

PLAIN TRUTH®

CHRISTIANITY WITHOUT THE RELIGION®



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the corruption of a government or of a particular world leader, and then that revelation caused a revolution—a positive change in government in the targeted area of the world.

At the end of a television program, the IMF team left the scene of their completed mission by stealth, so that no one ever really knew they were instrumental in helping to overthrow corruption and replace it with beneficial leadership.

YOU are part of the “PMF—Possible Missions Force”

In his classic book, *Mere Christianity*, C.S. Lewis likened the earthly proclamation of the kingdom of heaven to an invasion of enemy occupied territory. Lewis said that Jesus, the rightful king of the kingdom, has arrived and enlisted Christ-followers as his agents in the midst of a dark world held in the chains of death, disease and sin. In his service, we are ready and willing, in the words of the *Impossible Dream*, the theme song of *Man of La Mancha*, “to walk into hell for a heavenly cause.”

While that word picture applies to Christ-followers all over this world, I like to particularly think of our small team—our **Possible Missions Force (PMF)** made up of *CWR/PTM Friends and Partners*—as carrying out a small but vitally important quest. The mission we

Do you remember the original Mission Impossible television show that first aired in the mid-1960s? At the beginning of each episode, the leader of the Mission Impossible team (the team is referred to in the series by the acronym IMF—Impossible Missions Force) pulls out an old reel-to-reel tape recorder along with a manila envelope containing photographs of key individuals involved in this particular undertaking.

The recorded voice on the tape went something like this:

*Good morning Mr. Briggs (then later it was Good morning Mr. Phelps)
The man you are looking at is*

_____ (a description of the person or persons who were the target of the operation followed).

Your mission, should you decide to accept it is _____ (a description of the purpose and objective of the

assignment followed).

Then, at the end of the tape, concluding remarks went something like this:

As always, should you or any of your IMF force be caught or killed, the secretary will disavow any knowledge of your actions. This tape will self-destruct in 10 seconds. Good luck, Dan (in later episodes it was Good luck, Jim).

As promised, smoke started coming out of the tape recorder ten seconds later and the tape disintegrated.

The IMF (the *Impossible Missions Force*) was a fictitious group of American secret agents who were called on to perform impossible missions, often involving foreign governments and world leaders. The IMF, of course, used violence as part of its resources, but much of the time the success of their mission depended on unmasking

have been given may seem to be “impossible” but as the angel told a bewildered Mary, the mother of Jesus, “... nothing is impossible with God” (Luke 1:37).

We are, as you well know, a Christ-centered ministry. We are all about “all Jesus, all the time.” He is our focus and our cause and our all in all. We serve him. We proclaim his kingdom of heaven in numerous ways with our many ministry resources and tools.

Our purpose as Christ-followers is to lose ourselves in the cause of something bigger and more important. As members of the PMF our hearts are filled with the love and grace of God, so we dedicate our lives to serve those who are spiritually hungry, thirsty, naked, alienated, sick and imprisoned (see Matthew 25:34-40).

Our mission as Friends and Partners of CWR/PTM is driven by Jesus, who lives his life in us, so that we desire to proclaim Jesus and his gospel to those who are spiritually impoverished, addicted, enslaved and deceived. We live to realize the dream of helping others come to know Jesus and experience the grace and love of God. ***Our quest is to point others to Jesus, who invites them to embrace him just as he has invited you and me.***

All About Jesus

Have you ever thought of the birth of Jesus being the most impossible mission ever?

No doubt about it—when God in the person of Jesus came down to be one of us, it was the most unbelievable and, to the human mind, impossible mission ever. It was one of the most far-fetched and improbable endeavors, an assignment given to a young, unmarried woman named Mary.

If human bookmakers had to give odds on the success of God’s mission in Christ, we may safely assume that Jesus faced long odds. You and I know who the religious authorities favored in the “horse

race” between Jesus and Christ-less religion!

The birth of Jesus, not to mention his life, death, burial and resurrection, was not the result of a human initiative or a well thought out human plan. Nobody would have ever, in a million years, decided to achieve the objectives of this seemingly improbable mission in the way God did.

And it all started before his human birth, with the announcement to Joseph about the particulars of Mary’s pregnancy, as the angel assured Mary, “...nothing is impossible with God” (Luke 1:37).

As far as the human mind goes, it was seemingly an “impossible” mission from the get-go.

Mary was told that God the Holy Spirit would “come upon” her—not in the way a biological father would have sexual relations with a biological mother—but in “coming upon” her by the Holy Spirit, God the Father would miraculously impregnate Mary. If we had been Joseph, we would have concluded that the message delivered by the angel was IMPOSSIBLE!

So **why** would God, in the person of Jesus, decide to begin his human life by being miraculously conceived in the womb of Mary? **Why** not start out human life as an adult, like Adam? **Why** would God decide that Mary’s pregnancy be so completely out of the ordinary?

Why select a teenage girl to be the mother of Jesus? **Why** not have Mary learn to be a mother first, by having at least one other child before Jesus? Though there was no human father, **why** not at least let Mary be married so that attention was not called to the fact she was not married when she conceived?

1) Jesus was not just any baby. Jesus was the fully human and fully divine Son of God, both natures united in one human person.

2) The birth of Jesus is the beginning of the kingdom of heaven on earth, the beginning of



“This tape will self-destruct in ten seconds. Good luck...”

the gospel of Jesus Christ. As Donald Macleod said in his book *The Person of Christ*, the birth of Jesus “stands on the threshold of the New Testament.” The birth of Jesus is the first sign (the first warning shot, if you will) that what will follow is something completely out of human control. It is the first sign that the gospel is about God’s grace, not about human performance or accomplishment.

3) The birth of Jesus announces that Jesus is all about God—or put another way, the *Mission Impossible* involves all that God is—Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The birth of Jesus is the Incarnation of God in human flesh.

“Incarnation” is the theological term that describes the love, grace and mercy of God, his willingness to make himself vulnerable, his willingness to humble himself and descend from the glory of eternity into the barnyards and stables of our lives.

The Incarnation is the divine miracle that announces God’s desire to intimately involve himself with his creation—becoming one of us, in spite of all of our flaws and foibles.

The birth of Jesus was the beginning of the end of earthly power, of inhumanities perpetrated by humans on their fellow humans, of military dominance and the impoverishment and slavery of

those unable to stand against brute force. It all makes sense to us now—but *what if we had been living when Jesus was born?*

What If?

Had we been living in Bethlehem when Jesus was born it really would have sounded like an impossible mission, don't you think?

- *What if* you had lived in Bethlehem, a few houses away from where Jesus was born?

- *What if* the day after Jesus' birth the next-door neighbor to that place where Jesus was born told you that a little baby boy had been born among the animals in what we would think of as a barnyard today?

- And *what if* your next-door neighbor in Bethlehem had then told you that without anyone noticing it, without any fanfare whatever, that little baby boy was God in the flesh...???

- And *what if* your next-door neighbor in Bethlehem had also told you that the little one-day-old

baby boy was the Savior, and that he would not just save and redeem and rescue the people in that little town of Bethlehem but one day he would inaugurate his worldwide kingdom of peace and non-violence...?

- And *what if* your next-door neighbor in Bethlehem had also told you that this little baby boy would eventually conquer Rome by allowing himself to be crucified in shame on a cross...and that one day he would rule over the entire world without ever shedding anyone else's blood on the battle field?

- And *what if* your next-door neighbor had said that this child was born to a young, humble, working-class family who had arrived in town pushing the 21st century equivalent of a shopping cart? *What if* you had been told the birth of this little baby signaled the end of all authoritarian religion that preyed upon ignorance, fear and superstition—and the end of violent, greedy human kingdoms

who rule by intimidation and the sword?

What if, several decades ago, God had told you that he would like to use you to help proclaim this amazing good news to the world?

What if you had been on an entirely different "Christian" team at the time that had a completely different idea about Jesus and the gospel?

Would you have believed what Jesus eventually did in your life could have happened? *Would you have believed* then that Jesus would carry out an impossible mission in my life and in yours?

Now, you and I are part of a **Possible Missions Force (PMF)**

-serving others in Jesus' name. Now, on the PMF team we seek to point others to Jesus so that they too may experience and rejoice in this wonderful gospel that will transform their lives as it has transformed mine and yours.

The kingdom of God deserves all of our heart and soul and energies and contributions. **This is a cause worth losing ourselves in, because it is a cause greater than ourselves!**

Where there is physical or spiritual slavery, abuse, addiction, oppression, superstitions and ignorance, our PMF team (CWR/PTM), stands ready to serve in Jesus' name. Where there is spiritual arrogance and deception, pride and manipulation, CWR/PTM stands in Christ-centered opposition. By God's grace, he is using our PMF team to change lives!

WE MAKE A DIFFERENCE—for now, in this life and for eternity! This is God's mission—this is his dream. Our quest is to follow Jesus, marching "into hell for a heavenly cause."

It may seem preposterous that such a small minority of people might be used to proclaim the goodness and grace of God in such a powerful way, but remember, "...nothing is impossible with God" (Luke 1:37).

Make no mistake. By the grace of God, as a collective and united team of Friends and Partners, **we are making a difference**, for now and for eternity.

Our ministry's message is being read and heard and listened to by those we serve in the name of Jesus! As Partners and Friends of this worldwide ministry of CWR/PTM our calling—our quest, our mission and our dream—is to make a difference in the lives of many in the name of Jesus. We are **PMF—Possible Missions Force!**

Our mission may seem impossible to human eyes, but "...nothing is impossible with God" (Luke 1:37).

Thank you for your part in this ongoing work! We look forward to a wonderful year of ministry, serving others in the name of Jesus. □

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