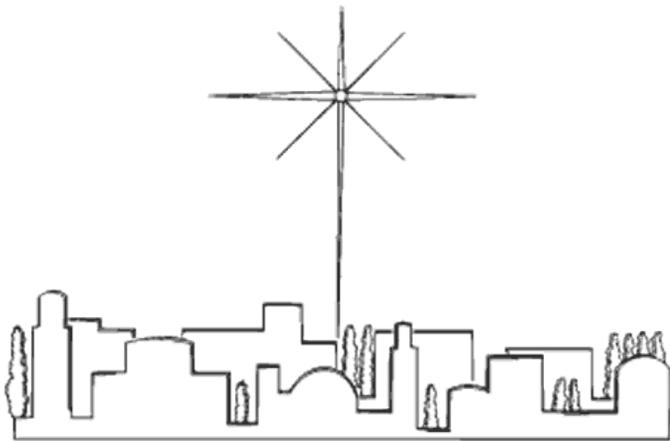




The Mustard Seed



Rehoboth Baptist Church Newsletter ~ December 2015



How to be Christmas to the World

By Steve Brown

As you may know, most of my life I've been a Scrooge about Christmas. While I still sometimes struggle with that, I'm a lot better. I'm not sure why. Maybe it's because I'm growing in Christ, maybe Anna's Christmas spirit is transforming me or it could be that I'm no longer a pastor with all the work a pastor has to do at Christmas.

However I think the real reason I'm a bit more into Christmas is that God has been teaching me that I don't have to be so much in control. Actually it's a deeper lesson than that. He's teaching me that my efforts to control things are silly because I never was and never will be in control of anything.

Let me give you a nontraditional Christmas text, a powerful statement about the incarnation of God in Christ. Paul said in Philippians 2:5-11:

"Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

Talk about going to a dangerous place without any weapons or any control...That's what the incarnation was all about. Paul said that Jesus "made himself nothing, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men" and that "he humbled himself." The world has always been a dangerous place for babies...and God became a baby.

Good heavens! What was he thinking?!

He was thinking about you and me.

The reason Christmas is such a wonderful time is because it is the time we set apart to remember how much God loved his people. It was the time when God came to us because we couldn't come to him. It was the time when God told us he wasn't angry and that he

would love us without reservation and without condition. It was the time when God took the armor off and became vulnerable to the worst we could do to him.

A long while back, when they were young, our grandchildren were with us in Florida. Jennifer, their mother, tried her best to get the girls to eat quickly because they needed to get out the door and were running late. She tried begging, she tried telling them how good the food was, and she told them that if they didn't eat, they wouldn't get to go out. Everything she tried didn't work.

So I decided to fix it. In my deepest and most authoritative voice I said, "Girls! Eat the food or I'm going to break your face!"

It got very quiet around the dinner table. Then Christy, who was five at the time, started laughing. She said, "Pops, I know you. You would never break my face!"

Christmas is the time when God let us know what he was really like. He went to a lot of trouble to tell us that he wouldn't "break our faces." When we understand that and say, "Father, I know you now. You would never break my face," I suspect he is as delighted as I was with Christy's understanding that her "Pops" loved her and would never hurt her.

Of course you already knew that. Christmas is God's gift to us. But let me tell you something perhaps you didn't know. We are called to be God's gift to one another and to the world. Note that Paul said, "Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus." In other words, Christmas is not only the gift of God to us; it is our call to be a gift to one another and to the world. It is the model of what we are supposed to be.

How do we become "Christmas" to others? The same way Jesus became Christmas for us.

Jesus was defenseless.

Jesus didn't try to protect himself. He "made himself nothing."

I don't know about you, but I spend a lot of my time trying to defend myself and God. I know. That's silly and a bit neurotic. I don't have anything to defend and God doesn't need any defending. (He was doing fine long before I came along.)

I spent a lot of time recently talking to a dear friend who was feeling horribly guilty about something he did almost 19 years ago. He said that there was no excuse for what he had done. I told him, "Of course there was no excuse. You're a sinner and, as Paul said to the Romans, you have no excuse. But God loves you and has forgiven you. Just don't pretend to be anything other than what you are...a man without an excuse."



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That is what it means to be defenseless. In Jesus' case, it was because he chose to be defenseless. In our case, it is because we really are. We don't have to pretend to be better than we are to our brothers and sisters in Christ or to the world to which we have been sent. It is our gift to them. If we pretend to be better than we are, if we defend ourselves, if we put on our "emotional and spiritual armor," they will think that Christmas is only for good people who are very religious. Until we become defenseless (without excuse, without armor) we will be only a curse to one another and to the world.

Jesus was demoted.

Paul said that Jesus "took the form of a servant."

Have you ever thought that we are here for "them" in the same way that Jesus was here for us? It's true. We think that we are special because we are Christians. Being special in the army at boot camp and as a Christian mean pretty much the same thing...we clean the latrines.

In his teaching the parable of the Good Samaritan, I heard a preacher make the following observation: The thieves said, "What you have is mine, I will take it." The religious leaders who passed by said, "What is mine is mine and you can't have it." The Good Samaritan said, "What is mine is yours and, if you need it, you can have it."

We are called to be Christmas to one another and to the world...and the way we do that is by being a servant the way Jesus was a servant.

Jesus was determined.

He knew the "end of the story." Paul said, "Therefore, God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name..."

It's the same with us. We will be exalted (not because of who we are, but because of whose we are). At Christmas, God said to us that this world isn't all there is and someday we will have the mother of all parties...a Christmas party to last all year long.

So Merry Christmas! Enjoy the tree, parties, family, celebration and gifts.

I know, I know. The really religious people will tell you that you're supposed to be very serious at Christmas. They are wrong and, because they are wrong, they will never be able to be vulnerable and free enough to be a Christmas for anybody else. Enjoying Christmas and "being" Christmas are sort of like dancing. You can't think about it. You just have to let go and do it.

Yeah, it's really crazy to be defenseless in a dangerous world. You can get killed.

It's really crazy to be a servant and to not care about power.

We really do have to look out for ourselves by lording it over one another.

Being Christmas to one another and to the world is really crazy...crazy like a fox.

Time to Draw Away

Read John 13:1-15

Are you into control? Best to let it go. Servanthood is revolutionary. It impacts, changes and challenges us (both the giver and the receiver) in radical and grace-filled ways. Being vulnerable, loving and open to the world is what Christ did at Christmas. We are called to do the same. So be yourself (warts and all)...and be Christmas.

No Room

By Max Lucado

Some of the saddest words on earth are: "We don't have room for you." Jesus knew the sound of those words. He was still in Mary's womb when the innkeeper said, "We don't have room for you." And when he was hung on the cross, wasn't the message one of utter rejection? "We don't have room for you in this world."

Even today Jesus is given the same treatment. He goes from heart to heart, asking if he might enter. Every so often, he is welcomed. Someone throws open the door of his or her heart and invites him to stay. And to that person Jesus gives this great promise, "In my Father's house are many rooms." What a delightful promise he makes us! We make room for him in our hearts...and he makes room for us in his house!

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it. John 1:1-5(nkjb)

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Visit us at: www.RehobothBaptistChurch.org
Mustard Seed Email: DLA85@Dlittlehale.com



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MISSION NEWS!

This month we will be praying for Dan and Sue Bisbee, missionaries with Fellowship International Mission in Senegal.

History of FIM-

Irene Wenholz was sent by Calvary Baptist Church of Altoona, Pennsylvania to serve in North Africa in 1922. Mary Mellinger, a recent Moody Bible Institute graduate, joined her in 1945. Their combined ministry attracted co-workers that shared their burden. As the workers increased it became apparent that the ministry would need to be formally organized.

Mary Mellinger asked her Pastor, Rev. Ralph Boyer of the New York Gospel Center to establish a mission board. Since the church was affiliated with the Independent Fundamental Churches of America (now IFCA International), Pastor Boyer asked 4 other IFCA churches to join in the formation of the Morocco Evangelical Fellowship in November of 1950.

The Sahara Desert Mission also joined the Morocco Evangelical Fellowship, and with this expanded purpose changed its name to Fellowship of Independent Missions.

In 1992, Dr. Richard Ruth became the Mission's first full-time Director and led the Mission through a move to its present Home Office facilities in Allentown, PA. Its name was then changed to Fellowship International Mission. Dr. Ruth retired, and Rev. Ray Shive became the General Director.

The Mission's passion- People trusting Christ as their personal Savior and growing in their faith.

Vision-

A growing team of thriving missionaries who are enthusiastically fulfilling their call in accomplishing the Great Commission to the glory of God.

Mission-

To assist local churches to fulfill their missionary vision and missionaries to fulfill their call.

Sound Doctrine-

Absolute truth matters. A shared understanding of biblical truths forms the platform from which effective, harmonious ministry is launched and maintained.

Prayer-

It is imperative to effective ministry, as we recognize our dependence on Almighty God.

Good Stewardship-

God expects His people to use the resources of time, money, abilities, and spiritual gifts to the best possible advantage in our pursuit of excellence in ministry.

Highlights from Dan and Sue's recent newsletter-

Dan and Sue have started a new school year. His English class has begun with 4 students, and it is his hope and prayer that the students will remain motivated and eager to learn.

Dan had a Sunday service in his home, and invited a man named Alan and his family. Dan was encouraged by Alan's interest in the Psalms, and prays that his wife Abby might come to faith.

Dan continues to pray that the Lord would lead him to His men of peace. Through these men he could build a relationship, and Dan is convinced that this is the best way to approach the Senegalese with the truth so that churches might be planted and a movement to Christ be seen in Senegal.

Sue is busy with homeschooling her children Christa, Sarah, Jeremy, Faith, and Hannah. David and Lydia remained in the US when the family returned to Senegal. Sue also ministers to the women in her local church and village.

Prayer Requests-

Pray for wisdom in how to encourage the children in their homeschooling.

Pray for Alan and his family, especially his wife Abby, that she may come to faith in the Lord Jesus.

Pray for a greater response to Dan's English classes.

Pray that the Lord would bring Dan to a man of peace.

We are thankful for Dan, Sue and their family. They have faithfully served the Lord in Senegal for many years. Continue to pray for encouragement, health and strength as they face daily challenges.

We are also keeping Paul and Jan Bothwell in our prayers during the month of January. They are missionaries with Missions Door, and serve in the greater Boston area.

History of Missions Door-

On May 22, 1948 in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, Missions Door began for the purpose of preaching the Gospel and planting churches across the United States and the North American Continent.

It was established by mission-minded Christians who called themselves Conservative Baptists.

The new Mission adopted the name of the Conservative Baptist Home Mission Society. Headquarters were established in the Chicago area.

The first missionaries were Robert and Winifred Johnson. They were appointed on October 7, 1948, for ministry in Alaska. Early ministries were also launched among Jewish people, Native Americans, Chinese, and Hispanics in the United States.



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Soon missionaries were sent to Mexico, Costa Rica, Honduras, and French Canada. US ministries were developed to focus upon suburban and rural church planting, ministry among Mormons in Utah, urban ministry in major cities across the country, and campus ministry among students at secular colleges and universities. Later campus ministry expanded to internationals, effectively reaching students from around the world, many from nations where missionaries are restricted.

The name of the Mission was changed to Mission to the Americas in 1994. The ministry, by this time, had been launched in Belize, Guatemala, and the Dominican Republic. In the 1990's the Mission began partnership connections between United States churches and sister churches in Latin America and Cambodia. In 1996 the ministry included El Salvador, Nicaragua, and Haiti.

The missionary family not only expanded, but began to grow significantly in ethnic diversity, with more than 30% non-Anglo missionaries by the year 2000. Appointed missionaries that would reach immigrant communities in the US included immigrants from Brazil, Cambodia, China, Cuba, Liberia, and the Philippines. African-Americans, Hispanic-Americans, and Native-Americans were also added to the missionary family. God raised up missionaries who were Belizeans, Dominicans, Haitians, Hondurans, Guatemalans, and Quebecois, for international ministries. The missionary family had changed dramatically!

The Mission relocated in 2001 to the inner city neighborhood of Five Points, in Denver, Colorado. and became Missions Door. The name was chosen to reflect ministry among immigrants in the United States, which resulted in the development of ministry back to their home countries in Asia and Africa-- from there to here and back!

Missions Door is in their seventh decade of ministry, and remains committed to the task of assisting local churches and followers of Christ in their efforts to evangelize, disciple, train leaders, and plant churches among the unreached of our world.

Much has changed in our world since 1948, but the need for forgiveness and new life in Jesus Christ is greater than ever.

About Paul and Jan-

Paul was born to missionary parents in Zaire, Africa, and accepted the Lord as a child.

Jan grew up on farms in Nebraska and Colorado, and also gave her life to Christ at a young age.

Paul and Jan met at the University of Colorado and were married after graduating in 1970. They have 4 daughters: Alicia, Kristin, Amelia, and Karin.

The Bothwells moved to Massachusetts, where Paul attended Gordon-Conwell Seminary.

Paul and Jan began ministering at an urban church in Boston, and felt God's call to urban ministry.

After graduating in 1975, Paul was appointed an urban minister by Missions Door and joined the church-planting team in Boston.

In 1977, they planted Jesus Helps Neighborhood Church in Roxbury, Ma. Paul was a pastor there until 1984, when he was called on to direct the CB church's rapidly growing Boston URBACAD (Urban Academy) program.

By 1990, his role had expanded to include being the Boston-area Team Leader of Missions Door Urban Ministries. In 2003, he was appointed the Missions Door Urban Specialist for urban New England.

Paul's passion and ministry is developing healthy church multiplication movements in world-class cities.

By 2004, the Missions Door initiative in Greater Boston alone had yielded 15 churches of 5 different languages.

Through the "train and multiply" mindset shaped by Paul's work and the Missions Door Team, these churches themselves have catalyzed over 150 churches overseas through their own global networks.

Prayer requests-

Pray for health and strength as Paul and Jan continue their ministry in the Boston area.

Pray for the churches started here and abroad, that the Gospel would be spoken clearly, and all done to the Glory of God.

Pray for Jan as she assists Paul and ministers to families.

Pray for their daughters and their families

We are thankful for the Bothwells, and their passion for raising up leaders who love the Lord and are eager to spread the Good News of Jesus worldwide.

And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen.

Matthew 28:18-20 (njkv)

January 2016

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14 9:00 AM Sunday School 10:30 AM Worship 6:00 PM Evening Service Kari Guest Valentine's Day	15 Behiye & Mark Oldro President's Day	16 7:00 PM Elders/Deacons Pray & Visit	17 7:00 PM Prayer Meeting 8:00 PM Choir	18	19	20																																																																																																																						
21 9:00 AM Sunday School 10:30 AM Worship 6:00 PM Evening Service Adam Schneider	22 Tory & AnnMarie MacDonald Washington's Birthday	23	24 7:00 PM Prayer Meeting 8:00 PM Choir Nicholas Phelps	25	26 Meredith Azevedo	27																																																																																																																						
28 9:00 AM Sunday School 10:30 AM Worship 6:00 PM Evening Service Kathy Frye	29	<table style="margin: auto; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td colspan="7" style="text-align: center; border: none;">Jan 2016</td> <td colspan="7" style="text-align: center; border: none;">Mar 2016</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="border: none;">S</td><td style="border: none;">M</td><td style="border: none;">T</td><td style="border: none;">W</td><td style="border: none;">T</td><td style="border: none;">F</td><td style="border: none;">S</td> <td style="border: none;">S</td><td style="border: none;">M</td><td style="border: none;">T</td><td style="border: none;">W</td><td style="border: none;">T</td><td style="border: none;">F</td><td style="border: none;">S</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="6" style="border: none;"></td><td style="border: none;">1</td><td style="border: none;">2</td><td colspan="6" style="border: none;"></td><td style="border: none;">1</td><td style="border: none;">2</td><td style="border: none;">3</td><td style="border: none;">4</td><td style="border: none;">5</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="border: none;">3</td><td style="border: none;">4</td><td style="border: none;">5</td><td style="border: none;">6</td><td style="border: none;">7</td><td style="border: none;">8</td><td style="border: none;">9</td> <td style="border: none;">6</td><td style="border: none;">7</td><td style="border: none;">8</td><td style="border: none;">9</td><td style="border: none;">10</td><td style="border: none;">11</td><td style="border: none;">12</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="border: none;">10</td><td style="border: none;">11</td><td style="border: none;">12</td><td style="border: none;">13</td><td style="border: none;">14</td><td style="border: none;">15</td><td style="border: none;">16</td> <td style="border: none;">13</td><td style="border: none;">14</td><td style="border: none;">15</td><td style="border: none;">16</td><td style="border: none;">17</td><td style="border: none;">18</td><td style="border: none;">19</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="border: none;">17</td><td style="border: none;">18</td><td style="border: none;">19</td><td style="border: none;">20</td><td style="border: none;">21</td><td style="border: none;">22</td><td style="border: none;">23</td> <td style="border: none;">20</td><td style="border: none;">21</td><td style="border: none;">22</td><td style="border: none;">23</td><td style="border: none;">24</td><td style="border: none;">25</td><td style="border: none;">26</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="border: none;">24</td><td style="border: none;">25</td><td style="border: none;">26</td><td style="border: none;">27</td><td style="border: none;">28</td><td style="border: none;">29</td><td style="border: none;">30</td> <td style="border: none;">27</td><td style="border: none;">28</td><td style="border: none;">29</td><td style="border: none;">30</td><td style="border: none;">31</td><td colspan="2" style="border: none;"></td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="7" style="border: none;">31</td><td colspan="7" style="border: none;"></td><td colspan="2" style="border: none;"></td> </tr> </table>				Jan 2016							Mar 2016							S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S							1	2							1	2	3	4	5	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	27	28	29	30	31			31															
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