

A New Birth
Radio Version

By

James E. Bogoniewski, Jr.

Theme:

This play tells the story of the rebirth of a couple's faith during the Christmas season. May the Lord use this story to give many a new faith in Him during the season we celebrate the birth of His Son, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Biblical Reference:

The Christmas Story

Approximate Running Time:

45-60 minutes (depending on the music used)

Props:

Microphones, mic stands, and music stands.

Scene:

The stage is set as the inside of a radio station. There is a semi-circle of microphones and stands set up for the cast to stand behind and perform the radio drama. A sound effect guy (or girl) stands to the side.

Note:

The sound effects listed are just background music that help set the scene and remind the audience that they're listening to a radio program. The person in charge of the sound effects can add to that with sound effects that further set the scenes or add to the presentation - a the director's discretion. Please feel free to edit the script to include any other directions for the sound effects guy (or girl).

Cast of Characters:

Narrator 1 and Narrator 2: The narrators should have a "radio show host" voice and do a good job of accentuating the puns and plays on words that are found in their lines. The two work as a team and help give this a "radio show" feel. Their timing is crucial for selling this an old-time radio show.

Bob: Bob is a man in his 30's. Bob used to be a believer, but has allowed the cares of the world to cut off his relationship with God.

Ted: Ted is a man in his 30's. Ted is someone who is able to rejoice in the blessings of the Lord through good times and through bad.

MC: Mrs. C. is an older woman who loves to dress to the hilt for Christmas. She is a bubbly, energetic, lovable older woman.

Beth: Beth is a woman in her 30's. She's married to Bob. She too used to be a believer but has allowed the cares of the world to cut off her relationship with Christ.

SL: Song Leader. This is the person who leads the congregations in a song or two - at the director's discretion.

Pastor: The pastor of the church. His primary job is to give the Christmas Eve sermon.

Mary: The Mary from the Bible.

Jesus: Do I need to say more?

Servant: A servant who is a doubter of Jesus Christ.

Master: An energetic person who tastes the best wine of his/her life at the wedding feast in Cana.

Martha: The Martha from the Bible.

Lazarus: The Lazarus from the Bible.

[*Theme Long background music.*]

Narrator 1: Welcome to WACC's live Christmas presentation of a New Birth, an original live Christmas radio dramatic presentation written and directed by WACC's own PJ. And presented to you tonight by the following Amazing sponsors: Athens Community Church, Acts of Light, heavenly bread, the United Samaritan appeal, the eye of the needle financial planning services, God's Son Life and casualty insurance company, The Bethlehem inn, the best seed company, the international harvest society, miracle foods, joseph's amazing coat boutique, subway, the believers trust and saving association, true vine vineyards, the burning bush sound system, and by the new and improved etzel. The etzel - the only car you'll regret buying for the rest of your life.

Narrator 2: You're listening to WACC's live presentation of A New Birth starring Liz, Rachel, and Joshua Bogoniewski, Steven Barth, George Blair, Sheila ka-nud-son, Amy Snyder, Cadie Balch, Alya Snyder, and Pastor Jim; with Seth Bogoniewski and Harold Delinger on sound, and with a special musical appearance by Esteban Vazquez.

Narrator 1: I'm _____.

Narrator 2: And I'm _____.

Narrator 1: And we're your hosts for this exciting evening of live drama as we experience a new birth here on WACC radio.

[*Samaritan background music.*]

Narrator 2: Before we begin tonight's production let's take a minute to thank one of our sponsors; The United Samaritan appeal. A man who has been robbed, beaten, and left for dead isn't choosy. He doesn't care if the man who is helping him goes to the same church, what he does for a living, whether he lives on the right side of town, or the other side of the tracks. He doesn't care where his aunt's sisters came from, the color of his skin, what brand of soda he drinks. To him it doesn't make any kind of a difference at all. He's just looking for help. How about you? When you see someone in need of help, are you willing to make a difference? Give to the United Samaritan Appeal. Make a difference.

[*Theme Short background music.*]

Narrator 1: And now we present A New Birth, an original Acts of Light live radio dramatic production presented live here on WACC radio.

[*Subway background music.*]

Narrator 2: Our story opens at the food court at the local mall the day before Christmas Eve. The mall is busy with last minute Christmas shoppers. Bob is sitting at a table enjoying a new Southwest barbecue steak sub from Subway.

Narrator 1: And for those of you who are listening in the car tonight. Why don't you stop on over to your local Subway and give one a try? Why not bring one home for everyone in the family. Subway. Eat fresh.

Narrator 2: Bob is just about done with his tasty sub from Subway when Ted walks by his table.

Ted: Hey Bob, is that you?

Bob: Ted, hey! It's been a while! What are you doing here?

Ted: Shopping like everyone else in the world, by the looks of it.

Bob: Yeah, I know what you mean. I don't really want to go in there, but I don't have much choice. The clock is ticking and I'm running out of time. The inevitable is fast approaching.

Ted: I'm with you there. We've got like 37 hours until Christmas morning and I haven't even started my Christmas shopping yet.

Bob: Same as you. Why bother shopping until the last minute, right? Let the early birds fight it out for the first worm on Black Friday - that's my philosophy. Then the better prepared can get the second round of deals. I'm more than happy coming a few weeks after them and picking out something from the scraps they've left behind.

Ted: Yeah, it gives them more of a surprise when we don't give them the latest and greatest things on the market like everyone else. There's nothing like waiting until the last minute. I can remember a bunch of times waiting until the last minute almost got us into a lot of trouble.

Bob: And a few times it did get us into trouble. Man, how did we ever graduate from college in four years?

Ted: I don't know. Hey, I guess much hasn't changed since we were in college together.

Bob: Well, I wish that was the case for me.

Ted: What do you mean by that?

Bob: Well, things have been tough for me lately.

Ted: Sorry to hear that. What's up?

Bob: Well, I got laid off from my job six months ago. I had been working there since college but they downsized and didn't think I was too important, so it was hit the road jack without as much as a thanks.

Ted: No way.

Bob: Yes way. So, I think I did a pretty good job of recovering from that rejection. They gave me a decent severance package and some good leads on finding another job. It was the least they could do.

Ted: Well, that's good. So, have you found one?

Bob: Kinda. I found work, but it wasn't in my field, and it was only part time, and it didn't pay much. So I had to get another job that was kinda the same - you know, part time, didn't pay much, not in my field.

Ted: But it paid the bills, right? I mean, sometimes we have to do something like that just to get us through a tough period. Then we get through it and everything seems better.

Bob: Yeah, I guess you're right. Only I lost both of those jobs two weeks ago and I haven't found anything else yet.

Ted: Wow. Don't worry, though. You'll find something.

Bob: I guess so. But this is like the worst time to be looking for a job. Everyone tells me that they're not hiring until the new year. So, things are gonna be really tight until then. My severance package is about to run out and we don't have anything in the bank. I don't have much to spend on Christmas this year. I just hope the kids understand.

Ted: It sounds like you're on the edge of getting desperate.

Bob: On the edge? Did you say I'm on the edge? I'm not on the edge. I'm way over the edge. I haven't seen the edge in - I don't know. I can't even remember the last time I've seen the edge. I'm holding on to a thin string and I'm afraid that string is gonna snap soon.

Ted: Then what happens?

Bob: I don't know. I haven't gotten there yet. I'm afraid I'll do something that I regret.

Ted: Like what?

Bob: Like, see that Salvation Army pot over there? Like I'm this far from running over there and knocking that guy over the head with that stupid little bell and running off with whatever's in that bucket.

Ted: Wow, I guess you are over the edge. Well, hang on. I know the Lord will get you through. One day at a time.

Bob: [*Sarcastically.*] Yeah, right.

Ted: What do you mean by that?

Bob: I wish the Lord would do something to help us through this. He's been like totally non-existent through this whole thing. Talk about deserting us in our time of need.

Ted: Sorry to hear that Bob. I thought you were still going to church and all.

Bob: Church! What do I need to go to church for? You gotta be kidding me, right? Our church has been no help to us. They offered to pray for us, but what good is that gonna do when we need food to eat.

Ted: Woah. I guess you have changed since the last time I saw you. I meant that your faith was strong the last time I saw you, I just assumed it was still strong now. But I guess that was a wrong assumption for me to make.

Bob: Don't make the mistake I made - assumptions can only get you into trouble, or laid off, or with a low paying job with kids to feed and a mortgage payment to make. And don't expect God to be there in your time of need. As soon as you really need Him in your life you find out that He's on some kind of vacation or something.

Ted: That's not true. God doesn't take vacations.

Bob: You know what I mean. He just checks out or forgets we need Him or something. Anyway, you can't depend on Him wherever He is or whatever He's doing.

Ted: Aw, come on Bob. I don't want to preach to you or nothing like that, but I gotta say that God never checks out of our lives. Sometimes we can't see Him working, and things might get really rough, but that doesn't mean that He's not there working in our life.

Bob: Well, then what does it mean?

Ted: It means we just can't see Him working right now.

Bob: Yeah, that's what I thought you were gonna say. That's a lot of help to me when I got bills to pay and kids to feed and no help on the horizon. I don't mean to sound sacrilegious or anything like that, but I've got a hard time believing in God after He left us high and dry like this.

Ted: I really feel for you Bob. Everyone goes through tough times in life. Nobody has it really easy. I've been through some tough times too.

Bob: Anything like this? You lost your job? You don't have enough money to pay the bills? You sitting at home waiting for the phone to ring? You have no hope for tomorrow?

Ted: No, it wasn't that.

Bob: Then I don't think you can relate.

Ted: I wish that what I went through was as easy as what you're going through.

Bob: Come on Ted. I thought you were my friend. Now you're picking on me. I don't need to stand here and listen to this. What can be worse than a guy losing his job and not being able to take care of his family?

Ted: No, I never lost my job like you. I lost my wife to cancer.

Bob: [*Immediately changing his attitude.*] Oh, Ted I didn't know.

Ted: It was three years ago tomorrow.

Bob: Christmas Eve?

Ted: Yeah. She was fighting it for a while, and we thought she was going to beat it, but she lost her fight just before Christmas.

Bob: I can't even imagine life without Beth or the kids.

Ted: I couldn't imagine life without Sue either. I think about her every day. I miss her so much. I know what it's like to ask God why He did what He did. I know what it's like to wonder what tomorrow is going to hold. I know what it's like to cry out to God and hear nothing in return. But I also know what it's like to look back on a situation a while after it's happened and see God working in ways I never saw while I was going through it.

Bob: You saw God working even though Sue died?

Ted: Yeah, big time. I don't know why everybody thinks that God's gotta heal people every time they get sick in order to prove that He exists and if He doesn't heal someone then he doesn't care about us. We're all gonna die sooner or later. Some get to live a long life. Some die as babies. Some die in the middle of life. It's not our choice. Who are we to tell God what He should do? I saw God working in many ways through Sue's illness and even in her death. He gave me a new value for life. He made me appreciate the time I had with Sue and the kids far more than I did before she got sick. I don't think work's the most important part of my life anymore. But the most important thing He taught me through this experience is to trust in Him no matter what's happening around me.

Bob: Trust Him? After He took your wife? I don't get it.

Ted: I don't know what tomorrow holds - but He does. I don't know what He has planned for my life - but He does. I don't know how long I'm going to live - but He does. When I trust in my own understanding of life I keep finding out that I don't know as much as I thought I did. When I just give it over to God I have this peace that I just can't explain.

Bob: But peace doesn't pay the bills. Peace doesn't bring your wife back. What good can it possibly do?

Ted: It allows me to live each day of my life without worrying about what tomorrow is going to be like.

Bob: Come on Ted. That sounds like something out of a movie where everything comes out just great in the end and everyone lives happily ever after because they won the lottery or something.

Ted: [*Smiling.*] Yeah, it does. But it's true. It's one of those things you don't get until you get it. I can't explain it to you.

Bob: I can tell.

Ted: But there's nothing like it Bob. I know that I'm right in the palm of the Lord's hand no matter what happens. I know that I'll never go wrong when I trust Him with my whole life.

Bob: That doesn't sound practical. So, you're telling me that I'm supposed to trust God even though I don't have a job and I don't have a bunch of money to spend on my wife and kids this Christmas?

Ted: Yeah. You used to trust Him, right?

Bob: Kinda.

Ted: Back when things were going well and you had a job and money to pay the bills and plenty of presents under the tree. It was easy for you to thank God then. It was easy for you to trust in God then. It was easy for you to have hope for the future then, right?

Bob: Yeah.

Ted: So, why does all that change just because you don't know what's gonna happen tomorrow?

Bob: I don't know.

Ted: Look, it's getting late. We both have shopping to do. Why don't you take this money and get something for the kids, okay? And how about coming to church with us tomorrow night?

Bob: I can't take this money.

Ted: Why not?

Bob: You've got kids to buy stuff for too, and anyway...

Ted: I'm your friend. You have a need. I want to help meet the need. Take this money. It's all God's money anyway. Take it and come to church with us tomorrow night.

Bob: I don't know.

Ted: 7:00 at the Athens Community Church. I'll see ya then!

Narrator 2: Ted quickly puts 50 dollars into Bob's hand and disappears into the crowd. Bob looks up towards heaven and then down towards his hand. He gladly puts the money into his pocket and discards his trash, and enters the crowd to find some Christmas treasures of his own with Ted's generous gift.

[Burning Bush background music.]

Narrator 1: Speaking of a generous gift. I'd like to mention the burning bush sound system. "Divine sounds." That's what your friends and neighbors will say when they hear your new burning bush sound system. The ultimate in professional sound quality. The commanding sound of this speaker is complimented by the one, the only, the patented, the spectacular, eye-catching appearance of an actual burning bush. If you've had the wool pulled over your ears by other speakers, it's time for you to experience the total effect of the Burning bush sound system. The exodus 3 model is especially impressive. Find out today about this amazing Theophanous sound source.

Narrator 2: The burning bush is a subsidiary of the divine inspiration company, incorporated.

[Eye of the Needle background music.]

Narrator 1: This portion of the program is also brought to you by the eye of a needle financial planning group.

Narrator 2: Once there was a millionaire that was told by a prophet that it was easier for a camel to go through an eye of a needle than it is for a rich man to get into heaven. So he went to prepare his camel for the trip. Ridiculous? Some may think so. But some people would rather attempt the impossible than make the sacrifice guaranteed to have great returns on the investment. So, stop by the office and find out about our exclusive three step program.

Narrator 1: Unless you'd rather find a camel trainer.

[Theme long background music.]

Narrator 2: When we left our story Bob and Ted had completed their conversation at the mall and each entered the surging crowd to find last minute Christmas gifts for their loved ones.

Narrator 1: Our focus changes to the other end of the mall where a young lady named Beth is lost in her thoughts as she is riding the escalator to the third level of the mall. Lost in her desire to get everything on her last minute Christmas shopping list. She didn't notice that she was nearing the top of the escalator. When she reached the top her feet stopped and her torso kept on going. It just so happened that Mrs. C. was rounding the corner at that exact moment and Beth fell right into her, almost knocking her all the way down the up escalator.

[Fade background music.]

MC: I'm sorry, I didn't see you, dearie. You kinda caught me by surprise.

Beth: Sorry, my eyes were blinded by the lights, and I'm not afraid to admit that the top of escalators scare me beyond reason. I'm so concerned that I'm going to get sucked back down around the top and inside. I know that it's an irrational fear, but still... Mrs. C.?

MC: Beth, is that you?

Beth: Yeah. It's me. Oh, I haven't seen you in a few years. Hey, what are you doing here?

MC: Shopping. It is almost Christmas, you know. What are you doing here my dear?

Beth: [*Apologetically.*] Shopping, same as you. Hey, I haven't seen you in a long time. How have you been?

MC: I've been just great. Things are still going well for us. I've missed seeing you, though. I must say that I've really been enjoying this holiday season. You know how much I love Christmas - and I think I love it more and more each year that I'm alive. The lights, the shopping, the food, having our family together - it's hands down my favorite time of the year.

Beth: I wish I could share your enthusiasm.

MC: You used to love this time of the year - if I remember correctly.

Beth: Yeah, usually.

MC: We used to coordinate our outfits on Sunday mornings so we could show the rest of the church how fashionable ladies dressed during the Christmas season, right dearie?

Beth: [*Smiling.*] I remember that.

MC: So, what happened to those outfits?

Beth: I'm sure I still have them at home at the back of some closet somewhere.

MC: You don't wear them anymore?

Beth: No, I haven't worn those outfits in a while.

MC: Don't you want to show the rest of the world how a fashionable lady dresses during the Christmas season?

Beth: It's not that. It's just that...

MC: What's the matter? Don't they fit any more, dearie?

Beth: No, I'm sure they do - at least I think they will. It's just that dressing up for Christmas isn't all that important to me anymore.

MC: Not that important to you? How can dressing for Christmas not be important to you?

Beth: Sorry. No offense. But it's not. I've got a family now and they're more important to me. I had a job and there's things to do and things to plan and things to shop for and I just don't have the time. You know.

MC: I can see that I have a bunch of work to do. When can you come over so we can try on your outfits and salvage this year?

Beth: Ummm. I'm not sure. I'm really busy. Isn't that what I just said to you? Weren't you listening?

MC: Don't hem and haw with me dear. Of course I was listening. This is Mrs. C. you're talking to. I know that you're busy, but the Beth I know would find time to get together with Mrs. C. to try on fashionable clothes, am I right?

Beth: I'm not coming over to your place to try on clothes, okay? Didn't you hear me? I'm not into Christmas anymore.

MC: [*Gasping.*] Not into Christmas? How can anyone not be into Christmas? Well, unless they were turning into a scrooge or something.

Beth: I'm not turning into a scrooge. Life gets busy. Things come up. Other things become more important as we mature.

MC: Honey, forgetting about Christmas has nothing to do with maturing. I'm mature and I sure haven't forgotten about Christmas. Come on, what else is it?

Beth: I'm not sure... I guess...

MC: Come on. I thought we already quit the hemming and the hawing and here you go again dearie.

Beth: Well, I guess it's the busy stuff I was talking about and because of other stuff that's going on right now.

MC: What other stuff?

Beth: This year has been a tough one for us and it's hard to be all festive when things aren't going well.

MC: Is it your marriage?

Beth: No, not really. We're stressed out right now, and that affects our marriage, but I'm not too worried about Bob.

MC: Is it the kids?

Beth: Kinda. They're not going to have the kind of Christmas we want to give them this year and I know they're going to be disappointed by it.

MC: Why can't you give them what you want to give them? Let me guess, they gave you a list as long as a football field, right?

Beth: No, it's not that. We just don't have the money to spend on them this year. Bob lost his job and then he got another one - two more actually - and then he lost them and we're almost out of money. I just don't know what we're going to do. If things don't change in the near future we could lose our home, our car, and who knows what else.

MC: Oh. I see. This is more than I could have imagined. Have you prayed about all this?

Beth: No. Why would I pray about this?

MC: Excuse me, dearie.

Beth: I said, why would I pray about this?

MC: I guess it's been a while since you've been in church - whether it was Christmas or not, huh?

Beth: Yeah, it's been a while.

MC: Prayer is our lifeline with God. Prayer is the way we share our concerns with the one who can really do something about it. Prayer is the most important thing we can do in our times of need. I can't believe you could forget that.

Beth: I haven't forgotten it, I guess. It's just that I tried praying back when this was a little problem and nothing happened. So I gave up.

MC: Never give up on God. You gotta get to our church tomorrow night.

Beth: What?

MC: You gotta bring your husband and those kids of yours and get yourself to our church tomorrow night. You gotta get right with God and bring your concerns to Him and I know He's gonna answer your prayers.

Beth: Uh, well, how can you say that?

MC: Because I know He does - and you did too. You just forgot it somewhere along the way. I don't know where you lost it or how you lost it but I do know that now's the time you gotta get it back.

Beth: Uh, well, I'm not sure.

MC: Dearie. This is the time. Don't wait another day. There's no better time to get right with God than Christmas. I don't care what you wear. You gotta be in church tomorrow and get right with God. You just gotta.

Beth: We'll see.

MC: Okay. Look, it's getting late. We both have shopping to do. Why don't you take this money and get something for the kids, okay? And I'm planning on seeing you in church tomorrow night? I'm getting all dressed up for you to see my new outfit. All right?

Narrator 1: Mrs. C. gently presses 50 dollars into Beth's hand.

Beth: I can't take this money.

MC: Why not?

Beth: You don't have to give this to me.

MC: I know. I'm your friend dearie. You have a need. I want to help meet the need. Take it. It's all God's money anyway. Take it and come to church with us tomorrow night.

Beth: I don't know.

MC: 7:00 at the Athens Community Church. I'll see ya then!

[Theme short background music.]

Narrator 2: Mrs. C. slowly walks away, making sure she is clear from the end of the escalator. Beth looks up to heaven and then down into her hands. She puts the money into her purse and enters the crowd in search of gifts for her family. As Mrs. C. made her way around the mall she just happened to pass Joseph's Amazing Coat Boutique.

[Joseph's Amazing Coat background music.]

MC: You say you need a new coat because a new patch on an old coat just won't do, well then Dearie, have I got the place for you. Come and visit me at Joseph's Amazing Coat Boutique. Sure, we all admire those who are thrifty, but when you put a new patch on an older worn out garment they tear and are lost forever. Be smart and go all the way. You'll still be wearing your new fashionable Joseph's Coat long after the new patch has worn out. Mention this program for a special buy one get one free on everything that a fashionable young lady needs to be fashionable this Christmas.

Narrator 1: Joseph's Amazing Coat Boutique. Don't look like you just fell down a well. Shop at Joseph's Amazing Coat Boutique today!

Beth: It's AMAZING!

[Bethlehem Inn background music.]

Narrator 2: This portion of the program is also brought to you by the Bethlehem Inn. You'll never forget your visit to the City of David when you stay at the Bethlehem Inn. Ever since the great census of Caesar Augustus we've had a reputation for beautiful star-filled skies. Such stars you've never seen before in your life. Come and see for yourselves. Memorable things happen in and behind the Bethlehem inn. And for a limited time, when you visit the Bethlehem Inn you can make an optional trip, just outside of the city to the place where the legendary choir with heavenly voices played their one and only concert for the shepherds as they watched their flocks by night. It's a short trip just outside of Bethlehem. Find the peace that wise men seek in Bethlehem at the Bethlehem Inn. One star rated comfort and convenience. Come spend your special birthday with us. The Christ-child did.

[Believers Trust background music.]

Narrator 1: This brief break from our program is sponsored by the Believers trust and saving association. Are you up to your nose in the debt of sin? We at the believers trust and saving association have good news for you. Your debts can be cancelled and you can live a new life again. Our associate will cross out all charges against you and give you new life. You can bank on Him. He's eternally assured. He's acceptable everywhere and for everything. Believers Trust and saving association. Bank with the King of kings and Lord of lords.

[Theme short background music.]

Narrator 2: And now we return to our story. You're listening to A New Birth, an original dramatic Christmas production produced for your listening pleasure here on WACC radio by Acts of Light - your local Christian drama troupe.

Narrator 1: You've seen that Bob and Beth have gone through quite the dramatic time in their lives. Full of trials and tribulations. Full of heartbreak and loss. They once had a strong faith in Christ and an active involvement in their local church, but the cares of the world have gotten in the way and have caused them to forget their first love. It happens more than we'd like to admit.

[Best Seeds background music.]

Narrator 2: If you'd like to sow seeds that last then you need to know about the best seed company. Don't be so-so about seeds. Even the best seeds are so-so without good ground. Birds, thorns, and the sun take their toll. But our seeds, planted in good ground are guaranteed to produce an abundant return on your sowing. The best seed company. Sowing for our maker since A.D. 33.

[Theme short background music.]

Narrator 1: And now back to our story. Our scene shifts to the Athens Community Church. It's Christmas Eve. The candle light service is about to begin. Bob and his family have arrived early and are greeting friends they haven't seen in quite a while. Mrs. C. is standing in the foyer and handing out bulletins and wishing everyone a very Merry Christmas. The worship leader makes his way to the platform to welcome everyone and lead them in the opening song.

SL: Welcome to our Christmas Eve service. May the Lord bless you as you come to worship Him on the eve of the birthday of our Lord and Savior - Jesus Christ. Why don't you stand as you please join me as we sing.

[They sing.]

SL: You may be seated. Let's pray. Lord God, we thank you for this special season - this Christmas season. We thank you for the birth of your Son. May your blessing be on our service as we celebrate Jesus' birthday. Amen.

Narrator 2: The congregation completed their song and the pastor made his way to the platform.

Pastor: Merry Christmas everyone. Well, at least Merry Christmas Eve. I'm sure this is a very special night for you, your family, and your friends. There are plenty of things you're probably planning on doing. They may include eating some great food - probably too much great food if you're like me. You're probably going to be seeing close family and friends. You're probably going to be unwrapping our quickly wrapping some presents soon. I realize that some of you may not have many great Christmas memories to depend upon. Some of you may not have big plans for Christmas this year. Some of you might be mourning the loss of someone in your life or the loss of an important relationship in your life. But before you put your mind to its next Christmas task or memory - whatever it may be - I'd like you to let it drift a bit with me for a moment. I'd like you to let it drift to a quiet evening in a humble stable where a little boy was born long, long ago.

You see, about 2,000 years ago there was a woman named Mary and a man named Joseph who were expecting their first child. Because of a census, they had to travel a great distance to Bethlehem, where they were to be counted and pay their tax. The trip wouldn't have been that big of a deal except for the fact that Mary was very pregnant. So pregnant, in fact, that she gave birth on the trip. As they entered the town they soon discovered that so many had come to Bethlehem that there was no more room for them at the inn. They looked all around but there was no place for them to stay. One innkeeper saw that Mary was very pregnant and took pity on them. Not having a room for them to stay in, he offered them the stable behind the inn. It was there that Mary gave birth to her firstborn child. It was a son and they named him Jesus.

There were also shepherds who were watching their flocks of sheep by night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them and told them of the baby who was born in the manger. Suddenly, many angels appeared in the sky, proclaiming the birth of the new baby. They just had to check it out, so they left their flocks and headed to the manger to see the newborn King.

The Bible also tells us that Wise Men from the East saw a new star in the sky and knew something special was happening. They headed to Herod to ask him about the newborn King. Herod's wise men pointed these wise man to Bethlehem to see Jesus. On the way, sometime later, they saw the star which led them to where he was. They too wanted to see the newborn King and pay Him his due respect. They gave him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

Now, this is a great story, and we hear it every year, but we can't just leave Jesus there in the manger. We can't allow ourselves to be all warm and fuzzy by what we've seen here and expect it to last until Easter when we can get all warm and fuzzy again until next Christmas. It just won't last. Actually, it usually lasts until sometime in January.

Jesus didn't stay there in the manger. Jesus grew up. He was born in the manger so that he could meet our physical needs. So that he could teach us. So that he could heal us. So that he could be an example to us. But most importantly - He was born in a manger so that He could die on a cross for our sins and rise again from the dead to prove that He was God.

Jesus' ministry began when He performed His first miracle at a wedding feast in the town of Cana in Galilee.

[Wedding background music.]

Narrator 1: Our scene changes again to that of the wedding feast in Cana. The wedding ceremony has been performed and the guests have been treated to a wonderful feast. There is only one problem. None of them are leaving. They are having too good of a time.

Mary: Jesus, they have no more wine.

Jesus: Why do you ask me to help with the details of this wedding?

Mary: They are out of wine and I know you can do something about it.

Jesus: My time has not come yet. Is this the time or place for me to reveal my glory?

Narrator 2: Mary smiles at Jesus as she puts her hand on His shoulder. She turns to leave and says to the servant.

Mary: Do whatever He tells you to do.

Narrator 2: She returns to her table. The servant looks to Jesus, waiting for His next command.

Jesus: Take those jars over there and fill them to the brim with water.

Narrator 2: They do just that.

Servant: It's done. Now what would you like us to do?

Jesus: Now draw some out and take it to the master of the banquet.

Servant: Okay? But we're not looking for water, we're looking for wine.

Jesus: I know. Just do as I ask.

Servant: Okay, but this is pointless..

Jesus: Draw some out and take it to the master of the banquet.

Servant: Okay, but don't hold me responsible for what he says. I just do what I'm told around here.

Narrator 2: The servant exits to find the Master of the banquet. Suddenly, the master hurries to find Jesus with the servant close behind.

Master: [Very excited.] Who is responsible for this?

Servant: It wasn't me!

Master: Who made this, this, this wine?

Servant: Don't blame me. I had nothing to do with it. It was this man here. He told us to put water into those jars and draw it back out and then bring it to you. I only did what he asked.

Master: You put water into the jars and pulled it back out?

Servant: That's all I did.

Master: [Very excited.] Then it's a miracle! This wine is the best wine I have ever tasted. My highest compliments to you sir! Most people serve the best wine first and then bring out the cheaper wine after the guests have had too much to drink, but you have saved the best wine for last. Come, bring this wine to the guests. Let them enjoy the best wine I have ever tasted in my life!

Narrator 2: Everyone at the wedding feast enjoyed the wine and thanked the host for the great wedding feast.

[*True Vine background music.*]

Narrator 1: The preceding portion of our program has been brought to you by True Vine Vineyards. Some men have planted many vineyards in their lives. Some vineyards grow like weeds and produce sour grapes. Some flourish briefly but cannot withstand the merciless examination of the sun and they bear no fruit. But there is one true vine pruned and tended by the master vine dresser that bears life-giving fruit. It satisfies man's deepest thirst, fills his heart with joy, and his soul with peace. And onto this unique vine the vine dresser has grafted branches to produce an abundant harvest. Every branch that does not bear fruit is removed and the rest are pruned to increase production. It isn't easy to supply a thirsty world from one true vine, but the vine dresser refuses to compromise on His standards. He's been working at this for a long, long time. True Vine Vineyards. We supplied the master with the wine at the wedding feast at Cana. We can supply all of your eternal banqueting table needs.

[Theme short background music.]

Narrator 2: And now back to our program. We return to the Athens Community Church where the pastor continues his message at the Christmas Eve service.

Pastor: Was Jesus just a master at making great tasting wine? I don't think so. He created the universe from nothing by simply speaking it into existence. Of course, He could turn water into wine without words. He could do it without touching it. He could do it without anything but willing it to happen. He is God.

Jesus was born in a manger to show us what God is like. He lived with us, teaching us what the Kingdom of God is like. He revealed His power to us through the miracles that He did, turning water into wine, healing the sick, the lame, and the blind. He even brought some back from the dead. One was a man named Lazarus.

Lazarus and his two sisters, Mary and Martha, believed that Jesus was God's Son. When Lazarus became ill Mary and Martha sent for Jesus for they knew He would heal him. Lazarus died before Mary and Martha heard back from the servant they sent. Jesus didn't come to them in time. They had to bury their brother.

[Lazarus background music.]

Narrator 1: We return to the Bible times. Mary and Martha are besides themselves with tears from the death of their brother.

Mary: Master. Where have you been? Did you not get our message? We sent it to you days ago! Have you come to help Lazarus? Ohh!!!

Martha: Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. But I know that even now God will give you whatever you ask.

Jesus: My dearest Mary and Martha. Don't cry. It's not too late. Lazarus is dead but I promise you - your brother will rise again.

Martha: But we know He will rise again at the resurrection at the last day.

Jesus: I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live. Even though he dies and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe me?

Mary: Yes Lord, I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, who was to come into the world.

Jesus: Then believe in me and you will see him alive again.

Martha: What are you saying? We buried him ourselves. Don't you understand? We know that he was dead when we buried him. How can he be alive again?

Jesus: He is dead but he will rise again.

Martha: He is dead, but how can he become alive again? Do you think we would bury our brother if he was still alive?

Jesus: No, I know you wouldn't do that.

Martha: Then how can he be alive?

Jesus: You've seen and heard so much. Do you not believe in me yet?

Mary: Yes, we believe that you are the Messiah.

Martha: But how can he come back from the dead?

Jesus: Believe in me and trust me and you will see. Now take me to him and you will see.

Mary: But master, he's been in the grave for four days and we could not afford to have him embalmed.

Martha: You don't want to go into his grave!

Jesus: I'm not going into his grave. Take away the stone.

Martha: But Lord, by this time there is a bad odor.

Jesus: Did I not tell you that if you believe, you will see the glory of God? Watch and believe. Father, I thank you that you have heard me. I knew that you always hear me, but I said this for the benefit of the people standing here, that they may believe that you sent me. Amen. Lazarus, come forth!

Narrator 1: Mary and Martha cry out with joy as Lazarus slowly walks out of the grave. He still has the grave wrappings on him. They quickly unwrapped him and begin to minister to his physical needs.

Martha: I can't believe it's really you. You're alive, just as Jesus said you would be. We thought we lost you forever!

Mary: Are you thirsty? Are you hungry? Is there anything we can get for you? Anything at all?

Lazarus: Lord, how can I possibly thank you?

Jesus: That will do. It is good to see you again, my friend.

Narrator 2: Mary and Martha bow at Jesus' feet and begin to worship Him.

Mary: Lord, how could we have doubted you?

Martha: You are the Lord God almighty in the flesh.

Mary: You are the Messiah - the promised one!

Jesus: Rise and follow me.

Narrator 1: They made their way back to Mary and Martha's house telling everyone they saw of the wondrous things that Jesus had done for them. Lazarus was so glad to be able to eat some bread and water. And speaking of bread..

[Heavenly Bread background music.]

Narrator 2: The preceding portion of our program has been brought to you by Heavenly Bread. Some bread satisfies an immediate hunger, but the fullness does not last. Some bread may be tasty but is lacking in nourishment. Why not get it all? Heavenly bread satisfies today, tomorrow, for an eternity. Heavenly bread - available in your closest copy of the Holy Scriptures.

[God Son background music.]

Narrator 1: This portion of the program is also brought to you by the God Son Life and Casualty Insurance Company. Suppose something happened to you tonight. You might have all the good things that you need for many years. You might be tempted to take life easy, eat drink and enjoy yourself. But supposed this very night you have to give up your life. Then who will get all of these things that you've kept for yourself. You may be rich today, in your own eyes, but have you thought at all about tomorrow? God Son Life and Casualty Insurance Company. Put your life into good hands, the best hands, God's hands.

[Theme music.]

Narrator 2: And now back to our story. We return to the Christmas Eve service at the Athens Community Church. The pastor continues his sermon.

Pastor: You see, Jesus didn't bring Lazarus back from the dead because he missed him or because Mary or Martha missed him. He brought Lazarus back from the dead so that he could prove that He had power over death and the grave. He did it so that he could prove that He is our Lord God - the author and creator of the universe. He proved he was God 2,000 years ago and we know that he is still God today.

Jesus was born in a lowly stable, He performed great miracles - healing people, proving He had command over creation, and he died on a cross and rose again from the dead as a sacrifice for us all. Each one of us can spend all of eternity with God in Heaven because of Christ and because of Christ alone. It's not what you and I have done. It's not what we can give to Him. It's all about Jesus.

So, how about you? Have you admitted to God that you are a sinner? Have you asked God to forgive you of your sins and save a place in Heaven for you? Have you invited Christ into your heart to clean house and begin a new friendship with the one who will never leave you or forsake you? Today could be the best day of your life.

Maybe you're here and you remember a time when you gave your life over to Christ but you haven't been living like it. Maybe you've let the cares and trials of the world get in the way of that special friendship with the creator of the universe. Maybe you've been through some tough times. Maybe you've lost your job. Maybe you've lost a close family member. Maybe you've just been too busy to give time to God. Today could be the day you get right with Him and let Him work in your life again.

[Special music or closing song. Silent night and a candle lighting.]

Pastor: Christmas is the day we celebrate the birth of Christ. But Christmas can also be the day you celebrate a New Birth in your life. This altar is here for you my friends. It's here for you to come and meet with God - maybe for the first time in your entire life. It's here for you to pray to Him - maybe for the first time in a long, long while. What's holding you back? Give it to God. He gave His life for you. Now you can give your life to Him. If you want to pray with someone, come on forward. Come on forward.

[Invitation background music.]

Narrator 1: Bob and Beth have obviously been touched by the message. They go forward to the altar and seek God's forgiveness for their selfishness and again dedicate their lives to Him. They pray with the pastor and ask God to work out their financial troubles, trusting that He will guide them to a better job and get them through their tough times until then. They remember other times that they went to the altar. They remembered the first time, when they asked God to forgive them of their sin and to cleanse them of all unrighteousness. They accepted the gift that Christ gave them when He died on the cross as a sacrifice for their sins. The Holy Spirit came into their lives, guiding and directing their lives until they eventually stopped listening to Him - deciding to go their own way. Beth and Bob decided to rededicate their lives to Christ, allowing Him to guide and direct their lives from this point forward. On this Christmas Eve night, at this very altar, they truly gained a New Birth.

[*Fade background music.*]

Narrator 2: As Bob and Beth returned to their feet, Mrs. C. and Ted make their way to the front of the church to greet them. After a long hug, Beth says to Mrs. C...

Beth: I am so glad I saw you at the mall yesterday. I haven't prayed like that in a way too long!

Bob: And I was able to get a lot off my chest and into God's hands tonight.

Beth: Thank you for caring for us so much that you insisted that we come to church today - and thank you for that gift you gave us yesterday!

Bob: I'm so glad that Beth was able to talk me into coming today.

Beth: This is just what we both needed.

Bob: I'm sorry for the way I acted yesterday. We were so caught up in our own lives that we let ourselves fall away from the Lord. We blamed Him for all the stuff going on in our lives and it drove us farther from Him.

Beth: But all we had to do is turn to Him and He was there for us. Just like the Pastor said.

Bob: It was so good to get that burden off my shoulders.

MC: That's great. So, how do you feel now?

Bob: At peace. For the first time in a long time I'm at peace - really at peace.

Beth: Me too. And we couldn't have done it without you. Thank you for caring about us.

MC: It's not about us dearie. It's all about God. He led you to us yesterday so that we could invite you to be here today. We're just a small part of His great big plan for you. Don't thank us - thank Him.

Ted: It was definitely God's plan for you to spend Christmas Eve here in church.

Bob: That's for sure. Hey, look. I've got to apologize for the way I went on and on at the mall yesterday. I did a lot of complaining and I know I sounded really selfish - especially with you losing your wife the way you did.

Beth: Me too. You've been like a mother to me. You've spent so much time with me over the past years and I was so rude to you. I treated you like you were less than a stranger. I'm so sorry. Will you forgive me?

MC: Of course I'll forgive you. It's Christmas. Isn't that what Christmas is all about? It's all about how God sent Christ to pay the price for our sins so that we can receive forgiveness and a place in heaven, right dearie?

Bob: That's what Pastor said.

MC: If God could do that for us then I can do it for you. Consider yourselves forgiven.

Beth: Thank you so much!

Ted: We're just really glad that you let God work in your lives today. It's great to see someone meet God - or reconnect with God - here in church on Christmas Eve.

MC: That's the real reason I love Christmas so much. We celebrate Jesus' birthday and now we can celebrate your re-birthday, right dearie?

Beth: Yeah, I do feel like a new person. So, is this a reason for us to go shopping?

MC: Do we need a reason? Come on dearie, I got plans for you!

Narrator 1: Beth and Mrs. C. head to the dessert reception held in the fellowship hall in the church basement. They excitedly talked about the latest in Christmas fashions.

[Joseph short background music.]

Narrator 2: Like the ones you can find at Joseph's Amazing Coat Boutique. Come check out our Boxing Day Sale from 7am to noon. Bring back the gifts that didn't fit and fit into one of our amazing new coats. Joseph's Amazing Coat Boutique, everyone will ask you where you got that new AMAZING coat!

Narrator 1: They leave Bob and Ted smiling at each other as they can only wonder what Beth and Mrs. C. are up to.

Bob: Oh great! I don't know what they're up to, but I now we can't afford it - or I'll be getting another job just to cover it.

Ted: Don't worry. It's Christmas Eve. I doubt there are many places still open at this time of night. And if they are open I bet there isn't much left on the shelves for them to buy.

Bob: I sure hope you're right. We definitely can't afford a late night Christmas Eve shopping spree with Mrs. C. at the helm.

Ted: Ah, don't worry about it. Come on, let's go downstairs. Rumor has it there are plenty of cookies and candy and pies and cakes and other goodies for us to enjoy.

Bob: [*Just like Mrs. C.*] That's why I just love Christmas, Dearie!!!

Narrator 1: They too head to the fellowship hall in search of Christmas cookies and candy and pies and cakes.

Narrator 2: Stop it! You're making me hungry too!

[*Miracle Foods background music.*]

Narrator 1: Speaking of hungry the preceding portion of our program has been brought to you by miracle foods. Are you looking for a feast for a few or two or five or ten-thousand? Want to make a splash with a few fishes or a couple of loaves? Miracle foods can help! We have a history of accomplishing the seemingly impossible culinary feast. We'll bring the food - you bring the baskets. Miracle Foods. Any assembly required.

[*Invitation background music.*]

Narrator 2: So, how about you? Do you have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ? Have you ever asked God to forgive you of your sin and give you a place in Heaven for all of eternity? Have you accepted the great gift that Jesus gave us when he was born in a lowly manger, to live a life without sin, to die on the cross as a sacrifice for your sin and mine? It's not that hard. All you have to do is tell Him that you're a sinner, that you want to be forgiven, that you accept what Christ did on the cross as the sacrifice that paid the debt for your sin, and you want to have a personal relationship with Him. John 3:16 says, "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life." You can do that tonight.

Narrator 1: And how about those of you who have fallen away from the Lord. You may have come to know Him when you were a child or when you were in a different place in your life, but things have changed since then. He's more distant, you haven't spent time with Him in a while. This is a great chance for you to experience a New Birth, just like Bob and Beth did tonight. No matter how many steps you've taken away from God you're just one step away from Him. Turn to Him. For he will meet you there and give you grace, forgiveness, and the peace that passes all understanding. If you'd like more information about the program you've heard tonight find a pastor or an elder or a ministry leader. They'd be more than happy to talk with you. Or you can call the station 24-7. We'd love to speak with you.

[Theme short music.]

Narrator 2: Thank you for joining us for WACC's live Christmas presentation of a New Birth, and original live Christmas radio dramatic presentation written and directed by WACC's own PJ, presented by Acts of Light.

[International Harvest background music.]

Narrator 1: It's also been brought to you, in part, by the International Harvest Society. Look across a grain field and try to imagine how many individual kernels there are. Each are precious to its maker, rich with potential fields inside. The world is a lot like that. It is filled with a rich harvest of individuals. Each one is precious; rich with potential. And just like the grain field, the harvest can't await the laborer's convenience. It's clear that help is wanting. Want to help with the harvest? Call the International Harvest Society and help bring in the harvest of a lifetime!

Narrator 2: Thanks to all of our AMAZING sponsors: Athens Community Church, Acts of Light, Heavenly Bread, the United Samaritan appeal, the eye of the needle financial planning services, God's Son and Life and Casualty Insurance Company, The Bethlehem inn, the Best Seed Company,

Narrator 1: The international harvest society, miracle foods, josph's amazing coat boutique, subway, the believers trust and saving association, true vine vineyards, the burning bush sound system, and by the new and improved Etzel. The Etzel - the only car you'll regret buying for the rest of your life.

[Theme music leading to a big finish.]

PJ: This is Pastor Jim thanking you for joining us for this special Christmas Eve Production. And on behalf of the entire, cast, crew, staff, and leadership of WACC, we wish you a very merry Christmas and a blessed New Year. May you remember that Christmas is all about Jesus' Birthday and may you seek His blessing on your New Year!

Narrator 2: Say Goodnight [Narrator 1.]

Narrator 1: Goodnight [Narrator 1.]

- CURTAIN -



Copyright © 2004 by James E. Bogoniewski, Jr.