



Christian Report

VOLUME 24 ISSUE 12 DECEMBER 2024

The Unexpected Gift: Finding Christ in the Chaos of Christmas

Christmas is often celebrated with sparkling lights, neatly wrapped presents, and picture-perfect family moments. Yet, if we peer into the first Christmas, we see a much messier scene—a child born in a stable, surrounded by animals, laid in a feeding trough. It’s a story far from the perfection we strive for during the holidays.

But maybe that’s the point.

Jesus didn’t arrive in the grandeur of a palace or the safety of a hospital. He came into the grit of humanity, showing us that God works through imperfection. As we prepare for Christmas, we can learn to embrace the messiness of our lives as places where Christ’s love can enter and transform.

A Messy Nativity

Consider Mary and Joseph’s journey to Bethlehem. They were young, tired, and without a place to stay. The King of Kings entered the world in a barn. This was no accident; God chose humility and simplicity as the backdrop for His Son’s birth.

Could it be that God still shows up in the places we least expect—in our chaotic homes, our unpolished prayers, and our broken relationships?

Rethinking Traditions

What if instead of seeking the “perfect” Christmas, we leaned into its imperfections?

- **Gift-Giving:** Jesus Himself was a gift. What if instead of focusing on material presents, we focused on giving gifts of forgiveness, time, or compassion?

- **Hospitality:** The inn had no room for Jesus, but we do. How can we make space for those who feel left out, lonely, or burdened this season?

- **Simplicity:** Instead of exhausting ourselves trying to make everything look perfect, what if we rested in the joy of Emmanuel—God with us?



Joy in the Unexpected

The shepherds were the first to hear the good news of Christ’s birth. They were ordinary people, not kings or priests. This reminds us that God often works through the ordinary and the unexpected.

This Christmas, when plans go awry, or things don’t look as polished as you’d hoped, pause. What might God be teaching you through the im-

perfections?

A Season of Grace

Christmas isn’t about perfection; it’s about grace. It’s about a God who steps into our world not because we’ve earned it, but because He loves us. Jesus came to redeem not only our sins but our messy, complicated lives.

This year, as you look at the twinkling lights, remember the true Light of the World, who entered our darkness to bring hope, joy, and peace.

At Christian Military Fellowship, we wish you a holiday season overflowing with the love and light of Jesus Christ, the greatest gift ever given to the world. *Merry Christmas!*

We are a **group of believers** whose mission and passion is to engage with the **American military** to win souls for Jesus Christ, to disciple these souls to strengthen their relationship with the Lord, and equip them to win more souls as they engage with people around them so that those people may come to a saving knowledge of Jesus. That's why CMF's motto is "**To Win, to Disciple, to Equip, to Win**".

How do we do this? CMF has **local representatives and field personnel** who regularly meet with active duty military, both one-on-one and in groups, for **Bible study, prayer, and fellowship** to help them grow in their Christian walk and apply God's Word to their lives and duties. We also meet virtually with military and veterans all over the world through our Facebook page and group, Instagram, as well as through live virtual gatherings when being in the same room is not possible.



And do you know what we have found? These on-fire military Christians, as they are deployed internationally, are often led by the Lord to engage with people of different cultures, thereby introducing them to Jesus, impacting their world, and **fulfilling** CMF's guiding scripture found in **Matthew 28:18-20**:

*"And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. **Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.**"*

Another powerful way we fulfill our mission is our **Link Up** program, where we unite members with other members no matter where they are in the world. Our **Christian Report** is an ongoing source of encouragement to our members. Despite deployments and changing assignments, there's no need for our members to feel isolated and alone.

CMF is a prayerful community of believers. Members are encouraged to bring us their prayer requests so that staff, field personnel, and our membership can lift up these petitions before the Lord through our **Battle Plan** (monthly prayer list) and our **Electronic Battle Plan** (daily requests sent via email). **Just email us at prayer@cmfhq.org**. Isn't it wonderful that we serve such a good God, who encourages us to "boldly approach His throne of grace" where we will receive mercy and grace to help us in our need?

While these are just some of the benefits of membership (which is free) they are effective ways to **support and equip** each other more effectively, where we can stand **together for Christ**. In a world that rejects Christ and Christian values, where the pressure can be great to compromise our faith, it has become **more important than ever** for Christians to **be part of a fellowship** that can support them in their walks with Christ. It's through CMF that we can most effectively be **united and equipped** for this purpose.

Not yet a member? It's easy to join. Simply point your smartphone camera at the QR code to the right and click on the box that says "Open in Web Browser" and you will be taken directly to the CMF website membership application. You can also navigate to www.cmfhq.org/get-involved/join-cmf. Simply read our Statement of Faith, and if you agree, complete the membership application. That's all there is to it!



Why Donate to CMF?

Since our inception, May 1977, Christian Military Fellowship has remained true to our calling to give each and every person in or associated with the armed forces of the United States the chance to say yes to the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. Your tax-deductible donation enhances our ability to provide free resources to Christians in the military that include:

- Bible study material · Books · Bibles
- Leadership Training and materials
- Discipleship Training and materials
- World-wide fellowship link-up service

With your help, Christian Military Fellowship can continue to serve the men and women of the United States military and their families during these challenging times. Help us build a Godly legacy! Your gift, large or small, will help us to continue in the battle for souls.

CMF is a member of ECFA, a recipient of Ministry Watch's Shining Light Award, and a recipient of the Platinum Transparency Award by Guidestar/Candid.



To better steward our resources and focus more on ministry, Christian Military Fellowship is transitioning our newsletter, The Christian Report, and our prayer list, the Battle Plan, to digital formats. Rising costs of printing and postage make this a necessary step, and we're excited to continue providing these updates to you via email.

Please help us make the switch by emailing us at office@CMFHQ.org with your updated contact information (address, phone number, and email). Alternatively, you can navigate to our Substack sites directly to subscribe:

<https://ChristianReport.Substack.com>

<https://BattlePlan.Substack.com>

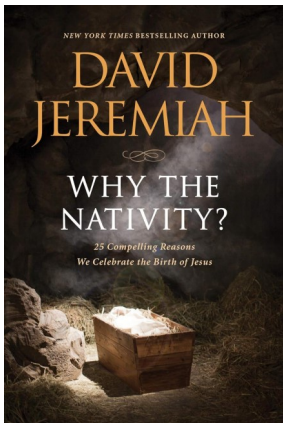
You can also scan the QR codes with your phone to sign up directly for The Christian Report and Battle Plan.



Thank you for standing with us as we adapt to meet the needs of our ministry while continuing to share God's work among our nation's military and their families!



Book of the Month



Many people have heard the classic Bible story of the birth of Jesus, but numerous unanswered questions remain, such as:

Why did God choose a young virgin named Mary and a simple carpenter named Joseph to bring his only Son into the world?

Why was the Son of God born

in a lowly manger in a small town called Bethlehem? And what does this nativity story mean for us today?

Drawing from both the Old and New Testaments, noted pastor and theologian David Jeremiah provides answers to 25 of the most thought-provoking questions surrounding the most pivotal moment in human history—the birth of Jesus Christ.

Supplies are Limited! This book is offered free and postage paid to our members. You may order this and other great resources from emailing your request to office@cmfhq.org or calling us at (800) 798-7875.

Are You Interested in Becoming a Local Leader?

Christian Military Fellowship exists to help you fulfill your calling in Christ to share the hope that is in you with those with whom you interact as part of your daily life.

Briefly, CMF Local Leaders will start, and sustain a CMF fellowship made up of members of the military community in their area. While CMF is an “all ranks” ministry, our area of focus is on enlisted personnel. Local leaders institute and lead the military community in Bible study, prayer, and fellowship,

keeping in communication with participants. They should also seek to build relationships with the chaplains and the chaplain team.

Toward that end we encourage you to study and complete the CMF briefing material:

Orientation (Brief #1) that shares an overview of the CMF ministry.

Developing a Local Ministry (Brief #2) that shares the Biblical foundation

for and delineates the logical steps in beginning your local ministry.

Pray and Plan (Brief #3) that shares the most important activity of all! Asking Jesus what He would have you to do and then being obedient to follow His leading in your local ministry.

If you choose to begin this process, please reach out to us at: leader@cmfhq.org.

We're praying for you!

The Christmas season is a time of joy, reflection, and celebration as Christians worldwide gather to honor the birth of our Savior, Jesus Christ. While the heart of Christmas—the arrival of Emmanuel, God with us—remains the same, the ways in which this sacred event is celebrated vary beautifully across cultures and countries.

The Universal Message of Hope

In every corner of the world, believers embrace the promise of hope and salvation brought by Jesus’ birth. As Luke 2:11 proclaims, “Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; He is the Messiah, the Lord.” This truth unites us all, whether we celebrate under the sparkling lights of a Christmas tree, around a table filled with traditional foods, or in the quiet reverence of a church service.

Traditions from Different Nations

The Philippines: In this deeply Christian nation, the Christmas season begins as early as September! The centerpiece of Filipino celebrations is the Simbang Gabi, a nine-day series of dawn masses leading to Christmas. Parols—star-shaped lanterns—light up homes and streets, symbolizing the Star of Bethlehem.

Germany: German families celebrate with Advent traditions, lighting candles each week to anticipate Christ’s arrival. On Christmas Eve, they gather to sing carols, read the nativity story, and exchange gifts around the Weihnachtsbaum (Christmas tree), a tradition Germany shared with the world.

Nigeria: Churches in Nigeria hold vibrant Christmas services filled with music, dance, and drama reenacting the nativity story. Families gather to share special meals, often featuring rice, chicken, and other festive dishes, and express the joy of giving by visiting loved ones.

Norway: In Norway, Christmas is marked by the peaceful tradition of Julebord (Christmas feasts) and quiet reflection. Candles illuminate homes, symbolizing the light of Christ breaking through winter’s darkness. Families read the Christmas gospel together and attend midnight mass.

A Military Christmas

For many in the military community, Christmas looks a little different. Deployed service members may find themselves celebrating in far-off places, joining with fellow believers to worship in makeshift chapels or open-air services. Military families at home may create new traditions to fill the gap left by an absent loved one. Through it all, the truth of Christ’s birth brings comfort, strength, and unity.

As part of Christian Military Fellowship, we are reminded of the global body of Christ we belong to—a family of believers that spans nations and cultures. Whether we sing “Silent Night” in English, German, or another language, our hearts are united in worshiping the One who

came to bring salvation to all.

Reflecting on the Greatest Gift

This Christmas, as we reflect on traditions near and far, let us remember that the greatest gift is not found under a tree but in the manger—the gift of Jesus Christ. His love transcends borders, languages, and traditions, reminding us of the incredible unity we have as His children.

May your Christmas season be filled with the love of Christ and the joy of knowing that wherever you are in the world, you are part of a much greater story—the story of God’s redemption for all.

From all of us at Christian Military Fellowship, Merry Christmas!



CHRISTIAN MILITARY FELLOWSHIP

An Indigenous Ministry • Discipleship • Prayer • Community • Support
Encouraging Men and Women in the United States Armed Forces, and their families, to love and serve the Lord Jesus Christ.

We are pleased to announce that MinistryWatch has listed CMF as one of their “Shining Light” Ministries. To become a MinistryWatch “Shining Light,” a ministry must have earned a 5-star rating on MinistryWatch’s 5-star financial efficiency scale. Further, those ministries on this list have a Transparency Grade of “A.” That’s MinistryWatch’s highest transparency grade. Out of 700 ministries, only 13 meet these strict criteria.

<https://ministrywatch.com/ministrywatches-annual-list-of-shining-light-ministries/>

Mailing Address: PO Box 449
Veradale, WA 99037-0449
(800)798-7875
(303)761-1959
<https://www.CMFHQ.ORG>
office@CMFHQ.org

We are accredited members of the Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability and a Platinum Seal from Guidestar/Candid in order to maintain the highest standards of excellence and accountability.

