

The Morning Star

“I, Jesus,.....am the Bright Morning Star” (Revelation 22:16)

January, 2010

MBC Mission Statement: *To glorify God by proclaiming the excellencies of Christ so that all people may know the joy of salvation in Him.*

MBC Vision Statement: *To be a Spirit-filled church, passionate in our pursuit of knowing and enjoying Christ's glorious presence and make His presence known to others by ministering to the whole person in a way that makes people glad worshippers of the Lord Jesus Christ.*

... put on the new self, created to be like
God in true righteousness and holiness!

Ephesians 4:24

www.heartlight.org

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If you would like to contribute information regarding MBC Ministries, please e-mail photos, notes, prayer requests and praises to Monica Pramuka at Pramuka26@charter.net

TO THE MEMBERS AND FRIENDS OF MIDDLEBURY BAPTIST CHURCH,

The Bible says, *“But as for me, I will watch expectantly for the Lord, I will wait for the God of my salvation. My God will hear me.” (Micah 7:7)*

As we enter into a New Year, we truly do have much to look to the Lord for. Many of us come into 2010 finding ourselves waiting on the Lord for various things. There are things going on in our personal lives for which God is calling us to look to Him, to wait upon Him and to trust in Him. In like manner, our church is looking to the Lord and waiting upon Him, confident that He will act and that He hears the prayers of His people. As we come into 2010 as a church family, we are waiting and looking to Him in the area of the Lord's financial provision for the work of ministry and the advancement of His Kingdom in our community and in our world. Our desire is to minister to the needs of the whole person so that all people would become glad worshippers of Christ. We have been persistent in prayer for the needs of God's people and for the unsaved in our midst. We remain confident and hopeful knowing that the God of our salvation hears our prayers. We are also looking to the Lord and waiting upon Him to work mightily in the lives of His people in terms of growing in our understanding and experience of the work of the Holy Spirit in the lives of His children. **Jesus said,** *“If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him?” (Luke 11:13)* Please do join us on Wednesday evenings at 7:00 pm as we continue our study on the “How Much More Aspect” of the work of the Holy Spirit in the lives of His children.

Recently I came across a book that was entitled “Expectation Corner”. I think that title and the message it contains speaks of where the Lord has us right now as His people. The book tells of a king who had prepared a city for some poor subjects. Not far from them were storehouses where everything they needed was supplied, all they had to do was make their request known and their needs would be met, if they would be on the lookout for the answer. The sad story was told of a person in the city who never expected to get what he asked for because he thought he was unworthy. One day, he was taken to the king's storehouses and there to his amazement he saw the packages that had been made up for him and sent. The king's messengers had been to his door but found it closed because he was not on the lookout.

Andrew Murray wrote, “A joyful expectancy is the essence of true waiting.” May the Lord find His people on the “lookout” for Him. Let's pray and watch with a joyful expectancy in the Lord. **The Bible says,** *“But as for me, I will watch expectantly for the Lord, I will wait for the God of my salvation. My God will hear me.” (Micah 7:7)*

Looking to the Lord with you,
Pastor John

Vision Development Team Update

At our last business meeting in October of 2009, I asked the church to pray about the possibility of changing the name of our church. Everything that we do as a church ought to have as its basis the vision that God has given us as a church. Our vision statement states that we desire “To be a Spirit-filled church, passionate in our pursuit of knowing and enjoying Christ’s glorious presence and making His presence known to others by ministering to the whole person in a way that makes people glad worshippers of the Lord Jesus Christ.” So the reason for changing the name of the church would be so that our name more closely communicates to people the vision of our church. As you know, the Vision Development Team has been assisting the pastors in implementing the vision of the church into its various ministries, therefore it is appropriate that they have the primary responsibility in considering a new name for the church. At our annual meeting in January, the Vision Development Team may have a recommendation for a new name for the church. Any action to change the name of the church will be taken by a majority vote of the active membership of the church at a special or quarterly business meeting.

Please be in prayer for the Vision Development Team as they seek the Lord’s will concerning a new name for the church which would be a reflection of our church’s vision. If you have any thoughts or suggestions regarding a new name for the church that you feel is in keeping with the vision statement of the church, please share them with a member of the Vision Development Team. (Members include: Pastors John and Tony, Frank Pramuka, Jeanne Pramuka, Michael Schwartz, Lauren Lounsbury and Monica Pramuka)



Church cancellations due to inclement weather will be available on the church answering machine (203-758-9655) or WFSB Channel 3 Eye Witness News

Youth Activities

JANUARY 3—6:00-7:15 PM

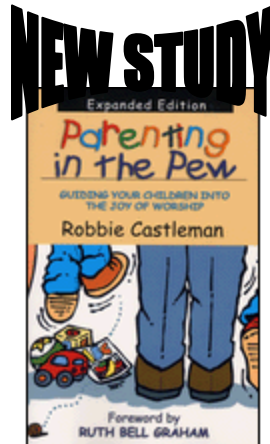
SARDINES...AND PLANNING FOR JANUARY 10TH

JANUARY 10—1:00-4:00 PM

**YOUTH WILL OFFER BABYSITTING TO GIVE PARENTS
"TIME OUT"**

JANUARY 17—1:00—4:00 PM

HIKING (MORE INFO TO FOLLOW)



**THURSDAY MORNINGS
IN THE MONTH OF JANUARY
10:00 AM**

**Inspiring children to be full
participants in the worship service
and teaching them the joy of
worship—from toddlerhood to
the teen years.**

*Thursday morning Ladies Bible Study
will resume February 4.*

MBC ANNUAL MEETING

JANUARY 24

Right after Worship Service

Please bring a bag lunch

**PARENTS "TIME OUT"
SUNDAY, JANUARY 10
1:00-4:00 PM**

Need a free afternoon? Youth will offer babysitting service at the church for those parents who could use a break. Activities and snack will be planned by the youth under the direction of Lauren and Cheryl. Sign up sheet is on the bulletin board in the Youth Room.

Please equip children with a bag lunch

TIME OUT

January Calendar

6

Fri.	1	HAVE A HAPPY AND BLESSED NEW YEAR!!
Sat.	2	
Sun.	3	9:45 am—Christian Education for all ages 11:00 am—Worship 6:00 pm—Corporate Prayer / Youth Acitivity (Sardines) <i>MONEY AND PERMISSION SLIP DUE FOR YOUTH RETREAT</i>
Mon.	4	7:00 pm—Bible Study - “A Helpful & Practical Look at the Book of Acts” at the Pramukas’
Tues.	5	7:30 pm—Bible Study at the Torres’ Home
Wed.	6	6:00 pm—Corporate Prayer 7:00 pm—Wednesday Night Bible Study— “ The Holy Spirit— unfolding the ‘how much more’ of His Presence (<i>childcare provided</i>)
Thurs.	7	10:00 am—Parenting in the Pew class for Parents/Guardians
Fri.	8	
Sat.	9	
Sun.	10	9:45 am—Christian Education for all ages 11:00 am—Worship 1:00-4:00 pm—Parents “Time Out” - a free afternoon for parents 6:00 pm—Corporate Prayer
Mon.	11	7:00 pm—Bible Study - “A Helpful & Practical Look at the Book of Acts” at the Pramukas’
Tues.	12	7:30 pm—Bible Study at the Torres’ Home
Wed.	13	6:00 pm—Corporate Prayer 7:00 pm—Wednesday Night Bible Study— “ The Holy Spirit— unfolding the ‘how much more’ of His Presence (<i>childcare Provided</i>)
Thurs.	14	10:00 am—Parenting in the Pew class for Parents/Guardians
Fri.	15	

Please submit calendar items and events for January to Monica by January 20

Sat.	16	
Sun.	17	9:45 am—Christian Education for all ages 11:00 am—Worship 1:00-4:00 pm—Youth Activity: Hiking 6:00 pm—Corporate Prayer
Mon.	18	7:00 pm—Bible Study - “A Helpful & Practical Look at the Book of Acts” at the Pramukas’
Tues.	19	7:30 pm—Bible Study at the Torres’ Home
Wed.	20	6:00 pm—Corporate Prayer 7:00 pm—Wednesday Night Bible Study— “ The Holy Spirit— unfolding the ‘how much more’ of His Presence (<i>childcare Provided</i>)
Thurs.	21	10:00 am—Parenting in the Pew class for Parents/Guardians
Fri.	22	
Sat.	23	
Sun.	24	9:45 am—Christian Education for all ages 11:00 am—Worship MBC Annual Meeting—bring a bag lunch! 6:00 pm—Corporate Prayer
Mon.	25	7:00 pm—Bible Study - “A Helpful & Practical Look at the Book of Acts” at the Pramukas’
Tues.	26	7:30 pm—Bible Study at the Torres’ Home
Wed.	27	6:00 pm—Corporate Prayer 7:00 pm—Wednesday Night Bible Study— “ The Holy Spirit— unfolding the ‘how much more’ of His Presence (<i>childcare Provided</i>)
Thurs.	28	10:00 am—Parenting in the Pew class for Parents/Guardians
Fri.	29	
Sat.	30	
Sun.	31	9:45 am—Christian Education for all ages 11:00 am—Worship 6:00 pm—Corporate Prayer



**MIDDLEBURY BAPTIST CHURCH
FOOD PANTRY**

There is an **INCREASED** need for good healthy food such as cereals (low sugar), canned meats, beans, biscuit and muffin mixes, dried potatoes, rice, etc. Perishables such as eggs and meat are accepted as well. Please contact Frank, Jeanne, Monica or Mary Mazza before bringing in perishables.

CLEANING CREW....Many tasks for many abilities. Please see Pastor John....and help to keep our church clean.



Winter is upon us and there is once again the need for shoveling and sanding of walks and steps. Please see Pastor John if the Lord is leading you to this ministry.

AN URGENT PRAYER

There are many in our church body who are struggling financially. Please consider giving a little extra each week to the Benevolent Fund. Just mark the bottom of the check or place the cash in an envelope marked "Benevolent Fund". Grocery Store gift cards would be helpful as well in aiding these families to put food on the table. If one member of our body is hurting, we all hurt. Has the Lord called you to minister to our brothers and sisters in Christ in this way?

Your Testimony Wanted

How has the Lord been revealing Himself to you lately? How did He reveal Himself to you when you were born again? Encourage others who visit our website or read our newsletter with your personal testimony. No names are necessary, unless you wish them to be published. Please submit your testimony to Monica at Pramuka26@charter.net.

Blaspheming the Holy Spirit
Mark 3:22-30 & Matthew 12:22-32
Pastor Tony Mazza—November 19, 2007

Manifestations of the Spirit could be chalked up as works of the devil. On the other hand, there may be works of the devil that are attributed to God.....

Blasphemy of the Holy Spirit is an unpardonable sin—how often do we hear that preached? This will not be forgiven in this age, or in the age to come. *Blasphemy is speaking against and attributing things of God to the devil.*

In **Mark 3:24**, the Pharisees are basically accusing Jesus of casting out demons with the devil. In other words, they accused Jesus of using Satan's power. *Blasphemy is calling good evil.* Blasphemy is the unpardonable sin—you are either for Jesus or against Him. In **Matthew 12:30**, the words “gather” and “scatter” are present-indicative...you do one or the other. If you're not with Jesus, you're with Satan.

When Jesus healed the demon-possessed man who was blind and mute, the Pharisees were not actually there to witness the event—they only heard about it. They had already heard about other events and had obviously already formed a prejudice against such things. The Pharisees did not deny the miracle, but attributed it to the work of the devil—a miracle took place, but it wasn't really God who accomplished it. This is impossible—the devil does not do miracles. The Pharisees did not want to recognize or admit the supernatural hand of God in this matter.

The Pharisees wanted to control the people, in the same way some churches want to control the people—they fear the control of the Holy Spirit, because it diminishes their control. The Pharisees' control was being lost and they had to offer up a crazy accusation in order to regain it. Supernatural work of the Spirit today is often referred to as being from the devil—likely for the same reason. Control gives them authority over the people—supernatural control is “like the wind”, you know not from whence it comes and where it goes. The Holy Spirit has dominion over our thoughts and beliefs, not the human church.

As we ourselves fear loss of control—do we really want our lives given over totally to the Holy Spirit? Something to ponder.....

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A LOOK BACK ...continued

Also, because we see so much of the “hoaxes” today, perhaps we too have a preconceived prejudice against the manifestations of the Holy Spirit. We see so very little of actual manifestations of the Holy Spirit, so we have little to go on, comparatively speaking. We see people being “slain in the Spirit” and speaking in tongues—some things way over the edge—and our vision gets clouded to the real workings of the Holy Spirit. The fear is that if you let the Holy Spirit in, you open up the church to the extreme and false we are so accustomed to seeing on the television screen. There is the fear of not being able to discern.

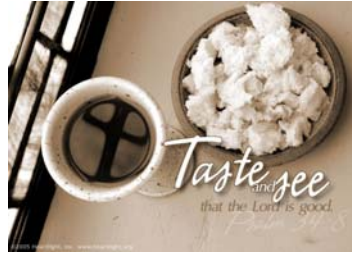
Spirit and Truth is necessary—the Word verifies the Spirit, and vice-versa. What you must do to overcome this fear is to find the proper truth in that area—in God’s Word.

In **Matthew 12:25**, we read that Jesus read their thoughts—without their saying a single word directly to Him—perhaps this is what frightens us most—someone who can see inside our souls and thoughts and hearts—and reveal it!

Is it possible that those who are against the workings of the Holy Spirit are actually against Jesus? When resisting a thing of supernatural wonder, you simply deny its existence. This thing just didn’t take place. *If you deny the gifts/manifestations, you deny the baptism, you deny the supernatural, you deny Jesus! You are denying God what is His—denying Him His glory!* “What I do is what the Father does...” (Jesus’ words) Do not speak against the Holy Spirit, because you deny a work of God. This miracle was God revealing Himself—imagine how Jesus felt at this denial.

So, he who is not for Him, is against Him (**Matthew 12:30**). Denial is evidence of not being with Jesus, and actually against Him. Jesus explains “blasphemy” against the Holy Spirit (**Matthew 12:31**) in **verse 32** as “speaking against” the Holy Spirit...for the mouth speaks out of that which fills the heart (**verse 34**). This sin follows you to the grave (in this age, and in the age to come).

*Is it possible for God to be doing a work and in the very midst of it,
you miss it?*



**Good News of Great Joy For All Peoples
December 27, 2009**

**Reference: Isaiah 11:1-3, Isaiah 61:1-3,
Luke 4:1, 14-21**

Here we are, the first Sunday after Christmas and a New Year ahead. Whenever I celebrate Christmas, I think of my mom saying that with all the preparation, Christmas comes and goes so quickly. In truth, it is just beginning. The message of Christmas is enjoyed and experienced by God's people every day. As we share the message of Christ with people, those that are not His can experience the good news of Christmas as well. This message is for all peoples. The central idea is that the Lord's anointed brings good news to all peoples. Who is the Lord's anointed? Jesus Christ. How do believers share in His anointing?

Reference Isaiah 61—we have here a Messianic prophecy—Isaiah is referring to Christ. In **Luke**, we see that Jesus quotes these verses and says, *“Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.”* We have here the gospel, the good news and glad tidings of great joy that Jesus brings to the afflicted (all people). We can certainly celebrate that good news every day. The one thing we are called to is to share that good news, that gospel, those glad tidings, with those who are afflicted, held in captivity, the oppressed, the poor—to bind up the broken-hearted. God's people are anointed to share this good news just as Jesus was anointed to share the good news. The real work of binding the broken-hearted is the healing that Jesus brings to those who are broken over their sin. Before anyone can come to Jesus and enter the Kingdom of Heaven they need to be broken over their sin. For anyone to come to receive the good news, being broken must come first.

The gospel is intended for those who are meek, humble and for those who recognize their sin before a Holy God. They need to recognize their need for a Savior. He came to proclaim liberty to the captives and freedom to prisoners. Who are those captives and prisoners that need to be set free today? They are those who are in captivity and bondage to their sin. In **John 8:31** Jesus spoke of Himself here...“If you continue in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine and you will know the truth and the truth will make you free.”

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Taste and See...continued

Jesus Christ is the Truth, He is the one who makes men and women free. In **John 8:36** He says, “So, if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed.” All this here is in fulfillment of Isaiah 61. He is not speaking of deliverance from physical prison, but from the spiritual darkness that people are in. That is also what Christmas is all about—Jesus Christ, the Light of the world has come. That’s why we light candles at Christmas time. There is the opening of the eyes that only Christ can give and this is in contrast to the darkness that people are in. (reference **John 3:16-21**) Jesus Christ is the one who brings people out of the darkness of their sin and into the light.

As we spend time with family and friends this Christmas, perhaps there is a rub there, some persecution. Why? Well, it’s oftentimes related to their loving the darkness more than the Light.

Isaiah 61:2—”to proclaim the favorable year of the Lord”.... This means today is the day of salvation. A day of vengeance and a day of judgment will come, but today is the day of grace. So as that grace comes, look at **Isaiah 61:3**. All these verses in Isaiah are the good news.

Even as I look at our Mission Statement –to be a people passionate in the pursuit of knowing and enjoying Christ’s glorious presence— it’s right here in ministering to the whole person. That applies right here to **Isaiah 61**—ministry to their physical and spiritual needs. He comes to make glad worshippers.

He comes to comfort those who mourn. We participate in all of that—we are called to comfort those who mourn. **Psalm 23:5-6**—you prepare a table for me...you anoint my head with oil...I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever. We have this good news of great joy to share with a lost and dying world!

We will be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the Lord. We are implanted in Christ! Christ’s righteousness is imputed to us. We are planted in the Lord for what purpose? That He may be glorified! Those who have received those tidings of great joy are implanted in Him for His glory! Share the good news! Praise be to God!

You can listen to the full sermon at
www.middleburybaptistchurch.org

That Which I Will To Do—Romans 7:15-24

The approach of a new year generally gets us into an introspective mood and resolving to make changes—we so long for that “fresh start”, don’t we? We have this constant battle going on within us. Yet we, as followers of Jesus Christ, have a fresh start—a fresh start that involves dying first.

In the novel “The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde” by Robert Louis Stevenson, Dr. Jekyll says, “ I had in me many generous desires to help the poor and downtrodden...I loved to go out and be kind to them, both medically and financially. But along with these good motives and impulses within me, these generous desires I had, I found another set of impulses utterly different and absolutely contradictory. I would find rising within me grotesque desires of anger and desire for self-gratification.” Dr. Jekyll’s answer to this dilemma was a drug that would create, in effect, another man to suit this dark side of his personality—this person would have an entirely different appearance and could be “itself wholly without hindering the other and there would no longer be struggling with each other inside.” Does this have a ring of familiarity to you?

In Romans 7:15-24, Paul says, “*For what I am doing, I do not understand. For what I will to do, that I do not practice; but what I hate, that I do. If, then, I do what I will not to do, I agree with the law that it is good. But now, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me. For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells; for to will is present with me, but how to perform what is good I do not find. For the good that I will do, I do not do; but the evil I will not to do, that I practice. Now if I do what I will not to do, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me. I find then a law, that evil is present with me, the one who wills to do good. For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man. But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?*”

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How insidious the flesh is—those “grotesque desires of anger and desire for self-gratification”. Dr. Jekyll had it right, the countenance changes when we experience these varied impulses. We all have seen soft features turn hard, beauty turn to ugliness, gentle eyes turn cold and steely; even the shoulders slump or pull back in defiance when we revert to “Mr. Hyde”. I recall the first scene in “The Lord of the Rings—The Return of the King” - two hobbits peacefully fishing...one finds the Ring...the two succumb to the power of the Ring and battle over it...one strangles the other to take ownership of the Ring...as he clutches it, saying “precious, precious”, his features change into the grotesque creature Gollum. Dr. Jekyll referred to this as the “horror of my other self”.

It is a comfort (believe it or not) that there is a battle going on in the first place—it is a clear sign that the Holy Spirit is at work....**Galatians 5:17**, *“For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish.”* Dr. Jekyll found that when he was “himself”, he experienced a sense of conviction at the evil in his heart, but when he transformed into Mr. Hyde, all conviction turned to pure glee at his sinfulness—he was “free” to sin unashamedly. Eventually, Dr. Jekyll’s “conscience slumbered” in that it was not “himself” doing these deeds, but another. Unfortunately, over the course of time, Mr. Hyde would begin to emerge without the use of the drug—eventually taking over almost entirely—total depravity. We find in Dr. Jekyll’s final lucid moment as himself, he realizes his only alternative out of this tortured life is death.

What can we “take home” from this story as a whole? What is the final answer to the dilemma of the battle taking place within? We must first understand that the very nature of us is sinful—we are not sinners because we sin, we sin because we are sinners. In Christ lies the only answer to the problem of our sin nature, and it involves death without a doubt, but there is something beyond this. Our guilt removed by the blood of Christ, we continue to move forward attempting “goodness” in our own flesh and failing repeatedly, leaving us “treading water” so to speak. We are stuck in the “sin cycle” - sin, repent, forgiveness, sin, repent, forgiveness—this cycle can lead to discouragement, to say the least. Every year we vow to ourselves to change—and yet change seems so out of reach.

The blood frees us from the guilt of sin (covers our sins, penalty paid in full) and places us back into right relationship with the Father. The cross itself frees us from our sinful natures—“*For I am crucified with Christ...*” (**Galatians 2:20**). The Resurrection gives us new life, a new heart, makes us sons and daughters of the Most High—“...*that He might be the firstborn among many brethren*” (**Romans 8:29**) and endues us with power from On High (the Holy Spirit) to manifest Christ in this life.

Christ, and Christ alone, is the answer to this battle with the flesh (this “horror of the other self”). To quote G. Campbell Morgan, “Everything a sinning man needs he finds at the cross.” God does not just forgive us and then leave us to our own devices. The work of Christ is all-sufficient. Just as the “old man” comes from the seed of Adam, the old man is now dead and we are alive in Christ—it is no longer “I” who live, but Christ lives in me. “*For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive.*” (**1 Corinthians 15:22**). Not only did Jesus take my sins upon Himself on that cross, He also took “me” on—I was in Christ when He died (I was crucified with Christ—He took the penalty of death for me, and also crucified my flesh). Oh, to grasp the full concept of this promise! “Be holy as I am Holy” no longer seems quite so farfetched when we come to the full realization of what Christ accomplished on our behalf. We need not succumb to sin—the Holy Spirit gives us new life and empowers us to not respond to temptations...to quote Tony Mazza, “He makes us dead to sin, not immune, but DEAD”. We no longer need to respond as we face temptation - we have only to turn to Jesus. That’s our part in the matter—to discipline ourselves to turn to Him in those times in utter and total helplessness and surrender. He will do the rest. Put off the old man and put on the Lord Jesus Christ (ref. **Ephesians 4:22** and **Romans 13:14**). This takes vigilance on our part.

G. Campbell Morgan again, “I cannot understand the mystery of all that Jesus did, but it is by way of the cross alone that my wounded heart is healed, my withered soul is renewed, my deformed spirit is built up, my broke manhood is remade....”

Oh, to finally grasp this and hold onto it with all our might. What Jesus has done for us...Lord, why do we find it so difficult to surrender to You—do we not believe Your promises? Will You someday say to us, “Oh, you of little faith”? Lord, we are so tired of this battle—yet you have already claimed the victory. Thank you, Jesus.

“Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord!” (Romans 7:24-25)

W o r d s n g n r i b s h

“We are so utterly ordinary, so commonplace, while we profess to know a Power the Twentieth Century does not reckon with. But we are “harmless”, and therefore unharmed. We are spiritual pacifists, non-militants, conscientious objectors in this battle-to-the-death with principalities and powers in high places. Meekness must be had for contact with men, but brass, outspoken boldness is required to take part in the comradeship of the Cross. We are “sideliners” - coaching and criticizing the real wrestlers while content to sit by and leave the enemies of God unchallenged. The world cannot hate us, we are too much like its own. Oh, that God would make us dangerous!”

Jim Elliot, Missionary Martyr

“Remember the perfections of that God whom you worship, that he is a Spirit, and therefore to be worshipped in spirit and truth; and that He is most great and terrible, and therefore to be worshipped with seriousness and reverence, and not to be dallied with, or served with toys or lifeless lip service; and that He is most holy, pure, and jealous, and therefore to be purely worshipped; and that He is still present with you, and all things are naked and open to Him with whom we have to do. The knowledge of God, and the remembrance of His all-seeing presence, are the most powerful means against hypocrisy.”

Richard Baxter

Christian Martyr in Pakistan

Jesus tells us that the first shall be last and the least shall be the greatest in the Kingdom. He elevates repentant sinners and tax collectors above Pharisees and wealthy leaders. And through the Apostle Paul, He reminds us that He chooses the foolish things of this world, the weak and the despised, to show the glories of His wisdom. In late October, at Islamabad's International Islamic University, an Islamic suicide bomber tried to attack the women's side of the campus. But, there worked a lowly janitor, Pervaiz Masih, who like so many of the 2 percent Christian minority in this 95 percent Muslim country, are relegated to the most menial jobs—garbage collectors, sewage workers, and servants. The suicide bomber was making his way to a cafeteria holding some 300 to 400 women students at the time, when Masih came between him and his goal. Masih is a common name among the Christian minority—it means Messiah. And on October 20, Masih certainly followed in the footsteps of Jesus, the true Messiah. He refused to let the bomber pass. In the process, the bomb detonated, killing Masih, the bomber, and three girls nearby. Meanwhile, 300-400 Muslim girls in the cafeteria were unharmed. Masih rose above the barriers of caste, creed and sectarian terrorism. A Christian sacrificed his life to save Muslim girls. *Compass Direct News*

Sure Could Use a Little Good News Today.....

Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam—December 11

History was made in Communist Vietnam.....some 40,000 people gathered in Ho Chi Minh City to worship God, celebrate Christmas, and hear the gospel message—an event of unprecedented magnitude in Vietnam. Organizers of the event stood firm as authorities attempted to sabotage the event. After much prayer, authorities finally gave permission and the event took place without incident. For house churches, events like these are very rare and very special, and for many this was their first glimpse of the strength of Vietnam's growing Christian movement. Thousands of Christians joined a choir of more than 1,000 singers in loud and joyful praise. Sources said that the main speaker, Rev. Duong Thahn Lam, head of the Assemblies of God house churches, "preached with anointing" and people responding to his gospel invitation poured to the front of the stage "like a waterfall". Organizers and many participants were overwhelmed with emotion and gratitude as the event closed, praying "Lord, bring revival to all of Vietnam!" We join them in rejoicing and praising God! *Compass Direct News*

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Pakistani Christians Released

You may recall seeing the photos of Gulsher Masih and his daughter, Sandal Gulsher, on the International Day of Prayer for the Persecuted Church. Our prayers for their release from prison have been answered! They were arrested for blasphemy and falsely accused of burning a copy of the Quran. During cross-examinations, witnesses admitted to falsifying the information. The presiding judge dropped all charges and ordered their release. *Father, week after week we hear of those who are suffering for their faith. Today we give you praise for this glimpse of Your work. Thank You for Your mercy upon Masih and Sandal. Continue to protect them and give them favor with friends and neighbors that Your Word might bear much fruit in Pakistan.* *Open Doors Ministries*

The persecution of Christians worldwide continuesplease keep our brothers and sisters in Christ in your prayers.

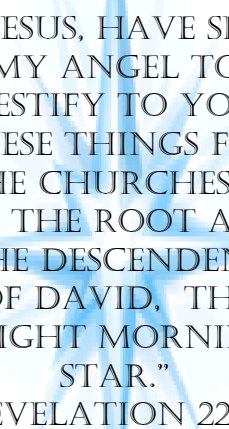
MISSIONS MOMENT

This year, Middlebury Baptist Church was able to collect 3 large boxes of winter wear—hats, gloves, socks—to send to St. Paul’s House in New York City. With so many people living on the streets there, this will be a real blessing to them.

MBC also delivered Christmas gifts to a needy family in Middlebury. We pray these gifts brought cheer and revealed Christ to this struggling family.

In these difficult financial times, our Missionaries are also having a hard time making ends meet. Please pray for them as they continue the vital work of expanding the Kingdom of God and revealing Christ to those in danger of perishing.

Please also pray earnestly about supporting our Missionaries financially—you can be an important part of the work they are doing!



“I, JESUS, HAVE SENT
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OF DAVID, THE
BRIGHT MORNING
STAR.”
REVELATION 22:16

The Morning Star is a ministry of :
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