What fun to get a balloon
THANKSGIVING UNTO OUR GOD

By Carol Terry

'Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift.' As our children and women bowed with us in worship before a manger-born Saviour, our hearts were overwhelmed with thanksgiving unto Him, first of all for our Lord who has filled our cup to overflowing this year with a very precious and holy sense of His presence, more wonderful than anything else in all the world. We have walked with Him on holy ground, as He has clothed us with His garments of righteousness and enabled us to walk with Him in white.

In addition to this greatest gift of a consciousness of His presence with us, has been the blessing of material gifts. He has abundantly proved to us at this time the verse 'Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.' There were enough new dresses for the children so that each one received a Christmas dress. If only you who sewed so faithfully, if you who took the trouble to make them lovely with pockets or ruffles or pretty materials could have seen the almost uncontrollable delight of each child when she tried on her dress, your joy and reward would have been full to the brim and running over. We could hardly hold the little ones still long enough to see if the dresses fitted properly, so filled were they with the desire to jump and run with joy.

The Christmas cards with the beautiful hair ribbons and colourful balloons came in sufficient quantity so that there was something for everyone. Today the ribbons adorn shiny black hair and the cards are carefully tucked away in Bibles or hymn books, to be taken out and enjoyed again and again (sometimes even during church).

For your faithful prayers, your generous gifts, your loving thoughts toward our children, we thank you with all our hearts. No words of ours can express what it has meant to us all at this time. May the year of 1959 be filled for you with that sweet consciousness of His presence that has made our year so wonderful.

THE SAVIOUR'S BIRTHDAY IN THE LILY FAMILY

By Elsie Rohrer

Birthdays are important events in the Lily Family. Each month the little ones count up how many birthdays there are to be in the month. If it happens to be one of the sisters on either side of her in age, she knows that she will be one of the guests at the party. What fun it is to get all dressed up and then even better, to get a balloon (which probably only lasts ten or fifteen minutes but is carried around and treasured for a day or so).

Every Thursday evening, when the weekly prayer meeting is held
in the church, the five little ones come to my room for a Bible story and time of prayer. This is truly a treasured hour when the Lord seems very close as these little ones voice their simple, child-like prayers. The week before Christmas I told them the story of the birth of Jesus, explaining why we celebrated Christmas. Afterwards Peninnah said, ‘Auntie we said there were only two birthdays this month but we forgot to count Jesus’ birthday. We can all come to His party can’t we?’

This party took place the Saturday following Christmas, and a good time of fun and fellowship was enjoyed by all. There was a real family spirit which pervaded throughout the evening. After the refreshments we had a short devotional period, followed by prayer. It was sweet to hear the little and big ones thank God for sending His Son and for all of you who helped to make their Christmas a happy one. I wish you could see how eagerly they open their cards and proudly show their ribbons and balloons to each other. Also could you see how lovely they look on Christmas morning dressed up in the pretty frocks which so many of you have lovingly sewn for them, I know that you would feel well rewarded.

The Sunday after Christmas our regular Christmas Thanksgiving offering took place. My heart was blessed when Ratan came and asked for all her money to put into the offering. She had received her first wage at the end of November and so gave it all plus what she had saved from her pocket money, as her birthday gift unto the Lord.

Birthdays signify growth, and the children are all growing rapidly. What a joy it has been recently to see some of them grow spiritually as well. Some are much slower in this than others and need your prayer support, particularly the adolescents. Will you not pray that each of these ‘Lilies’ will grow up into sturdy young women?
Christmas began in Mukti long before the 25th of December. When the anxiously awaited boxes of clothes arrived and we knew the children would have new dresses the excitement and joy began. Being able to receive them without any duty was an answer to prayer and a precious gift of love in itself. Our hearts were warmly moved as we saw the loving thoughtfulness that had gone into the choice of materials and sewing of the dresses, even to the pretty pink braid with gold threads in it, that would make little girls’ eyes shine.

But the joy we had in opening the boxes was even overshadowed by the great delight of the children as family after family came to be fitted. It was hard to keep back the tears for it looked as if it was everyone’s very first Christmas and new dress. Their eyes glistened and they danced up and down for joy. Little Chubbie who came to us just a few months ago and for whom it was the very first was sure that this must be Christmas. She was not the only one that night who could hardly wait for family prayers to ‘tell the heavenly Father how much she thanked Him for the lovely new dress He had sent. We felt sure the Lord must have brought some special joy to your souls, too, in answer to their prayers.

Christmas for over a thousand children and grown-ups is no easy task to be fitted into a busy missionary schedule and sometimes mere exhaustion has robbed Christmas of its joy. But it seemed different this year and perhaps this gift of peace was an answer to your prayer.

Receiving and preparing the hundreds of Christmas cards, ribbons and balloons for the families was a blessed task. Somehow a bit of the love that had been poured into each envelope seemed to spill over to us who had the joy of distributing them. How carefully many of the cards had been chosen so they would bring new gladness: exquisite nylon ribbons and large balloons from New Zealand were carefully distributed so they could be enjoyed by some little ones in every family; lovely hand-painted cards that came ‘with love’ from a young girl in Scotland; and so many beautiful cards with colourful, many-shaped balloons and pretty ribbons from Sunday schools, and other groups and individuals in U.S.A., Canada, Austrália, Great Britain and Norway, who faithfully pray for and support our dear ones here.

An unexpected gift
Added to all the other gifts on Christmas day was an unexpected one that arrived in a basket on the top of a village man's head—a gift not wrapped with fancy paper and a pretty ribbon but in a bit of a blanket. Unwrapped, it revealed a sight which brought a pang of sadness rather than an exclamation of delight. A miserable little mite, just skin and bones, tried to cry pitifully. Some weeks before, this little baby's blind sister had been brought to us because her mother had died. A sister-in-law had offered to care for the day-old new baby but now found that she was unable to do so. She became our Christmas gift to be treasured and loved in the name of the Saviour who had sent her. We received her with gratitude and a prayer that God would do the miracle in her life that would help her to grow up to be a messenger of peace in this land.

Another source of real happiness during the holidays were the parties in the different families because of the gifts sent by many of you towards the children's Christmas. No Christmas dinner or party at home was ever looked forward to with more excitement and anticipation. It meant a happy evening in the missionary's or some other special room where there would be games, races, prizes that had come in some of your parcels, special sweets and tea. Then best of all, was the blessed time of devotions and remembering you in prayer after the highlight of the year and evening—when they received their envelopes with your Christmas card, ribbon and balloon. Little Chubbie left her plate to come over and lean her head on my shoulder with shiny eyes to ask whether that night was Christmas again.

Chubbie had never heard such a wonderful story as this one around which all the happiness centred. She listened enraptured each night as the beautiful story was unfolded during family prayers. She could not wait to hear more and would ask again and again from the time she came home from school, whether it wasn't time for prayers yet.

On Christmas eve, gathered in a little circle, we continued the story of the wonderful day the Saviour came. We read, too, about the wise men and their gifts. Chubbie's eyes glistened. 'Auntie', she said seriously as she learned towards me, 'I want to give the Lord Jesus my heart'. The room was dimly lit with only the little lights shining above the manger scene in the corner. But the room seemed to be filled with the radiance that surrounded the shepherds on that first Christmas night as Chubbie so simply and sincerely made room in her little heart for God's matchless gift of love—His Son. Could any other Christmas be more precious? Could any other gift to Him and us be more blessed?
HIGHWAYS OF PRAYER TO TRAVEL WITH US IN 1959

Carol Terry. From the Superintendent's Office—That the Lord will lead Mukti on to even higher heights to dwell with the King for His work, that it might become a powerhouse of prayer in this land. As the work of Bible Revision presses on toward completion, guidance is needed regarding all the printing arrangements. In the Lotus Flower Family pray for two of the girls who are in high school studying, preparing to become nurses.

Janet Callan. In the Jasmine Family praise for the work of the Spirit of God in the hearts of our older girls during the special meetings. Pray for our two new babies Alka and Shashikala that they may early learn to love the Lord. Pray for the weak Baby Buds and for the Nurses and helpers that abundant grace may be their portion.

Elizabeth Morris. A Hindu girl named Alka in the Rescue Home was saved during the meetings in November, and has had to leave us for her home on account of a law case. Pray that she may be kept true. A Muslim girl fifteen years of age, a new convert who has had to leave for her home needs your prayers. Pray for other Hindu girls who need the Saviour.

Bhimabai Harishchandra. Praise for a girl with a most difficult nature in the Rose Family who gave her heart to the Lord during special meetings. Pray for Maina a twelve-year-old Hindu girl that she may have a true experience of salvation.

Anne Siemens. Praise for the deep way the Lord has worked in the hearts of so many of our Blind women and girls. Pray for Rajas and Shalini as they study in Bible College.

Elizabeth Stone. Pray for the many children in Elim Sadan, the Home of the Boarders. Pray for the girls and women in the Fancy Needlework department that they may know the joy of serving with hands dedicated to the Saviour.

Jean McGregor. Praise for a closely-knit, happy, Sky Flower Family. Pray for better understanding of how to help the 'teenagers'. Praise for the gift of love and patience that God has given to Motibai, the Kindergarten teacher. Pray for special strength for her and Mamta Akka who helps her. Pray that many of the children might find Christ.

Elsie Rohrer. Pray that the eight teenagers in our Lily Family may recognize their responsibility of walking before their younger sisters in the fear of the Lord, and may do so. Pray that the Word given forth in the villages by the Evangelistic Bands may be sown in the power of the Spirit and may find entrance into many hearts.

Virginia Nicholson. Pray that the oldest sister in our Gold Mohar Family may learn to love the little ones, set a good example and be willing to take responsibility when the matron-mother is not there.

Ruth Bollman. In keeping with Mukti's indigenous principles, we are exploring additional Crafts whereby our girls might be self-supporting. We need prayer. We praise our Lord for evidence of
increased security in the Hibiscus Family. Several have thrilled us with their ability to discern the Lord’s will in everyday matters.

**Lillian Doerssen.** Praise for happiness and health of the many little ones in the new Honeysuckle Family. Pray for Ruth, the young matron-mother in her large responsibility of caring for them and helping to lead them into eternal pathways. Praise for the happy, helpful spirit in the Sunflower Family. Praise for the old ladies still working faithfully in the Printing Press, and for young girls who are learning and taking up the work gladly. Pray that they may be given strength for this heavy task, especially as they labour towards the completion of the work on the Bible. Pray that God will give strength and wisdom to make known His working and the needs of the people of this land in the Publicity department. Pray for the Home Science department for our teenage girls to help them to become well equipped, godly mothers in their own homes and in our families here in Mukti.

**Corene McMillen.** Pray for wisdom and strength for the Bookkeeping work. Pray for a fruitful ministry through visitation among the Bethel Women. Pray for Jewel and Rebecca who will be going a distance away to boarding school.

**Howard McMillen.** Each Tuesday thousands of villagers come to Kedgaon for market. Pray that many will accept tracts and gospels from our Christian Men. Pray for Jawlikar, our Farm supervisor, that he may continue to grow in grace and continue to be a vital witness among our workers. Pray for men in our neighbourhood who have inquired about becoming Christians that they might make clear-cut decisions for the Lord Jesus Christ. Pray that materials and funds will be available to carry out necessary Building repairs in Mukti.

**Margaret Williams.** Pray that each member of the Franzipanni Family may allow the Lord Jesus to have His perfect way in her life, particularly the teenagers. Clubs regularly held are a time of challenge and cause for praise. Pray for strength and vision for young leaders being trained to serve with consecrated hearts; for all attending to be ‘thoroughly furnished unto every good work’.

**Sonubai Anda.** The number of destitutes increases constantly. Pray that our heavenly Father will meet our daily needs in the Kitchens. It is a great burden and expense but we praise the Lord because some are finding the Saviour here.

**Vimalbai Dongre.** Pray for the Hindu children in the School as they attend the Scripture class daily, that souls may be brought into His Kingdom. Pray for the Orchid family.

**Kamalbai Deshpande.** Pray that we may be able to entertain our Visitors well and that they may see that the Lord Jesus lives in this place. Praise for those in the Queen of the Night Family who have shown a real desire to follow the Lord. May they be kept by His power. Pray that the Lord may call out those from among our young women with a burden and vision for Adult Education.
Gladys Fletcher and Elda Amstutz. Pray for them as they continue their deputation work and prepare to return to Mukti.

Dr. Sheela Gupta. Please pray for us all who work in the Hospital that the healing ministry will have the touch of the Great Physician and that the gospel of love and peace will be declared with power.

Adrienne Mocatta. Pray that the Lord will continue the work of grace begun in the Morning Glory Family during the special meetings. Pray that the Lord will bless Suprabha as she helps in the Physiotherapy department and will use her to lead many patients to Himself.

Juanita Harrell. Praise for God’s help in final language examination. Pray for faithfulness in ‘weeding’ out of sins in each heart of our garden of Everlasting Flowers.

Pastor Hiwale. Praise for a year of blessing. Pray for God’s hand upon the ministry this year.

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