



# EQUIPPING U

INTERNATIONAL CHRISTIAN EDUCATION ASSOCIATION/DECEMBER 2013

## Luke 1:26-35

[26] In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, [27] to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. And the virgin's name was Mary. [28] And he came to her and said, "Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you!" [29] But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and tried to discern what sort of greeting this might be. [30] And the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. [31] And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus.



## Can This Be the Christ?

### HE WILL BE GREAT

[32] He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, [33] and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." [34] And Mary said to the angel, "How will this be, since I am a virgin?" [35] And the angel answered her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy--the Son of God.

Over the past several months, I've had a number of commitments that required more effort, time, and emotional energy than I initially expected. Perhaps Christmastime is that kind of season for you.

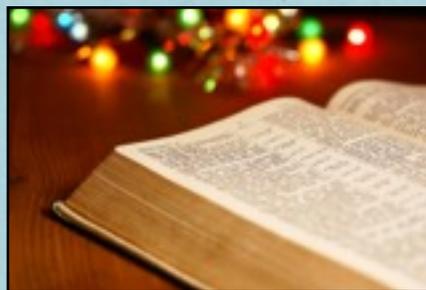
Near the end of this demanding time, two friends came alongside me to ask if there was anything they could do to help. Now, I'm not one to turn down good help, but the things that I had left to do, I needed to do. No one else

could study for the ladies retreat I committed to teach. No one but me could prepare the songs I agreed to sing, and I alone could spend time in the scriptures allowing them to transform my mind regarding some emotionally difficult situations. Only I could do these things, and they all seemed pressing.

Now that the songs have been sung, the retreat is a mere memory, and my thinking about my



**TEACHING TIP.** As winter begins it can be easy to let the winter blahs, with all of its grumpy complaining, begin, too. Let's take a tip from the younger generation, and join them in enjoying all the blessings that winter brings.



**TEACHING TIP.** In the hustle and bustle of Christmas it can be easy to lose the rhythm of spending time in God's word. Purpose this Christmas to steal away for some time in the Scriptures.



**TEACHING TIP.** It takes effort to train children to become givers. Help the children in your life to recognize the truth of Christ's words that "it is more blessed to give than to receive." (Acts 20:35)

difficult situation has become more biblically grounded, I find myself reflecting on the Lord's goodness to me as he led me through this season. My gratefulness was only enhanced when I began reading the passage about the woman at the well in Sychar.

John, the beloved disciple, tells us of her conversation with Jesus. In all likelihood shame brought her to Jacob's well in the noonday sun, a time when no one else would be there. But today she wasn't alone—that was surprising. But when Jesus requested a drink from her, she simply couldn't believe it. Not in a feministic, "get it yourself" way, but in an incredulous, "I can't believe a Jewish man is talking to me and willing to drink from the same jug as me" kind of way.

The fact that he wasn't despising her—neither for her heritage, "for Jews have no dealings with Samaritans" (4:9), nor for her gender "[his disciples] marveled that he was talking with a woman" (4:27)—was truly unbelievable to her.

Yet Jesus wasn't looking down on her. He was offering this shame-filled woman new life.

## He wasn't looking down on her...He was offering her new life.

With the invitation, "Woman, believe me," Jesus clearly told her what kind of worship God sought and who He was: "I who speak to you am [the Christ]." So why, when she leaves her water jar and goes into town, does she ask the people

## VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT



**Dianne Phelps**

*ICEA is a volunteer staffed ministry. Each month Equipping U highlights and honors one of our faithful volunteers.*

Since the 1960's Dianne Phelps has been serving Christ through the ministry of ICEA. Over the years her volunteer roles have ebbed and flowed but her desire to see lay people trained to serve as faithful leaders and Sunday School teachers in the church has been unwavering. Dianne, thank you for your example of faithfulness, stewardship, and willingness to serve the body of Christ with your time and talents.

"Can this be the Christ?" (4:29) He had told her he was. Did she not understand?

Oh, she had understood, for He told her all she had ever done. But she also understood people, and wisely invited her neighbors to decide for themselves if Jesus was the Christ. She knew the evidence was on His side.

There are some things we must do ourselves, and allow others to do for themselves. One of those things is to decide if Jesus could be the Christ. This Christmas share Christ's story. Invite others to consider "Can Jesus be the Christ?" Then let the Spirit do His convincing, convicting work.

### FROM THE EDITOR

Christmastime!  
What a wonderful season to remember anew that "God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him." (John 3:16-17) Since Christ did not come to condemn the world, neither should we. May we be faithful in sharing the gospel and grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Serving with U,

*Kim*  
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### START PLANNING FOR YOUR VBS

Winter's just begun, but before we know it, kids will be ready for VBS. Will you be ready for them? Find curriculum and gather ideas February 22 at the VBS • Summer Ministries Training. [www.iceaOnline.org](http://www.iceaOnline.org).

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