

THE HEART OF CHRISTMAS

A Panorama of Word and Song

Scene -- Mother and 3 children in the corner of a living room.

Mother: "What a lovely Christmas this year! All of you gave me too many presents, you simply must cut back on my gifts next year! Look at this living room, children, it looks like a department store -- really it does.

And speaking of stores, did you children see the expression on the butcher's face yesterday when I told him I needed oysters for breakfast? It was too funny! "Oysters for breakfast?" he exclaimed -- "Yes," I answered, "we always have oyster stew for breakfast on Christmas Day." Then I had to go on and explain about being raised in China and how we always had oysters for breakfast out there until it became a family custom which your father and I have carried on."

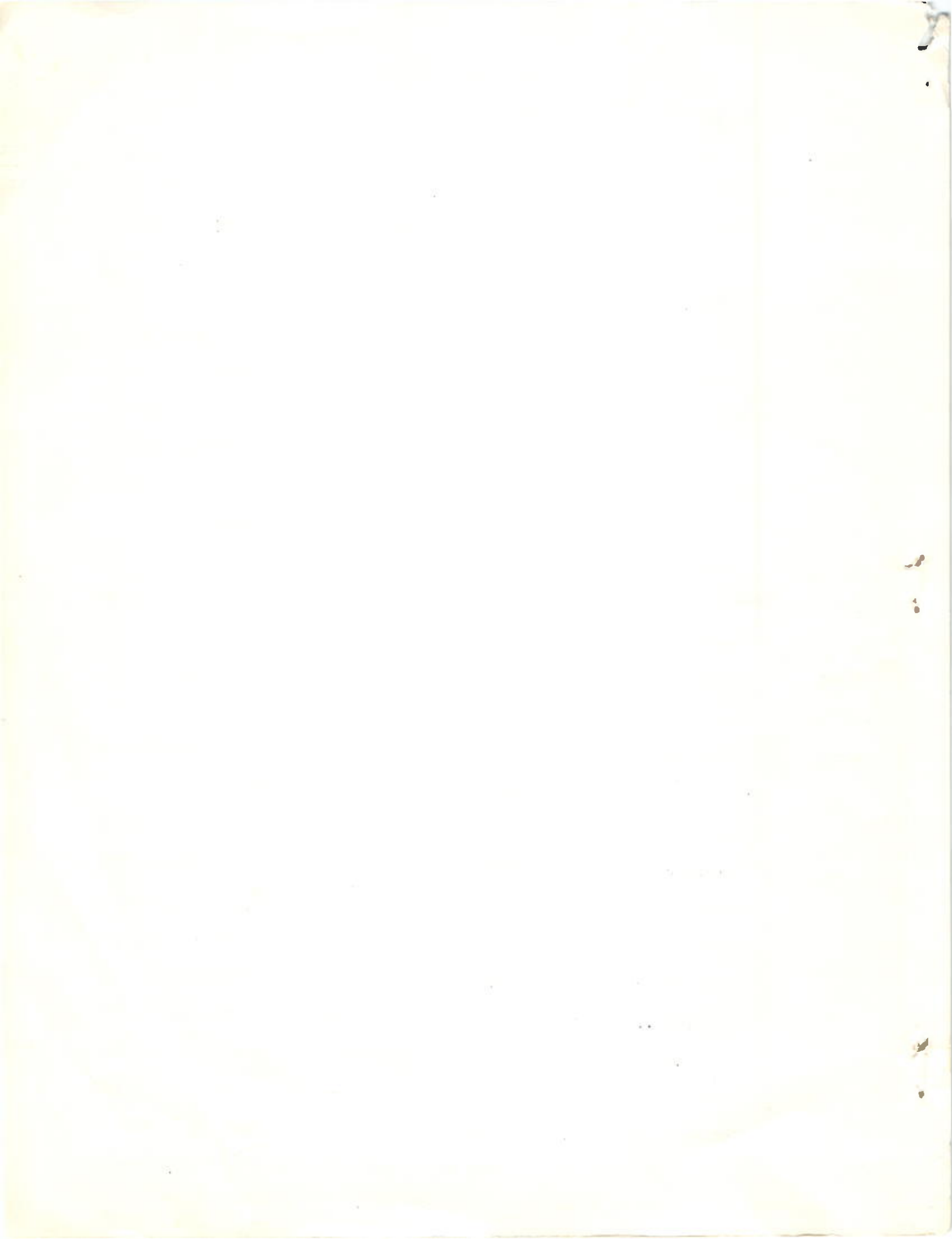
1st Child: "I must say it is a funny custom. None of my friends have oyster stew for breakfast on Christmas Day."

2nd Child: "Yes, and they are luckier than us. I hate old oyster stew!"

3rd Child: "Me, too! And what is a 'custom' anyway, Mother?"

Mother: "Some other time I'll explain what a custom is. Now, children, let's all calm down. Get yourselves comfortable. It's time for the Christmas story.

"And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed...And all went up to be taxed, everyone into his own city. And Joseph also went up... out of the city of Nazareth... unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem...to be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child...And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn. And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them...and the angel said unto



them: Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord." (Pauses & looks up)
"Let me ask you children a question: Is this the very beginning of the Christmas story, or does it sound as though we had started right in the middle of it?"

1st Child: "What do you mean, Mother? It's about Jesus being born and the angels and the shepherds -- and that's the Christmas story, isn't it?"

Mother: "Did you notice that the angel called this Baby a Saviour? If He was a Saviour, what was He to save us from?"

2nd Child: "I never noticed before that the angel said the Baby Jesus was a Saviour."

3rd Child: "What is a Saviour anyway, Mother?"

Mother: "Let me see, how can I explain it to you. Let's say you fell through the ice when you went skating last Friday, and a man rushed up pulling you out of the water to safety. That man would be your Saviour. Do you see?"

Children nod.

Mother continues: "Yes, there is a lot more to the Christmas story than the birth of Jesus; and it is the most exciting true story that happened."

All Children: "Tell us, Mother, tell us all of it!"

(Numbers in parentheses indicate which picture of Panorama to show)

- (1) Involves 30 children

First
Speaker
for
Panorama

"IN THE BEGINNING GOD CREATED THE HEAVEN AND THE EARTH.

THE BIBLE TELLS US IN ITS OPENING CHAPTER THAT "THE EARTH WAS WITHOUT FORM AND VOID" THEN:

- (2)

THE FIRST DAY LIGHT APPEARS.

THE SECOND DAY THE FIRMAMENT.

THE THIRD DAY THE EARTH AND SEA DIVIDE AND PLANT LIFE IS BROUGHT FORTH.

THE FOURTH DAY THE SUN AND MOON ARE APPOINTED LIGHT HOLDERS.

THE FIFTH DAY THE FISH AND FOWL APPEAR.

THE SIXTH DAY WERE CREATED CATTLE, CREEPING THINGS AND MAN.

"AND GOD SAID, LET US MAKE MAN IN OUR IMAGE, AFTER OUR LIKENESS:
AND LET THEM HAVE DOMINION OVER THE FISH OF THE SEA, AND OVER THE FOWL
OF THE AIR, AND OVER THE CATTLE, AND OVER ALL THE EARTH, AND OVER EVERY
CREEPING THING THAT CREEPETH ON THE EARTH."

AND GOD BLESSED THE SEVENTH DAY, AND MADE IT HOLY.

- (3)

Second
Speaker
for
Panorama

TO HAVE A COMPANION ON EARTH, GOD MADE MAN IN HIS OWN IMAGE WHICH MEANS
HE MADE MAN WITH A FREE WILL, THE POWER TO CHOOSE WHAT HE WANTS TO DO.

GOD PLACED THE FIRST MAN IN A PERFECT WORLD, A GARDEN OF GOD'S OWN
PLANTING, CALLED EDEN, WHICH MEANS "A DELIGHT."

SO FAR, THIS HAS BEEN A HAPPY STORY BECAUSE IT HAS BEEN ABOUT GOD'S
PLAN FOR HIS WORLD - AND FOR US. GOD'S PLAN WAS FOR US TO LIVE ALWAYS
IN PERFECT FELLOWSHIP WITH HIM. THERE WAS TO BE NO SICKNESS, NO HUNGER,
NO WAR, NO UNHAPPINESS. WE WERE TO BE HIS COMPANIONS, TO LIVE CLOSER
TO HIM THAN ANY OF HIS OTHER CREATURES.

BUT WAIT. ARE WE LIVING THE HAPPY LIFE GOD PLANNED? HAS ANYONE YOU KNOW
EVER BEEN SICK? DO PEOPLE FIGHT WARS? IS THERE UNHAPPINESS IN THE WORLD?
SOMETHING MUST HAVE GONE WRONG WITH GOD'S PLAN.

SOMETHING DID GO WRONG, AND THE SOMETHING WAS THIS: THE PEOPLE WHOM
GOD HAD MADE DID NOT FOLLOW HIS PLAN.

(3) (Scene 2 - Backdrop of tree in the garden - Adam and Eve)

Third
Speaker
for
Panorama

IN THE GARDEN OF EDEN WAS A TALL AND BEAUTIFUL TREE ON WHICH GREW A STRANGE AND LOVELY FRUIT. BUT BEAUTIFUL THOUGH IT WAS, THIS TREE WAS FORBIDDEN TO ADAM AND EVE. "FOR" GOD HAD SAID, "IN THE DAY THAT THOU EATEST THEREOF THOU SHALT SURELY DIE."

THIS WAS THE TEST, TO SEE WHETHER ADAM AND EVE WOULD CHOOSE TO FOLLOW GOD'S PLAN. HERE IS WHERE SORROW ENTERS THE STORY. FOR ADAM AND EVE, INSTEAD OF LISTENING TO GOD WHO HAD MADE THEM AND LOVED THEM, LISTENED TO THE WORDS OF SOMEONE WHO HATED THEM, SATAN.

THE WONDERFUL FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD ENDED. THE CURSE IS THAT NOW EVERYTHING IN THE WORLD WAS UNDER A DEATH SENTENCE. ALL PLANTS AND ANIMALS AND, YES, PEOPLE WOULD GROW OLD AND DIE. EVEN WORSE THAN THIS DEATH WOULD BE ETERNAL SEPARATION FROM GOD.

(Scene 3 - Mother & children)

Mother: "But children, God was already planning a way by which his disobedient children could return to Him. This terrible eternal death would be only for those who refused to follow that way."

Child #1: "What was that way?"

Mother: "God promised the world a saviour, who would redeem or buy back mankind from this terrible curse of sin. The promise of one who would come to crush the serpent's head (that means to have victory over Satan) and He would be like a great bridge that would allow us to come back to God."

Child #1: "Would God send this Saviour right away?"

Mother: "No. There were many things that were to take place before this wonderful promise of God's would come true."

Fourth
Speaker
for
Panorama

THE FIRST SIN BROUGHT UNHAPPINESS TO ADAM AND EVE. BUT THE UNHAPPINESS IT BROUGHT THEM WAS NOTHING COMPARED TO THE GRIEF IT BROUGHT GOD. HERE WERE THE CREATURES HE HAD CHOSEN OUT OF ALL THE UNIVERSE TO BE HIS COMPANIONS - AND THEY HAD LEFT HIM.

HE WAS LONELY AGAIN, BUT NOW HIS LONELINESS WAS WORSE THAN BEFORE, BECAUSE HE HAD HAD CHILDREN AND THEN LOST THEM. GOD, YOU SEE, STILL LOVED THESE PEOPLE HE HAD MADE. GOD DOES NOT CHANGE. NO MATTER HOW BADLY THEY HAD BEHAVED, THEY WERE STILL HIS DEAREST CREATION. AND SO, WHEN THEY LEFT THE GARDEN, HE WENT WITH THEM - WITH ADAM AND EVE AND THEIR CHILDREN AND THEIR CHILDREN'S CHILDREN - CALLING TO THEM, WARNING THEM OF DANGER, TRYING TO TEACH THEM. BUT THEY WOULDN'T LISTEN, THESE CHILDREN OF ADAM. JUST AS THE FIRST TWO PEOPLE FORGOT ABOUT GOD, SO DID THE PEOPLE WHO CAME AFTER THEM. YEAR BY YEAR THEY DRIFTED FARTHER AWAY FROM GOD'S PLAN.

Fifth
Speaker
for
Panorama

(4) CAIN KILLED ABEL, THIS WAS THE WORLD'S FIRST MURDER. THE BIBLE SAYS "AS MEN MULTIPLIED INIQUITY ABOUNDED UNTIL THE EARTH WAS CORRUPT BEFORE GOD AND FILLED WITH VIOLENCE" AND GOD SAID "I WILL DESTROY MAN FROM THE FACE OF THE EARTH." (loud organ)

Pause:

(Scene 4 - Noah & Family Backdrop of ark)

NO ONE HEARD GOD CALLING. NO ONE HEARD HIM SAY, OVER AND OVER, THAT THIS WAS NOT THE WAY TO LIVE, THAT THIS WAS NOT WHAT HE HAD MADE THEM FOR. EXCEPT FOR ONE FAMILY, ONE RIGHTEOUS FAMILY - NOAH AND HIS THREE SONS AND THEIR FAMILIES. GOD COMMANDED NOAH TO BUILD AN ARK, FOR THE SAFEKEEPING OF HIS FAMILY, AND THROUGH HIM THE PROMISED SAVIOUR. THE FLOOD OF WATERS THEN SWEEPED THE EARTH DESTROYING ALL FLESH, WHILE THE EIGHT SOULS, NOAH AND HIS FAMILY ALONE, WITHIN THE ARK, WERE SAVED. THE FLOOD LASTED ONE YEAR AND TEN DAYS. AND GOD LOOKED ON HIS WORLD, AND HE SAW THAT OF ALL HIS PEOPLE ONLY NOAH AND HIS FAMILY WERE LEFT. BUT NOW, THOUGHT GOD, THESE PEOPLE WILL BE DIFFERENT. THEY HAVE SEEN WHAT HAPPENS WHEN MEN DO NOT LISTEN TO ME. NOAH'S CHILDREN WILL NOT FORGET ME. AND GOD MADE AN AGREEMENT WITH NOAH, THAT NO SUCH FLOOD SHOULD DESTROY THE EARTH EVER AGAIN. AND GOD BLESSED NOAH AND HIS SONS AND INSTRUCTED THEM TO "REPLENISH THE EARTH." AND GOD SAID "AND IT

SHALL COME TO PASS, WHEN I BRING A CLOUD OVER THE EARTH, THAT THE BOW SHALL BE SEEN IN THE CLOUD. AND I WILL REMEMBER MY COVENANT."

NOW THE HUMAN RACE HAD A NEW START. THEY HAD SEEN BOTH MAN'S SIN AND GOD'S GRACE TO DEEPEN THEIR FAITH.

Choir sings:

(5)

Sixth
Speaker
for
Panorama

AT FIRST, THEY DIDN'T FORGET. NOAH'S SONS REMEMBERED THE GREAT FLOOD. THEIR SONS HEARD ABOUT IT FROM THEIR FATHERS. BUT AFTER A WHILE PEOPLE BEGAN TO FORGET WHY THEIR FAMILY HAD LIVED THROUGH THE FLOOD. THEY FORGOT HOW IMPORTANT IT WAS TO LISTEN TO GOD. MEN GATHERED TOGETHER TO BUILD A GREAT TOWER AND TO MAKE FOR THEMSELVES A GREAT NAME. GOD DID NOT WANT THEM TO STAY IN ONE CITY ONLY, ALL HUDDLED TOGETHER. HE WANTED THEM TO SPREAD OVER THE BIG WORLD WHICH HE HAD MADE FOR MAN. GOD CHANGED THE SPEECH OF ALL THE PEOPLE. THEY HAD TO STOP BUILDING THE TOWER. THEY COULD NO LONGER UNDERSTAND EACH OTHER. SO THEY ALL SEPARATED AND EACH WENT TO LIVE IN A DIFFERENT PLACE WITH HIS OWN FAMILY. THEY WERE SCATTERED OVER THE EARTH, JUST AS GOD WANTED THEM TO BE. THE NAME OF THE TOWER WAS "BABEL" WHICH MEANS CONFUSION.

(Scene 5 Mother & Children)

Mother: "How do you like the Christmas story so far?"

Child #1: "Now I begin to see. God saved one family so He could send His Son Jesus Christ to earth. If everyone had drowned in the flood there would be no more people ever."

2nd child: "And we wouldn't be here today!"

3rd child: "Well at least I wouldn't have to eat oysters for breakfast."

Mother: " _____ is right. Now God continued to prepare the world
(1st child)
for the coming of that Saviour whom he had promised. Some day God has
promised that a man would be born who would overcome Satan. Satan had
caused sin and death to come into the world, but some day a man would be
born who would again bring everlasting life by taking away the sin of
the world. You children all know the Bible verse John 3:16. Let's say
it together. For God so loved the world, that He gave His only
begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but
have everlasting life."

Seventh
Speaker
for
Panorama

(6)
THE FIRST THING THAT GOD DID TO MAKE THE WORLD READY FOR THE COMING OF
JESUS CHRIST WAS TO PICK ONE GOOD MAN, AND TO TELL HIM TO LEAVE HIS
COUNTRY AND GO TO A COUNTRY THAT GOD WOULD SHOW HIM. THAT MAN WAS
ABRAM. HIS WIFE'S NAME WAS SARAH. GOD SAID TO ABRAM, "I WILL MAKE OF
YOU A GREAT NATION . . . IN YOU ALL THE FAMILIES OF THE EARTH SHALL BE
BLESSED. GOD PROMISED ABRAM THAT JESUS CHRIST WOULD BE ONE OF HIS
CHILDREN'S DESCENDANTS. THIS WAS THE SON THAT HAD BEEN PROMISED TO
EVE, TOO. HE, JESUS THE SAVIOUR, WAS TO TAKE AWAY THE CURSE OF SIN AND
BE A BLESSING TO ALL THE WORLD. YEARS LATER ISAAC WAS BORN AND HE HAD
TWO SONS, ESAU AND JACOB. ESAU SOLD HIS BIRTHRIGHT TO JACOB.
JACOB HAD 12 SONS. BECAUSE JOSEPH WAS THE FAVORITE HE WAS HATED BY HIS
BROTHERS WHO SOLD HIM TO SLAVERY AND HE WAS TAKEN INTO EGYPT. THERE
GOD BLESSED HIM AND 20 YEARS LATER A GREAT FAMINE CAUSED JACOB, WITH
HIS CHILDREN TO JOURNEY AND SETTLE IN EGYPT.
AFTER THE DEATH OF BOTH JACOB AND JOSEPH, A KING WAS RAISED UP IN
EGYPT THAT KNEW NOT JOSEPH. ALARMED AT THE GROWTH OF THE HEBREW PEOPLE
HE WAS DETERMINED TO DESTROY THEM BY KILLING ALL THE MALE CHILDREN.

(Scene 6 - Ten Commandments - Moses)

Eighth
Speaker
for
Panorama

(7)

THERE WAS A MAN IN EGYPT NAMED MOSES. HE WAS AN ISRAELITE BY BIRTH, BUT HE HAD BEEN ADOPTED AS A BABY OF THE PHARAOH'S DAUGHTER AND RAISED AS AN EGYPTIAN PRINCE.

"COME," SAID GOD TO MOSES, "I WILL SEND THEE INTO PHARAOH, THAT THOU MAYEST BRING FORTH MY PEOPLE THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL OUT OF EGYPT BACK TO THE LAND OF CANAAN. BEFORE ISRAEL'S DELIVERANCE WAS COMPLETE, HOWEVER, GOD HAD TO SEND TEN FLAGUES TO THE EGYPTIANS. AT THE LAST PLAGUE THE "PASSOVER" WAS INSTITUTED.

THE MIRACLE OF THE CROSSING OF THE RED SEA MARKED THE END OF 430 YEARS THE ISRAELITES SPENT IN EGYPT.

THERE WERE 80 YEARS OF WILDERNESS WANDERINGS. DURING THE FIRST 40 YEARS THE LAW WAS GIVEN, (THE TEN COMMANDMENTS, THE INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE FIRST CHURCH, THE TABERNACLE IN THE WILDERNESS, AND ALL THE OTHER JEWISH LAWS.) THE SECOND 40 YEARS WAS SPENT IN THE WILDERNESS BECAUSE THE PEOPLE AGAIN REFUSED TO TRUST GOD. OF ALL THE 2 MILLION PEOPLE, ONLY 2 MEN WERE ALLOWED TO SEE THE PROMISED LAND, JOSHUA AND CALEB. EVEN MOSES COULD NOT SET FOOT ON THIS LAND BECAUSE HE DISOBEYED GOD.

(7)

Ninth
Speaker
for
Panorama

AFTER THE DEATH OF MOSES, THE PEOPLE WERE LED FORWARD INTO CANAAN BY JOSHUA. WHILE JOSHUA LIVED THE PEOPLE SERVED THE LORD, BUT AFTER HIS DEATH THERE WAS A GREAT TURNING AWAY FROM GOD.

DURING THIS BAD TIME OF ISRAEL'S HISTORY GOD RAISED UP MEN THROUGH WHOM HE COULD JUDGE AND SPEAK TO HIS PEOPLE. THESE MEN WERE CALLED "THE JUDGES OF ISRAEL."

(Scene 7 - Three children as kings - backdrop of courtyard)

AFTER SEVERAL HUNDRED YEARS AND AGAINST THE WILL OF GOD, THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL DEMANDED A KING. SAUL WAS CHOSEN TO BE THE FIRST KING OF ISRAEL. HE WAS A KING OF SELF WILL AND AFTER 40 YEARS REIGN DIED A MISERABLE DEATH.

Tenth
Speaker
for
Panorama

(8)

THE REIGN OF DAVID WAS THE BRIGHTEST PART OF ISRAEL'S HISTORY. HE ALSO REIGNED 40 YEARS.

SOLOMON, SON OF DAVID WAS ISRAEL'S LAST KING WHERE ALL THE TRIBES WERE UNITED. DURING THIS TIME THE TEMPLE AT JERUSALEM WAS BUILT.

IN SPITE OF ALL SOLOMON'S WISDOM, HE DID VERY FOOLISH AND BAD THINGS. BECAUSE KING SOLOMON DID NOT KEEP THE LORD'S COMMANDMENTS, GOD WOULD TAKE THE KINGDOM AWAY FROM HIM. SO GOD REMOVED TEN TRIBES FROM SOLOMON AND GAVE THEM TO JEROBOAM, ONE OF SOLOMON'S OFFICERS. AFTER SOLOMON'S DEATH, HIS SON REHOBOAM WAS ABLE TO KEEP ONLY THE TWO TRIBES OF JUDAH AND BENJAMIN. THE TWO KINGDOMS WENT THEIR SEPARATE WAYS.

(Lights out on scene 7)

THE KINGDOM OF ISRAEL LASTED TWO HUNDRED AND FIFTY YEARS, THEN IT WAS OVERCOME BY OTHER NATIONS.

(8)

Eleventh
Speaker
for
Panorama

THE KINGDOM OF JUDAH LASTED 135 YEARS AFTER THE FALL OF THE KINGDOM OF ISRAEL. JUDAH WAS REIGNED OVER BY 19 KINGS AND ONE QUEEN, ALL WERE DESCENDANTS OF DAVID, THUS THE RIGHTEOUS SEED WHICH WAS TO BRING FORTH THE SAVIOUR OF THE WORLD WAS PRESERVED.

THE END CAME WITH THE DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM BY KING NEBUCHADNEZZAR, AND THE FINAL CAPTIVITY OF ITS KING AND PEOPLE WITH THEM BEING TAKEN TO BABYLON. THE BEAUTIFUL TEMPLE WAS BURNT TO THE GROUND. THIS IS THE PERIOD OF DANIEL.

AFTER 70 YEARS OF CAPTIVITY IN BABYLON A SMALL NUMBER OF JEWS RETURNED TO JERUSALEM AND REBUILT THE TEMPLE.

(Scene 8 - Mother and Children)

Mother: "So children, that is the story of the part of our Bible which is called the Old Testament."

1st Child: "What happened next mother? Is it time for the Lord Jesus to be born?"

Mother: "Almost _____." "You see there were about 400 years between the Old Testament and the New Testament. God's word tells us nothing about these years."

2nd Child: "Nothing at all!"

Mother: "Not one word, so we have to go to other writings to find out what happened. We know that the history of Israel during these years was one of terrible bloodshed. But in their darkest hours a faithful few guarded with their very lives the old testament canon - that was what they called their Bible."

1st Child: "They must have loved God very much."

Mother: "Yes they did, with their whole heart and God honored them with the greatest gift of all."

Mother: "God was ready for Christmas, and the gift He was giving the world was so priceless and so rare that He could not place it in unworthy hands. You see, children, God had planned a way to bring His ^{people} children back to Him, the children He had lost - and that way was Christmas."

1st Child: "God must have loved them very much to still want them back after the mean way they acted."

Mother: "Yes, these people had disappointed Him so often. They had brought Him little but sorrow ever since He had created them. He had given them the power to choose and they had chosen to disobey Him. He had created them to be His friends, and they spent most of their time fighting each other. He had talked with them and they had turned away. But God's love does not wear out. Yes _____, He loved them very much. He knew that by themselves they could never find their way back to Him. It didn't matter whether He started with Adam or Noah, with bad men or good men; sooner or later everyone wanders outside His plan and is hopelessly separated from Him. This is the Christmas gift God was planning. He was going to send His Son to earth as a human baby."

Candle Lighting -- Song

Adult
Narrator:

"The angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth, to a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. And the angel said unto her, "Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favor with God. And, behold, thou shalt...bring forth a son, and shalt call his name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David...and of his kingdom there shall be no end."

"And Mary said, Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word." And the angel departed from her."

"And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed...and Joseph also went up from Galilee unto...Bethlehem to be taxed with Mary, his espoused wife..And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger."

Music --

Adult
Narrator:

"And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night."

(Shepherds walking down the aisle, talking as they come.)

1st Shepherd: "It's cold tonight. I wish I had worn a heavier cloak. I feel uneasy, too. The night seems still and strange."

2nd Shepherd: "The sky is real dark tonight -- there's not even one star in sight. That makes anybody feel sort of creepy."

3rd Shepherd: "Bethlehem is certainly crowded tonight with all the people who have come to be taxed. They said the inn was full this afternoon."

1st Shepherd: "I still think something is queer tonight. Look over there; isn't that a light in the east?"

2nd Shepherd: "You're right! There is a glow -- a strange one, too!"

3rd Shepherd: "See, it's growing brighter -- much brighter."

1st Shepherd: "What makes it? Is the world on fire?"

Adult

Narrator: "And lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them and the glory of the Lord shone round about them; and they were sore afraid."

Angel (boy's voice from balcony):

/"Fear not: for, behold I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger."

Music

1st Shepherd: "Let us go now unto Bethlehem and see this thing which the Lord hath made known to us."

(Shepherds proceed up aisle to kneel at manger.)

Adult

Narrator:

"And when eight days were accomplished..His name was called JESUS."

After 40 days they "brought Him to Jerusalem, to present Him to the Lord.

/"Behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem, saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? For we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him...Then Herod, when he had privily called the wise men, enquired of them diligently what time the star appeared. And he sent them to Bethlehem, and said, Go and search diligently for the young child; and when ye have found him, bring me word again, that I may come and worship him also.

"When they had heard the king, they departed; and lo, the star which they saw in the east, went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was...And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and

worshipped Him; and when they had opened their treasures, they presented Him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh. And being warned of God...they departed into their own country another way."
Song - Trio - Wise Men (Wise men proceed down aisle as song is sung)

First
Wiseman:

"We people of the Orient never visit a King without a gift.

I BRING GOLD TO THE BABY TO SHOW HIS ROYALTY."

Second
Wiseman:

"We have travelled many long miles to pay homage to the Baby who is a king. I BRING FRANKINCENSE FOR HIS DEITY."

Third
Wiseman:

"We belong to a people in the East who try to find out all they can about religion and science. We like astronomy and astrology especially.

I BRING MYRRH FOR THE KING'S HUMANITY.

(Kneel down and worship at the rail)

Mother:

"What a moment that would have been! Just think -- you could have reached out your own hand and touched the Son of God, had you been there with the shepherds and wisemen!

There the baby Jesus lay sleeping -- sleeping as though the world had not waited thousands of years for this moment. As soundly as though from this moment on all the sin and sorrow of the world were not His problem."

1st Child:

"And then He grew up in Nazareth. I would like to have known Jesus then."

Mother:

"Yes, we know very little about him as a boy, but we do know he was a good obedient son to his earthly parents. The Bible says "Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man."

(9)

AND THEN WHEN GOD'S SON JESUS CHRIST WAS A MAN, HE WOULD BRING MEN BACK TO GOD, BACK TO THE GOD THEY HAD FORGOTTEN. HE WOULD TELL THEM WHY GOD HAD MADE THEM AND PUT THEM ON THIS EARTH. HE WOULD SHOW THEM, TOO, AS WELL AS TELL THEM. IN HIS OWN LIFE THEY COULD SEE WHAT GOD MEANT BY "LOVE." HE WOULD FEED THE HUNGRY, HEAL THE SICK AND MAKE THE BLIND SEE. AND FINALLY HE WOULD SHOW THEM THE GREATEST LOVE OF ALL: HE WOULD DIE FOR THEM AND THEN LIVE AGAIN.

7

AFTER THAT THE WAY WOULD BE OPEN FOR ALL WHO WOULD TO RETURN TO GOD. THE GREAT SEPARATION BETWEEN GOD AND MAN WHICH BEGAN SO LONG AGO IN THE GARDEN OF EDEN WOULD NOW HAVE A BRIDGE ACROSS IT, A WAY BACK TO GOD. JESUS SAID, "I AM THE WAY, THE TRUTH, AND THE LIFE - NO MAN COMETH UNTO THE FATHER, BUT BY ME." AFTER THAT NO MATTER HOW A PERSON SINNED, NO MATTER HOW FAR FROM GOD'S PLAN HE WANDERED, THERE WOULD STILL BE THIS WAY BACK. FOR LOVE LIKE THIS WOULD BE STRONGER THAN SIN - STRONGER THAN DEATH ITSELF. IF WE ARE TRULY SORRY FOR OUR SINS, WE CAN COME TO HIM FOR FORGIVENESS.

(Scene Mother & Children)

1st Child: "That was a wonderful way to tell about Christmas, mother. I wish everyone in the whole wide world could hear it."

Mother: "God depends on people just like us to spread the good news about Jesus Christ. One person tells others, and those people tell still more people until the whole world could know what God has done."

"And so, this Christmas morning with our gifts opened all round us, and our tree so beautifully decorated over there in the corner, let us realize how greatly blest we are to live now when Jesus' work of love is finished.

"Why don't some of you show us what our Christmas tree ornaments really mean?"