



## Pastor's Perspective — Christmas without Christ

By Ron D. Lindholm, Senior Pastor

Rachael Carmen has a speaking and writing ministry with her husband in Charlotte. Her comments on Christmas were featured in the December 2007 Tyn-dale House publication *Dr. James Dobson's Focus on the Family Bulletin*. They are worth repeating.

*"When I was a kid, Christmas was my favorite time of year for all the wrong reasons. I loved making my wish list. My conversations with friends centered on the gifts we'd receive. And I had an arsenal of manipulative tactics ready to use on my parents. I do not remember a skimpy Christmas.*

*"We had the stuff but not the Savior; we had the tree but not the manger; we had the lights but not the star. We had Christmas without Christ. And although we always had many presents and full stockings, the holiday was empty. His presence was missing.*

*"I wish I could say it was easy for me to transition from a lifetime of wanting stuff to wanting Him. I grew accustomed to getting; I enjoyed being selfish. I didn't realize how ugly it was—until my kids started getting old enough to respond to marketing.*

*"This season isn't about extraordinary gifts but about celebrating Christ's birth. It's not about exhausted nights or expensive parties but about His extravagant love. It's not about rushing around but about resting in Him. With this focus, I can celebrate the greatest gift of all time, Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God."*

*We had the stuff  
but not the Savior...*

Like I said, Rachael's words are worth repeating; even more than that, they are worth remembering. If you are not careful, you might find yourself (and your family) having Christmas without Christ.

## Christmas Celebrations

**Christmas Musical:** A mini-musical will be presented during the morning service on Sunday, December 21.

**Christmas Eve:** There will be a candlelight service at 6:00 PM to celebrate our Savior's birth with songs, hymns and Scripture reading.

Please invite unsaved friends and neighbors to these Christmas celebrations, praying God will open their hearts to the wonderful truths of the gospel as they learn of Christ's coming into the world to rescue them from sin.

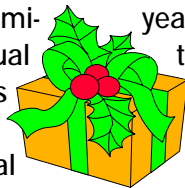


## New Year's Eve Fellowship

A Progressive Dinner is planned for New Year's Eve beginning at 6:00 PM. If you would like to participate, please sign up in the church foyer and also indicate if you would be willing to host a group in your home for the appetizer, main course or dessert. Depending on the number of participants, we may need more than one site per course. Don't miss this opportunity to encourage one another in the Lord as we reflect on His goodness in 2008 and anticipate His work in our lives in the coming year.

## Remembering Our Missionaries

One way we show our love for our missionary families is by giving generously to Fellowship's annual Christmas missionary offering. This offering is received throughout the month of December for the purpose of providing each family a gift equal to their monthly support provided by our church. This



year our goal is \$3,850. Please plan to participate in this expression of gratitude for the sacrificial service of our missionaries. As you do please also pray for the Lord's provision for the coming year, as a majority of our missionaries continue to face significant shortfalls in financial support.

## Sharing Christ this Christmas

Christmas is a great time for Christians to speak with others about the salvation we have in Jesus Christ. To help you share your faith Fellowship is providing copies of outreach books for you to give to those who do

not yet know Jesus. Please take several copies from the church foyer and share them with others as you buy up opportunities the Lord provides to be a witness for Christ.



## Preparing for the New Year

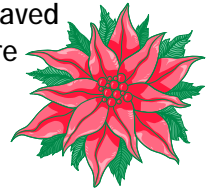
The December Annual Meeting will be held on Wednesday, December 10 at 7:30 PM. The purpose of this meeting is to approve a church budget and elect deacons for 2009. The Finance Committee and Pastors and Deacons have carefully prepared a proposed budget which acknowledges the need to be fiscally responsible in trying economic times, while seeking to address the needs of our

church here at home, as well as helping our missionaries abroad. The Clearing Committee has identified two men, Joe Robinson and Ron Wasserstein, who meet the biblical qualifications and have consented to serve in the office of deacon. We are thankful for the prospect of being able to expand our Deacon body in 2009 and look forward to the unique ways in which Joe and Ron will contribute to the ministry.

## Parties with a Purpose

A Christmas party for our **ESL Classes** will be held on Thursday, December 18 from 8:00 to 9:00 PM in Fellowship Hall. The entire church family is invited to participate. The students will learn about the Christmas story during their class time, and you will have the privilege of talking with them further about the special meaning that Christmas has for those of us who understand the reason for the season.

Our **Awana Clubs** will have a Christmas party at the church on Saturday, December 20 from 10:00 AM to NOON. The children and their families will enjoy playing games and sharing gifts, and a gospel message will be presented. Please pray that this event will help us forge stronger relationships with unsaved Awana families, and that some who are present will accept Jesus as Savior.



## No Man Is an Island

Twenty-four men and young men attended the retreat at Skycroft Conference and Retreat Center on November 21-22. This was perhaps the biggest group ever from our church, and great fellowship was enjoyed during this time together. Missionary Jim Ruff ex-

ceeded our high expectations in providing a great challenge from God's Word to function not as isolated individuals, but as a community of believers. We pray the Lord will continue to use what was learned to equip our men to serve one another and the church at large.

## Money Matters

**Thanksgiving Offering:** We are thankful for the more than generous Thanksgiving Offering of \$10,184. This offering, together with 50@1 giving and regular mortgage payments, should enable the church to reduce our principle by over \$80,000 in 2008, leaving a balance of about \$78,000 at year's end.

**Regular Giving:** While year-to-date giving continues to exceed the need, giving to the General Fund has been down since July and was quite low in November.



## Calendar

Dec. 9	Nursing Home Ministry (2:00 PM)
Dec. 10	December Annual Meeting (7:30 PM)
Dec. 13	Leaf Clean-up (9:00 AM)
Dec. 18	ESL Christmas Party (8:00 PM)
Dec. 20	Awana Christmas Party (10:00 AM)
Dec. 21	Christmas Ensemble (AM Service)
Dec. 24	Candlelight Service (6:00 PM)
Dec. 31	Church-wide Progressive Dinner (6:00 PM)

November Giving Per Week (General Fund)	\$4,785
Weekly Need	\$5,568
Year-to-Date General Fund Giving	\$267,853
Year-to-Date General Fund Need	\$267,287
Year-to-Date 50@1 Giving	\$11,654
Thanksgiving Offering	\$10,184
Year-to-Date Building Fund Giving	\$15,431