christian whose life was a faithful testimony for the Lord Jesus whom she loved and served. She was the author of six books on her personal experiences and was also involved in Christian radio ministry. Funeral services were held in Flemingsburg, Kentucky, with burial in the Wallingford Cemetery.

The **Rev. Roger G. Price, Sr.**, age 58, died September 29, 2000, at Indianapolis, Indiana. He had received bachelor degrees from Union Bible College and Indiana Wesleyan University and had nearly completed a master's degree with the latter institution. An agent for the Schmul Publishing Co., he had served for many years in Christian ministry and was a recognized authority on such early holiness movement figures as Beverly Carradine and W.B. Godbey. He is survived by five children, including Roger G. Price, Jr., a GBS graduate. Funeral services were held at North Manchester, Indiana, with burial at Laketon, Indiana. Officiating was Dr. Michael Williams with Rev. Jim

Beers, Rev. Wallace Thornton, and Mr. Curtis Hale, assisting.

## CLASSIFIED ADVERTISING

*We will accept only items appropriate to our purpose and mission. Cost is fifty cents per word for each inclusion. We reserve all rights to accept or reject materials submitted to us.*

### HELP GBS BUILD ITS ARCHIVES!

We are building our archival collection as a safe repository for valuable photographs and other memorabilia connected with God's Bible School's rich past. If you have such items and are willing to donate them, or in the case of photographs and documents to allow us to copy them, please contact the editorial office of *God's Revivalist*, 1810 Young Street, Cincinnati, Ohio 45210.

**Church Pews Needed!** The Radcliffe Bible Methodist Church needs twelve 8-foot, padded pews, preferable mauve in color or in a color to match a mauve color scheme. Please contact Rev. Ruth Ann Huskins, 5160 Oakes Road, Clayton, Ohio 45315—8934. Or call (937) 837-6211 or (937) 603-03229.

**PASTOR NEEDED in our rural community.** The Waterford Union Church was founded as a holiness church, and we are praying for a Wesleyan/holiness pastor. Contact Clifford Peterson, 16118 E. Waterford Road, Lewistown, Illinois 61542. Telephone 309-5476-3899.

**Editorial Assistant needed in the Philippines.** *Qualifications:*—Spirit-filled, passion for literature evangelism, teachable, journalism background, editorial, office management, computer knowledgeable and professional/sales experience. *Location:* Word of Life Publishers (The Wesleyan Church) Manila, Philippines. *Duration:* Short or long term. Contact Scott Olson, PO Box 50434, Indianapolis, IN 46250. Phone (317) 576-8161. E-mail: [WWMgonet@wesleyan.org](mailto:WWMgonet@wesleyan.org).

(*Revivalist Family* continues on page 16)

# gbs alumni spotlight

*charting the course, setting the pace, raising the standard...*

## TRIBUTE TO MRS. VIRGINIA MILAM VERNON

*by her son George B. Vernon III*

God's paths sometimes take some surprising and delightful turns. He has a wonderful way of taking individuals with nothing but a desire to follow Him, then making them into bountiful channels of blessing through which He can flow. This was certainly the case with Virginia (Milam) Vernon, a shy young teenage girl from a very poor farm in Alabama who came to God's Bible School in the mid-1930's.

After leaving GBS in 1941, she served in the ministry with her husband (George B. Vernon, Jr.) for 35 years. I am fortunate and blessed to have had the privilege of living in that home for several years and experiencing the outpouring of her consistent, loving Christian life.

She is a woman of strong **faith**. Her experiences across many years of Christian living and service have taught her over and over again that

God's Word can be depended upon. But she is not content to live in the past. In order to maintain a strong and vital faith, her devotional books are the old classics on prayer and faith, not the light and chaffy "cheap grace" material that many are reading today. Hers is a faith that works.

She has also been a woman of **fortitude** and sacrifice. I remember very clearly that one of the parsonages where we lived had no running water. Everything from washing clothes and dishes, preparing meals, and taking baths was done with water drawn from a well and carried into the house. I never remember hearing Mother complain—not one time—that the furniture was out of date and the car was wearing out, or even when we had NO car.

She has always been a **fruitful** woman. God's Word is very clear that genuine Christians are identified by their fruit. This dear saint exemplifies all of them, but she is recognized primarily for her patience. Perhaps with eight children and a husband who talked fast, walked fast and worked fast, she had more opportunities to develop a meek and quiet spirit!

I would put a love for her **family** near the top of the list of her qualities. Perhaps all mothers are the same, but I know of no one who is more anxious to hear from and visit with her family. This includes not only her children, but also her broth-



(above) Virginia Milam Vernon receives the Alumnus of the Year award from National Alumni Association President Dennis Joslin at Homecoming 2000; (right) George and Virginia Vernon at GBS soon after their marriage.



Virginia Milam Vernon, far left, helps other students and staff prepare for the annual Thanksgiving Day dinner for Cincinnati's poor during her freshman year at GBS, 1936.

er and sisters, some who are older than she is.

For a number of years she and her husband have been known for their **friendliness** and hospitality. There was never a time in their ministry

when they were blessed with an abundance of material things. However, several individuals have spoken about how comfortable they were made to feel in their home. While the meals were rarely steak and the beds were probably not the most upscale, visitors felt a genuine feeling of welcome and sharing. Behind all of this was a saintly lady simply giving her best to Jesus.

She continues to be a woman of **fervency**. I remember our home as a place where missionaries and Christian workers were welcomed. While she is not able to do as much of that now, her dedication to God's cause is deeper than ever. She probably knows the names of more missionaries than anyone I know. When I stop by to visit, I note that she has correspondence and publications from organizations all around the world.

The most important thing I could say about her, however, is that she is a woman of **faithfulness**. In spite of failing eyesight,

she still sends tracts to business and government leaders. Don't ask me how she finds their addresses! I remember one occasion in which she sent a gospel tract to the president of a large distillery. (I'm not sure he ever responded!)

Her monthly Social Security check is very small, but missionaries and organizations such as God's Bible School can count on hearing from her—every month. God and His cause are the most important things in her life.

Corrie Ten Boom once wrote that Jesus never said, "Well done, thou good and *successful* servant", but rather, "Well done, thou good and *faithful* servant." Virginia Milam Vernon has been one of those, and I thank God for the privilege of being her son. ■



Alumni reporter **Marc Sankey** ('94 BRE) pastors the Bible Methodist Church of Franklin, Ohio. You can contact him at [pastorsankey@netzero.com](mailto:pastorsankey@netzero.com)

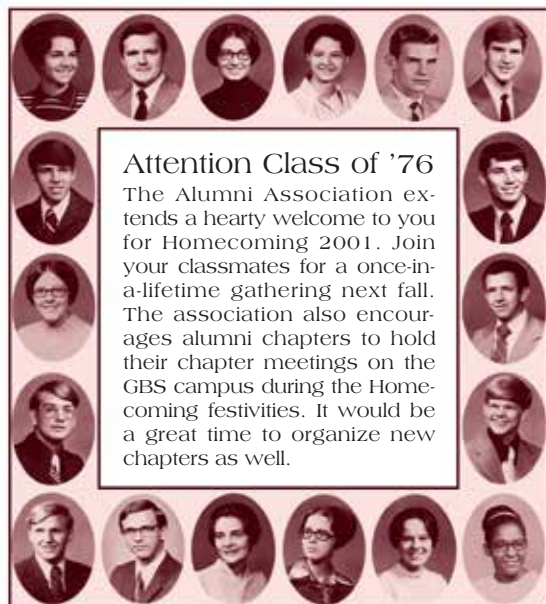


“What is Allegiance?” was theme of Dan Durkee’s keynote address at **Youth Challenge 2000, October 26–28**. Held again at West Harrison, Indiana, this year’s event drew approximately 1200 persons for various pulpit challenges, musical presentations, and a patriotic rally with Christian lawyer David Gibbs III. Committed to “keeping our holiness heritage alive” and geared to a conservative holiness constituency, this year’s Youth Challenge included speakers James Plank, Garen and Sheila Wolf, and John and Martha Zechman. Among musical groups were Phil and Kim Collingsworth, Vision, and those from participating Bible colleges. Doran Ritchey and Jon Plank served as instrumentalists. The conference closed with a moving dramatization by Hobe Sound Bible College.

“Jesus: God’s Way of Salvation” is the theme of the **18th World Methodist Conference**, to be held in Brighton, England, July 25–31. The assembly, representing Methodist denominations from around the world, will feature special speakers, public worship, fifteen seminars on urgent contemporary concerns, and time for prayer and worship.

More than 400 Nazarenes from every district in Ecuador attended **Holiness Congress 2000 held in August** at Nazarene Theological Seminary in Quito. “The workshops and open panel allowed a dialog with the people that led to a deeper understanding of the doctrine of holiness,” according to North Andean Field Director Dwight Rich. “The Holy Spirit moved in a tremendous way, and people were sanctified in services, in the devotional times, [and] in dormitory prayer meetings at 3 A.M.”

Following the resignation of Bishop Donald J. Wolfram, **Bishop Robert B. Dallenbach was elected as general superintendent of the Pillar of Fire Church**, which is headquartered in Zarephath, New Jersey. In his farewell address, Bishop Dallenbach, who will remain a member of the Central Board of Trustees, reviewed the history of the denomination and also noted, “It is imperative that we look to the future...” ■



**Attention Class of '76**

The Alumni Association extends a hearty welcome to you for Homecoming 2001. Join your classmates for a once-in-a-lifetime gathering next fall. The association also encourages alumni chapters to hold their chapter meetings on the GBS campus during the Homecoming festivities. It would be a great time to organize new chapters as well.

**IHC  
ALUMNI RECEPTION**  
An alumni reception will be held during the Inter-Church Holiness Convention in Dayton, Ohio. We invite all alumni to attend this exciting reunion at the Crown Plaza Hotel on Wednesday, April 25 during the supper meal. More details will be announced later.

# Christmas...

## ...Servant to Sons

*Adapted from a sermon by Chris Hilling*

*What is the meaning of Christmas? We receive conflicting messages as we listen to the music of the season, walk through the shopping malls, or absorb the advertisements which surround us. We can understand the little boy who asked his father, “Just whose birthday is Christmas? Is it really Jesus’? Are you sure it isn’t Santa Claus’?” In the mainstream of our society, there are many people who do not realize why we are celebrating Christmas once again.*

But those of us who know Jesus Christ understand that Christmas celebrates what God has done for us in Him, taking us who were servants to the “elements of this world” and transforming us into the children of God. This is dramatically illustrated in Galatians 4:1–7, where Paul points out three steps which move us from servants to sonship. As we meditate upon these words, we are brought to a deeper understanding of why we keep this holy season.

### ***I. THE PROBLEM OF SERVANTHOOD: Galatians 4:1–3***

Paul wrote this epistle because the Galatians who had once embraced Christianity were now reverting back to the Mosaic laws and ceremonies. In essence, they were living as though Christ had not come—indeed, as if there were no Christmas! Thus verses 1–2 speak of being ***servants to the law***. Paul gives an example of a child who had inherited an estate but was not old enough to claim it. Though the heir and master of the property, this child was still considered a servant of the law; and for all practical purposes, a minor and a slave were viewed in the same light. As a child, the heir could not assume control of his inheritance until such a time as was legally appointed.

Verse 3 points to the ***system of the law***. While the law is perfect, accomplishing all the purposes for which it was established, God has now provided something greater. The law is designed to demonstrate our sinfulness, to point us to Christ, and to teach us how to be saved by faith and obey and please God. But its purpose was never to save a person through obedience to it. Only Jesus is the door to heaven—the Way, the Truth, and the Life. Salvation is through faith in Him and in nothing else!



Also the law was incomplete. There were many laws on the religious books when Jesus took His first breath in Bethlehem. One writer claims that there were over 250 laws and 365 prohibitions. In his reference to the “elements of the world” (v. 3), Paul is referring to the “simplest compound” or to the “letters of the alphabet.” The law could not bring salvation, for it was only the “element” or the “alphabet” of salvation. As the alphabet is nothing in itself until it is compounded into syllables, words and sentences, so the law, taken by itself, gives no salvation. Christ came that first Christmas morning not to destroy the law, but to make the law complete—that is, to fulfill it (Matt. 5:17).

## II. THE PROVISION OF SALVATION:

### *Galatians 4:4–5*

Christmas becomes real to all who receive personal salvation by repenting of sin and by believing on Jesus Christ as Saviour. Verse four explains the **conditions of His coming**—“when the fullness of time was come” (v. 4). He came at the precise moment in accordance to prophecy. From the time of man’s first sin, there had been the promise of a Deliverer (Gen. 3:15), and throughout Scripture other prophecies pointed to Him. It was promised to Abraham that through his descendants all the nations of the earth would be blessed (Gen. 12:2–3). Balaam predicted that there would come a “star out of Jacob” and that “a scepter would rise out of Israel (Num. 24:17). The Psalmist wrote of a King whose name would “endure forever” (Ps. 72:17). Isaiah foretold that His name would be “called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace” (Isa. 9:6). Other prophecies specifically declared that He would be of the Tribe of Judah and of the line of David, that Bethlehem would be His birthplace, and that He would be preceded by a Great Prophet who would prepare His way.

Christ entered this world at a time when there could be no doubt about the fulfillment of these prophecies. Some may wonder why it took so long for the Messiah to arrive, but He waited in order to deepen the conviction for sin and to show that all existing systems that men had devised for salvation had utterly failed. He was born as a child on this earth when the time of preparation had come to pass. The Roman world was at peace, communication was at its best with a system of highways for travel and with Greek as a nearly universal language. Moreover, the Jews were dispersed in nearly every nation, still looking for the Messiah to appear and ripe for evangelism by the apostles.

Consider, too, the **confinements of His coming** (v. 4). He was “born of a woman,” made truly man in order to provide salvation for us. All of Adam’s descendants are born as slaves to sin and Satan, but Christ our Second Adam had to be truly human, yet born without inherited depravity. Therefore He “made himself of no reputation and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men” (Phil. 2:7). This was accom-

plished in the miracle of the Virgin Birth. Moreover, Our Lord was born “under the law” (v. 4). In order to deliver us from the condemnation of the law, Jesus had to be completely obedient to the law. Christ’s perfect obedience to the Father while on this earth was one of the essential elements in His provision for our salvation, for any disobedience would have disqualified Him from being the spotless sacrifice for sin.

Verse 5 points to the **characteristics of His coming**—“to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.” Jesus Our Saviour came so those who were servants and slaves to sin, condemned by the law, might be made the sons of God. Christmas underscores His purpose that all of us might continually and personally know the joy of His saving, liberating presence.

## III. THE PRIVILEGE OF SONSHIP:

### *Galatians 4:6–7*

Jesus, who came to us “in the fullness of time,” according to His Father’s will, ensures our acceptance as members of God’s family through “the **adoption** of sons” (v. 5). This occurs whenever we accept the great salvation which has been offered to us. As the result of personal conversion, the believer is “no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ” (vs. 7). As sons, we are no longer enslaved to sin but have become heirs with all the benefits of our spiritual inheritance. We now have a loving Father, peace within our hearts, joy in our soul, an Advocate who represents us, and the hope of heaven. When we become children of God, we are justified on the basis of Christ’s death, our sins are all forgiven, we are accepted before Him as righteous, and the penalty of our sin is removed!

As God’s children, we also receive the Spirit through **redemption**, for as Paul declares, “God hath sent forth the Spirit into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father” (vs. 6). By receiving the Christ of Christmas, we are not only justified and adopted into God’s family, but we are also initially sanctified by the Holy Spirit. Sanctification is what the Spirit does within us, empowering us to live regenerated lives, freeing us from the dominance of sin, and making us like Christ. It is also the Spirit’s presence which brings a direct witness to our sonship, giving us an assurance that enables us to look up to God and call Him “Father” (vs. 6).

Once more we celebrate Christmas—the advent of Christ, the sinless one. For it was in “the fullness of time” that God sent Him to provide salvation for our fallen race “that we might receive the adoption of sons.” *Servants to sons*—what a mighty transformation! Yet this is what He promises to all who will receive. This is the promise, and this is the joy of Christmas! ■

—The Rev. Christopher E. Hilling (GBS ‘97 BA) is pastor of the Harrison Chapel Bible Methodist Church, near Pataskala, Ohio.



# Those Amazing Methodists

## DISCIPLES INDEED—CONCLUSION OF A SERIES

*Early Methodism's story is our story, and it is a story of God's power unleashed with amazing success. In this eloquent series about our spiritual ancestors, A.W. Tozer explains the discipline, piety, and focus to which they were committed. Tozer, a towering evangelical prophet, was not specifically from the Wesleyan/holiness tradition, but his appreciation for it was profound. As part of the Revivalist's millennial reflections, we share his stirring words with our readers. Written more than half a century ago, they lay a firm foundation for spiritual renewal as we reclaim the heritage of "those amazing Methodists."*

John Wesley and his Methodists understood the meaning of discipleship as we do not today. To be a Christian was to be a disciple of Christ, and a disciple must voluntarily accept discipline.

This was to them a perfectly logical and obvious truth, and the application of that truth caused the early Methodists to stand out from ordinary nominal Christians as bright as stars in a dark sky.

The application of discipline to the Methodist Societies was simple as it was strict. The local church was divided into classes of about 12 members and over each class a leader was appointed whose duty it was

I. To see each person in his class once a week at least; in order

1. To inquire how their souls prosper.
2. To advise, reprove, comfort, or exhort, as occasion may require.

These groups were sometimes broken down into still smaller "bands" which met at intervals to examine their hearts before each other. "To speak...freely and plainly, the true state of our souls, with the faults we have committed in tempers, words, or actions...." Among the questions they asked each other were these:

Has no sin, inward or outward, dominion over you? Do you desire to be told of your faults? Do you desire to be told of all your faults, and that plain and home? Is it your desire and design to be on this and all other occasions entirely open, so as to speak without disguise, and without reserve? What known sins have you committed since our last meeting? What have you thought, said, or done, of which you doubt whether it be sin or not?

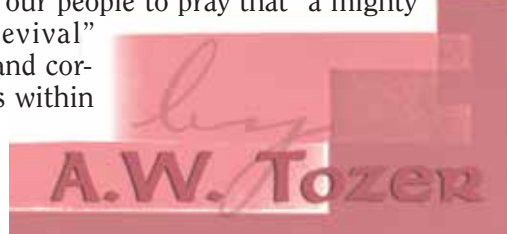
In this way they probed to the heart of each professing Christian. "Do you desire that in doing this, we should come as close as possible, that we should cut to the quick, and search your heart to the bottom?"

No one, however, needed to submit himself to such scrutiny. Should a member resent these searching questions he had but to leave the assembly. If it became evident that a member was habitually harboring unconfessed and unforsaken sins he was quietly dismissed. That there were many such is revealed by the "quarterly meeting," the rules of which provided for the public reading of the names of such as had been dismissed from membership since the last report. "We will admonish him of the error of his ways," said the Rules; "we will bear with him for a season. But if then he repent not, he hath no more place among us. We have delivered our souls."

Compare this with the brassy independence and moral license of our present-day evangelical churches and it may become clear why the early Methodists rocked the world and we are too feeble to make our influence felt across the street or even next door.

The general level of the church is so low now that it is impossible for a local church to exercise moral discipline. However deeply the pastor may grieve over the evils practiced by his people, there is not spiritual solidarity enough in the church to enable him to do anything about it. Ties of family and friendship are so strong that were a carnal and self-willed member to be called to account for his deeds, great numbers would quit the church in protest. Personal friendship is more real and more important than the communion of saints.

The result is that we try to do by preaching what the New Testament church and the Methodists did by discipline. We urge our people to pray that "a mighty Holy Ghost revival" may sweep in and correct the abuses within the church, when it is perfectly evident from the



Scriptures that these abuses must be corrected before the revival can come.

How did we get into such a fix? Well, there are many causes, but here is an effort to trace some of them in fairly recent history.

A short generation ago there sprang up in fundamentalist and “full gospel” circles a movement which for want of a better name I have called “tabernacleism.” In spite of its having little organization and almost no intellectual content, it had and is still having a powerful influence over the evangelical church of America.

As with almost all religious movements it represented a reaction from empty formalism along with a hunger for a spiritual reality which the drowsy denominational churches were not providing.

The springs of the movement were not all pure, for there was discernible more than a little carnal ambition and lust for power among its promoters. It varied from itself almost as much as from the sleepy churches it sought to displace, running the diapason all the way from hyperdispensational believism to an irresponsible, squalling pentecostalism. Tabernacleism, with its questionable morals and its engrossment with carnal religious feelings, bore not remote resemblance to the New Testament church.

There were, nevertheless, certain factors present in it wherever it was found that marked it as being all of one piece. The new barn-type tabernacle that sprang up on the corner in any city was sure to be a revolt from ecclesiastical authority, an effort to escape the multiplying church’s dues and the multicolored offering envelopes of the old-line denominations. That the new “pastor-evangelist-founder” of the independent tabernacle could extract more legal tender from his congregation in one evening than the old church had been able to do in one year never seemed to occur to anyone. The pastor-evangelist, often a layman as ignorant of church history as of Christian theology, assured everyone that this was indeed a return to the freedom and simplicity of the New Testament church. Other marks of identification were a constant attack upon religious ritual and the substitution of an uncomely and pitifully amateurish “order” of service in its place.

Add to this the long-drawn-out sermon filled with coarse humor, self-centered stories and a meaningless rep-

etition of emotion-triggered words and phrases; add the rapid singing of cheap, fifth-rate songs devoid of musical beauty and theological content to the accompaniment of a converted handsaw, a saxophone or a one-man band; add dubious financial transactions, a constant denunciation of churches, and worse still, an abysmal ignorance of the New Testament doctrine of the church; add a conceited spirit of independence that must perpetually boast of itself, and you have tabernacleism at its worst.

At its best the movement was, as I have said, a search for spiritual realities, and without doubt many a simple tabernacle group was a true apostolic church in lineal descent from Pentecost.

What I deplore is that the unworthy elements in tabernacleism have managed to perpetuate and extend themselves until they have permanently injured the religious fiber of the evangelical mind.

Without being aware of it we have gone through an experience tantamount to brainwashing. Our spiritual philosophy has become warped, our sense of belonging has gone from us, we recognize no authority, obey no rules, take no vows, are almost altogether undisciplined and feel no sense of loyalty. The idea that a local church could call us to account for our deeds would arouse humor or anger if declared openly before the average congregation today.

One reason for this attitude may be that we pastors have not been able to prove our moral right to command. Our people know us too well; they golf with us, fish with us and exchange humorous (and

sometimes soiled) stories with us, but they see no oil on our heads and smell no ointment on our garments. If we then preach in a manner to offend them they simply go six blocks uptown and join another group with no questions asked.

Anyway, it is my sober conviction that 95 percent of present-day evangelicals would have been rejected if they had applied for membership in the Methodist Society as it existed 150 years ago. We are simply not godly enough. Our brand of Christianity would not have passed the test of simple goodness imposed by those amazing Methodists.

To me this is a tragedy too great to estimate now. Only eternity will reveal how tragic it is. ■

**Add the rapid singing of cheap, fifth-rate songs to the accompaniment of a converted handsaw, a saxophone or a one-man band; add an abysmal ignorance of the New Testament doctrine of the church; add a conceited spirit of independence, and you have tabernacleism at its worst.**

it by the brook Kidron. But the high places were not removed; nevertheless Asa's heart was perfect (*shalem*) with the LORD all his days" (1 Kings 15:11-14). The reason the high places were not removed is evidently not because he "allowed" them to remain, but simply because he was unable to carry out the thorough abolition of them (Keil, *The Books of the Kings*, 219). Asa's heart was completely devoted to the service of God. He, however, as we have already seen, made some foolish decisions in his foreign alliances and was severely rebuked for it by a prophet of God. His response to the prophetic message was to become "wroth with the seer, and put him in a prison house; for he was in a rage with him because of this thing. And Asa oppressed some of the people the same time" (2 Chron. 16:10). Interestingly, these sinful actions did not disqualify Asa from being described as having a "perfect" (*shalem*) heart. Although Scripture does not record it, Asa must have repented of his sin and remained a thorough-going follower of the Lord all the days of his life. Otherwise God would not have described him as having a "perfect" (*shalem*) heart. Further, as far as he could, he fought against idolatry all his days.

Hezekiah, upon the news of his impending death, prayed to God and requested healing on the basis that he had walked before God in truth "and with a perfect (*shalem*) heart," and had done that which was good in God's sight (2 Kings 20:3; Isa. 38:3). Hezekiah received his request and was healed. After he was healed, he, like Asa, made some foolish choices with foreign powers and brought prophetic rebuke upon his head. His prolonged life produced an heir to the throne who became the most wicked king Judah ever had (Manasseh). In spite of his folly and mistakes, Hezekiah had a "perfect" heart with the Lord.

#### Conclusion:

It is comforting to observe that God's evaluation of people is different from most of our evaluations. God takes into consideration the entire life and its over-all motivation and purpose. Yes, David committed some terrible sins. Yes, Asa and Hezekiah made some foolish and destructive choices. But those sins and mistakes were the exception, not the norm of their lives. And it is here we should note that God's evaluation of a person, having or not having a "perfect" (*shalem*) heart, is an observation made at the end of the person's life, not at the beginning or middle.

To have a "perfect" (*shalem*) heart is to be wholly devoted, and completely loyal to God with no lapses into idolatry. A "perfect" (*shalem*) heart is characterized by being of "one heart" (1 Chron. 12:38), having "a willing mind" (1 Chron. 28:9), walking in His statutes, keeping His commandments, and doing good in God's sight (1 Kings 8:61; 2 Kings 20:3). A person with a "perfect" (*shalem*) heart actively seeks God (1 Chron. 28:9), acts faithfully in the fear of the Lord (2 Chron. 19:9), and confesses and forsakes his sin when accosted by the Holy Spirit (Psalm 51).

The sovereign Lord is seeking men and women who will wholly devote themselves unreservedly to His service with steadfast loyalty and purposeful obedience. He is eager to demonstrate His strength on behalf of those whose hearts are "perfect" (*shalem*) toward Him (2 Chron. 16:9). Are you serving the Lord with a perfect heart? Are you wholly devoted to the Lord, and does your devotion evidence itself in a life that is free from covetousness (which is a form of idolatry)? Is your life characterized by obedience to God's Word? If you are, then God wants to show Himself strong in your behalf. Ask, and you shall receive!

—Sermon outline by Dr. Allan P. Brown



"COMMITTED TO EXCELLENCE  
IN PREACHING"



THE MEANING OF A  
"PERFECT HEART" IN  
THE OLD TESTAMENT

Scripture: "For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to shew himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him."  
2 Chronicles 16:9

#### Introduction

The background for our text is the reign of King Asa of Judah. Threatened by the army of Israel (16:1), King Asa decides to hire military support from an idolatrous source, Ben-hadad, King of Syria. To raise the necessary funds, Asa almost bankrupts his nation (16:2,3). Ben-hadad comes to Asa's aid, attacks Israel from the north, causing Israel to withdraw her troops from Asa's border in order to fortify her own northern borders against further Syrian attack (16:4).

Asa, no doubt feeling relieved and happy that the danger of an invasion by Israel was over, is surprised and angered when he receives a strong rebuke from one of God's prophets. Because Asa had not relied on the Lord for protection, but had relied on an idolatrous foreign nation, God would send further war to Judah.

It is in this context that the words of our text are uttered. In our desire to understand what God means by the phrase, "a perfect heart," let us notice first *the searching sovereign*.

**I. THE SEARCHING SOVEREIGN** —"the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth."

According to our text, our sovereign Lord is depicted as actively searching the whole earth for men and women who meet the qualification of having a "perfect" heart. No one escapes His penetrating gaze. Everyone is examined as to his thoughts, motives, words, and deeds.

Second, let us notice the promise of God Himself to be a *strong protector*.

**II. THE STRONG PROTECTOR**—"to shew himself strong in behalf of them"

This phrase reveals a wonderful truth about our God. He looks for opportunities to help His people in their times of trouble while He magnifies Himself in the eyes of the surrounding idolatrous nations.

Are you needing God to show Himself strong in some area of your life? Do you need His supernatural help? Be assured, God wants to help you by demonstrating the greatness of His power. However, He has one characteristic that the recipient of His help must have: a perfect heart.

Lastly, we come to the *stated criteria*.

**III. THE STATED CRITERIA**—"whose heart is perfect toward him"

What does it mean to have a heart that is perfect (*shalem*) toward God? If we are to meet the qualification for receiving our Sovereign's mighty power, we must learn how to obtain and maintain a perfect heart.

#### A. The meaning of the term “heart” (*leb*)

The Hebrew word translated “heart” (*leb*) is a comprehensive term. It refers to the “control panel” of one’s personality. Your heart is who you really are inside. It includes your thought processes, your motivations, your will, and your affections. This is why Scripture warns us, “Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life” (Prov. 4:23). We are to discipline and guard our thoughts, our motivations, and our affections so they are in harmony with God’s Word, and then exercise our will by choosing that which is pleasing to God (Col. 1:10).

#### B. The meaning of the term “perfect” (*shalem*)

Is it possible to have a “perfect” heart? The typical response of many Bible readers is a quick and emphatic, “Of course not!” The reason for such a negative reaction is our tendency to conceptualize “perfect” in absolute terms—which is free from deficiency or defect. Most people equate “perfect” with that which is faultless and incapable of improvement. We ask ourselves, “Who, apart from God, is without fault?” Therefore, the claim of having a “perfect heart” is usually met with skepticism and unbelief.

The real question does not focus on the meaning of the English word “perfect”; it focuses on the meaning of the Hebrew word *shalem*. Let’s examine the biblical use of the word. There are fourteen occurrences in Old Testament that described the heart as being, or not being, “perfect” (*shalem*).

Chronologically, the first use of the phrase, a “perfect” (*shalem*) heart is 1 Chronicles 12:38. Upon the death of King Saul, the soldiers who were loyal to David came to Hebron “with a perfect (*shalem*) heart to make David king over all Israel: and all the rest also of Israel were of one heart to make David king.” The meaning of *shalem* in this context indicates the soldiers had “made up their minds.” There was no indecision or vacillation in their purpose; they were “single-minded” and “wholehearted” in their loyalty and devotion to David.

The second occurrence of a “perfect” (*shalem*) heart is 1 Chronicles 28:9. Just before King David’s death, upon the ascension of Solomon to the throne, David counseled him, “Solomon my son, know thou the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect (*shalem*) heart and with a willing mind: for the LORD searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts: if thou seek him, he will be found of thee; but if thou forsake him, he will cast thee off for ever.” Notice that the phrase “perfect heart” describes the manner in which Solomon was to serve the Lord. It takes place within the context of a relationship—“know thou the God of thy father.” Further, it is paralleled by a willing mind (*nephesh chaphetz*—a desiring soul). Therefore a *shalem* heart in this context indicates a heart that is wholly devoted to God and completely loyal in its allegiance (does not forsake God).

The third occurrence of *shalem* is 1 Chronicles 29:9. After hearing David’s moving speech to the assembled people during Solomon’s coronation, and after seeing David’s generous and sacrificial offering for the building of the Temple, the leaders of the people joined with David and gave generously. When the people saw that their leaders offered willingly to the LORD, “with a perfect (*shalem*) heart,” they rejoiced greatly. Here *shalem* indicates a wholehearted participation in the giving.

The fourth occurrence of *shalem* is during David’s inaugural prayer for Solomon. He petitions God, “Give unto Solomon my son a perfect (*shalem*) heart, to keep thy commandments, thy testimonies, and thy statutes, and to do all *these things*, and to build the palace, *for* the which I have made provision” (1 Chronicles 29:19). Building upon the meaning of *shalem* in verse 9, we learn that a “perfect heart” is not only a heart that is wholly devoted to God and completely loyal in its allegiance to Him, but a heart that demonstrates its devotion and loyalty by obedience to God’s revealed Word.

The fifth occurrence of *shalem* occurs at the close of King Solomon’s dedicatory prayer of the newly built Temple. Exhorting the nation of Israel, he says, “Let your heart therefore be perfect (*shalem*) with the LORD our God, to walk in his statutes, and to keep his commandments, as at this day” (1 Kings 8:61). Again, *shalem* indicates a heart that is wholly devoted and completely loyal in its allegiance to God and obedient to His Word.

It is at this point, chronologically, that the Bible introduces people whose heart was not perfect (*shalem*) with the Lord. The first is Solomon. 1 Kings 11:4 tells us that when Solomon was old, “his wives turned away his heart after other gods: and his heart was not perfect (*shalem*) with the LORD his God, as was the heart of David his father.” Further, we read that “Solomon did what was evil in the sight of the LORD, and did not follow the LORD fully, as David his father had done” (11:6, NASV). “The LORD was angry with Solomon because his heart was turned away from the LORD, the God of Israel, who had appeared to him twice” (11:9, NASV).

Note that David is said to have had a “perfect” (*shalem*) heart and followed the Lord fully. This information tells us that a “perfect” (*shalem*) heart is not referring to a sinless life. Holy scripture records many of David’s sins. But Scripture also tells us that David was able “to receive rebuke, to acknowledge his utter sinfulness (cf. Psa. 51:3-5), and to cast himself on the mercy of God to forgive him, cleanse him, and restore him to holy fellowship once more” (Gleason Archer, *Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties*, 200). From reading the Davidic psalms, we learn of David’s deep loyalty to God, his earnest desire to obey His Word and to further the cause of His kingdom on earth. Further, David never went after other gods. He was wholeheartedly, steadfastly, loyal to the God of his fathers, the God of Israel, and never engaged in idolatrous worship.

Many readers of the Old Testament are perplexed when reading that David had a perfect heart, and was a man after God’s own heart (Acts 13:22), when he was guilty of sins such as polygamy, adultery, murder and lying. Could it be that the English word “perfect” is at the bottom of our perplexity. The Hebrew word *shalem*, when describing the heart (*leb*), speaks of a wholehearted devotion and loyalty to God, which manifests itself in obedience to His Word, in spite of temporary sinful lapses. Such a definition qualifies David to be described as having a “perfect” (*shalem*) heart, for David, from God’s point of view, was a man who fully and loyally followed Him and therefore was a man after God’s own heart. And it is this lack of wholehearted, steadfast loyalty and devotion to God, demonstrated by his willingness to aid his foreign wives in their idolatrous worship, that earmarks Solomon’s failure to have a “perfect” (*shalem*) heart.

In addition to Solomon, two other kings are cited as not having a “perfect” (*shalem*) heart with the Lord: Abijah and Amaziah. Of Abijah it is said, “he walked in all the sins of his father [Rehoboam, the son of Solomon, an idolater, 1 Kings 14:22-24], which he had done before him: and his heart was not perfect (*shalem*) with the LORD his God, as the heart of David his father” (1 Kings 15:3). Amaziah did not qualify as having a perfect heart because he “brought the gods of the children of Seir, and set them up to be his gods, and bowed down himself before them, and burned incense unto them” (2 Chron. 25:2, 14). It appears that the sin of idolatry irrevocably disqualified a person from being described as having a “perfect” (*shalem*) heart.

Along with David, Scripture cites two other kings who had a “perfect” (*shalem*) heart with the Lord: Asa and Hezekiah. Asa, great-great grandson of David, instituted religious reform and fought against the idolatry in the land. “He did *that which was* right in the eyes of the LORD, as *did* David his father. And he took away the sodomites out of the land, and removed all the idols that his fathers [Abijah and Rehoboam] had made. And also Maachah his mother [grandmother], even her he removed from *being* queen, because she had made an idol in a grove: and Asa destroyed her idol, and burnt



➡(p5) their timeless orbits, He came directly to that grubby stable, which He turned into the court of heaven.

As the cattle lowed quietly in their narrow stalls and the donkeys peered curiously from their darkened corners, Mary “brought forth her first-born son and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger.” Laying aside the vestments of eternal sovereignty, Jesus Christ—“God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God,” as the Nicene Creed asserts of Him—stepped down to us in human flesh. This was all for the love of us, of course—all to become our great sin-bearer, “That we might go at last to heaven, Saved by His precious blood.” So it was that that dismal stable became the nursery of the Prince of Glory; the straw upon which He lay reflected a splendor far greater than great Caesar’s crown; and the whispering wind echoed the angel song which had aroused those nearby shepherds, “keeping watch over their flock by night.”

These simple countrymen could hardly grasp the message which they had received: “Unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord!” How their ears must have rung with the heavenly “*glorias*” and how their hearts must have nearly burst with excitement, as “they came with haste and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger.” Whether they were lithe and vigorous youngsters or bent and hoary grandsires we do not know; but before that night was past, they had gazed in adoration upon the Majesty of Heaven. *“And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.”*

Perhaps those mysterious “wise men from the east” had already seen His star twinkling in the nighttime’s fiery radiance. In all the Word of God, there are few accounts more thrilling than their long, heroic journey and their offering those most precious gifts—gold for His exalted royalty, frankincense for His supreme deity, and myrrh for His sacrificial death. *“Glorious now behold Him arise; King and God and sacrifice; Alleluia! Alleluia! sounds through the earth and sky!”* God and priest and sacrifice—the sacred drama was being played out on earth! The everlasting gates had lifted up their heads! The King of Glory had come to Bethlehem!

But what about the innkeeper? At home, asleep, exhausted by the demands of his busy day? Oblivious to the anxious young man or of his weary, expectant wife whom he had sent to the cattle shed? Unaware that he had consigned Deity to manger straw? Certainly he did not know that he had missed the most splendid opportunity of his life—the opportunity which more than any other would have hallowed all his memories with delight. It is true that he had offered some refuge for the Holy Family, but it was pitiful enough. After all, stables still are stables—designed as shelter for the beasts, not as birthplace for the Son of God!

Did old Reuben—as we have called him—ever learn of that great Gift which he had turned away? Even if later, as we devoutly (p26) ➡



# evangelists

Direct all listings and inquiries about slates to Revivalist Press, 1810 Young Street, Cincinnati, Ohio 45210

- Bales, Rev. Fred** (evangelist and singers), P.O. Box 124, Friendship, OH 45630. (740) 858-6152.
- Bell, Rev. and Mrs. Thomas** (evangelist and song evangelist with travel trailer), P.O. Box 162, Shirley, IN 47384-0162. (765) 737-6055.
- Boulson, James** (evangelist), 308 Jewett Rd., Steubenville, OH 43952. (740) 282-8341.
- Bradshaw, Rev. Walter D. and Sharon** (evangelist and singers with instruments), 206 Prairie Dr., Lexington, NC 27292. (336) 798-3225.
- Cargal, Hoyt** 7720 NW 30th St., Bethany, OK 73008-4446.
- Chalfant, Rev. Morris** 1465 Timber Ridge Court, Kankakee, IL 60901. (815) 939-4506.
- Cheatham, Rev. Robert E.** (evangelist), 119 Oliver Ave., Franklin, IN 46131. (317) 736-8063.
- Collingsworth, Phil and Kim**, P.O. Box 622, Cincinnati, OH 45201-0622. (513) 651-3680. www.philandkim.com  
Dec 5 .....J. Byrd's Cafeteria, Greenwood, IN  
Dec 6.....Ch of the Nazarene, Columbus, IN  
Dec 8...Penn View Bible Inst, Penns Creek, PA  
Dec 9....Performing Arts Center, Hanover, PA  
Dec 10....United Methodist, Steubenville, OH  
Dec 12...Cath. of Tomorrow Restaurant, Akron, OH  
Dec 14.....Ch of the Nazarene, Ravenna, KY  
Dec 15 .....Bible Methodist, Burlington, KY  
Dec 17 AM...Wesleyan Evangelistic, Dayton, OH  
Dec 17 PM.....Wesleyan, Westport, IN  
Dec 18.....Eaglecreek Friends, Westfield, IN  
Dec 19 AM...World Gospel Mission, Marion, IN  
Dec 19 PM.....Wesleyan, Warren, IN  
Dec 20 .....Bible Holiness, Sylvis, IL  
Jan 7.....Ch of the Nazarene, N. Vernon, IN  
Jan 21 AM.....House of Prayer, Roanoke, VA  
Jan 21 PM.....Wesleyan, Roanoke, VA
- Earley, Rev. Robert D.** (evangelist), 107 Timbersprings Dr., Indiana, PA 15701. (412) 349-0829 or 349-0823.
- Edwards, Daniel and Angie** 5672 W. 700 N., Ridgeville, IN 47380. (765) 857-2725.  
Dec 9.....Bird Lake, Osseo, MI
- Emert, Rev. and Mrs. William** (evangelist and spiritual counselor), 1030 E. Main St., Roaring Spring, PA 16673. (814) 224-2487.
- England, Rev. Robert Sr.** (evangelist), 30205 Carey Rd., Salem, OH 44460. (330) 537-3993.  
Dec 1-10 .....Bible Holiness, Troy, MO  
Jan 3-14 ...Allegheny Wesleyan, Lady Lake, FL  
Jan 16-21.....Punxsutawney, PA  
Jan 23-28.....Frankfort, IN  
Jan 31-Feb 4.....Shoals, IN
- Fay, Kenneth and Eleanor** (evangelist and singers), 2369 Mesa Ave., Emmett, ID 83617. (208) 365-5993 or 365-4742.
- Gallimore, Rev. Allen** (evangelist), 110 Harvey Ave., Oak Hill, WV 25901. (304) 469-3061.
- Grubbs, Rick** LIFECHANGERS "Redeeming the Time" Seminar Series, 275 Majestic Dr., Salisbury, NC 28146. (704) 279-5018.
- Hallaway, Rev. Dale** 44625 Cloverdale Rd., Centerville, PA 16404. (814) 827-3222.
- Harrington, Rev. Milton** (evangelist), 107 Stone Brook Court, Taylors, SC 29687. (864) 848-9180.
- Haynes, Rev. Edward P.** (evangelist), 2336 Barnor Drive, Indianapolis, IN 46219. (317) 353-8861.
- Humble, Richard G.** 457 Tarlton Road, P.O. Box 356, Circleville, OH 43113. (614) 477-3052.  
Dec 5-10 ...Brimers Chapel, Dandridge, TN  
Jan 16-21.....Springfield, OH  
Jan 24-26.....AWC, Salem, OH  
Feb 1-11 ...Sea Breeze Camp, Hobe Sound, FL
- Jones, Rev. Philo** (evangelist), 6739 E. Speed Road, Milltown, IN 47145. (812)633-4418.
- Light, Rev. and Mrs. David** (evangelist and singers), 9342 Twin Falls Rd., Copper Hill, VA 24079. (540) 929-5163.  
Jan 1-2 ...Ft. Myers Rescue Mism, Ft. Myers, FL  
Jan 18-28 .....OPEN DATE  
Feb 1-11 .....OPEN DATE
- Miller, Rev. and Mrs. Bence C.** (evangelist), 2104 Pinewood Dr., Columbus, IN 47203. (812) 378-9614.
- Parker, Rev. Dan** (evangelist), 140 W. Hester Dr., Easley, SC 29640. (864) 850-2955.
- Peyton, J. B. "Juddie" and Eunice** (evangelist and singers), P.O. Box 983, Bedford, IN 47421. (812) 275-4068.
- Quales, Donald and Valerie** (song evangelists) 1911 E. Co. Rd. 650 N., Petersburg, IN 47567, (812) 354-6389.
- Russell, Mark** (evangelist), RR 1, P.O. Box 158B, Centerville, PA 16404. (814) 827-7594.
- Scott, Noel and Betty** (evangelist and singers), P.O. Box 297 Lowry City, MO 64763-0297. (417) 644-7521; Cell (317) 727-3029; Fax (417) 644-2363.  
Dec 12-17.....OPEN DATE  
Dec 18-31 .....RESERVED
- Searls, Rev. Chad and Valerie** (evangelist and singers, travel trailer), 2730 N. State Rt. 555, Malta, OH 43758 (740) 347-4647.  
Dec 8-10..Calvary Wesleyan Holiness, Corydon, IN
- Smart, Marshall and Nadine** (evangelist and singers), 1278 N. State St. PMB #119, Greenfield, IN 46140-1055. (317) 326-4455.  
Jan 2-7 ...Bible Methodist, Pinellas Park, FL  
Jan 24-Feb 4...Camp Freedom, St. Petersburg, FL
- States, Rev. Wayne** (evangelist), 2619 E. 8th St., Anderson, IN 46012. (765) 649-1501.
- Thomas, Larry and LaDonna** (song evangelists), 230 Roosevelt St., Westfield, IN 46074. (317) 896-1272.
- Thomas, Lewis Edward** 70 Chestnut St., Mt. Sterling, OH 43143 (740) 869-4792.
- Thornton, The Wallace Family** (evangelist and song evangelist with travel trailer), 1134 Norwood Rd, Somerset, KY 42503-3874. (606) 423-3874.
- Tillis, Rev. and Mrs. William R.** (evangelist) Box 189 Penns Creek, PA, 17862. (717) 837-5859.  
Dec 5-10 .....Pilgrim Holiness, Oblong, IL  
Dec 31-Jan 7..Bible Covenant, Beckley, WV
- Wagner, Fred and Viola** (evangelists and singers with several instruments—travel trailer), 129 Faith Ave., DeFuniak Springs, FL 32433-9544. (850) 834-3290.
- Webb, Rev. Orlow and family** (evangelist and singers), Rt. 3, Box 1206, Mitchell, IN 47446. (812) 275-3279 or (812) 275-7820.
- White, Rev. John F. White** (evangelist), P.O. Box 86, Penns Creek, PA 17862. (717) 837-2328.
- Wilkins, Chester** (evangelist), 3219 E. 13th St., Anderson, IN 46012-4569. (765) 643-5666.
- Wilson, Rev. and Mrs. Ermal L.** (evangelist and musicians), 6730 S. Meridan St., Marion, IN 46953. (765) 674-7537.



ment Chris Ryan is completing the set. This, too, is an heroic job—measuring, drawing, cutting, and painting Styrofoam to look like sandstone blocks and creating 12-foot pillars, all to recreate the Magi’s palace, the Jewish temple, and Herod’s throne room. After Thanksgiving vacation, final rehearsals will begin—Monday through Friday the last two weeks. Unbelievably, only two or three of them will bring everybody together doing everything, and there’ll be only one massive dress rehearsal.

*“Is it worth it” From a natural viewpoint, no! But spiritually—yes! It’s unbelievably valuable!”* This is why Garen Wolf is so excited about the gigantic pageant he and his music faculty are about to produce; and he’ll

still be excited at five o’clock, December 11—the morning after its last performance. That’s when the pillars and the palaces start coming down to make room for the academy program later that week. He’ll be exhausted, of course; but he’ll have the satisfaction that his “Christmas drama with choir and orchestra” has been “beautiful and God-honoring,” as he wished—all about the Christ Child and about leading people to Him. ■

➡(p7) To supplement this system, John Neville, GBS alumnus and owner of Mid-America Motors, has now given four “color-scrollers,” each of which has a “gell-string of 16 colors,” enabling it to do the work of 16 spotlights. John Hood is the technician who operates it all, while high school principal Paul Clemens sees that the chapel’s highly-sensitive PA system amplifies a wide variety of sound effects with power, accuracy and flexibility. The entire program will use nearly 800 amps of electricity.

What about costumes? If you’ve ever directed a Sunday school program, you know about turning bathrobes into shepherds’ cloaks. But what about designing over 100 different vintage outfits, cutting out material, and then stitching them together? In addition to the choir, all of whom will appear in Biblical dress and about 20 of whom also have acting roles, costumes will be needed for about 20 additional actors. Rev. Gene Hood’s Beech Grove Independent Nazarene Church, Indianapolis, has helped solve the problem by donating funds for “a huge amount of costumes,” and in many cases, actually providing them. “People everywhere made costumes,” Wolf adds, explaining that his daughter Deanna and Martha Miller, both music faculty members, serve as costume coordinators. On opening night Jodie Weingard, Tim Crater, and their assistants will see that turbans, robes, halos, wings, and sandals all get on the right people.

By the time you read this, “He Came All the Way for Me” will be history; but in mid-November, everybody’s getting ready for the grand production. Three days a week, Professor Wolf is coaxing the college choir to wrap the campus in Yuletide sounds, and Lori Waggoner is doing the same with the orchestra. Her husband Keith is vigorously exercising the high school choir, while Martha Miller, faculty accompanist, is practicing on the piano and the keyboard. In the chapel, the great chancel is being transformed into a stage, and in a nearby base-

## Daily Devotional Journal

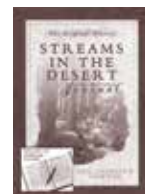
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## LOOKING AHEAD AT GBS

### DECEMBER

- 3 First Sunday in Advent, *the beginning of the Church's traditional period of preparation for Christmas*
- 8–10 College Christmas Program
- 15 Christmas Vacation begins
- 25 Christmas Day, *the Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ*

### JANUARY

- 4 New Students Registration
- 5 Second Semester Classes Commence
- 6 Epiphany, *commemorating the coming of the Wise Men to Our Lord Jesus*
- 9–14 Winter Revival, *Albert Barr, evangelist*

### FEBRUARY

- 14–26 Late-Winter Break

But too many of us still guard our fast-closed door; for at best, we have only the stable to offer Him. For like that ancient inn, our lives are too crowded to make room for Our Lord Jesus who so gladly would “dwell in [our] hearts by faith.” So crammed is every chamber with the savage clutter of selfish purposes, selfish priorities, and selfish pleasures that we cannot accommodate our holy Guest. For so long, these other residents have preempted His rightful place. They are a vile and treacherous lot, and at times we would be glad to rid ourselves of them. But as we know, they are very strong and well entrenched, and only Jesus can throw them out. He will do this, of course; but only if first we ask Him into the inn—not send Him to the stable!

For no longer will He be shuffled off into the outbuildings of our lives. Either we welcome Him to the best which we can offer—which means the very core of all we are and all we wish to be—or else He sadly will turn away. He will not accept the second place. He will not linger in the cobwebs and the straw. Neither will He lodge with those cruel and ugly guests whom we have pampered for so long. Indeed, it is His demand that we make Him not only our honored guest, but also the unrivaled owner of our inn. By sovereign right, He forcibly could claim it all; but this He will never do. Not until we have signed over its deed to Him and handed over its keys to Him—all without condition or restraint—will He ever move in and claim our hearts as His address. Our residence will now be His; but in the glorious exchange He offers, His residence will still be ours; and we shall have all eternity to marvel at the lovely change which He shall bring therein.

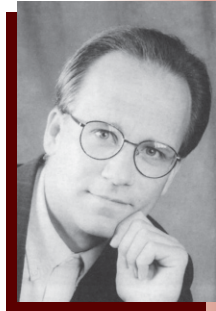
So what will you do with Jesus “who is called Christ?” This question confronts each of us, and there are no exceptions. But it is also confronts the world this sacred season. Everywhere He seeks entrance to the capitals and councils of the nations. He walks the boulevards of London, Moscow, Washington, Tokyo, and Paris, and also of your town and mine; and everywhere He is knocking, knocking, knocking. How often He has been offended by rejection and neglect! How long He has been ignored or pushed away! But He takes neither our subborn “no” nor our sullen silence to be our final answer, and He offers yet another chance to let Him in. But it is true that in the end, both men and nations must make conclusive choice. Jesus is at our door today. Tomorrow He may be gone.

Then “let every heart prepare Him room.” Old Reuben—or whoever else was the innkeeper in Bethlehem that holy night—did not know the Prince of Glory was waiting at his door. For us, the case is different; for we know exactly Who it is whose persistent knocking may now be heard among the sounds of “Jingle Bells” and ATM machines this Christmas season. This time He is not going to the stable. This time He must have the inn. ■

*Larry D. Smith is editor of God's Revivalist and member of the ministerial faculty of God's Bible School and College.*

➡(p23) hope, he did invite into his heart the Saviour whom he had rejected from his inn, he must have lived thereafter in the agony of regret. For as he would have told himself, he could have rearranged his other guests or sent them somewhere else. Certainly he would have done that if the governor or the high priest had pounded his cane upon his door. He could have given up his own room for Mary and Joseph and for the Holy Child and gone to the cattle shed himself. He could have urged friends or family to open a guest chamber for a pregnant girl and her weary husband. He could have—but he did not!

This Christmas, Jesus still asks entrance at the door—not of Bethlehem's inn, of course, but at the heart of each of us. “Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any man hear my voice, and will open the door, I will come into him, and will sup with him, and he with me.” This is the greatest opportunity we shall ever know, and all eternity will be determined by what we make of it. We are sinners, but Christ will save us; we are captives, but He will free us; we are cursed, but He will bless us. He raps loudly, pauses, then stops to listen. Gladly He awaits our faintest welcome; and wherever He receives it, He throws back the door which so long has been barred against Him; and then He makes His triumphant entrance with the laughter of His grace.



*Daniel Glick*

*We don't even know his name or where he lives. All we know is that God sent Him our way to be the stranger who saved us from a watery grave in the Azov Sea.*

# THE LAST **page**

## SAVED BY A STRANGER

**T**his past summer my family and I were traveling and working in southeast Ukraine. On July 28, we were invited to take a day off and go to the Azov Sea with a Russian pastor friend and his family. We chose to go to the end of a rather isolated seven-mile peninsula. Unfortunately, that day the waves were high—blown sideways down the shore. Our daughter Ruth, age 18, was sucked out into a powerful current.

Joe, our 16-year-old son, was the first to go after her. However, the current was too strong for him to pull her to safety. This is when I heard their cries of alarm, and in a moment I leaped into the sea and began to swim toward them. I wrestled with my daughter, doing what I could to keep her head above water. In a short time, however, with the waves breaking over my own head every few seconds, and the current taking its toll on my strength, I was unable to do anything for her. Joe had barely made it to shore. Had he stayed longer, his strength would have been too depleted to make it back.

When our Russian pastor friend Peter understood what was happening, he swam to us as quickly as he could. While Peter has a big heart spiritually for God and people, he has a bad heart physically for undertaking such efforts. In just a few moments he was “mission critical,” along with Ruth and me. The truth came crashing over me with each new wave that unless help came quickly, the three of us would perish. That’s when I began to cry out to God as loud as I could for help. The winds and the waves kept those cries from being heard on shore, but God heard perfectly well.

Witnessing our struggle, my wife went running down the shoreline crying and pleading for help. There were few people there, but one young, well-built Ukrainian man was watching us at a distance. After both Martha and Joe informed him in no uncertain terms that we needed help, he plunged into the sea. He reached Ruth first and locked her wrist in his strong hand. She later said that when she felt the power of his hand she knew she was saved. With vigorous strokes he pulled her to safety.

He then turned around and went back for Peter, who by now was spending most of his time underwater. With a great demonstration of power, this stranger pulled Peter to shallow water while two other young men were getting to me with a small inner tube. Our fears did not subside immediately, however, as Peter’s eyes glazed over and he collapsed in the shallow water and had to be dragged the rest of the way. It appeared to his six children and us that he was dying. Several men began to work on him, trying to force the water out of his lungs as he lay on the sand. In a while he was transported to a local hospital where he was given oxygen, and life appeared to return to him. (After a period of infection and illness, which lasted about three weeks, Peter’s life returned to normal, to the great relief of us all.)

When the stranger was thanked that day in tears by my wife and daughter, he just lowered his head, dug his toes in the sand and said, “Don’t mention it.” Some time later, he was gone. We don’t even know his name or where he lives. All we know is that God sent him our way to be the stranger who saved us from a watery grave in the Azov Sea.

Two thousand years ago, a Stranger saw us all struggling on the sea of life, tossed about by the waves of iniquity and the winds of helplessness. The tide of depravity was too great for our feeble strength, and the outlook wasn’t good. Seeing our plight, He plunged into this world, determined to rescue us. That plunge was taken through the womb of the Virgin Mary. The lives He came to rescue are ours. With powerful strokes He has come to pull us to safety—away from a sea death that threatens to swallow us. He is the Stranger from Galilee, the Saviour of the world; and, in contrast to that stranger on the shore of the Azov Sea, we know His name. The angel announced that He would be called “Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins” (Matt 1:21).

Praise God for the Stranger who was sent to save! Thank God that He is no longer a stranger to those who have received Him! ■

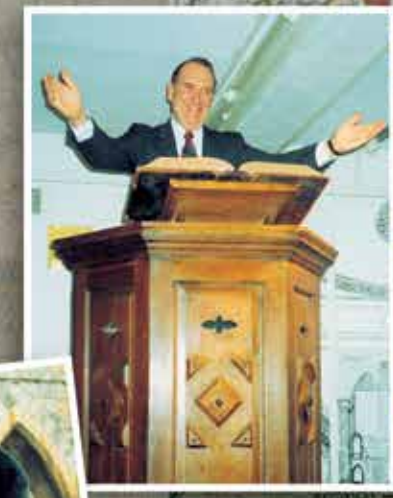


ANNOUNCING THE



# WESLEY HERITAGE TOUR

Watch for details of this GBS-sponsored trip to England in upcoming issues of *God's Revivalist*



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