



## Shepherd Tuesday Happenings for December 23, 2008

Dear Shepherdites and Friends,

Wasn't Sunday great? Christmas treat bags were presented to all present. The pastor brought a message from Romans 8:1-4, 8, which explained that Jesus looked like us, so we can look like God.

The pastor's message reminded me of a piece recorded by renowned broadcaster Paul Harvey several years ago, that I would like to share with you called *The Man and the Birds*:

*The man to whom I'm going to introduce you was not a scrooge; he was a kind decent, mostly good man. Generous to his family, upright in his dealings with other men. But he just didn't believe all that incarnation stuff which the churches proclaim at Christmas Time. It just didn't make sense and he was too honest to pretend otherwise. He just couldn't swallow the Jesus Story, about God coming to Earth as a man.*

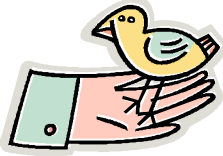
*"I'm truly sorry to distress you," he told his wife, "but I'm not going with you to church this Christmas Eve." He said he'd feel like a hypocrite. That he'd much rather just stay at home, but that he would wait up for them. And so he stayed and they went to the midnight service.*

*Shortly after the family drove away in the car, snow began to fall. He went to the window to watch the flurries getting heavier and heavier and then went back to his fireside chair and began to read his newspaper. Minutes later he was startled by a thudding sound...Then another, and then another. Sort of a thump or a thud...At first he thought someone must be throwing snowballs against his living room window. But when he went to the front door to investigate he found a flock of birds huddled miserably in the snow. They'd been caught in the storm and, in a desperate search for shelter, had tried to fly through his large landscape window.*



*Well, he couldn't let the poor creatures lie there and freeze, so he remembered the barn where his children stabled their pony. That would provide a warm shelter, if he could direct the birds to it. Quickly he put on a coat, galoshes, tramped through the deepening snow to the barn. He opened the doors wide and turned on a light, but the birds did not come in. He figured food would entice them in. So he hurried back to the house, fetched bread crumbs, sprinkled them on the snow, making a trail to the yellow-lighted wide open doorway of the stable. But to his dismay, the birds ignored the bread crumbs, and continued to flap around helplessly in the snow. He tried catching them...He tried shooing them into the barn by walking around them waving his arms...Instead, they scattered in every direction, except into the warm, lighted barn.*

*And then, he realized that they were afraid of him. To them, he reasoned, I am a strange and terrifying creature. If only I could think of some way to let them know that they can trust me...That I am not trying to hurt them, but to help them. But how? Because any move he made tended to frighten them, confuse them. They just would not follow. They would not be led or shooed because they feared him.*



*"If only I could be a bird," he thought to himself, "and mingle with them and speak their language. Then I could tell them not to be afraid. Then I could show them the way to safe, warm...to the safe warm barn. But I would have to be one of them so they could see, and hear and understand." At that moment the church bells began to ring. The sound reached his ears above the sounds of the wind. And he stood there listening to the bells as they played – Adeste Fidelis (Oh Come All Ye Faithful). Listening to the bells peel the glad tidings of Christmas. He sank to his knees in the snow.*

As, Paul Harvey would say, "And now you know...the rest of the story.

**Just Thinking** -- The family had finished eating their meal in the restaurant and little Jenny had not eaten all of her meal. When the waiter came, the mother asked him for a "doggie bag". With that the little girl began jumping up and down and squealing. The mother looked at her and asked her why she was so excited and to please calm down. The little girl replied, "Oh Mommy, we're getting a dog."

Something similar happened to us a couple of weeks ago; we were looking around in a shop at the hotel in Mexico, where some local crafts were displayed. Having collected chess sets at one time, I spotted a wooden one and remarked how nice the chess set was. Savon immediately replied, "You have enough chess sets to choke a horse." Without hesitation, I responded, "Oh boy, you're going to let me get a horse."

Both stories are cases where something is said which leads to an unintended and illogical assumption. I call it situational logic.

This time of year we often hear, "If you are good, Santa will bring you a present." As children we concluded in our minds that if we are good, for at least 10 minutes during the Christmas season, there may be a positive reward.

The Bible tells us that if we are good, we will be rewarded with eternal life. Does that mean for the next 10 minutes? It couldn't hurt; but we are told that we need to confess our sins and live our lives from that point as Christ would have us to live. Will be mess up; you almost certainly will; just like little Johnny at Christmas time. But Jesus wants more than just an apology and a promise, he wants a lifetime of commitment not just a seasonal one.

Deck the halls with boughs of holly, ring those jingle bells and dream of a white Christmas; but don't get caught up in situational logic. Jesus wants you at your best all year long. *"Do not live according to the sinful nature but according to the Spirit."* (Romans 8:4 NIV)

Merry Christmas

**At Shepherd This Week** – Here are your opportunities for worship this week at Shepherd Church of the Nazarene:

Wednesday @ 7 pm – Christmas Eve Service  
Thursday -- Merry Christmas  
Sunday @ 10 am – Morning Worship  
Sunday @ 4:30 pm – Praise Team Practice  
Sunday @ 5:00 pm – Evening Worship

**Discipleship Training** – As you may have noticed, there is no Discipleship Training this week because of the holidays. It will resume next week on Tuesday night only at 7 pm, in the Church Fellowship Hall.

Beginning Sunday, January 4, Discipleship will be each Sunday Morning at 9 am at the Church.

**Christmas Eve Service** – There will be a short Christmas Eve service at Shepherd on Wednesday night at 7 pm. Won't you and your family join us for this special time? Visitors and house guests are welcome.

**Building Improvements** – Ladies, you will have to take our word for it, but there have been some much needed improvements in the men's restroom. Thanks to Bob Coleman, Larry Ellisor, Henry Rast, Chad Branham and the Pastor for accomplishing this new look in the facility. Sorry, I will not be printing pictures.

**Church Mailboxes** – Don't forget to check your family mailbox at the church for last minute Christmas cards. You can also leave messages, information and words of encouragement in the boxes. Your family name is printed below your box. If you do not have a labeled box and attend regularly (you do not have to be a member), see Barbara Clark or the Pastor.

**Help Wanted** – We still need some folks to help to assist in the nursery. We would like to have enough volunteers, so you would only have to serve once a month. If you are willing, contact the Pastor or Loraine.

**Coming Event** – We will celebrate the New Year at 7 pm on Wednesday, December 31.



**Thank you and Merry Christmas** – Thank you to Chris Rude, our webmaster, who keeps our website up-to-date each week. For those of you that didn't get to know Chris and Katie, they were members of Shepherd until last fall when they moved to Tennessee. Merry Christmas Chris and Katie and thank you again.

If you remember Chris and Katie, and would like to send them Christmas greetings; I am sure they would appreciate it. If you do not have their e-mail address, send your message to [news@shephernazarene.com](mailto:news@shephernazarene.com) with the subject line "Chris and Katie" and we will forward it to them.

**Finally** – "Thanks for the electric guitar you gave me for Christmas," little Billy Ray said to his uncle the first time he saw him after the holidays. "It's the best present I ever got."

"That's great," said his uncle. "Do you know how to play it?"

"Oh, I don't play it," the little fellow said. "My mom gives me a dollar a day not to play it during the day and my dad gives me five dollars a week not to play it at night."

Do you reckon that Mom and Dad's favorite hymn is Silent Night?

See you in church and remember to come home to Shepherd where you **are** family.

*John*

*(See the next page for Christmas Pictures)*

## Church Christmas Dinner, Dec. 10, 2008

The Christmas present from the Church was presented to Pastor and Mrs. Coleman at the dinner.  
(Photos by Larry Ellisor)



Shepherd Tuesday Happenings  
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