

Faith Report

Rejoicing at Christmas

by Stan Long

Christmas has infinite meaning to Christians because the One who comes to us as a Servant of the Lord at Bethlehem is so unlike the heroes and celebrities of our day.

² *He grew up before him like a tender shoot, and like a root out of dry ground.*

He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him.

³ *He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering.*

Like one from whom men hide their faces, he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

Isaiah 53

We live in a culture that gives incredible attention to celebrity. There is a temptation to envy the lives of the rich, famous, and beautiful. People take extreme measures for their “15 minutes of fame.” We see a couple breaking into a presidential state dinner, a family fabricating a story about a boy in a balloon. Unless we intentionally shut our ears to the voices around us, we constantly hear and see news of modern pop culture celebrities. In former days, the printing presses of daily news papers around the country sought to provide accurate, important information for the nation. But now, as

those presses are shutting down, we live in a world of Twitter, iPhones, and 24-hour cable and entertainment channels. *People* magazine continues to satisfy society’s thirst for information about the lives of the rich and famous. Workplace water cooler discussions can sound something like this:

- Did Serena Williams really have a meltdown during a tennis match? Wow. What did she say?

- Can you believe what has been happening on the set of the David Letterman show when the cameras are turned off?

- Why did that singer Rihanna “stand by her man”, Chris Brown? She must have some issues!

- For whom do you feel more sorry: Jon, Kate or the Eight?

- Tiger Woods lost that little encounter with a fire hydrant, but where was he going at 2 a.m. anyway?

On and on it goes. In the midst of the noise comes this special season when we pause to remember One who had no paparazzi, no rewards programs at a four star hotel, and no Lear jet to circle the globe. He walked. He rode on a donkey. It all started with a humble couple, and a dirty manger.

Challenged by the religious leaders of His day, Jesus once said:

⁴² *If God were your Father, you would love me, for I came from God and now am here. I have not come on my own; but he sent*

me... ⁴⁵Yet because I tell the truth, you do not believe me! ⁴⁶Can any of you prove me guilty of sin? If I am telling the truth, why don't you believe me? ⁴⁷He who belongs to God hears what God says. The reason you do not hear is that you do not belong to God. John 8

Jesus is distinct from the celebrities of our time. The most astounding, amazing fact is that he had no skeletons in the closet. Jesus lived a perfect life of complete transparency and authenticity. He always declared the truth. There was no “spin” in His message. He took time for the “little people” of His day. He humbly served.

...*Christ Jesus:*

⁶ *Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, ⁷but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.*

⁸ *And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death—*

even death on a cross! ⁹Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name... Phil. 2

As we worship Jesus this season, never forget that our Savior is so unlike the celebrities of our time. He is the Son of Man, God the Son, Emmanuel. ♦



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*United that the
world would
know*

*⁹ After this I looked
and there before me
was a great multi-
tude that no one
could count, from
every nation, tribe,
people and lan-
guage, standing
before the throne
and in front of the
Lamb. They were
wearing white robes
and were holding
palm branches in
their hands. ¹⁰ And
they cried out in a
loud voice:
"Salvation be-
longs to our God,
who sits on the
throne,
and to the Lamb."
Rev. 7:9-10*

Introducing Randy Race

By Helen Brown



Randy and Dorothy (Dee Dee) Race with
daughters Melissa and Nicole

After a long search, Randy Race has been hired to fill the Business Manager position here at FCF. We are delighted to welcome Randy and his wife, Dorothy (DeeDee), and daughters, Melissa and Nicole. Dorothy and the girls will be moving to Baltimore after school is out later this month.

Randy is originally from Connecticut and started out as an engineer. He worked for over 20 years in manufacturing and business, much of it in senior leadership positions, primarily in the chemical industry in Massachusetts, Michigan and Texas. Several years ago, Randy felt God calling him from a business career and started taking seminary courses with a view to entering full time ministry. The family moved to Wilmore, Kentucky, three years ago for Randy to complete his Masters of Divinity degree at Asbury Theological Seminary.

Randy has been involved in lay teaching/speaking roles, cross cultural ministries, and with a Latino church in Lexington, Kentucky. He is very versatile. In addition to his professional skills and church involvement, he is also talented in construction, has been an EMT, deputy Fire Chief, HAZMAT technician, and volunteered in Builders Without Borders of

Texas. He also enjoys playing the guitar.

DeeDee spent many years as a computer scientist in software related jobs, and has worked in children's ministry and as a missions coordinator for a large church in Texas. She is an aspiring artist in her spare time. Melissa is in her last year of middle school and enjoys playing soccer, baseball and the bassoon. Nicole is in fifth grade and loves soccer and playing the piano.

God confirmed Randy's call to FCF and gave mighty affirmation when their house sold in just 14 days! Praise God for his provision. They will initially be living in Towson where they hope to purchase a home.

Transitions at FCF

- We say farewell to Reginald Shields, our buildings superintendent of almost 24 years, and thank him for his service.
- We say farewell to Judi Brotzman, who has moved to Virginia, and thank her for her faithful leadership and vision as the FCF Prayer Coordinator.
- We welcome Kevin Feldman* as Executive Director of Faith Urban Works.
- We welcome Army Arnold* as the Interim Director of Youth Ministry.

*Look for more details in the January Faith Report.

CALENDAR

- Dec. 4** Concert of Prayer 7:00 p.m.
- Dec. 5** Bazaar 2:30 p.m. & Children/ Youth Advent Concert 4 p.m.
- Dec. 6** Bazaar 4:30 p.m. & Advent Concert 6:00 p.m.
- Dec. 9** Faith Leadership Night 7:00 p.m.
- Dec. 16** PLYP Celebration 6.30- 8.30 p.m.
- Dec. 18** Concert of Prayer 7:00 p.m.
- Dec. 24** Christmas Eve Service 7:00 p.m.
- Dec. 25** Office closed for Christmas
- Dec. 27** One worship service 11:00 a.m.