Tall are the mountains of Christmas
Awesome, the Christmas peaks--
Islands of gold
Ablaze in the dawn,
Alert, while Eternity speaks!

Summit of love, the highest,
Is first to capture the sun--
And flanking crests
Of Faith and Hope
Stand forth as day is begun,

All will be scaled by nightfall,
Each crag and shoulder and horn--
For in cavernous dark
Of valleys below
The Mountaineer has been born!

---Franklin D. Elmer, Jr.

No one can ever do better, whatever his lot in life, than to do his best day by day and to attempt to produce in those about him Love, Faith and Hope. As followers of Jesus, who in our Christmas poem is called "The Mountaineer", we follow One who is the Author and Finisher of Love, Faith and Hope. It was this wondrous Scaler of insurmountable heights who taught, "You must love..." (Luke 10:27). He also demonstrated in his death on the cross the absolute carrying out of His statement regarding love--"Greater love has no man than this, that he give up his life for his friends." (John 15:13)

A lovely Jewish patient of mine, some years ago when in the hospital for cancer surgery, laughingly told me this little poem--"Roses are red, violets are blush. If it weren't for Christmas, we'd all be Jewish!" In actuality, if it weren't for the birth of the Messiah on that first Christmas morning all men would be lost--all would be without faith and hope. Christmas is such a day of joy and love! Even for the unbeliever it is a wondrous day! Jesus scaled and conquered the summit of Love--and everything good and worthwhile in this life has stemmed from that ultimate conquest.

Christmas brings Jesus again into the home, even to those houses where the Lord is rarely mentioned or considered. No time of any year is so full of family and happiness. Even those things which are of a social nature and have nothing to do with God take on the reflection and the aura of Christmastide. How sad it is that everyone does not understand the true meaning of the annual observances of Jesus' birth! In an atheistic society there is nothing comparable to Christmas--and thus love, hope and faith gradually diminish--and, as Solzhenitsyn once wrote concerning hope in "Cancer Ward", "That hollow in the chest where faith nestles, lies empty...and dries up."

One finds it difficult to imagine life without love, faith and hope. What would substitute for these virtues? Perhaps we could advocate erotic love for the love of God--or love of Party, friends or even love of the Revolution, or of the founders of the nation? One man told me he did not need Jesus. He said that he worshipped only his wife. I wonder how well his goddess is doing today twenty years later? What kind of love can one hope to give to a dead Lenin--or what kind of love can one expect to receive from him? Or from Stalin? Or from Mao? Or from Roosevelt?

Regarding faith in God--in Jesus Christ--what sort of faith could substitute for Godly faith? What shall man place his faith in if he does not have primary faith in God? Shall he place faith in his own strength, his intellect, his marriage, his science, his stock portfolio--his insurance program? A Jewish oncologist recently told me that he is a scientist--that he trusts in his "science". How can one have faith in 5 FU, bleomycin, Cytoxan, Alkeran or any one of the chemotherapeutic agents available today?

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Can these drugs substitute for God? Doctors used to have faith in salvarsan, calomel—even in blood-letting and the barber's leech. Today there is a whole new pharmacology. What will there be tomorrow? How can one have faith in gods of such transient and limited powers? If one has faith in his science rather than in God—his ultimate hope is built on the shifting sands of time. Science, of course, is marvelous and usually produces help and even cures at times for ailing man—but ultimately science as a god is not worthy of worship or of total dedication.

It is rather strange that the simple act of asking Jesus to come into the heart can have such profound and transforming effects. If one's science or traditions would keep one from such dedication, how sad to think that devotion to science or tradition could keep one from life, from healing, from hope, and from eternal life!

Again I am reminded of the gynecologist in Solzhenitsyn's "Cancer Ward" who had lost everything material to the Soviet State. Living in exile with his wife in a place called Ush-Terek far away in miles and years from his former professional life in Moscow,—living in a clay hut, Oleg's wife says: "Ah, Oleg, how well we live now! You know, except for childhood, this is the happiest period in my whole life."

She was right. "It is not the standard of living that makes us happy; it is the way we feel, the way we look at life. Both of these are always in our power, and hence man is always happy if he wants to be, and no one can stop him." These lines were written by a man who himself had been an exile in Siberia. How can one find God—and happiness—in exile and in extreme suffering and hardship when we are unable to do so in our comfort and luxury? In the multiplicity of things, one loses track of the truly important virtues of life—and Jesus becomes peripheral and quite unimportant to us. Hardship paradoxically produces strength while luxury produces softness of intellect as well as body. The logos (spirit) is a product of pain and labor—just as physical birth comes to man.

Bunyan, writing in his dark prison cell, perceived God and the path of man through life in an acute way he would never have seen in the library at Oxford. Given a preference, man should ask to follow the path of the Mountaineer, the One who leads to true love and truth on the craggy heights of hardship and weights too heavy to carry.

"Five minutes after death, it will matter very little, whether we died on a bed of down, in a spacious chamber, surrounded by friends, or at some rich man's gate neglected and alone. Present comforts may all leave us, our soft nest may be scattered to the winds, but our union to Jesus nothing can disturb." (James Smith)

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!!! IMPORTANT!!!—If it is your intention to make a contribution to the Foundation before the end of the year, it is most important that these contributions be received in our office before Dec. 31, 1980. Receipts for exemption from income tax will be issued immediately.

Jack Thomson

CMF of CANADA

Your support and prayers as well as your continuing interest in CMF of Canada is respectfully requested. This fledgling organization in Canada is comprised of physicians, nurses, paramedical personnel, clergy and laymen who are interested in the healing of the whole person. This means the necessity of adding to present medical, surgical and psychiatric practices the consideration and treatment of the spirit of man, both the well and the sick. With the cooperation of spiritually enlightened clergymen working with doctors and nurses as a team, a new standard of compassionate total patient care can be achieved. Disciplines formerly only practiced in certain healing churches urgently need to be courageously brought forth and utilized in hospitals and wherever therapy is offered. CMF Christian believing members can thus begin to effect a transformation of patient care—extending potentially into the areas of preventive Medicine. Thus the Healing Church plus the Spirit-filled doctor and nurse become the areas of Wholistic Health Potential in the truest Biblical sense. For suggested reading I recommend the four Gospels, the Epistles of John, the books of Acts and Romans and Paul's Epistles to the Hebrews, Ephesians, and Philippians. Other writings on Wholistic Medicine should not be read until one knows what God's Word says about man. We might suggest reading Healing The Whole Man by William Standish Reed (see below) as the first assignment after the Bible. Please join other Canadians in this great cause which is truly desperately needed by everyone in the Dominion and in the whole world.

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HEALING THE WHOLE MAN--MIND, BODY, SPIRIT by William Standish Reed, M.D. Published by Fleming Revell Power Books, it is available through CMF or your local book store. To order a copy from CMF, please write CMF of Tampa--(4821 Memorial Highway, Tampa, FL 33614)--and send $4.95 a copy (Canadian currency) plus postage and handling of $1.00.