



Pastor's Perspective: Christmas without Christ

By Dr. 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 Tyndale 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.

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

"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."**

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.

Sharing the Most Important Message of the Season

By Sherry Wasserstein

I don't think I'm so very different from most people. At least not in regards to the busy schedules that come with the holiday season. Between school activities, the normal living requirements and getting in every important holiday tradition—I love those military concerts—life gets even more hectic in December than other months.

So it was easy to rationalize why I couldn't take time out last year to listen...really listen....to my friend's words. She said it at least twice. She was from Pakistan. She knew about the beauty of Christmas trees and home decorations, something she never did as a Muslim, and she wanted to see ours.

At first, I just smiled and thought to myself, "That's nice." The second time, I began arguing with myself, "I do NOT have time for that! I only have a certain number of days left before we head to family for Christmas, and I need every moment of that time to get ready!" This was just one request that would have to be unfulfilled.

But on the following Sunday, Pastor Lindholm spoke about Christmas. He talked about how the secular world could distract us

from the true meaning of Christmas.

He reminded us about the truly Good News of Christmas -the birth of a Redeemer - and how the best use of the season was one in which eternal matters were addressed. We should use the season to share the story and personal redemption possible because of Jesus' birth.



Without even leaving the pew that Sunday I knew what needed to be done. The following Monday, I asked my friend if she could come to our house one day after school to share cookies and hot chocolate with us. With eagerness she agreed.

That afternoon, while her girls and our boys played board games together, she and I talked next to the Christmas tree. We talked about her life in Pakistan. We talked about their move here. And we talked about how her husband's best friend in her country was an evangelical Christian, like us. And we talked about Jesus. I sat there amazed at God's work. I was so glad I had seized the chance...when I thought I was too busy...to do the most worthwhile thing of all during the busy holiday season: share Jesus with



Calendar Highlights

Please invite unsaved friends and neighbors to our regular worship services and special celebrations this Christmas season. Pray that God will open their hearts to the wonderful truths of the gospel. The following special gatherings are planned:

- ◆ **Women's Ministries' Christmas Party:** Friday, December 4, at 7:00 PM in Fellowship Hall. All of the ladies are invited to attend. Please bring two-dozen cookies to exchange. They will go caroling at the homes of some of our church family who are physically unable to come to church. After caroling the ladies will return to the church for refreshments.
- ◆ **ESL Christmas Party:** Thursday, December 17, at 8:00 PM in Fellowship Hall. Please pray that this gathering will be used to open doors for the gospel among the families we are seeking to reach through this ministry.
- ◆ **White Elephant Gift Exchange:** Friday, December 18, 7:00 PM in Fellowship Hall. The idea is to have a fun, pressure-free evening in giving gifts that are unique and, sometimes re-gifted from previous years. Although there is a price limit of \$3, the better option is to simply find a "special" item around your house. Wrap it up, and hope someone loves it more than you ever could. Bring snacks to share and enjoy during the evening. All are welcome to attend.
- ◆ **Christmas Choir Program:** Sunday, December 20, 6:00 PM. The program will consist of specially prepared songs, congregational hymns, and narration, intended to focus our attention on the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ into the world.
- ◆ **Christmas Eve Candlelight Service:** 6:00 PM. The **service will celebrate the Savior's birth with songs, hymns and the reading of Scripture.**

Calendar At-A-Glance	
Dec. 4	Women's Ministry Christmas Party (7:00 PM)
Dec. 5	Leaf Cleanup (9:00 AM)
Dec. 8	Nursing Home Ministry (2:00 PM)
Dec. 9	December Annual Meeting (7:30 PM)
Dec. 17	ESL Christmas Party (8:00 PM)
Dec. 18	White Elephant Gift Exchange (7:00 PM)
Dec. 20	Christmas Choir Program (6:00 PM)
Dec. 24	Candlelight Service (6:00 PM)

Money Matters

November Weekly Budget Receipts	\$5,178
Budgeted Receipts Needed Per Week	\$4,933
Budgeted Receipts Received to Date	\$230,875
Budget Receipts Needed to Date	\$236,784

DECEMBER MEMORY VERSE

For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through Him.
John 3:16-17



Men's Retreat in November



Fellowship Baptist Church

5936 Rolling Road
Springfield, VA 22152