



Reflections from the Pastor

St. John's United Methodist Church
The Messenger

Christmas is a uniquely Christian holiday. It celebrates the birth of Jesus Christ, who for Christians is the Son of God. The name 'Christmas' underscores its unique religious content.

Christmas is the shortened form of "Christ's Mass". The term 'mass' carries the meaning of thanksgiving and is often used in connection with the celebration of Holy Communion.

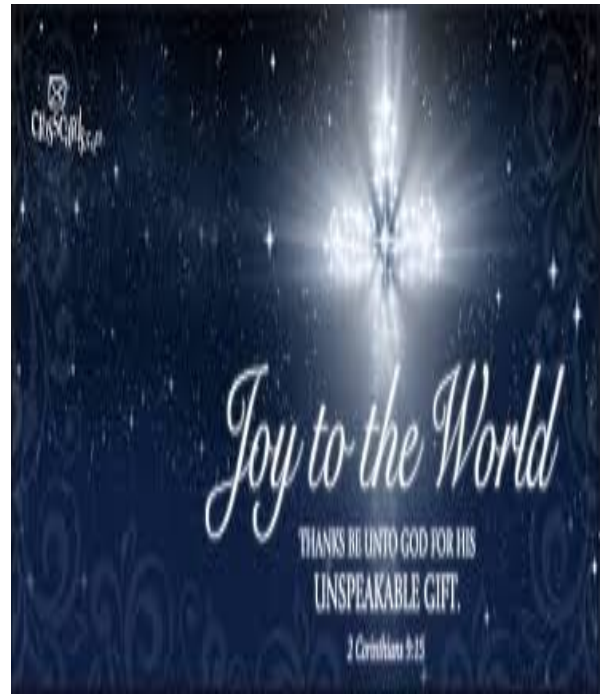
Christmas is the most celebrated holiday in the world. For the Christian, Christmas has deep spiritual significance centering in the birth of Jesus in a manger in the city of Bethlehem. To the secular world it has become the most commercialized period of the year. In America, many stores anticipate grossing anywhere from 25% - 40% of their annual sales from the last week of November until the end of December.

When one pauses to contemplate it, Christmas has a profound impact on every person regardless of their religious understanding. Every time one celebrates a birthday, or a person consults the calendar, we use Jesus Christ as our reference point. All of history is divided between two periods: BC standing for "before Christ" and AD representing the Latin "*anno Domini*" which means literally, "*in the year of our Lord*".

Every event in history is dated by how many years and days have passed since Jesus Christ was born on earth.

When the angels appeared to the lonely shepherds outside the village of Bethlehem on the night Jesus was born, they announced His birth as "*good news of great joy which shall be to all people.*" [Luke 2:10]. Today, for most of us, Christmas is a time of stress in getting cards addressed and mailed, searching for gifts for many persons on our gift list and making plans for family coming home and holiday meals to prepare and serve.

Could it be that God has allowed the Coronavirus pandemic to hit our world to remind us that all this commercialization of



Christmas has nothing to do with what the celebration is all about?

The heart of Christmas is the awareness that God took the initiative to send His

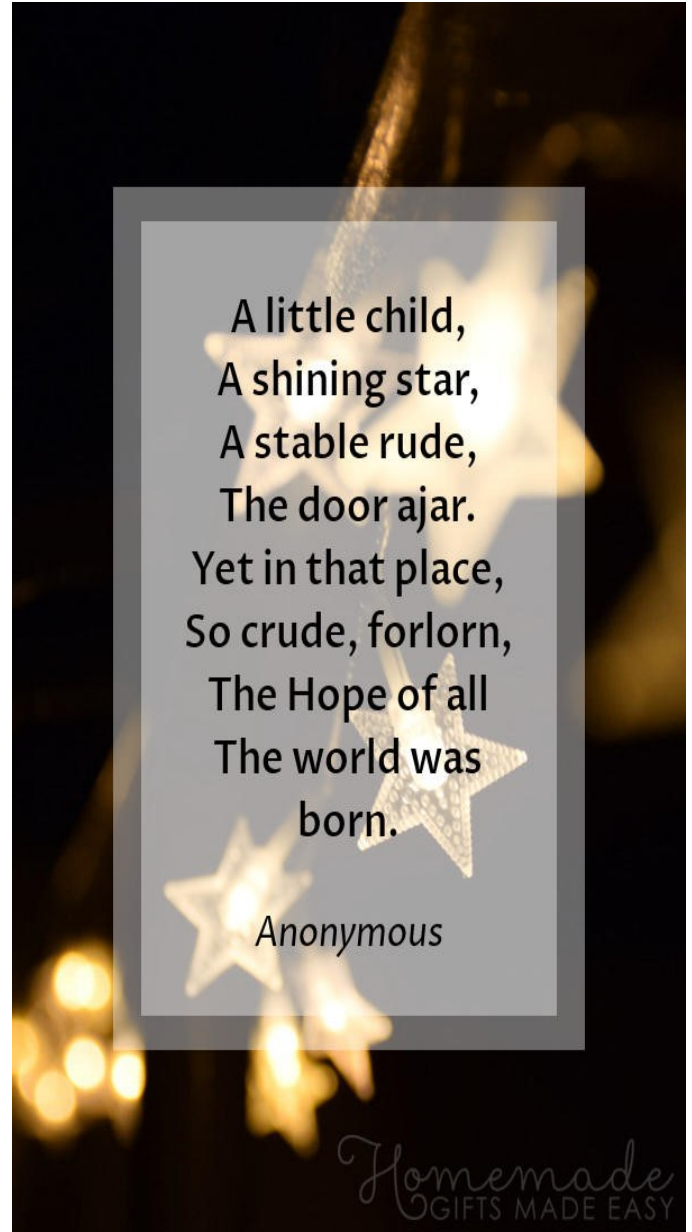
Son in human form to our world for the purpose of becoming the atonement for all humanity's sins. He died on the cross that we might be reconciled with God. Do we understand the cost of our salvation? It cost God the life of His one and only begotten Son. How does one put a price tag on that divine gift?

But it is more. God's gift of salvation is an eternal gift. Those who accept Christ as their personal Savior receive the gift of eternal life. Eternal life speaks first, of a quality of life we can enjoy here on earth. It speaks, secondly, of a form of life that will never end. It is God's life given to humans. When we end our sojourn here on earth, we have all eternity to enjoy His life with Him.

Has Christmas become a reality in your heart and life? Have you confessed your sins to Christ and asked Him to be your personal Savior? Do you enjoy the peace and joy of knowing that God's eternal life pulses in your heart and life; a life that will take us beyond the parameters of human existence on earth to eternal existence in the presence of God?

If this joy does not resonate in your life, do not let this Christmas pass without asking Jesus to be your Savior. That is how best to celebrate Christmas!

Pastor Ivan L. Schwenn

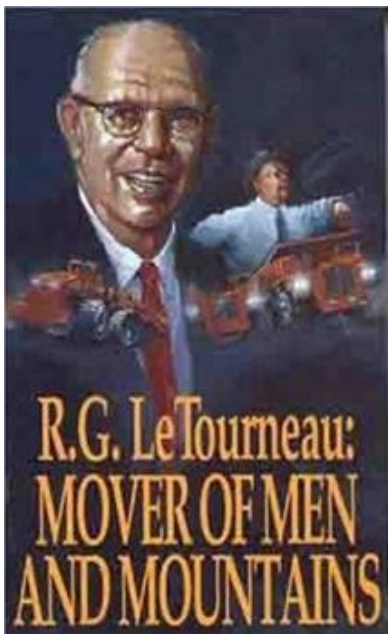


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12-19-1997

I'M SORRY GUY, I KNOW THAT YOU'VE GOT A GOOD HEALTH PLAN AND YOU GIVE OUT FREE GIFTS AND ALL, BUT JESUS REALLY DOES HAVE A MUCH BETTER PLAN



Robert Gilmore LeTourneau is best known as the “dean of earthmoving.” This title was given to him during and after World War II when machines designed and produced by Letourneau had been a major factor in winning the war.

Thousands of different pieces of earth moving equipment were used in

building roads, airports, and military bases all over the world as the war effort moved and grew.

LeTourneau’s experience in welding in the shipyards on the West Coast convinced engineers that ships could be built faster and stronger by welding the metal pieces together instead of by riveting.

Probably the best-known piece of earthmoving equipment was the two-wheeled tractor that was called Tourna pull. This tractor pulled a scraper that would collect dirt needed to build road surfaces. Once loaded, the Tourna pull could travel much more rapidly to get the dirt to the location where it was needed.

An off shoot of the Tourna pull was LeTourneau’s development of huge, low pressure rubber tires that enabled these huge, heavy machines to travel over rough and wet terrain. During his lifetime of designing new equipment, LeTourneau had over 300 U. S. Patents to his credit.

Brought up in a Plymouth Brethren home, LeTourneau was regular in his attendance at church. As a teenager, he gave his heart to the Lord Jesus. His salvation experience while not earth shaking, was genuine. As a young man he surrendered his life to the Lord and was determined to pursue is love for building earthmoving equipment. During this period, he made God His business partner.

When one studies the magnitude and variety of machines he developed, one would assume that LeTourneau was a highly trained engineer. The truth is that RG LeTourneau was a sixth grade drop out who at the age of 14 began working in an iron foundry in Portland, Oregon.

At the age of 29 LeTourneau found himself jobless and \$5,000.00 in debt. He jumped at an opportunity to level a large piece of land for a wealthy rancher. He found himself fascinated with earth moving equipment and began building newer and bigger machines in his own shop in California.



The next decade of his life did not improve and at age 40 he was again jobless with an indebtedness of \$100,000.00. As a devout Christian, he was determined to pay back every dollar he owed while at the same time reaching out by faith to give \$5,000.00 to missions each year through his church. To pay off this indebtedness he sold much of his equipment.

At this point, LeTourneau decided that his future was in designing, building, and selling earth moving equipment. He moved his corporate headquarters to Peoria, Illinois to be close to the Caterpillar engine factory. In 1932, in the very heart of the Great Depression, LeTourneau began to realize profits in his business. By 1938 he had broken the million-dollar mark in profits.

During this period of growth LeTourneau’s wife, Evelyn, suggested that they give 90% of their income to the Lord’s work and live off just 10%. With this money they founded the Letourneau Foundation from which millions of dollars have been

given to missions, educational grants, and scholarships.

In his later years, RG LeTourneau became a noted speaker to churches across America and around the world. He shared his testimony of how God led him in life and challenged others to do more for the Lord.

LeTourneau ever thought of himself as a common layperson. In life, he was an extremely uncommon man. He learned from life and from the Lord. One of his best-known quotes was: *“I ran into a sign on a safety bulletin board one time that went like this: ‘Where did you get your good judgment?’ ‘From my experience.’ ‘And where did you get your experience?’ ‘From my bad judgment.’”*

Only heaven will reveal how much of this earth was moved by RG LeTourneau through his life and his love for the Lord.



OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD 2020 UPDATE

St. John’s UMC has wrapped up Operation Christmas Child for 2020.



The shoeboxes collected at St. John’s UMC were dedicated during the Sunday morning worship service on November 15th..

By the time you read this article, the shoeboxes should be at the Processing Center in Southern California. Continued prayers are being asked for their safe delivery to each designated country and for every gift to be exactly what God wants for each child.

Thank you, to everyone who gave so generously to Operation Christmas Child. It was a highly successful season. Twenty six personally packed shoeboxes, 46 online shoeboxes and 5 previously ordered online purchases (test of online purchase program)



Bob and Mary Jo Gaines presented the personally packed shoeboxes on Sunday, November 15th for dedication.

brought the grand total to 77 shoeboxes in all.

From some remaining donated monies (not enough to purchase an additional shoe box) two of “The Greatest Journey” (a 12 lesson discipleship program offered to the children receiving shoeboxes) were purchased. All children receiving shoeboxes will also receive “The Greatest Gift”, the Gospel story of Jesus.

To God be the Glory!

Bob & Mary Jo Gaines



THE TRUE MEANING OF CHRISTMAS

C	N	W	N	H	A	A	Y	O	J	T	L	R	E
O	C	B	O	O	M	E	L	E	I	R	B	A	G
R	H	P	E	S	O	J	N	M	M	T	T	E	I
E	E	Y	E	T	T	H	E	A	L	E	H	L	H
G	M	Y	R	R	H	O	V	S	P	M	M	T	Y
N	O	I	T	A	V	L	A	S	U	L	N	E	E
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M	I	C	E	F	G	M	A	H	L	M	S	B	B
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S	T	I	A	J	P	Y	I	I	N	J	A	O	E
H	A	P	S	E	F	W	M	O	A	D	H	L	O

Words can forward, backward, vertical or diagonal within the puzzle.

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|--------------|-------------|-----------|----------|
| EMMANUEL | HOLY FAMILY | MESSIAH | HOST |
| FAITH | BETHLEHEM | JOSEPH | MYRRH |
| JESUS | HYMNS | SALVATION | PEACE |
| JOY | HEAVENLY | ADVENT | GABRIEL |
| GOLD | ANGEL | MANGER | MARY |
| HOPE | MASS | LOVE | WISE MEN |
| FRANKINCENSE | | | |



December 2020 Birthdays



December Birthdays

December 6th	Ken Coon's Birthday
December 11th	Ivan Nieto's Birthday (youth)
December 14th	Maria Christina Noriega's Birthday
December 15th	Eddie Moises' Birthday
December 18th	Monica Ford's Birthday
December 18th	Nancy Kay Gregory's Birthday
December 22nd	Glenn Martin's Birthday
December 25th	DeJon Giffin's Birthday
December 31st	Ivan Nieto's Birthday (adult)

**A Worship Service is now being held at 9:30 a.m.
on Sunday mornings in the church sanctuary
(a maximum of 50 people can be in attendance
(PLEASE WEAR A MASK)**

**Please check the St. John's website, watch for e-mail notifications, or
call the church office for additional information!**

All other events and meetings remain suspended until further notice.

**St. John's United Methodist Church
60 W. Veteran's Blvd. Tucson, AZ 85713-6128
Pastor Ivan Schwenn
pastorstjohnsumctuc@gmail.com
520-792-6398 E-mail: stjohsumctuc2@gmail.com
Website: stjohsumctucson.org
Office Hours: 8:00 am to 4:00 pm (Monday and Friday)**