

GRACE AND PEACE to you from GOD our Father, who sent our LORD AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST into this world, that WHOSOEVER believes in HIM should NOT perish, but have ETERNAL LIFE (John 3:16). By the time some of you receive this, especially back east and down south, CHRIST-mas and all the festivities will be over. I hope you and your loved ones enjoyed the BEAUTY of the season, because of JESUS. The message of CHRIST-mas is not giving, but SAVING. JESUS is the ULTIMATE GIFT!!!

The brightest night in human history was the night JESUS was born. Though the glory of GOD illuminated the heavens through the presence of ANGELS, this was NOT the greatest form of heavenly light. Instead, GOD'S MAJESTY and brilliant GLORY was revealed to us in an almost hushed sense through the form of a tiny baby. GOD had come near in the soft flesh of JESUS. The incredible incarnation of CHRIST brought the drama of REDEMPTION to a crescendo. God's only begotten conceived in Mary's virgin womb, ìEMANUEL,î GOD WITH US. (Matt. 1:23)

John wrote in John 1:4-5, ìIn Christ was life, and the life was the LIGHT of men. The LIGHT shines in darkness, and the darkness did NOT comprehend it. GOD understands our deepest need just as HE understood mankind's real NEED when JESUS was born. The people thought they needed someone to physically release them from Roman rule, but GOD knew the deeper NEED of their hearts. They needed a SAVIOR, someone who could save them from the bondage of sin, shame and guilt. This is what JESUS does for those who are lost and without GOD. HE provides a way through the darkness of sin, fear, doubt, hopelessness and rebellion. The LIGHT of HIS SACRIFICIAL LOVE draws us to HIM where our NEEDS are FULLY MET.

The NEED for a SAVIOR is just as great today as it was when JESUS was born. The LIGHT of GOD'S MERCY AND GRACE has NOT grown dim. John wrote: ìThere was the TRUE LIGHT which, coming into the world, ENLIGHTENS every man. HE came to HIS own, and those who were HIS own did NOT receive HIM. But as many as received HIM, to them HE gave the right to become children of GOD, even to those who believe in HIS name.î (John 1:9-12). The LIGHT OF GOD'S LOVE permeates our ENTIRE being, causing us to DESIRE HIM over the idols of this dark world. In Matthew 5:14-16, JESUS told HIS disciples, ìYou are the LIGHT of the world.î Technology, human reasoning, or a one-world view CANNOT satisfy the inner longing of mankind's heart. ONLY the LOVE of GOD can fill the emptiness of a broken

soul. Because CHRIST lives in us through the PRESENCE of the HOLY SPIRIT, we are HIS LIGHTS of HOPE to a lost dying world. The apostle Paul admonished us to shine like stars in the universe, as we hold out the word of life. (Phil. 2:15 NIV)

Did CHRIST-mas burn in your heart? Did it shine from within you like stars on a dark night bringing HOPE to the hopeless and lifting those who are struggling? May the following prayer be yours this Christ-mas and in 2004: LORD, make me a reflection of YOUR LOVE AND GIFT OF SALVATION to someone who NEEDS YOU. Give me the strength to accept YOUR unfailing LOVE for my own life, and teach me how to WORSHIP YOU in a greater way.

The advent of CHRIST is our own reminder that GOD is in CONTROL of ALL things. HE is the LIGHT of our own SALVATION, the ONE TRUE SOURCE OF ETERNAL PEACE. As you celebrate the birth of GOD'S SON, pray that GOD will make you sensitive to at least one person trapped in darkness who needs to hear of HIS SAVING GRACE. A simple word of HOPE, TRUTH or ENCOURAGEMENT may be all it takes to open heaven's door to a lost and dying soul.

This is my goal, to take an inventory of how well I managed both my personal life and the role GOD has given me in SKID ROW and PRISON MINISTRY. I am blessed and humbled that HE has taken my human efforts and supernaturally anointed them for an eternal impact. 2003 was another blessed year of HARVESTING SOULS for the KINGDOM as over 3,800 either invited JESUS in their heart as LORD and SAVIOR, or rededicated their lives to HIM, As ALWAYS, No one can come to JESUS unless the FATHER who sent JESUS draws him, and JESUS will raise him on the last day (John 6:44). The LORD gave me strength to do 261 services this year, along with counseling and phone prayers for multitudes. Yes, it's SUPERNATURAL STRENGTH AND DIVINE ENERGY. I give GOD ALL THE HONOR, WORSHIP AND GLORY. The HOLY SPIRIT teaches me what to say (Luke 12:12).

The Church on the Way, my home church, had another blessed and wonderful CHRIST-mas music extravaganza There were 16 services this month this month and a little over 200 came forward. Ron Zaucha and I did the Christmas Eve service at Chino Women's Prison. It was a blessed evening and a lot of moms shed tears. I was also a guest speaker at the Burbank Full Gospel breakfast and always have a good time in the Lord there.

Until next month, LORD BLESS YOU and to you who blessed me with LOVE offerings this year, I PRAISE HIM and THANK YOU.

In HIS Majestyís Service,

Mel Novak