

The Academy Perspective

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Vada Lee Barkley, Editor

UNTO US A CHILD IS BORN

by Vada Lee Barkley

Christmas fills the air. Merchants remind us to shop early. Salvation Army bell ringers solicit donations. Children compile wish lists. Shoppers figure how far they dare stretch the budget beyond what they can afford to spend.

Church choirs rehearse musicals to celebrate the birth of Jesus. Congregations join in singing "Joy to the World, the Lord is come." As we strike up that carol this year, I'll be thinking of the two interrelated reasons for His coming.

First, the Lord is come to share our humanity. Celebrating His humanity in no way detracts from His divinity. Yet even at Christmas much of our emphasis exalts His diety. For example, Luther's Cradle Hymn--that all-time favorite carol--contains the following stanza:

"The cattle are lowing,
The poor Baby wakes;
But Little Lord Jesus
No crying He makes."

Everyone knows a baby cries. How else would a mother know when to nurse an infant? Common sense tells us that a new-born baby, trying to sleep on a straw bed in a cold, stinking stable, disturbed by bawling cattle and bleating sheep, will cry. With all due respect to Luther, he obviously never slept on a straw mattress.

When all the well-wishers called so see Him, Jesus probably cried like any other baby if they woke Him. What does a baby know about frankincense, gold, and myrrh? I question whether they meant anything to Him at that time.

In our zeal to call Him "The Mighty God," we do well to remember another name for Him--Immanuel, "God with us."

In the final analysis, Jesus came to die for our sins. The angel's announcement to the shepherds suggests the destiny of the Child. "And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger" (Luke 2:12).

Did you ever wonder why the angel said a Babe in swaddling clothes would be a SIGN? Obviously mothers didn't normally dress their babies in swaddling clothes or this wouldn't have been a sign. Imagine how hard it would be to take care of a baby if you wrapped him/her in swaddling clothes.

Dr. Gerald Winrod explains: When Jesus was born, Mary, the promised Jewish "almaw," wrapped Him in swaddling clothes. This actually means, in the original text, that she wrapped Him in grave-clothes. The root word from which the English word "swaddling" comes, means to wrap in bandages. It is the same word used figuratively in Job 38:9, which refers to the thick darkness, a swaddling band. When Jesus was born, Mary wrapped Him in the thick darkness of grave-clothes. She knew that He was born to die.

This was what astounded the shepherds when they came to see the new-born Babe. It was the same as if a baby born into a home today should be placed in a tiny white casket. . . Jesus was born to die that fallen humanity might live.

Dr. Paul Scherer wrote: "God walked down the stairs of heaven [Cont. col. 3--Barkley]

DECEMBER PROGRAM

Dr. David Miller and students from the SNU Chorale will present the program for our next meeting, December 12. Helen Silvey, representing our Fine Arts interest group, made the arrangements.

I understand that the students are excited about eating lunch with us. And, of course, we're excited about having them.

Be SURE your reservation is confirmed by 10 a.m. Friday, Dec. 9. If your caller doesn't get your reservation, call me or Elbert or the answering machine: 789-6400,ex.6578. We may have 100 people this time.

PRAYER REQUEST

As the Perspective goes to press, Esther Overholt is undergoing laparoscopic surgery for a malignant tumor near the pancreas. Further surgery may be necessary if a tumor in the pancreas is malignant. She and Elbert certainly need our prayers.

CHRISTMAS GREETINGS

Art and I wish all of you a blessed Christmas. May the Prince of Peace make His presence very real to you and your family.

[Barkley Continued]

with a Baby in His arms." Knowing full well that the world would reject and eventually crucify His Son, God gave Him to us. No wonder we sing with such enthusiasm "Joy to the World, the Lord is come!"

CHRISTMAS RAMBLINGS

by Bob Troutman

--I heard an interesting sermon yesterday at the First Methodist Church in Madill. The idea was that from the beginning God planned for us to be at home with Him, not in heaven but in a fellowship relationship here on earth. Adam and Eve were at home with God in the Garden of Eden, but they chose to leave. Through Christ, we can come back home. After conversion, we must choose each day whether we wish to remain there. What it boiled down to, then, is that only if my relationship with God is right, will I be at home this Christmas.

--I can't imagine Christmas without Christmas trees. Decorating our five medium-sized ones, counting the one outside by the front door, is a time of remembering. Through the years we have collected all sorts of items to use for ornaments, things never intended for that purpose. Friends have given us many ornaments, especially angels to add to my collection. The oldest ornaments are two glass bells that were on the first Christmas tree Wilma and I had--47 years ago. Memories are one of the best parts of Christmas!

--Christmas for me means decorating. My second earliest childhood memory is of the Christmas I was five. We lived in a "shotgun" house in Bowlegs, Oklahoma. (Yes, that is its real name--and if you don't know what a shotgun house is, ask someone who grew up in the oil fields.) I helped Mother string red and green sisal Christmas rope from each corner of the room to the gas light fixture in the center. (You have to be around 70 to remember sisal Christmas rope. (It used to be everywhere, but it

failed to make the endangered list and exists no more.) The crowning touch was a red honeycomb bell hung where the ropes met. I thought it was beautiful. Today, just about every wall and shelf space in our house has some Christmas decoration on it. Anything goes when your decorating style is eclectic!

--I start playing Christmas music before Thanksgiving. High on my list of "most favorites" is The Messiah. Every time I play it, I remember the presentation in College Church my first Christmas at Bethany Peniel College. Actually, about all I remember is Mattie Sheppard singing "He Shall Feed His Flock."

And what would Christmas be without cantatas? I miss the old-fashioned ones that told the Christmas story so clearly. To me Peterson's "Love Transcending" is still one of the best. It wouldn't be Christmas if I didn't play it.

--I've attended a lot of children's Christmas programs. Of course, the really special ones were those that Steven and Philip had a part in. How long ago that was! I looked forward to seeing our grandchildren in Christmas programs, but we haven't had that privilege. They're eight and 10 now, and we've seen them in two programs. Africa is so far away--and it seems even farther at Christmastime.

--Like everything else, Christmas changes as the years pass, but it's still Christmas. Soon this year's Christmas will be another memory of Christmases past, to be treasured when I decorate the trees next year. Have a blessed Christmas.

--Many great ideas have been lost because the people who had them couldn't stand being laughed at.

AD COUNCIL CONSIDERS PROJECT(S) FOR '94-'95

During the first couple of years, we saved enough money to finance our annual budget for the '93-'94 fiscal year. We voted to waive membership dues for that year and encouraged donations to the Endowment for SNU. We donated enough to pay for a \$50,000 life insurance policy on an SNU student, with SNU as beneficiary.

The Ad Council is considering one or more projects to recommend for this fiscal year.

THANKS TO OUR CONTRIBUTORS

October:

Bob Griffin, Plans and Programs Committee Report.

Elbert Overholt, "Is This Book for You?"

Bruce Blowers, "Simbai, Papua New Guinea: Work & Witness Report"

November:

Milton Sonnevik, "Up, Up and Away to Dear Old Norway!"

Wini Howard, "To See the Queen"

Art Barkley, Fillers

Elbert Overholt, "More than Chess and Checkers,"

December:

Lois Brasher, "1994-My Year That Was,"

Art Barkley, Fillers

Bob Troutman, "Christmas Ramblings"

Elbert Overholt, "An Interest Group Activity"

--There's one thing to be said for inviting trouble; it generally accepts.

--A good listener is not only popular everywhere, but after a while he knows something.

1994 - MY YEAR
THAT WAS

by Lois Brasher

In January I went to Papua New Guinea to visit my niece and her husband, Rev. Gordon and Pat Stockett Johnston. They have been Nazarene missionaries 26 years, first in Lebanon, then Jordan, and for the past 13 years in New Guinea. On my way to New Guinea I stopped in the Philippines to visit Nazarene Headquarters in Manila and to deliver computer parts, personal mail and goodies to our own Rhonda Brown.

While in Manila I visited the American Military Cemetery and Memorial where my brother, Marvin Stockett, is memorialized on one of the Walls of MIA's.. On marble walls are inscribed the names and particulars of 36,279 of our Missing. In the cemetery are buried 17,206 of our Military Dead representing 40 percent of the burials which were originally made in temporary cemeteries in New Guinea, the Philippines and other islands of the Southwest Pacific Area. Marvin was the pilot of a B-29 that went down June 16, 1944. His last communication came from over Jerhat, India.

While I was waiting in the Manila Airport for my flight to Hong Kong, Don Owens and George Rench got off the plane from Hong Kong and we had a nice little visit. Milton always said he was glad we were not out dissipating because we were sure to run into somebody we knew!

Gordon Johnston was Mission Director for New Guinea and Pat was in charge of Publications for New Guinea. While I was with the Johnstons in their home I read the manuscript for her 1994 Missionary Reading Book, Changed Heart, Changed Lives. I also spent many days proof-reading her Pidgeon manuscripts of Matthew and Mark along with study

guides which she was translating and preparing for the Nazarene Bible College in Mount Hagen. The Johnstons came back to the states in August, and Rev. Johnston is recovering from cancer surgery in Silver Springs, Maryland.

In March Miltonette, Clara and I flew to Lake Charles, Louisiana, where I entertained 20 of Milton's relatives at a post-humus birthday dinner party honoring Milton's 72 birthday. In April, I sent Miltonette and Clara to Israel with the Bethany First Church tour directed by Mel and Jeanie McCullough.

In June, I flew to New York "to minister to the homeless at the Lamb's Center." It was an incredible experience! My primary duty was to cook 3 meals a day and wash dishes for the young teams who came to Work and Witness. The Lamb's Center employees and summer full-time volunteers also ate with us. In addition, I also prepared and served numerous executive luncheons, one of which was for the Pastoral Search Committee when John and Jan Jenkins Calhoun came from California for interview. The Calhouns are now pastoring the Lamb's Church. I look forward to meeting people in heaven who are there as a result of the sacrifices and service of many, many dedicated people including our own Jim Posey who has been a member of the Lamb's Board for 20 years. My experience at the Lamb's changed my life!

I came home from the Lamb's in August. I took my son, John Marvin, with me to the 84th Infantry 50th Reunion on a tour of the battlefields of the Battle of the Bulge. All 127 people on the tour fell in love with John Marvin because he was so helpful to everybody -- the tour guides, bus drivers, the aged and the infirm. I was SO proud of him. It was wonderful tour and helped close my

grief over Milton. I was a bride of less than a year when Milton served in the Battle of the Bulge.

John Marvin and I left the tour 5 days early at Stuttgart and drove to Zurich. On the way we visited Dwight and Kathy Swanson at the European Nazarene Bible College to deliver goodies from Win and Margaret Swanson. The Swansons and Brashers have been friends for nearly 30 years. Back then Dwight was a little kid. Now he's a PhD and is the Academic Dean of ENBC.

The kitchen at ENBC is state of the art. When the cook mentioned they are looking for a cook in February, I smiled and said, "Thank you. No.."

I came home from Europe early because my feet were killing me. As soon as I got here I had "FEET" surgery, neuromas removed from each foot. Somebody said, "Oh, I'm sorry you had foot surgery." I replied, "Don't be sorry. It is the best thing that has happened to me in ages."

I feel better now than I have since that dark, cold night, January 9, 1977, when Milton had his first heart attack, then his death February 1, 1993. Even during 16 years of heart/lung problems, a broken back and cancer of both lungs, Milton's life was filled with joy. I feel God gave me a special blessing when he let me keep him at home and take care of him.

GOD IS SO GOOD. I praise him every day for my heritage and all the manifold blessings I have enjoyed all my life.

"Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless His holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits." Psalm 103:1-2.

--Always put off until tomorrow what you shouldn't do at all.

AN INTEREST GROUP ACTIVITY

by Elbert Overholt

Five Academy members enjoyed an introductory discussion of William J. Bennett's THE DEVALUING OF AMERICA on Monday, November 28 in Room 135 of the SNU business building. It was a profitable beginning and we anticipate additional good sessions next semester when more of you join with interested SNU faculty.

We discussed the ideology of the author and his purpose for writing the book. Our conclusions were positive and we think he has something to say to the American people. One of the main reasons for writing the book was to raise critical issues and have them discussed and analyzed. Hopefully some solutions will be found to some of our most pressing problems.

The books are in the SNU bookstore and it's not too late to get one and join the group at the next session. If you identify yourself as a member of the Academy you may purchase the \$17.99 book for \$12.99. If you are interested let me know at our next luncheon or call me at 789-7645. The meeting time will be at 10:00 a.m. on a Monday in order for interested faculty to join us.

We are planning to discuss the following questions from Chapters 2-3 at the next meeting.

1. List some specific areas in which you think that our public schools have fallen short of what we should expect. Is it true of private schools? Home schooling?

2. On p. 62 the author presents characteristics of an effective school. What is meant by "effective"? Would you alter the list? If so, how?

3. What role should the federal government play in education? Should education be the responsibility of the State? Local Board?

MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

In addition to paid up members already mentioned in the Perspective, our list now includes the following: Wayne Pittard, Eva May Harper, Hazel Callaway, Mary Louise Smith, Clyde/Anna Faye Dawson, Sam/B.K. Stearman, Maurine Dickerson, Jack/Josie Harris, Lois Brasher, Paul Gray, and Doris Littrell.

--The most important thing a father can do for his children is to love their mother.

--Money can't buy love, health or happiness, or what it did last year.

