



## Pastor's Pen

When Pope Julius I authorized December 25 to be celebrated as the birthday of Jesus in A.D. 353, who would have ever thought that it would become what it is today. When Professor Charles Follen lit candles on the first Christmas tree in America, in 1832, who would have ever thought that the decorations would become as elaborate and expensive as they are today?

We do not know the actual calendar date of the very first Christmas. But the Bible tells us that on that day at some point during the nighttime, *“there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord.”* (Luke 2:8-11)

It has been a long time since 1832, longer still from 353, and longer still from that dark night brightened by a special star when Jesus the King was born. Yet, as we approach December 25 again, it gives us yet another opportunity to pause, and in the midst of the excitement, elaborate decorations and expensive commercialization which surround Christmas celebrations, to consider again the event of Christmas and the One whose birth we celebrate. The Bible further informs us, *“this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heaven-*

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*ly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men. And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us. And they came quickly, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger. And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child.”* (Luke 2:12-17)

Good News...A Savior is born, which is Christ the Lord

Merry Christmas to All,  
Pastor Jim

***Portions of the article taken from:***

Brian L. Harbour, James W. Cox, *The Minister's Manual*: 1994, San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1993, p. 254.

## Awana

Awana has been going well this year thanks to all the volunteers. We lost Pam Anderson when she moved, but the Lord provided Ashley Sims as a new leader and Doreen Solum took over the director position for Pam.

We have averaged 46 clubbers this year with a high of 51. Awana is structured so that clubbers can join at any time during the year, so please invite your friends and neighbors. This is a great way to share the gospel with those around you.

For the months of September and October we had a contest to see who could bring in the most change. This "Penny Drive" was used to raise funds for our local Awana Missionaries, Jerry & Angie Berheim. It was a competition between the age groups (Cubbies, Sparks, T&T, & Youth) to see how much money they could bring in per clubber. I am happy to announce that our Youth really stepped up and brought in over \$3 per person. We had a total of \$82.30 donated!! We did not have Awana during the last week in October because of Halloween and the Trunk or Treat event at the church. Volunteers to help with Awana are both welcome and needed. Help us to reach the youth of our community.

Nicole Clark - Commander

### Operation Christmas Child

Operation Christmas Child is a ministry formed by Franklin Graham that takes Christmas gifts and the Gospel to underprivileged children all over the world. We are collecting items to fill shoeboxes in November. Each month we will highlight a different item to bring in. But, please remember we will take all types of donations at any time! For January please bring in wash cloths & soap.



# Putting on the Full Armor of God

## Apologetics - From Bob Neubauer

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### And There Were in the Same Field

Each year we have the privilege of looking at the Biblical texts concerning the birth of Jesus. All of us have read them many times. All of us have heard them sung by choirs in our churches. Some of the greatest music ever composed has been about the birth of our Savior. Each year we look forward to singing our favorite Christmas hymns. So, once more let's look at some of the things God determined were important to have in scripture about the events of the incarnation. We read in Luke chapter 2: *In the same region there were some shepherds staying out in the fields and keeping watch over their flock by night. And an angel of the Lord suddenly stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them; and they were terribly frightened. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of great joy which will be for all the people; for today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger." And suddenly there appeared with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among men with whom He is pleased."*

Certainly, this was the most dramatic and most important announcement in all of recorded history. The shepherds were not looking for Jesus; they were simply tending their sheep. Yet, we see that they responded rightly to the angelic proclamation. *When the angels had gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds began saying to one another, "Let us go straight to Bethlehem then and see this thing that has happened which the Lord has made known to us."* Notice that though we can be sure that nothing remotely like what they had just seen had ever happened to them before, they recognized that this had come from God. Not all Jews were believers in the one true God (Romans 9:6), but these shepherds apparently were. One reason we know we are Christians is that we too respond properly to the Lord's proclamations to us. Something else we can learn from the shepherds is that we should respond right away when God's truth is made clear to us. They did not dilly dally, wondering if they should do something. Rather, they set out right away for Bethlehem. And, of course, God's choice of shepherds as those to whom this announcement would be made was no accident, since Jesus is the great Shepherd.

According to our text the good news about the birth of Jesus is for all people. This means for people of every nation, every ethnicity without distinction. Male or female, young or old, rich or poor the birth of Christ is the first part of the good

news. It is not all the good news, for Jesus had to live a sinless life, offer that life on the cross for sinners, be buried and rise again on the third day – see I Corinthians 15:1-4. For Roman Catholics the birth of Christ is where the good news ends. One Roman Catholic apologist said, “The Catholic church is all about the incarnation.” And yet though we shouldn’t be, we in protestant churches are still negatively impacted by Rome. Many of our Christmas hymns reflect the idea that this is all we should be rejoicing about. While there should be joy to the world because He has come, His coming in and of itself saves no one.

Our text was taken from the New American Standard and you may have noticed that it says *peace among men with whom He is pleased*. All modern translations differ from the King James which says *peace on earth good will toward men*. The change is not a matter of translation but one of a difference in the Greek text. The King James was translated from a manuscript put together from just a few (seven or eight) Greek manuscripts. Today, we have more than 5800 Greek manuscripts which have given us a much more accurate Greek text. It is not that today we have better translators, it is that we have a better text from which to translate. Think about what the King James is saying here. How would the birth of Christ be “good will” for those who will never come to faith? It wouldn’t. Still, the King James will always have a place with English speaking Christians if for no other reason than the beauty of its language. That language is what has always made it the easiest translation to memorize.

What happened when the shepherds got to the manger? *When they had seen this, they made known the statement which had been told them about this child. And all who heard it wondered at the things which were told them by the shepherds.* If anyone ever had a story to tell it was this group of shepherds. They must have recognized to some extent the importance of the announcement by the angels. And the fact that they found the baby where the angels had told them He would be gave additional credibility to the angelic proclamation. What exactly was the wonderment of those who heard the shepherds’ story? We are not told, but it is likely there were different reactions. Probably some believed the testimony of the shepherds but did not know its meaning. Some must have doubted whether the story was true. Some likely wondered if it was true. These probable reactions are similar to what see today when we tell the story of Jesus. Just like the shepherds we do not and in fact cannot control people’s reaction. Our responsibility is to share what happened and then leave the results up to the Holy Spirit. The Spirit is well up to the task of convincing unbelievers of the truth of what we are saying. So, learn the story well and practice how you will communicate the story of Jesus. Tell the story, then leave the work of conversion up to the only one able to convert, the Holy Spirit. And then watch Him work!

## MINISTRY OPPORTUNITIES AT FSBC

- 2-9 Lottie Moon Week of Prayer
- 2 No Pot Luck
- 2 Budget Questions (5:30 p.m.)
- 3 Church Council (6:30 p.m.)
- 6 Ladies' Christmas Party (6:30 p.m.)
- 8 A Night in Bethlehem (6:00 p.m.)
- 10 Deacons Meeting (7:00 p.m.)
- 11 Nominating Committee Meeting (6:30 p.m.)
- 13 MDO Christmas Program (5:30 p.m.)
- 16 Business Meeting (5:30 p.m.)
- 24 Christmas Eve Offices Closed
- 25 Christmas Offices Closed
- 26 No Awana – No Prayer Meeting
- 31 New Years Eve Offices Closed
- Jan 1 Offices Closed
- Dec 21 – Christmas Break No Awana No MDO No Prayer Meeting

### Usher Report

We recently met and appointed Dave Ellis as head usher. We were short one person to fill the full complement of 16 volunteers but were fortunate to have Jake Sisson step forward to fill the last vacant slot. We would welcome any men who are members of the church body to be substitute ushers on a need to fill a date basis. We would especially welcome men who would be available for fifth Sunday services. Contact Dave Ellis at 590-3577 if you are interested.



## SUNDAY SCHOOL SNIPETS

### “THE WHY”

Over the years I have come to understand that people need to know more than “how” to do things. The “why” is very important. If people lack an understanding of the “why”, then the “how” seldom matters for long. The action or method may begin with energy and accuracy but frequently, motivation fizzles resulting in cutting corners, questioning, and ceasing the activity.

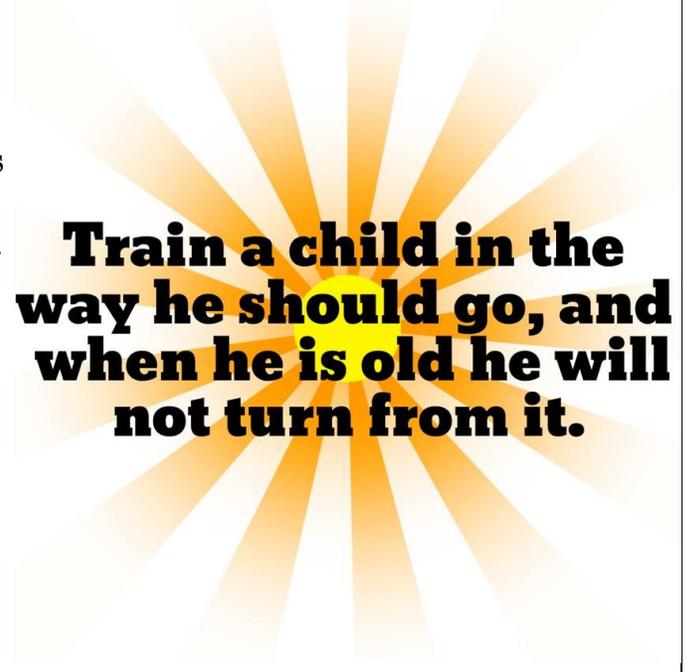
For instance, a class outreach leader is enlisted and told to develop a prospect list or an outreach list for the class. He starts without fully understanding the why this is needed except for just developing the list. So, he gathers a few names with contact information from class members and the church office, but without understanding the why, nothing is done with the list. His efforts were simply busywork.

The “why” makes a difference in what you do and how you do it. A narrow or incorrect motivation changes interest and direction. Sometimes, Sunday School leaders tend to leave out the “why”. Leaders themselves need to know and understand the “why” so they can effectively share it with others.

As Sunday School Director, my hope is that I can paint the “why” picture big enough, thus raising a vision for why the work of Sunday School is so important and to help our leaders/teachers see the possibilities.

We are so blessed to have such faithful and dedicated teachers in our Sunday School. Praise God! If God is nudging you in the direction of Bible teaching, please don't hesitate to contact me or any member of our Church Nominating Committee about how you can get involved.

Lord bless you all,  
Brother Patrick



**Train a child in the  
way he should go, and  
when he is old he will  
not turn from it.**

## Joke of the Month (Comedy) Corner



### Coding Logic



## December Birthdays and Anniversaries

5 Raymond Danner  
6 Don Hancock  
7 Elijah Grohs  
7 Samantha Simler  
13 Roman Grohs  
13 Linnette Randolph

20 Omayya Simler  
24 Dale Kearby  
27 Patti Clark  
27 Chris Pentico  
29 Diane Noland  
30 Le Roy Damke



*Happy Birthday*

15 Vincent & Raedena Brooks  
17 Osi & Stephanie Osgood

29 Eric & Mary Grohs



## First Week January Birthdays

1 Darlene Artz  
1 Amanda Case  
2 Garry Harper

4 Lendell Simler  
7 Osi Osgood