

The Sunday School Lesson

John Brayboy, Salem Missionary Baptist Church

Jesus is Born (Matthew 1:18-25)

- I. Virgin Birth (Matt. 1:18)
- II. Joseph's Vision (Matt. 1:19-21)
- III. Prophecy Fulfilled (Matt. 1:22-23)
- IV. Obedient Response (Matt. 1:24-25)

I. Virgin Birth (1:18)
The word of God is very clear about the way Jesus was born. Mary was a virgin who was engaged to be married to a man whose name was Joseph. Engagements lasted for at least a year in the days when Jesus was born. When a woman was engaged to a man, it was like a marriage except for the sexual relations. The engagement could only be broken honorably. Matthew made it clear that there were two facts about Jesus' birth: (1) He was born to a virgin, and (2) He was conceived of the Holy Ghost. According to medical science, it is impossible for a virgin to conceive without sexual relations. Therefore, Matthew made it clear about how Jesus' birth came about. Jesus was God. He is and was eternal. In order to keep His deity, and Perfection, He had to be virgin conceived. He was the sinless Son of God. God was Jesus' father. He was conceived by the Holy Ghost. I do not understand how it was done, but I believe that is the way it was.

II. Joseph's Vision (1:19)
Evidently, Mary came to Joseph and told him that she was with child. He loved Mary, but like any man that must have been a hard pill to swallow. Not wanting to make a spectacle of Mary, he pondered on a way to break the engagement with her. Mary, being a respectable young woman from a fine family, would be disgraced if Joseph had handled the situation the wrong way. While he pondered his predicament, the Lord visited Joseph to calm his fear, and set the record straight. Sometimes what we see or

hear is not as it appears on the surface. Certainly at this point, Joseph needed some comforting and assurance. The Lord told him to marry Mary because the child she was carrying was conceived by the Holy Ghost. Not only that, but if there was any more doubt, the Lord told him that His name would be Jesus. He would be the Savior of the world to save the people from their sins. God had a plan for Jesus' entrance into the world. It had to be miraculous, and had to be in a way to transfer God from heaven to earth without Him losing His deity or authority. So God became man, born of a woman and dwelled among men. He died the sacrificial lamb for man's sins.

III. Prophecy Fulfilled (1:22-23)

Isaiah the Prophet foretold 400 years prior to the birth of Jesus how it would be in Isaiah 7:14. His name would be Emmanuel, meaning God with us. Jesus came to reconcile us to God, so that we could have the presence of God with us at all times. When God saves us, the Holy Ghost takes up abode in us so that we are never alone. When Isaiah prophesied about the baby Jesus' birth, he did not understand the meaning of his prophecy an what profound impact it would have on the world.

IV. Obedient Response (1:24-25)

Joseph was a just man. He responded to what the Lord had told him, even though he did not understand it. Joseph exercised faith in God and did what God said. He took Mary to be his wife. The marriage was not consummated until after the birth of Jesus. Sometimes we face situations that we don't understand or know what to do about them. If we will keep the faith and wait upon the Lord, everything will work out. We may never totally understand, but remember, God makes no mistakes. Like Joseph, we must be willing to accept God's plan in our lives for His plan to be complete. Not only in us, but others.

When we trust and obey God, others can be blessed. Christian brethren, allow Jesus to have preeminence in your life, so that His will can be done in your life. Lost person, Jesus stands knocking at your heart's door. Let Him in now. Let's not forget what Christmas is all about. God's gift of His son, Jesus to save us from our sins. God bless you.

PEMBROKE STATE UNIVERSITY Views from the Campus

by Don Gerak, University Relations

During National American Indian Heritage Month, Pembroke State University Chancellor Joseph B. Oxendine addressed three very different Federal departments and agencies.

Passed as a Joint Resolution by the United States Congress and proclaimed by President Clinton, National American Indian Heritage Month recognizes the "heritage and contributions to American society of American Indians." It also encourages self-esteem, pride, and self-awareness in American Indians of all ages.

Citing warriors from Chief Joseph of the Nez Perce tribe to Col. Eli S. Parker, a Seneca who served as Gen. Grant's military secretary during the Civil War, to his brother, Tom, the first American Indian to graduate from Navy flight school and serve as a fighter pilot in the early days of World War II, Dr. Oxendine said "American Indians have served their country with great pride and with distinction."

During World War II, the U.S. military had a difficult time keeping classified coded messages from being decoded by the Japanese until Navajo Indians were used as radio/telephone operators. These "code talkers" made a spectacular contribution to the communications system in the Pacific. The code used by the Navajos was actually the Navajo language and supplemented by technical military terms.

According to the "Navajo Times," 420 Navajos qualified as code talkers and "few experiments in WWII proved more successful than the Navajo code talkers." The code remained secret until the 1960's. It was reported that after the Japanese delegation signed surrender papers aboard the USS Missouri in 1945, one of the first questions they asked was about America's unbreakable code.

Also during WW II was heard the cry "Geronimo!" as thousands of army paratroopers jumped from airplanes. The battle cry was a tribute to the bravery and daring of the Chiricahua Apache leader.

Most Federal agencies sponsor a special event and invite prominent American Indians to participate in them.

Dr. Oxendine, Chancellor of Pembroke State University, is very proud of his Lumbee heritage and is a popular speaker throughout the region.

Dr. Oxendine spoke to the soldiers and airmen at a combined Fort Bragg/Pope Air Force Base celebration, to members of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency in Raleigh, and to the employees at the Federal Prison at Seymour Johnson Air Force Base in Goldsboro.

He proudly recounted the contributions Native American have made and continue to make to American society.

"It is an appropriate time to give particular attention to the role of American Indians in the military life of this country," Dr. Oxendine said.

"Traditionally, American Indians have taken great pride in the honor of fighting for just causes and we have invariably believed that the policy of the U.S. during war time was just."

"Prominent involvement of Indians with the U.S. military in time of war dates back to the Civil war, and has been evident in all wars since that time."

The Presidential Proclamation stated "Native people have represented this country in every war, from the American Revolution to the Persian Of, and are proud members of every branch of the U.S. Armed Forces."

The tradition originates from an incident in the 1880's. While being pursued by the U.S. Cavalry, Geronimo escaped by leaping down a steep cliff on horseback into a river at Medicine Bluff, Oklahoma. According to the soldiers, Geronimo yelled out his own name in defiance of the troops. This incident became legend and was adopted by American paratroopers.

In his address to employees of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the Chancellor stressed environmental initiatives taken by American Indians.

"American Indians have long been protectors of the environment," he said. "and the Presidential Proclamation stated 'Native peoples were the first environmentalists, understanding the air, water, plants and animals must be treated with respect if they are to remain available for generations to come.'"

According to Dr. Oxendine, the definitive American Indian statement on environmentalism was made in 1854 by Chief Seattle of the Syquamish Tribe in the Pacific northwest. Chief Seattle's remarks were delivered when he was being forced to sell tribal lands to the U.S. Government just prior to being forced to live

on a reservation.

"The great chief in Washington sends us word that he wishes to buy our land," he said. "We will consider your offer. For we know that if we do not sell, the white man may come with guns and take our lands."

"The earth does not belong to man. Man belongs to the earth," Chief Seattle said when questioning how people can buy and sell land. "How can you buy or sell the sky, the warmed of the

land. The idea is strange to us." Chief Seattle then urged that children be taught respect for the earth. "If we sell you our land, you must teach your children that it is sacred, that the rivers are our brothers and yours, and your must hence forth give the rivers the kindness you would give any brother."

The U.S. Government's decision to honor American Indians began in 1976 with Joint Resolution 209 which authorized the President to designate the week of October 10-16 as Native American Awareness Week. During President Reagan's first term in office, May 13, 1983, was designated American Indian Day. American Indian Week was held November 23-30, 1986.

In 1987, Nov. 22-28 was designated American Indian Week. The following year, National American Indian Heritage Week was celebrated Sept. 23-30. In 1989, Dec. 3-9 was chosen as the National American Indian Heritage Week.

In 1990 the month of November was designated National American Indian Heritage Month. A Joint Resolution the following year authorized the President to designate 1991 and 1992 as American Indian Heritage Month and 1992 as the "Year of the American Indian."

November 1993 and 1994 were designated National American Indian Heritage Month by Joint Resolution.

Educational Notes



With low morale and a high level of stress among educators, it seems that past staff development and workshops did not always prove to be totally effective. But for teachers and staff members of Purnell Swett High School, total effectiveness and a revitalized spirit captured the minds and hearts of those who attended and were involved in staff development for their school November 18-20 at Myrtle Beach, South Carolina.

The general session began Saturday morning as Mrs. Doris Graham welcomed everyone and stressed the purpose of the workshop which focused upon the education of children. Afterwards Principal Bill Brewington commented on the workshop's intention and stressed that children have various thinking styles, and requested teachers to take this into consideration as they teach and work with students. Upon sharing some positive aspects of the four period day schedule, Mr. Brewington also encouraged teachers and staff to express some major concerns involving school.

With the ending of the general session on Saturday, teachers along with area supervisors, Jackie Sherrod, Charles Graham, Ronnie Chavis, Nila Chamberlain, Myrna Leggett and Laura Artist, attended sessions that were designated in various locations of the motel. The supervisors led their assigned groups in discussing discipline, study habits of students, attendance, grades, and other major areas of concern. Upon discussion of these matters, various strategies and approaches to enhance and improve academics and performance of students were shared within the group.

Sunday morning's general session witnessed a sense of refreshed minds and spirits as Mr. Brewington and Mrs. Graham shared the success and effectiveness of the workshop. Each area supervisor was given an opportunity to speak and share their opinions and concerns of the meeting. After Mrs. Rosa Pearson prayed, Mr. David Emanuel brought an inspiring message for prayer service to the group as he read scripture from the old Testament. Through his message, he encouraged everyone to not forget their focus and the major highlights of the workshop. There was also a request from Mr. E. to encourage teachers to understand the students and work with them for these are some unpleasant situations the children must sometimes endure and

Spitler Selected as Employee of the Month



Gary Spitler, sports information director at Pembroke State University since 1978, was selected as employee of the month.

Spitler also serves as the University's NCAA compliance officer and is facility manager of the Jones Physical Education Center.

He is a graduate of Elon College and served as their assistant sports information director and sports editor of the campus newspaper before joining the PSU family.

Spitler has earned many honors as sports information director, including more than 40 national brochure awards. In 1987, he was selected "National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics Sports Information Director of the Year" and was the recipient of the Ike Pearson Award. The award is presented annually to the top NAIA sports information director from among more than 500-member schools.

Spitler received his highest honor in 1992 when he was inducted into

the NAIA Hall of Fame for Meritorious Service. He was also honored when selected to serve as a press officer for the 1987 U.S. Olympic Festival and the 1988 Olympic Baseball Super Series for the U.S. Baseball Federation.

From 1989-92, he served as chairman of the NAIA District 26 which governed athletics among the 17 district schools in North Carolina, South Carolina and Tennessee.

Spitler is also the executive director of the Braves Club, PSU's athletic booster club. As compliance officer, he keeps all facets at PSU's athletic program within NCAA rules and regulations.

He is married to the former Barbara Sawyers of Wytheville, Va. Their children are Greg, 12, Anne, 8, and Steve, 3.

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ANNOUNCING

Dr. Joseph T. Bell, M.D.

Robeson Health Care Corporation is pleased to announce the association of Joseph T. Bell, M.D. with the Julian T. Pierce Health Center in Pembroke. Bell will serve as lead physician and provide pediatric services.

Bell received his medical doctorate from the University of North Carolina School of Medicine and completed his residency with the Moses Cone Hospital in Greensboro. He is a native of Robeson County and recently returned from Oklahoma where he worked with the Choctaw Nation Indian Hospital. His wife is Vickie Bell and they have a daughter, Tori.

"As a native Robesonian, I understand the cultural heritage of our patients. This will enhance my ability to interact positively with our client population and will result in healthier patient outcomes."



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