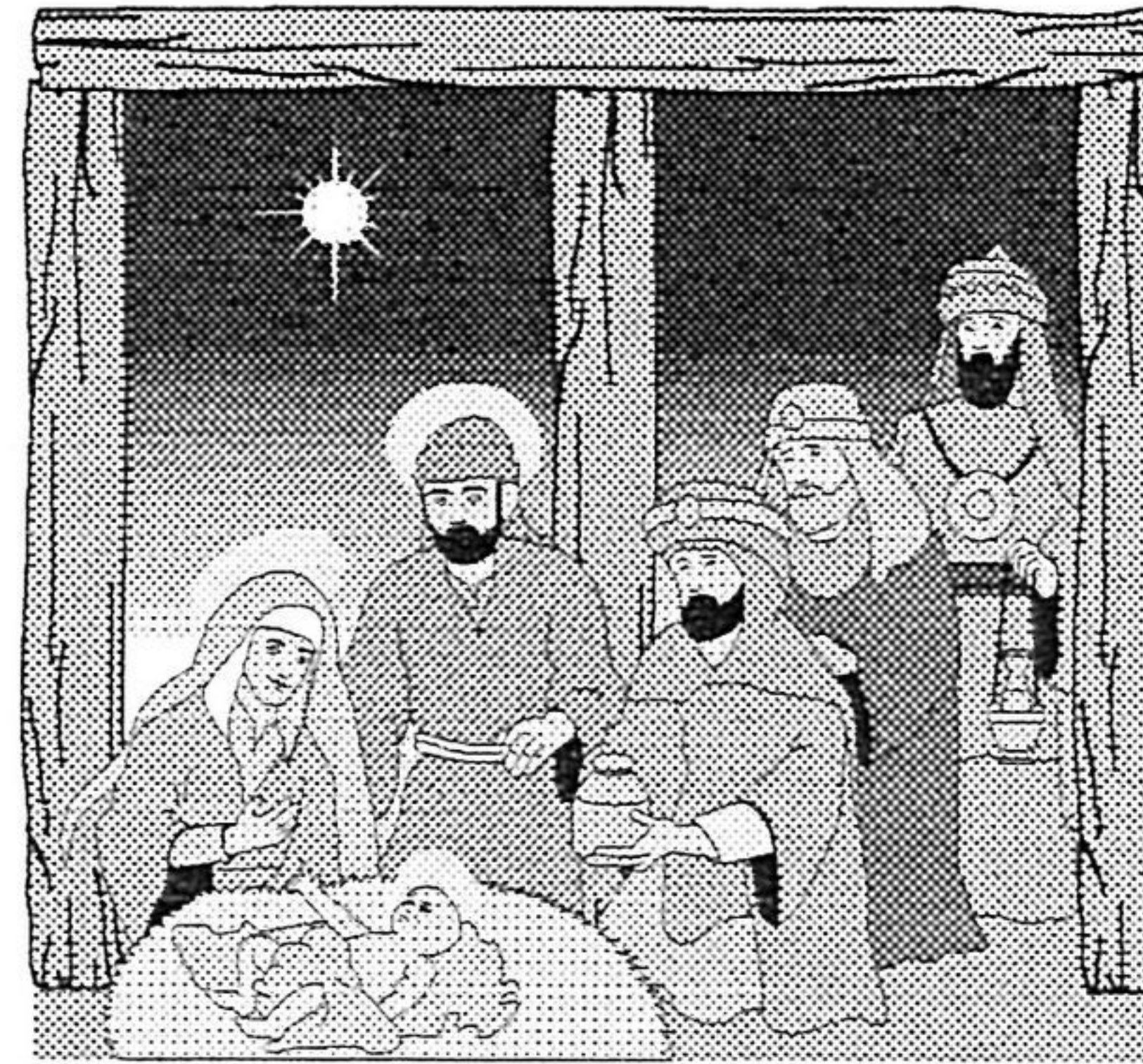


## Understanding the Reason for the Season

By the time you get to read this article it will be December and there will be a scant 20 days left until Christmas. What does that mean to you I wonder? Will it be worrying there are sufficient funds in the bank account or on the credit card balance to pay for the kind of Christmas you wish to have this year? Will it be worrying you will have time to complete the round of shopping for gifts, for food and all the other things which go to make up your kind of Christmas? I guess what I am really asking is: What does your Christmas look like? Are some of the above, elements in your Christmas? I'll bet they are.

But you know, with all of the modern hype we receive through the media, I think that some of us are beginning to forget Christmas is a celebration of an event which happened, as far as we can ascertain, almost exactly 2000 years ago. There are now a whole two generations, many of whom do not know that it is a celebration of the birth of one person, a male child, to a very poor family somewhere in the Middle East, in a country which was under the occupation of a foreign power.

Doesn't it seem strange that people all round the world are still celebrating this event without really knowing why? I mean, what is it about this child which makes him so special that we almost break the bank, or blow all our credit on buying gifts for ourselves, and our family and friends. What is it that causes us to write dozens of pretty cards and mail them off to people, many of whom we



might not have seen for the past 30 years... but we do it because we just know they might send one to us? Surely our need for information; our need for answers challenges us to discover for ourselves the real story of why Canada and the rest of the developed

world goes spending crazy at this time of the year. So I would like to give you an invitation. I would like to invite all of you who seek to remember the reason for the season, to come to one of your local churches and find out for yourself. You will need to allocate about 60 minutes of your time to this task, but I promise that you will come away from the church feeling uplifted... feeling better about yourself... feeling hopeful for the future, and just so confident that you will be able to meet the credit card bill when it rolls into your mail box in January.

I am not going to spoil the story for you by giving you a quote from the Bible, or talking about it. Instead, what I ask you to think about is that the story which will be portrayed in your local church in four weeks time is all about how people who lived so long ago, in a world very different from ours, visualized this event happening. How many donkeys or sheep or cows were in the stable at the time is unimportant. What the gifts were like which were given to the child's parents is also unimportant. The exact circumstances of the birth of this child, is also unimportant. What REALLY should matter to us is that a child was born who was named Jesus, and as this child grew older, he had a vision for what life should be like in the world in which

*Continued on page 14*

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