Grace & peace to you from GOD our FATHER who sent our LORD & SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST into the world, that WHOSOEVER believes in HIM should NOT perish but have ETERNAL LIFE (John 3:16). It is the GREATEST verse in the BIBLE because: GOD is the GREATEST person; SO LOVED is the GREATEST devotion; the WORLD is the GREATEST number; that HE GAVE is the GREATEST act; HIS only begotten SON is the GREATEST gift; that WHOSOEVER believes is the GREATEST condition; shall not perish is the GREATEST mercy; but have eternal life, the GREATEST result. May the LORD shine on you with GRACE & LOVE.

Because of the slowness of bulk mail, by the time you receive this newsletter, CHRISTMAS, our LORDíS birthday & all the festivities of the holiday season will be over. However, it is a good thing to DAILY praise & remember, that JESUS was the only one born for the sole purpose of dying for us. GOD in flesh! John wrote, ìIn CHRIST was life, & the life was the LIGHT of men. The LIGHT shines in the darkness & the darkness did NOT comprehend it.î (John 1:4-5). Last year, when my December newsletter was received by some in late January, I was asked, ìWhy do you write things about Christmas after itís over?î Well, with me, it is never over. I praise GOD every day for HIS GIFT that HE gave us, & JESUS should be on the throne of every heart always.

December was a light month of ministry with 16 services, but a very nice harvest of over 250 souls. 2002 was a blessed year of harvesting souls with 264 services & some 3600 gave their hearts to JESUS CHRIST or rededicated their lives to HIM. Again, John 6:44 tells us, ìNO one can come to JESUS unless the FATHER who sent JESUS draws him & JESUS will raise him up on the last day.î There was also counseling, visiting & praying for those in hospitals, along with ministering with so many who are hurting & broken. It was also a good year of Bible studies. I give GOD the HONOR, WORSHIP & PRAISE for all HE did thru me this year. I constantly thank & praise HIM DAILY for the supernatural strength & divine energy HE gives me as I invade satanís territory to set the captives free (Isa. 61:1).

The first Sunday at Donovan Penitentiary was a double sword for me: joy & disappointment. Yard 1 was well attended & a nice harvest & yard 3 is on fire with revival, but yard 2 had only twelve to come hear the Word. They were watching the San Diego Chargers football game. The L.A. Mission services services were all well attended & soul catching. As always, the Fred Jordan Bible Study for the Spiritual Growth Program & services

were anointed (John 2:20, 27). Also did a Sunday Church service along with the Wednesday service at the Long Beach Rescue Mission. Really enjoyed being a guest speaker for Don Bennett at the Marina del Rey singles. My message was ìDonít Give Upî. The L.A. County Jail service had so many young kids on their way to a living nightmare in penitentiaries . I see multitudes of men & women wondering where they are sent to or where they are in lifeí calling.

I have often wondered what became of the shepherds from that first Christmas night. They were no doubt typical sheep-men, ordinary, working men who spend most of their time in the hot days & cool nights of the Middle East taking care of their nervous flock. In the rolling fields outside the village of Bethlehem, their daily ritual of guarding the flock at night was shattered by the appearance & divine pronouncement of an angel. As Luke tells it, the ìGlory of the Lordî (Luke 2:9) invaded their familiar pasture with this great news of CHRISTíS birth.

They wasted no time in following the angelís instructions & came upon the CHRIST child in a stable. They had told others what they had seen & heard, probably beginning with their families & then with other men of their trade. Iím sure the awesomeness of that night lingered for quite some time. They must have looked often unto the star-filled sky & remembered the joy & terror of that divine visit. The scene in the stable must have been fresh in their minds for many weeks & months. But as the years passed & no more holy hosts appeared, did the holy delight of that night burn bright in their hearts? Were they forever changed men, these simple shepherds who had heard from God & looked into the eyes of the long awaited MESSIAH? I canít answer that.

I do know, however, that men & women today who meet CHRIST as their SVAIOR & spend years growing in HIM can fall prey to the taxing tedium of the routine. The shepherds went back to the days & nights of the mundane tasks of feeding & protecting sheep. We must be careful & aware, as most too easily lose the spontaneity & JOY that should mark our friendship & relationship with CHRIST. We need to take & spend more time with HIM. Talk with GOD about everything, <u>everyday</u>. In 2003, we must maintain our enthusiasm & intimacy with the LORD & not be so distracted & diverted by responsibilities & obligations. Keep it fresh. Converse with HIM while youíre in traffic, working around the house, getting dressed, fixing dinner or whenever. I do this even on the softball field, just praising & praising. Tell HIM about what pleases & blesses you

& what even makes you happy or sad. POUR OUT YOUR HEART TO HIM. Let HIM in on the details. As you do this, I think you will find your fellowship enhanced in a distinctly personal way. You will find out how much HE cares for you as HE answers your pleas & cries. (Ps. 30:2, Ps. 35:15, 17, 19). HE takes your burdens (Matt. 11:28-30), & works faithfully in the small, seemingly uneventful parts of life (Heb. 10:23). Seek HIM and HIS WORD & rely on the HOLY SPIRIT. A disciple is nothing more than a person who is EVER learning MORE about CHRIST, our LORD.

Until next month, may GOD bless you abundantly & to you who sent LOVE offerings, a 100-fold return. Lord bless you,

In His Majestyís Service,

Mel Novak