

# FREE LIFE NEWS

*He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life. 1John 5:12*

*You can be free no matter where you are if you are in Christ. . .*

## Christmas time Ambassadors

By Eric Turk—Lynaugh Unit, TX

The Christmas season, for many, evokes a sense of hopeful joy, a sense of homecoming. Virtually everyone in the United States knows Christmas-time as a special time that re-ignites memories from Christmases past, and promises to spark to life lasting memories to be enjoyed through the Christmases to come.

The Christmas season affords people the much needed permission to put aside differences and give themselves to the spirit of the season, loving unconditionally friends and foes. Christmas represents love, joy, and peace, and fills all who celebrate it with an endearing sense of hope. Christmas serves as a lasting reminder that there is good to be had in life, even if only for a season. Christmas is the one season in which all mankind experiences the melding of the natural with the supernatural, resulting in the intended purpose of its birth. . . "on earth peace, goodwill toward men".

Christmas is the one celebration not owned by any one church or ideology., Christmas belongs to everyone. By and far Americans love Christ-

mas-time and readily embrace all the symbols and heirlooms that centuries of Christmas celebrations have produced.

Unfortunately some "Christian" groups try to undermine Christmas. They label it as being unbiblical, even heretical, and cite the season's many symbols as proof. Rather than enterprising on the effects the season has on the hearts of all people, they would instead discredit the celebration and condemn those who practice and promote it.

They cite many biblical references to justify their stance, and do their best to leave those who decide to celebrate Christmas anyway with a sense of inmost conflict and guilt. They stand in defiance to the celebration of Christ's birth while at the same time claiming to be ambassadors of Christ.

Whatever the details surrounding the symbols of the season, the truth remains that at the heart of Christmas is Christ. True ambassadors of Christ recognizes this fact. Putting aside their personal feelings about the symbols ,they move

en masse as soldiers into the world seeking to explain the Christ of Christmas more fully. They recognize the opportunity the season affords and move into the world as strategists spreading the overarching message that ultimately leads to year-round hope and peace.

The Bible paints the picture beautifully of what a Christmas time Christ Ambassador really looks like. Let us consider Joseph as he is revealed in Matthew 1: 18-25...

*18 Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost.*

*19 Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not willing to make her a public example, was minded to put her away privily.*

*20 But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost.*

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Mack & Mitzi Hall—  
Directors

*21 And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins.*

*22 Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying,*

*23 Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.*

*24 Then Joseph being raised from sleep did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto him his wife:*

*25 And knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son: and he called his name JESUS.*

*The Lord was working out his plan in the midst of Joseph's and Mary's plans. In verse 18 we're given the truth of the scenario even before Joseph knows about it. Imagine it, months before when Joseph had first seen Mary, he had found a place in his heart for her. Following Jewish tradition Joseph more than likely went to Mary's father asking for Mary's hand in marriage..*

Cont. next page

## Christmas time Ambassadors, cont.

Imagine his shock and inner turmoil when in the midst of their engagement Mary was discovered to be pregnant. How crushing that must've been to his heart and pride, while at the same time bride-to-be spoke of angelic visitations. As troubling as a scenario like this might prove to be for any one of us, God knew the hearts of His servants. Verse 19 gives us some of the elements that go into the making of a true ambassador of Christ. First of all notice Matthew's description that Peter uses of Jesus in Acts 3:14 The Greek word used in both instances has the implication of fairness. Matthew says Joseph was "fair" in his dealings, in this case his dealings with Mary. The angel had not yet visited Joseph, so all he had to go on was Mary's word that she had been impregnated by the Holy ghost! Surely he would've been incredulous, but "being a just man" he gave her the benefit of the doubt, without implicating himself in her story. Notice next that Matthew write that Joseph was, "not willing to make {Mary} a public example". The Jews would've killed her!. Joseph knew this, and even though the situation could imply betrayal by Mary (Joseph hadn't yet been visited by the angel) he still cared for her and desired for her to be safe. In the midst of all that was happening, even to him, Joseph desired to protect Mary. A third element of his character is revealed when we read in verse 19 that Joseph, "was minded to put her away privily". Joseph had nothing to hide, in the eyes of the world he had been disgraced. He could have made it known that he was rejecting her as his fiancée while still keeping her safe by not revealing the reason. But she chose rather to keep the whole matter secret. But why? Remember, Joseph loved her and he was a just man. Perhaps he chose secrecy for Mary's benefit, to protect her reputation. He respected her and would not

deny her her dignity. So to summarize Joseph's character, he was overall Just, meaning he was fair. Then he was a defender, offering Mary protection from public opinion. And then he was respectful of Mary's dignity, wishing to spare her from disgrace. This is the heart of an Ambassador for Christ, that's why our Lord chose Joseph. The Lord didn't leave him in the dark either. In verses 20&21 the angel appeared to Joseph as well, confirming Mary's story, and assuaging Joseph's concerns. Verse 24 tells us that Joseph unquestioningly obeyed the word of the Lord, no matter what public might've been. And as a result the Lord rewarded His faithful servant by granting him the privilege of being the first one to speak the name of the Lord of glory.(verse 25) Jesus never told us to change the customs and beliefs of the world, he told us to promote Him at every opportunity. Joseph is the perfect picture of a true Christmastime Ambassador. No matter the ways and opinions of the world around him, he remained in his situation for one reason only—to speak the name of Jesus. Remember Joseph this Christmas season. Even if you don't agree with all the traditions of the holiday season, use the time as and opportunity to speak the name of Jesus. Our Lord will honor your service and you'll have the assurance that you are serving Christ as a true Christmastime Ambassador. May the peace of Christ bring you peace as you strive to represent Him this Christmas season.

## The Time is Now

It was on the third Monday night at the County Jail ministry service, he listened to the message of "Let not your heart be troubled" asked questions, and responded to the invitation to receive Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. The counselor spoke to him, prayed

with him, but he told her, "I don't think I have a heart". she was taken aback by his statement, and continued to assure him of God's love for him. If he didn't have a heart, he wouldn't have noticed his cell partner reading his Bible and sharing his testimony of faith, if he didn't have a heart he wouldn't have come to Church to find out more, if he didn't have a heart, if it was too hardened by his choices in his life, he wouldn't desire to find out more about what his cell partner was sharing with him. God called this young man to Himself through the Holy Spirit on the third Monday Jail service, and his life will never be the same. The time will come, the Scripture say, when God will not strive with man, Today is the day of salvation, Today is the day to accept His gift of Salvation by accepting His Son Jesus Christ into your heart. Receive His Love into your heart today.

## Turn The Page

### Jon Sheptock Ministries

It's a long and lonesome highway  
When you're livin' on your own  
& you're reaping all the harvest  
From the bad seed that you've sewn  
You can think about the reason  
Why you spent your life in vain  
But your thoughts will soon be wandering  
The way they always do  
When you're tryin' to find an answer  
For all the crazy things you do  
And you don't feel much like livin'  
You just wish the trip was through

Here I am On life's road again  
There I am so full of rage  
Here I go losin' hope again  
There I go turn the page

Its like your backed into a corner  
You got no place to go  
With the weight of sin upon you  
Always leaves you feelin' old  
You pretend it doesn't bother you  
But you just want to explode

Most times you can't feel a thing  
Other times you can  
A voice is calling to you  
but you just don't understand  
And you always seem to fight it  
But He's got you in His hand

### Chorus

Out there in the distance  
Seems a million miles away  
The grace of God is calling you  
You try to get away  
But the blood poured from His body  
And you can't wait another day

Later in the evening  
As you lie awake in bed  
With the echoes of His mercy  
Ringin' in your head  
At long last you surrender,  
And the soul inside you wakes up from the dead

Here I am - I have life again!!  
There I am with no more chains  
Here I go - I've got hope again!!  
By His blood - I have been changed!

## PRAISE THE LORD.." HE FULFILLS HIS WORD..." [Luke 1:26-38]

"How will this be, "Mary asked the angel," since am a virgin?" many of us have at one time found ourselves in Mary situation. From Scriptures, we get a lot of promises that God has given to the church yet unfortunately as humans we view them skeptically. I must say that the Lord is soooooo faithful to his word and if He has spoken he shall really cause it to happen. As I drove along Entebbe Road to the Airport, it wasn't easy to believe that the long a waited prayer had finally been an-

swered this was to be the day the Lord had designated for our first ever American guests...since we hadn't met in person before, I made up a placard with the words "PASTOR ROBERT FREE LIFE" this was to act as an identification for them to know that it was I who was to pick them up. We reached a few minutes before they landed at the Airport. In fact we thought we had reached the Airport late due to the congested traffic we met along the way, I drove praying "Lord help me reach the Airport before they land" again God answered that last minute prayer. With my postcard raised in my arms, we anxiously waited at the exit point to receive our guests. There they showed up...immediately our eyes met, we just knew each other, after hugging, and introducing each other, we headed for the car. As we entered the car, inside my heart I was wondering about the Goodness, and mercies that God had shown us. Before we started our journey to my house, I requested that we get few minutes to thank God, after which I started to drive. The lights along the road from Entebbe to Kampala had gone off, so as I drove, I jokingly said "This is U..U., Uganda" and this made them laugh... we reached home while it was coming to midnight, some of the children weren't yet a sleep so they gave them a warm welcome

**MINISTRY TO THE ELDERLY**  
Here in Uganda we have a saying which says "when you get something to eat, eat as if you won't eat tomorrow" so that's what exactly happened, before our guests came, Pastor Rudy who was the team leader of the 2 said "we are coming to serve you" so the morning after their arrival, we touched the road and headed for the village where we do the elderly ministry. prior to this day we got food stuff and human basics that we were to distribute to the needy elderly people there, we also took with us medicines and chemicals to spray in the needy elderly huts, because many of them were

infested with jiggers, cockroaches, and other infectious insects. The road to the elderly village is very bumpy so however much I tried to drive with carefulness, still it was unavoidable to hit some of the holes, and to spice it up whenever we hit a hole, I would say.."This is Uganda..." with laughter backing up my statement, we joyfully proceeded to the village. As we reached every place, pastor Rudy, Steve and Cody and the rest of free life team, got out of the car and with spray cans, we entered huts and sprayed everywhere we reached we received a touching welcome from the villagers, sights of desperacy, needy were very visible and unavoidable. we moved from village to village doing Charity work to the needy, our guests showed sympathy and with prayers and words of comfort encouraged the elderly people everywhere we met them, we were able to install a door on one of the hut we once rehabilitated, this desperate elderly man was sleeping in door less hut. so on this day God worked for him. We reached a lot of villages spraying, but we just couldn't do everything in a day, we were all tired and worn out.

#### ELDERLY COMETOGETHER DINNER

As Part of our program for the day, we had a come together dinner at one of the elderly women compound. the preparations were so fabulous, after presentations, in music, and speeches, we were served food, many of us didn't really think that our American brothers could really afford eating the food that was prepared, but to our astonishment they willingly took plates, and started like they had been with this community for years...Amazing. as they were eating I prayed in my heart "oh God don't let our brothers to receive, stomach pain" the reason I prayed such a prayer was because, it was their first time in such a village, and they were eating some foods for the first time? praise God he listened to my prayer, when all was finished, we gave

out the supplies we had gone with and with great joy, the needy villagers received packages each, even to those that were unable to come to this meeting point, we did make sure that we sent their packages to their huts. we really had a wonderful moment with the elderly people, they felt loved and touched by the compassion showed to them that day.

#### AT CHURCH

Though we had been very tired from the elderly mission the day before, now was Sunday, and our guests had to attend our service, with a warm African mixed with American welcome Pastor Rudy, Steve, and Cody were officially welcomed as our first ever Hosted American Guests to come to Free Life Worship Centre. The morning was Bright, the weather promising, with the drumming, singing African Christian rhymes, our church children carrying flowers, the 3 guests were escorted in the iron walled church structure. both inside church and outside church joy, smiles, faces of surprise, enveloped people. this was the day the Lord had designated for us to experience...As choirs, and many different musical groups ministered, it was clearly evident that this was God Ordained, the ministry in Word by Pastor Rudy was excellent and inspiring. After the word some people came forward to be prayed for, and God showed His goodness to his people that day. As part of our welcoming program, Lunch was cooked in honor of our dear guests, and it was dubbed "Well of Hope Welcome Lunch" we ate with them, but unfortunately, they don't have an African Appetite. "smile" they were brought to laugh when one of our youth entered in church with a heap of food on His plate,,it looked like a mountain..We all laughed because for sure it looked amazingly much.. but you know what...? This is Uganda...remember our proverb says "when you get opportunity to eat, eat like you are not going to eat again... as we feasted on the delicacies, a low

sound music tune went "let it rain.. let it rain .., and as it sung it actually started to rain a little bit.. Pastor Rudy Shouted "LET IT RAIN .... My Brother "oh yes I Responded with Smile.. For I knew rain represents a Divine Blessing as long as it rains peacefully" Since we have two churches and yet we wanted to have our guest visit both of them. We decided to have them at the Mpererwe church in the morning, and then at the Matugga church in the evening, that's what exactly happened, So after Mpererwe we drove to Matugga, . Even in Matugga, it was fabulous, Matugga is about 7 miles from Mpererwe.

#### AT SCHOOL

On Monday, our guests spent almost all Day At school, seeing our the children study, talking to teachers and playing with children, , the guests were welcomed with presentations from children, the children felt their presence. it was all good at school, and exiting to see our guests playing with our school children....

#### Ending Remarks

It was really so wonderful and heart touching to receive from America such missionaries with a heart for God's work here in Uganda. we were so humbled by their love and humility. we are so grateful to the Lord who connected us to Free life News, And Mum Mitzi. Because its thru this newsletter, and thru her that we have been able to receive uncountable Blessings. We are so optimistic that still many more Brethren are willing to come. We dearly invite all of you, to this side of earth. with open Loving arms shall we Receive you.....God Bless You Jesus Times  
From  
Pastor Robert Sisye  
Free life - Uganda

## SKEETER

By Sheila Sellinger  
FMC-Carswell, TX

The snow flurried, a white veil of frozen dust landing lightly on the Chevy's windshield. Black rubber blades swiped them off as if offended that the tiny crystals dared to collect on the cold glass. Swish, swish, swish, they moved back and forth, from sides to side. The storm had started the night before promising a wonderfully white Christmas. Drifts piles in the clumsy mounds along the sides of the road, blanketing trees and shrubs in glittering powder. It was beautiful, yet freezing. The heater blew warm air into the cozy cab, my fleece lined denim jacket draped along the seat beside me covering a load of last minute gifts. I turned slowly onto my street, careful not to slide into the drainage ditch on neither side of the hidden gravel road.

A van crept along ahead of me, hugging the right shoulder as if ready to park across from my driveway. The toe of my boot eased the break pedal down until my truck stopped well behind the other driver. Something flew from the van's open window, falling into a deep drift, then the vehicle pulled away down the road.

I held my breath. What had they thrown out? I inched up, looked through the passenger side window, but saw nothing. Shifting the truck into park, I slipped into my jacket and got out leaving the engine running while I made around the front of my pickup. Snow and ice crunched under my boots, and I snuggled deeper into my coat. Man, it was freezing! I waded through the drift, looking for . . . I wasn't sure what.

"Hello?" I called softly, and made kissy sounds with my shivering lips, hoping that I was wrong. I kissed again, heard a soft whisper, then trudged through the knee deep snow toward the sound.

"Come here, baby." I coaxed.

Another whimper came from a line of shrubs just behind the snow bank. I forced my legs to clear a path, stepping high with each step.

"Here, baby, it's okay."

From the dark recesses of shrubbery, belly deep in snow, struggled a tiny pup. Shivering uncontrollably, he waddled toward me, whining pitifully. We met between the bushes and snow bank, and I lifted him gently into my arms. He was so small, too young to be weaned, and I

stuffed him gently inside my warm coat. I didn't dare drive the truck one handed, so I quickly switched off the ignition. Together, we hurried up the driveway to the house. It wasn't a long walk, and I was glad to be wearing snow boots with good traction.

The house was toasty warm, and I shut the door solidly behind us. Within seconds, we were met by my faithful dalmation, Frank, his tail wagging happily. I patted Frank on the head and moved to the sofa.

"Well, little one." I began rubbing his fluffy body with a towel, 'how ae you?' I was worried, and angry. Who could be so cruel as to throw away such a cute little guy; and on Christmas Eve? Once he was warm and dry, I tucked him safely inside of Frank's dog carrier, then went out for the truck.

No more than an hour later, the front door flung open. My daughter rushed in, her cheeks red from the cold. Frank's carrier sat by the back door, the pup sleeping soundly inside. My little girl hugged Frank, then dropped her backpack into a chair.

"Hi, Mom!" she greeted. I smiled at her enthusiasm. "Hey, you, did you have a good time?" her thin arms circled my waist, her cheek cold through my t-shirt. "Yea, but I'm glad to be home." she shrugged. I silently agreed. "I have something that I need your help with." I announced. She gazed up at me with raised brows. "What?" she asked. I pulled her over to the carrier and had her look inside. "I think he needs a name, but I'm not sure what it should be." A squeal of delight woke the snoozing pup. "A puppy! Oh, Mom, a puppy!" crazy with excitement, she danced from foot to foot. I laughed, "yes, a puppy. But calm down or you'll scare him. He's been through a lot today." she very carefully pulled him from his shelter and held him close.

"Is he mine?" she whispered hopefully. "yes, if you want him." I smiled. She stroked his fat little body gently. "Yes," she breathed, 'I want him.' that started a wonderful relationship between the two. He pup turned out to be a very feisty blue beagle that she named Skeeter.

"Merry Christmas, honey.' I whispered as I wrapped them both in a hug, 'Merry Christmas to both of you.'

Scripture says many things about the lonely and helpless, but one thing that I

think about is where Jesus said that whatever we do for the least of these, we do it for Him. I like to think that I not only gave a home to that precious hound; I also unknowingly welcomed the Lord into my home during the most special time of the year.

### I STAND AMAZED IN THE PRESENCE

I stand amazed in the presence of Jesus the Nazarene, and wonder how he could love me, a sinner, condemned, unclean.

Refrain:

*How marvelous! How wonderful!  
And my song shall ever be: How marvelous! How wonderful  
is my Savior's love for me!*

2. For me it was in the garden he prayed: "Not my will, but thine." He had no tears for his own griefs, but sweat-drops of blood for mine. (Refrain)

3. In pity angels beheld him, and came from the world of light to comfort him in the sorrows he bore for my soul that night. (Refrain)

4. He took my sins and my sorrows, he made them his very own; he bore the burden to Calvary, and suffered and died alone. (Refrain)

5. When with the ransomed in glory his face I at last shall see, 'twill be my joy through the ages to sing of his love for me. (Refrain)

By Charles H Gabriel

## "The Great Have To" — Spirit Fire

[Jesus said,] "So don't be surprised when I say, 'You must be born again.'" — John 3:7 nlt

### Key Thought

We sometimes fail to realize that Nicodemus is the ultimate good guy -- he is the best of the best. He is a religious leader and teacher. He has come to Jesus out of darkness to find light. He has noticed what Jesus has said and done and believes that the only way Jesus could do those things is because he has come from God. But knowing and saying the right things about Jesus are not what make a person a true follower of Jesus, a disciple, a real Christian. If Nicodemus, the best of the best, has to be "born again," then so do all the rest of us! Being born again is the great essential, the great "have to," we all must experience. So where are you? Have you been born of "water and the Spirit"? Have you been born of God? Have you been born again?

### Today's Prayer

O Father, thank you for my "new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade"! Thank you for the cleansing power and the new life that comes from the Holy Spirit. I praise you in Jesus' name. Amen.

### YOUR VALUE

By David Shepherd  
Wynne Unit, TX

The value of a thing is usually dictated by what or how much a person is willing to pay. You can put a huge price tag on anything but if none is willing to pay that price then its only reason-

able to think that the value of the item is not worth the tag price.

There has been time in my life that I felt invaluable and unloved for whatever reason, and it's a terrible feeling that can lead to terrible things. Being incarcerated for the last 15 years I've encountered many guys that felt underserving, unvalued, and unloved. Some guys can pinpoint the reasons they feel that way, but there are others that can't do that. Some of the things that add value to our lives are: love, mercy, grace, . . . forgiveness, and acceptance. When we bestow these things on others and they bestow those things on us we feel a certain value in ourselves and other people. Of all of those the most valuable is love. I recently read an article about a Dad who gladly gave one of his Kidneys to his daughter so that she could go on living. Well, for whatever reason the kidney failed and the daughter was again in waiting for another one. Now, a man or woman only has two such organs and must keep one of them in order for that person to go on living, but I could not help but think what I would do if that was my daughter who would die if no other kidney could be had. It took me a fraction of a second to determine that I would, without hesitation or doubt, surrender my last kidney and kiss this old world goodbye so that my daughter could live. Matter of fact, it would be an easy choice for me to make in that regards. I have two kids that I love more than anything or anyone except the Lord Himself. Now, I'm sure you have heard said the old value marks of, "I'd give a fortune for that" or "I'd give an arm or leg for that." meaning that they have a great desire to have those things, but you usually don't hear it said to pay for most anything of value. It would no doubt be the ultimate price for anything, don't you think? Well the great news for you is that you are valuable, and Someone already paid that ultimate price for you and that Person is Jesus. No matter

what anyone else thinks or doesn't think of you, or what wrongs you've done or even how many, His love for you is not conditioned by nay of that. He loves you so much that His desire is to have you spend eternity with Him and there is no conditions on you to receive that eternal life with Him because it's a gift, A free gift at that. Matter of fact, there is nothing you could possible do to earn that eternal life (gift) because earning is a wage for work, and a gift is something un-earned. All you have to do to get the free gift is to accept the Lord as your Savior and Heavenly Father. The definition of accept here is believe. John 3:16 explains this really well, but there are many such definitions in the Bible. The truth is that you only have two choices in which to familiarize your soul, one family is fathered by Satan and the other is fathered by God. There are no other choices nor can you just opt out of either. Satan hates, and he hates you. 1st. Corinthians 13 defines what love is and Satan can't meet those bars because he is not capable of love by any means. The only reason he has any desire for you is so that he can use and manipulate you to hopefully gain revenge on God Who is your Creator. If your choice is to be loved and valued then you must choose the family of God because he not only loves you, He is Love. Well, it is that very love that motivated Jesus to lay down His life so that you may go on living. You're not only valuable to Him, but you are worth much more than any fortune or arm or leg!! With that said, if you just simply choose the make Christ your Lord and Savior you will never again doubt your value because to Him you are worth everything.

### CARROT, EGG, OR COFFEE BEAN

A young woman went to her grandmother and told her about her life and how things were so hard for her. She did not know how she was going to make it and wanted to give up. She was tired of fighting and struggling. It seemed that as one problem was solved, a new one arose.

Her grandmother took her to the kitchen.

## STOP WRIGGLING..

by: Delores McPherson, Mineral Wells, TX

"We know that God's children do not make a practice of sinning, for God's Son holds them securely, and the evil one cannot touch them. We know that we are children of God and that the world around us is under the control of the evil one....Dear children, keep away from anything that might take God's place in your heart." 1 John 5:18, 19, 21.

Such good advice John gives keep away from ANYTHING that might take God's place in your heart. We know Satan is in control of the things in this world. What we sometimes forget is that we don't belong to this world. We belong to Jesus who holds us securely! What an awesome thought. I think about how sometimes a small child will wriggle and wriggle trying to get free from a parent's hold because he sees something he thinks he must have or participate in. But the parent continues to hold him and sometimes even tighten their grip because they know the thing the child wants is not good for them and could even be destructive or life threatening. We need to consider that thing that we are desiring ...is it good for us? Will it bring us closer to God? Can we use it for His glory? If the answer to any one of these is no, then we should relax and enjoy the grip of the Savior for He truly knows and wants what is best for us. Stop wriggling...Be still and know that He is God! Have a great day in the Lord.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love he

predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved. In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight

Titus 2:11-14

For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works.

1 Peter 1:3-5

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

Mark 6:34

## UPDATE On MAGIDU

The young boy who was severely injured last year, who was brought back to life through the miracle working God we serve, is now under the care and nurturing of Dr. Gilbert, living in the Mercy

House Children's Home. He is being sponsored by loving, caring people in a Texas church, for his clothing, upkeep, and education.. We continually give thanks to God for his life saving power, Spiritually and physically. Magidu is a happy, thriving young boy, full of hope and peace. He was recently enrolled in the 3rd grade at school, is doing very well, after being out of class for a year due to his illness. We look forward to the future, anticipating the good work God will do in and through this young man's life.

We give You Praise, Father.

## HE SENT THE FREE LIFE NEWS

Sitting in my Seg. Cell, wanting something to read, I wrote to the Chaplain requesting some reading material, He sent the Free Life News, I started reading and read the story on page 6 of the lady in Tanzania who had no feet, and crawled to the service to lead in Worship. Tears fell from my 60 year old eyes, imagining how this young woman was willing to crawl on the ground to Worship Almighty God, and compose music to Him. We have a lesson to learn here, we may be sitting in a "hell hole" but with Christ in our hearts He is always very near to us, and we can use every opportunity to Worship Him. I really like the Free Life News the Chaplain sent me, it touched my heart in a profound way.

Jerry Glen Mathis—Wynne Unit, TX

*IN EVERYTHING, GIVE  
THANKS!!  
THANK YOU GOD FOR  
ALL YOU HAVE DONE  
THOROUGH YOUR SON.  
JESUS CHRIST*

**CARROT, EGG OR COFFEE BEAN**

CONT. from pg 5

She filled three pots with water and placed each on a high fire. Soon the pots came to a boil. In the first, she placed carrots, in the second she placed eggs, and the last she placed ground coffee beans. She let them sit and boil, without saying a word.

In about twenty minutes she turned off the burners. She fished the carrots out and placed them in a bowl. She then pulled the eggs out and placed them in a bowl. Then she ladled the coffee out and placed it in a bowl.

Turning to her granddaughter, she asked, "Tell me, what do you see?" "Carrots, eggs, and coffee," she replied. She brought her closer and asked her to feel the carrots. She did and noted that they were soft. She then asked her to take an egg and break it. After pulling off the shell, she observed the hard-boiled egg. Finally, she asked her to sip the coffee. The daughter smiled as she tasted its rich aroma.

The granddaughter then asked, "What does it mean, Grandmother?"

Her grandmother explained that each of these objects had faced the same adversity -- boiling water -- but each reacted differently. The carrot went in strong, hard and unrelenting. However, after being subjected to the boiling water, it softened and became weak.

The egg had been fragile. Its thin outer shell had protected its liquid interior. But, after sitting through the boiling water, its inside became hardened.

The ground coffee beans were unique, however. After they were in the boiling water, they had changed the water.

"Which are you?" she asked her granddaughter. "When adversity knocks on your door, how do you respond? Are you a carrot, an egg, or a coffee bean?"

Think of this: Which am I? Am I the carrot that seems strong, but with pain and adversity? Do I wilt and become soft and lose my strength? Am I the egg that starts with a malleable heart, but changes with the heat? Did I have a fluid spirit, but after a death, a breakup, a financial hardship or some other trial, have I become hardened

and stiff? Does my shell look the same, but on the inside am I bitter and tough with a stiff spirit and a hardened heart? Or am I like the coffee bean? The bean actually changes the hot water, the very circumstance that brings the pain. When the water gets hot, it releases the fragrance and flavor of your life.

If you are like the bean, when things are at their worst, you get better and change the situation around you. When the hours are the darkest and trials are their greatest, do you elevate to another level? How do you handle adversity? Are you changed by your surroundings or do you bring life, flavor, to them?

ARE YOU A CARROT, AN EGG, OR A COFFEE BEAN?

**You, Lord,** are forgiving and good, abounding in love to all who call to you. Ps. 86:5

**“FILLED”**

Heartlight Magazine—Phil Ware

Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit,... — Ephesians 5:18 niv

**Key Thought**

We will all live "under the influence" of something or someone. Shortcuts to living a full life nearly always involve living "under the influence" of some addictive substance or behavior. God's antidote is far more than a call to stop addictive behavior: it is a call to live "under the influence" of God's holy presence alive within us, the Spirit of the Living God. This Spirit-filled life is the only alternative to an addiction driven life because we all hunger and thirst at our core being for God. Anything less than experiencing this water of life within us (John 7:37-39) will leave us vulnerable to the many false substitutes that place us in bondage.

"Be filled with the Spirit!" is more than

a command, it is the only way to live life abundantly (John 10:10).

**Today's Prayer**

O Father, fill me and transform me by the power of the Holy Spirit at work within me. Mold me and conform me to the character and compassion of your Son Jesus, in whose name I pray. Amen.

**Silent Night**

**Silent night, holy night!  
All is calm, All is bright  
Round yon Virgin, Mother and  
Child  
Holy Infant so Tender and  
mild,  
Sleep in heavenly peace,  
Sleep in heavenly peace.  
Silent night, holy night!  
Shepherds quake at the sight!  
Glories stream from heaven  
afar;  
Heavenly hosts sing Al-le-lu-ia!  
Christ the Saviour is born!  
Christ the Saviour is born!  
Silent night, holy night!  
Wondrous star, lend thy light!  
With the angels let us sing  
Alleluia to our King!  
Christ the Saviour is here,  
Jesus the Saviour is here!  
Silent night, Holy night!  
Son of God, love's pure light  
Radiant beams from Thy holy  
face,  
with the dawn of redeeming  
grace,  
Jesus Lord at thy birth;  
Jesus Lord at thy birth.**

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### THIS IS YOUR NEW YEAR'S PRAYER——

If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory. (Colossians 3:1-4, ESV) That is good news for you to hide in your heart to lighten the burden of your heart. Jesus said take no thought for tomorrow, for tomorrow will take care of it-self.

Why should I feel discouraged, why should the shadows come,  
 Why should my heart be lonely, and long for heav'n and home,  
 When Jesus is my portion? My constant Friend is He:  
 His eye is on the sparrow, and I know He watches me;  
 His eye is on the sparrow, and I know He watches me.

#### *Refrain:*

I sing because I'm happy, I sing because I'm free,  
 For His eye is on the sparrow, and I know He watches me.

“Let not your heart be troubled,” His tender word I hear,  
 And resting on His goodness, I lose my doubts and fears;  
 Though by the path He leadeth, but one step I may see;  
 His eye is on the sparrow, and I know He watches me;  
 His eye is on the sparrow, and I know He watches me.

Whenever I am tempted, whenever clouds arise,  
 When songs give place to sighing, when hope within me dies,  
 I draw the closer to Him, from care He sets me free;  
 His eye is on the sparrow, and I know He watches me;  
 His eye is on the sparrow, and I know He watches me.

MERRY CHRISTMAS  
 TO ONE AND ALL  
 WITH LOVE FROM THE  
 FREE LIFE TEAM

John,  
 Jack,  
 Steve,  
 Phyllis,  
 Fred, Sally, Mike, Rodney,  
 Kathie, Josie, Pastor Robert, Mack  
 & Mitzi