

No Room But A Manger

by Rev. E.A. Ramrattan
 "And she brought forth her first-born son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn." Luke 2:7.

Many families have had the experience of travelling on cold wintry nights and upon arriving at a motel or hotel to have been terribly disappointed to see the sign "No Room" or "No Vacancy" or even to have someone say, "Sorry, we are all filled up." If you have had this kind of experience after a hard and tiresome journey, then you know how depressed and drained of spirit you would feel. I suppose the thought of having no place to rest, and worst when pain and anxiety complicates

clear thinking, it is enough to drive one up the wall in a fit of frustration and disgust. Well, can you imagine how Mary, in her delicate condition, after riding on a donkey's back through the long rough road must have felt when her husband Joseph ran to the inn hoping to find a place of rest came back with a sad look on his face to say "there is no room in the inn." Mary must have wondered, why Lord, why can't we find room, my body is aching to death, I can hardly sit up on this ass anymore. No one can say for sure that it was the Inn-keeper's fault why there was no room. When we review the situation carefully we can see quite clearly that the city of David

was crowded because of the Decree of Caesar Augustus that all the world should be taxed. I suppose the Inn-keeper was a good man, and that he must have sympathized with Joseph and his problem. It could be that he took time to hear that Mary was in pain, and that Joseph was quite anxious and worried to find her some rest and comfort, but when an inn is full, there is simply no room, so that's it. I am sorry I cannot help, try some other place. But wait a minute—suppose the Inn-keeper knew that Mary was chosen by God to give birth to the long-awaited Messiah, the Son of God and Saviour of the world, do you think he would have found room? It could be, that he would have even given up his own room, and be happy about it knowing that he too had a part in the scheme and plan of God. We do not doubt that he was a good man, but the question is, was he good enough to make the sacrifice and at the cost of putting himself out? No, he did not give it serious thought. Mary and Joseph were poor ordinary country folk, so why should I deprive myself of my own comfort, maybe he never even cherished the thought of making room, thus he turned down the opportunity of helping and forfeited an eternal blessing. No one can tell the extent of the publicity his inn would have received, and the role he would have played. Instead of reading, "there was no room for them in the inn," rather we would know that it was around "that inn" the angels sang aloud the chorus—

"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men. . . For unto you is born this day in the City of David, a Saviour which is Christ the Lord."

However, Mary and Joseph had to seek refuge where they could find it, and that led them in their anxiety, frustration and pain to the manger in a barn. They could not choose, they simply had to take and make do what was there—nothing but a rude stable.

In situations like these, very often, the mode of expression is through tears. It could be that Mary tried hard to restrain the tears in order to support Joseph, but it nevertheless flowed freely. It could be that deep down in her heart she must have had a dialogue with herself. "Well, I am sure I am not mistaken, I was wide awake when the angel Gabriel said to me, I will have a son, and he shall be great, and he shall be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord shall give him the throne of his Father David, and he shall reign over the house

of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom, they shall be no end," but, but, where is the proof? Can a Son of the Highest be born in the stench of this abominable stable? It did happen. God showed Mary it could happen. It is not the place or the circumstance, but the Word of God must come to pass. Wonder of Wonder! "When the fullness of time was come, God sent his Son." There is always room, and God can lead us if we let Him.

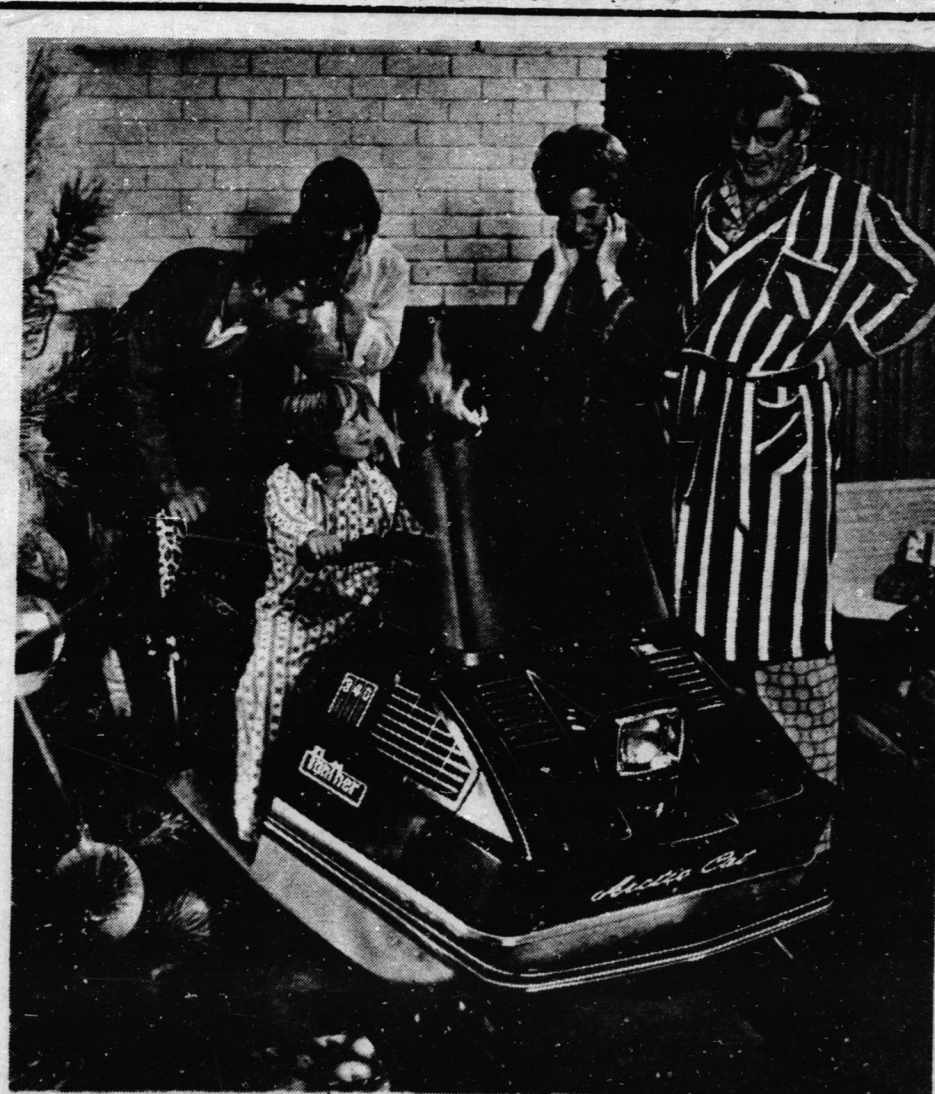
Today, do you think things have changed much? Do you think that there is room in crowded cities, and homes and hearts for the Son of God. I know for sure, in many homes and many hearts there would be room this Christmas for the ever-green tree, the flashing lights, the decoration of the home, the candles, stocking, the parties and dances, the lavishly furnished table, yes my dear friends, the occasion calls for celebration, these are necessary, but we must not allow these to crowd out the significant theme of Christmas. Christ can be crowded out, not because we want to, but simply because we have no room left for his accommodation. Let it not be said, as it was about 2000 years

ago, "When Christ was born in Bethlehem, they laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn." Luke 2:7. May we all make our hearts a resting place "A chamber for his birth So Jesus Christ can

live again Within our hearts on earth."

On behalf of the members of Wesley and Garnet United Churches and my family, we wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Bright and Prosperous New Year—with every blessing.

Bob & Irma Lysch
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Cheapside United Church Women

The home of Mrs. Harold Nie was a very appropriate setting with its Christmas decorations and glowing wood fire in the fireplace for the Christmas meeting of Cheapside United Church Women on Thursday afternoon Dec. 14.

The President, Mrs. Arvil Nie, opened the

meeting with the Christmas carol While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks By Night, a litany and Prayer. The Secretary Mrs. Ivan Whitford read the minutes, correspondence and thank you notes. The roll call was answered by 14 ladies.

Mrs. William Booth, friendship and visiting

convener, gave a report on the years work, a letter was read from the boy in Korea who has been receiving help from the organizations of the Church.

Mrs. Creaser and Mrs. Ivan Whitford were in charge of the Christmas program. The carol O Little Town Of Bethlehem was sung

followed by prayer. Mrs. Whitford gave a meditation Keeping Christmas, Mrs. Craig Werner read Gifts That Money Can't Buy. An interesting play On Our Way of Thinking Of Christmas was presented by Mrs. Creaser, Mrs. Harold Nie, Mrs. Merrill Nie, Mrs. Reg

Armstrong, Mrs. Arvil Nie, Mrs. William Crawley and Mrs. Ivan Whitford.

The offering was received and dedicated. Mrs. Creaser conducted a candle lighting service when Let Your Light Shine was sung each member lighting her candle from her neighbor's.

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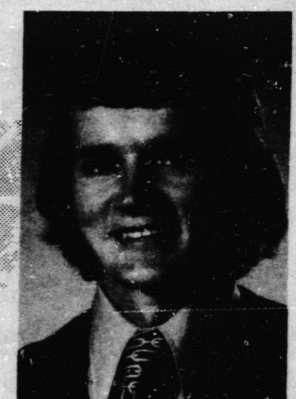
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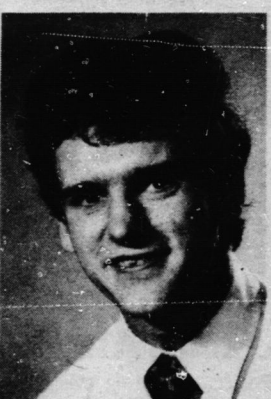
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When the crisp fragrance of evergreens scents the air... when the lights of the holiday home say, "Welcome"... that's Christmas! Hoping it's merry and bright, full of delight, for our appreciated patrons, we send greetings and gratitude.

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