



Christmas 2017

He's got skin like leather; and he is rail-thin from living outdoors and lack of food. That's my friend - Joe - who's had no home for two years now. *Who cares whether he's alive or dead?!* For some folks, life can get pretty disheveled.

While thousands root and roar for their home team at the Liberty Bowl, there are people less than three blocks away from there facing freaky, scary issues...Welcome to the Belt Line Community!

The organization which calls itself Jacob's Ladder Community Development Corporation tackles situations of just such dire need as Joe's. They rehab houses in a way ex-president, Jimmy Carter, could rave about. They give school-aged kids who need help with homework or computer skills a foothold on the ladder of success. They act as down-to-earth need-meeters.

A pregnant mother with a man who is not the father of that baby, paying taxes, starting life in squalor, governmental upheaval, living in a framework of violence...All the situations just listed are not from a Fred G. Sanford and Son telecast but right from the so-called Christmas

story in the Bible. Check-out scripture texts in Matthew 1:18-19; Luke 2:1, 7, 16 and Matthew 2:16 to let the blockbuster reality of it trek through to your heart just as the Christmas Star trekked across the sky for some astrologers in a distant country so long ago.

Good thing Mary and Joseph had some Wise Men bringing such valuables as gold for the child (Matt. 2:11) since they were about to migrate to another country (Matt. 2:12-13); and we know they were dirt poor by the fact that they gave the offering specified for those in poverty in Luke 2:24 (See Leviticus 12:8).

When most of us think of Christmas, we normally think of gift-giving. What better way might we pay homage to the Lord than by giving to the physical needs of those for whom Christ was sent into the world to save; those whom He calls beloved...served by Jacob's Ladder (Matt. 25:43-45). Jesus knew experientially what it was like to lie down many a night without a wall to lean against or a roof overhead or a place to lay one's head (See Luke 9:58). Thank God for those who are burdened to supply such tangible useable needs for individuals who lack the wherewithal to meet such needs.

Do you know the one verse Jesus said which is not in any of the four Gospels? It's Acts 20:35, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." My wife, Lucy, and I give regularly to the valued ministry of Jacob's Ladder. We hope you make a place in your heart for this need during this Holy Christmastide.

May God bless you,

Jim Townsend
Retired Bible Scholar