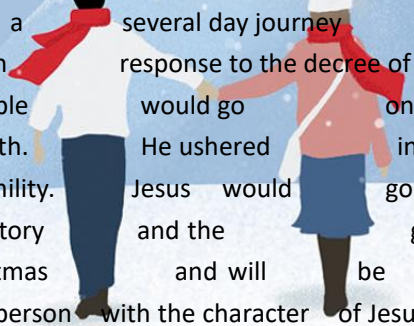


## CHRISTMAS AWAY FROM HOME

Soldiers and missionaries know what it is like to be away from family and friends in foreign lands during Christmas. My first such experience was in Dec. 1983 in Belgium where I spent a year at the largest Roman Catholic University in Europe as co-leader of an evangelistic team to the students. Our mission group teams with OM (Operation Mobilization) in Belgium all got together at a large former convent to celebrate together. While we were waiting for our food I thought I would try one of the pretzels on the table. My first bite revealed it was a decorative piece made of plaster of paris. During our days there we practiced our dramas, dances and our sketch board messages that we would use on the street and on the campus. During the evenings we watched lots of Agatha Christie films about Poirot, a Belgian detective.

Most of the 1980's and early 90's I was in London at Christmas, where I enjoyed time with other missionaries from various countries. Although we were away from our biological families, we were bonded together as brothers and sisters in Christ on divine missions at the call of the one whose birthday we were celebrating. We had little money to share with others but our gift was sharing the love of Christ with the world around us. December 1997 was a very special one as I was based in a rural Indian village for three months. That Christmas I gave a message in the open air to a gathering of Indian believers. That atmosphere was more like the first one in Bethlehem not only in climate but also in being a humble outlying town.



Joseph and Mary had made a several day journey to get to the little town of Bethlehem. They had come in response to the decree of a king for a census. Their child born that night in a lowly stable would go on to become the most humble person to ever walk this earth. He ushered in a kingdom unlike any other. Its chief virtue would be humility. Jesus would go on to become the most celebrated person in history and the greatest of servants. This is why He is honored at Christmas and will be throughout eternity as the greatest of kings. Only a person with the character of Jesus is fit to rule the world. Mary and Joseph were away from home that first Christmas, but they were not alone, for God was with them, in more ways than one. They had come to Bethlehem at the decree of a king, but now they were in the presence of a future Servant King who would go on to change the world forever. Christmas is a reminder to us that God's ways and patterns are different than the kingdoms of this world. **Humility was on display that first Christmas.**

- Bethlehem A humble out of the way little town
- Shepherds God announces this birth to those of a most humble occupation
- Stable Not a clean inn for people, but a place for animals and smells
- Servants God chose Mary and Joseph because of their humility
- Solitary Mary and Joseph were away from family during this special birth
- Darkness Jesus was away from home too as He came from a place of pure light and entered a foreign world of darkness. **He left his home so we could join his heavenly home.**

**His humility became our salvation. His salvation became our humility -Andrew Murray**

See our website for additional Christmas messages and some new scenery [jesusreigns.net](http://jesusreigns.net)

