

**WMAF**  
newsletter

# Defender

## World Ministries to the Armed Forces

1998

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER

1998



*Rev. Gilbert L. Howe  
Originator and Founder of GIs For Christ, now  
WMAF*

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## Where It All Began

*by Rev. Joseph P. Howe*

**I**t was spring, nineteen forty-one, World War II had just begun with ominous foreboding clouds on the horizon for the United States. Rev. Gilbert L. Howe sensed the impending war and that our young men would be committed to the conflict before long. God burdened his heart as he watched a train, loaded up with new recruits, pull out. He could not get over that scene in his mind. It was a vision of thousands of men going over the precipice of time into eternity without God! A scene that repeated itself in his mind, over and over, until he realized that God was calling him to the ministry of servicemen.

Rev. Howe pastored a church in Grove City, PA. He left his pastorate and went to Ft. Indiantown Gap, PA, to begin his work with the military. With no money or contacts, he began by interesting a small group of Christians who were also burdened for the men. Mr. Shuey, a godly farmer near the base, gave Gilbert a place to stay and helped him acquire some property where he began preaching.

The crowds gathered in a makeshift tent and soon began to build a building. It was exciting, but no servicemen! As time went on, the crowds dwindled off because of the lack of attendance by the soldiers. Pearl Harbor was attacked and America was in the war—yet there were no men coming in from the base.

These were desperate hours for God's faithful servant who preached to an empty house over loud speakers every night. People thought he was crazy! He wasn't crazy—just hopeless as his burden only increased. On a cold winter day, he took his last \$2 and bought some O Henry candy bars, took them to his room, and wrapped some tracts around them with rubber bands to give to the boys. He gathered up the candy bars and laid them on the front seat of his car and headed for the base.

Have you ever been so desperate that you don't care what happens to you? He was that day as he drove toward the main gate. The closer he got to the gate the faster he went! Increasing his speed to 80 mph he went right through the gate, past the sentries and the pillbox, right into the base! Sirens went off and shots were fired into the air (war security was in effect). Realizing what he had done, he woke up to reality and made an effort to get back out of the base. He quickly turned off the main entrance road onto a side road and was confronted with a whole row of bayonets!

He stopped the car. MPs ran to the car. Four jumped into the back seat and one slid in on his right and another slid in from the left, pushing him out of the driver's seat. The soldiers came from everywhere to see what was going on. They pressed around the car to see this "saboteur." The MP on the right was holding the O Henry bars on his lap and asked the preacher what they were. Gilbert said, "They are candy bars that I was going to give to the men." He noticed in the rear view mirror one of the MPs in the back seat motioning with his finger around his ear that this man is crazy. He said, "No, it is true. This is why I came. Pick one out and I will eat it." The MP selected one, Gilbert ate it, and the window filled with arms of men and the candy bars disappeared.

One man, having read the tract about the meetings at the ministry, stuck his head back in the window and asked if there were services that night. Gilbert said that there would be and encouraged him to go out that night. The MP interrupted the conversation saying, "This man has preached his last sermon for a long time!" Rev. Howe again called out to the boy,

*Continued on p4*

# From the Pulpit: Message and Bible Study

by Rev. Joseph P. Howe

## Title: THE SPIRIT OF CHRISTMAS

Scripture: Luke 2:1-14; Isaiah 53:2-6



Christmas is a celebration! When an army or sport team, wins a great victory, there is a great celebration—a victory celebration. Unlike some other celebrations, Christmas is to be a happy and joyous time. All the Hosts of Heaven rejoiced and celebrated when Jesus was born. *And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men. Luke 2:13,14.* What a celebration that was!

Many segments of our society are “trying to make Christmas come out right.” The businessman wants a profitable Christmas; the politician wants a politically correct, or “generic,” Christmas; the entertainer wants a fun Christmas; and so it goes. We all want the benefits of the season.

People are looking for the “spirit of Christmas.” They search for the warmth and “magic” of Christmas by getting together, sharing gifts, and trying to overlook their problems and differences. They often “get together” as a duty to each other and sit, grinning, around a Christmas tree, that symbolizes life and heavenly joy, with people they’ve been in conflict with all year long. Somehow, Christmas just doesn’t work out. Longing for this “spirit of Christmas,” every year it seems just out of reach.

What is this Christmas spirit? Why do some have it while others do not? How can we enter into it? There is a secret to all of this. A secret that can be drowned out in the noise of holiday activities, overlooked in the maze of decorations on every hand, and missed when attentions are diverted from one activity to the next.

The “Christmas spirit” is really what the Bible calls the “Christian spirit.” It is what the believer should experience all year long! The Savior has redeemed us and changed our hearts and we should love and care for people all the time—as He does. Christmas, to the believer in Jesus Christ, is an extension of our Christian spirit in celebration.

To have great memories of family and sense the nostalgic warmth of home, there has to be a functioning family. To have thoughts of home and loved ones, there must be relationships established. These relationships are to be cultivated and nurtured all year long. Then, the holiday is a special experience added to all those from before. How disappointed people become when expectations are high and one looks for the “magic” to somehow overrule the broken relationships—the magic that never comes.

Christmas doesn’t have to be an emotional roller coaster ride every year. The Savior, whose birthday we celebrate, can bring the Heavenly Peace of salvation and redemption to your heart. It is the celebration of Heaven, after all. Heaven is celebrating the fulfillment of the Savior made flesh to die in our place. God is carrying out His plan for us. His Son is now become flesh for us.

**Herein lies the message of Christmas:** *For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all (Isa 53:2-6).*



Study  
This!

## BIBLE STUDY

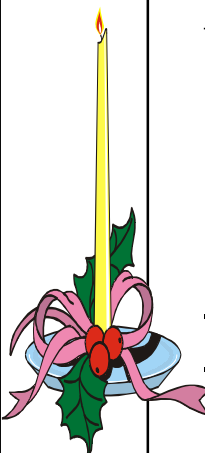
Luke 2:1-14;  
Isaiah 53:2-6

**PRINCIPLE:** What do you see in these verses? Write down the Bible principles that are most important in the passage.

**PLAN:** Write down the ways you can live these principles during the next 24 hours.

**PRACTICE:** After 24 hours, write down your progress. Your victories become your testimony and your defeats become your prayer requests.

*Need Help? WMA795*





## Mail Call!

Dear NSBC,

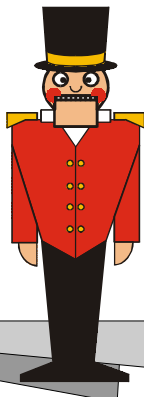
Forgive me for not writing sooner. After leaving Great Lakes I spent six weeks in San Diego and had a great time on the beach. I then spent leave with my family in CA and now I reside in VA. I have another six weeks "C" school here in Dam Neck and then I report to the USS Roosevelt out of Norfolk. I can not thank you enough for providing a solid ministry used by God to help sailors as myself. The teaching I received there came at a crucial time in my walk with God. I have and will continue to pray for you there, and I ask that you would pray for me. Thank you for sending the updates and addresses, they've been a great help. God bless you.

Your co-worker in Christ,  
ETSN SJD

Dear World Ministries,

I just wanted to write and thank you for the work you do. I received one of your newsletters (as any service member mail) and appreciated it. Though I'm not interested in being on your mailing list or receiving future newsletters I do wish to thank you for the time and effort you expend to support us here and around the world. I'm in Bosnia. Thanks again and may you be continuously blessed in the good work you do.

Sincerely,  
SGT RC  
Task Force Med Eagle, OJF



## E-mail

Hello,

I would like to take this time to say thank you for the great and mighty work you are doing for our military service personnel. I recently found one of your newsletters and thoroughly enjoyed reading it. I have been in the military for 17 years and my heart is touched when I see others praying and supporting our armed forces. God bless each and everyone of you. We are currently starting our six month deployment in the Gulf, so continue to remember the USS Stout in your prayers.

MSC(SW) LH  
USS Stout



Thank you...

for keeping our  
holidays free!



*Continued from p1*

"Someone will be there tonight, just go on out," and the car pulled away.

They transported him to the Provost Marshal's office for interrogation. Gilbert sat in the outer office, surrounded by MPs, while the Provost Marshal proceeded to "clarify" the situation that he was in. Basically, he chewed him out! "Don't you know there's a war on? What's the matter with you?" And so it went for some time. The Provost Marshal then dismissed the guards and took Gilbert into his inner office and set him down by his desk.

"You look like an intelligent man, Reverend, why did you do it?" Rev. Howe, realizing he would probably never minister again, told him the whole story. He related his burden, progress, then disappointment, and finally, his despair. When he finished, the tears ran down the face of that Provost Marshal, who said, "I can hear my Methodist mother down in Alabama shouting 'Amen'."

The marshal proceeded, "You'll never do this again, will you?" Gilbert, of course, assured him he wouldn't. "Then, you get out to your pulpit tonight and I'll see to it that you have someone to preach to." Awed, Gilbert pinched himself. He thought he was hearing things. But, it was true! Out he went, back to the tabernacle he had built, just outside the gate.

Just as service time arrived an Army truck pulled up with a load of soldiers, then another truck, and another, until the whole place was packed! Rev. Howe never knew just how those trucks got there and never asked! Several men found the Lord that night and the work was on! The ministry continued throughout the war where countless men found Christ before shipping overseas to the battlefronts in the European Theater.

I think back on those desperate days of my father's burden that drove him all his life until the Lord took him home in 1969. God has honored his faith and the ministry has continued all these years. His burden has fallen on many others, including his own son, to carry on the ministry far beyond his own lifetime. What a joy it is to serve the Lord in a ministry like this one.

***God bless you all this holiday season! Please pray for us that we may continue until Jesus comes!***



## Help is on Line!

*For pastoral help, call*  
**WMAF95@aol.com**

## Sign Up A Friend

***You may have a friend in the military that would like to be a part of our worldwide ministry. Please, send us their name and address below and we will put them on our list referred by you.***

Write your name here:

Name \_\_\_\_\_

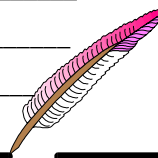
Write your friend's name here:

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City State Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_



**The *WMAF Defender*** is a bi-monthly newsletter, published by World Ministries to the Armed Forces, ministering to military people around the world. Dedicated to the cause of Christ, the salvation of souls, and the discipling of Christian military members everywhere, the *WMAF Defender* is solely supported by the offerings and donations of those interested in this outreach.

If you would like to help us in this vital outreach, send your tax exempt donation to:

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