

Pastors Note

Rev. John Mendez

A Christmas Message

As we approach the Christmas holiday season, we focus our attention on the infant Jesus. Centuries earlier, the Prophet Isaiah declared that "unto us a child would be born" in whom the love and liberating power of God would be manifested. Centuries later, in a little isolated village called Bethlehem, poor impoverished shepherds, the least of these found the "babe wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger. Then curious, searching wise men from the East were led to the infant by a bright shining mysterious star. With the birth of the infant Jesus was also born the hope and joy of a new beginning, a new future for all or God's people. Hence, Christmas is the affirmation of a new life of joy, love and justice.

However, the manger in a greedy, profit-making society only seeks to commercialize and get rich on

Christmas. Artists are inspired to paint new ideas of joy surrounding Christmas on canvas. Churches through their liturgy and song lift up the manger event as a time of celebration only. But the Bible story of Christmas knows none of this. In the Bible the Christmas event

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is full of pathos and tragedy. It is an impoverished substitute for the room that could not be found in the inn. In my travels around the world, in Africa, in Central America, in the back alleys, ghettos, and slums of North Carolina and America, many poor and impoverished

children are still born outside the inn of comfort and privilege. They live in slums and shanties and many are homeless. We should never forget the child of Bethlehem who came to transform the world into a new Jerusalem, a new heaven and earth had nowhere to lay his head.

Worse still, Herod's soldiers who were trained to obey and not question hastened to Bethlehem to kill the poor infant Jesus for fear that a pauper might become a king. The child, the infant Jesus, who embodied within himself the dreams and aspirations of his parent, of the homeless, of the nobody's, outcasts, poor and impoverished everywhere was born a threat to the security of the old established order. The grief of the mothers shadows forth the grief of the women at the foot of the cross.

How many children

whether in South Africa, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Honduras, Palestine, Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan, East Winston-Salem, New York, South Bronx, Washington, D.C., Chicago Eastside, Mississippi, etc. are born amidst the devastation caused by human conflicts, victims of the fears and hates of their elders? The Prince of Peace continues to suffer and die in each little child who is abused, unfairly aborted, maimed, killed, abandoned, tortured and held in detention in our day.

Yet, however dark the night, there is a bright star that shines at midnight. Emerson was right, "only when it is dark enough can you see the stars." The cruel and mean Herods of this world cannot and will not win. It

Continued on page 8

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Happy Holiday

REV. JOHN MENDEZ

Sunday School... 9:30 A.M.

Morning Worship.. 11:00 A.M.


Bible Study & Prayer Service

Wednesday... 7:00 P.M.

Emmanuel Baptist Church

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"I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the lord."
(Psalm 122:1)




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My True Love Gave To Me A

Malcolm Pharr and Sherry Wolford

