



Pastor's Perspective — Responding to a Hostile World

By Ron D. Lindholm, Senior Pastor

Last year Target refused to allow the Salvation Army to set up kettles at its stores. Seizing the moment, Wal-Mart stepped forward to publicly welcome the Army and committed itself to match dollar-for-dollar whatever donations might be made. Out of a sense of loyalty to Christ, Christians by the tens of thousands shunned Target and did their Christmas shopping at Wal-Mart.

This year, Wal-Mart, while still allowing the Army to set up its kettles, removed all references to Christmas from its stores and, with other retailers, prohibited its employees from extending the traditional "Merry Christmas" greeting to its customers. Incensed, many Christians cried "foul!" that we should be denied the warmest of holiday greetings (*from those who do not share our faith*) and embarked upon a personal crusade to elicit the words from every clerk and cashier.

Friends, may I speak freely to you? While I do not deny an anti-Christian bias in our culture nor hide from you a longing for the "good old days" when everyone seemed to celebrate Christmas with us, we are being less than honest if we suggest that more were true Christians then or that the message of the gospel is now somehow bound by these constraints and hostili-

ties—it is not. That I know of, not one of us has been denied the opportunity to share our faith, which is not conveyed in the greeting. Further, the greeting means nothing but holiday cheer to those who do not know the Christ of Christmas. The story needs to be told. God has given us lips and voices with which to make it known. Did we tell anyone this Christmas? Did we really tell them? Did we unwrap the present completely? Will we tell anyone in this New Year? It's a story that knows no season, month or day.

In the first century it was a real growth-step for the early church in the face of opposition from a hostile world to see God as Sovereign and the gospel as unconquerable. Persecution did not silence the church, but drove it to prayer, to an emboldened witness for Christ and to an unprecedented advance of real, life-long Christmas joy in the hearts of those who responded in faith (Acts 4:23-31). I pray that we at Fellowship would know that joy and have that experience in 2006 as we are driven to our knees in prayer in an increasingly hostile world. God is Sovereign—and He is Lord over all.

*After they prayed...
they were all filled
with the Holy Spirit
and spoke the word
of God boldly.*
Acts 4:31

Christmas Missionary Offering



Through the annual Christmas offering \$4,687 was given for our missionary families. This enabled the church to present each family with a gift equal to 160% of their monthly support provided by Fellowship. Thank you for your generous expression of appreciation for the ministries of our missionaries.

Selection of Church Leaders

Frank Buckley was elected to the office of Deacon on January 1. He joins Pete English and Joseph Estrada as Fellowship's Deacons for 2006. A critical need exists for more men who are qualified and willing to serve in this vital ministry to the church. Please pray for the Lord to provide!

They chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit...

Acts 6:5

The January Annual Meeting will be held on January 25 for the purpose of approving the Officials and Trustees appointed by the Pastors and Deacons, as well as reviewing the annual reports of the various church leaders, committees and organizations.

Please plan to participate in this important meeting.

What's Your Resolution?

As those "bought with a price" our priorities should reflect those of our Savior who loved the church so much that He "gave Himself up for her." As you evaluate your life and make commitments for the New Year, consider these suggestions:

* *Become a church member.* This is a simple yet profound way of tangibly expressing your commitment to Christ and His people.



* *Attend Sunday school.* With the adult classes beginning new studies, January is an excellent time to start that together we might grow in our faith.

* *Commit yourself to corporate prayer.* The crisis facing one of our missionary families reminds us of the critical role of prayer in the advance of the gospel.

* *Serve sacrificially.* Talk to a Pastor or Deacon about needs that exist and how you can help meet them.

Getting to Know Our Church Family

Jill Beirne

Jill was born and raised in Ridgecrest, CA. Her mother had the patience of Job and never gave up on any of her children. The Bible Jill uses today is the same one her mother used when Jill was growing up. Her mom's hand-written words continue to be a great encouragement to Jill to trust fully in the Lord.

*Greet one another
with...love*
1 Peter 5:14

As a child Jill liked to draw and write poetry. Together with her neighbor Larry she enjoyed playing with cars and repairing things, though anything they touched was "real ugly and totally unusable when we finished."

After high school Jill was married and gave birth to two sons, Robert and Joey. She also raised her niece Leslie, who she later adopted as her own daughter.

Jill went to Cerro Coso College for writing, the Chubb Institute for multimedia design, and received her BA from Suffield for technical writing. She has worked as a technical writer, a creative coordinator, and a freelance journalist covering NASCAR in California.

Money Matters

The Lord continues to demonstrate His faithfulness through the generous giving of His people! For 2005:

- * General Fund giving averaged \$4,794 per week, over \$100 more than the weekly need.
- * Fellowship sent \$15,256 to First Baptist—New Orleans to help with hurricane recovery.
- * Over \$10,000 was given for our missionaries and missions projects through love offerings and gifts.
- * 50@1 contributions were nearly \$7,200 yielding a far greater reduction in our mortgage indebtedness.

The 2006 budget, approved at the December Annual Meeting, includes modest increases in staff compensation and missions support. The budget requires weekly General Fund giving of \$4,706.

December Giving Per Week (General Fund)	\$6,321
Weekly Need	\$4,691
Total Giving for 2005 (General Fund)	\$249,288
Budgeted Need for 2005	\$243,917
Total 50@1 Giving for 2005	\$7,190

At the age of 23 and at a time when she was very unhappy, Jill turned to the Lord and accepted His free gift of eternal life through Jesus Christ.

Jill is well acquainted with the trials of life in this world so broken by sin. Her oldest son Robert went home to heaven in 1986, she was divorced in 1990, and her daughter Leslie was taken home in 2004.

Having lost her previous job Jill moved to Northern Virginia and began work as a Congressional Liaison at the Pentagon. It was there she met her husband Michael. They dated for 3 years and were married in September 1999.

Jill's son Joey is now 30 and lives in Mineral, VA with his wife Karina. They have given Jill two beautiful grandchildren, Robbie and AJ, and are expecting a third on Feb. 14. Jill's son Robert would have been 34 this year and her daughter Leslie would be 46.

Jill's current interests include painting, especially murals for children, and cooking. And yes, she still tries to fix things though her efforts still fall short of success.

Jill began attending Fellowship in September 2005 and became our newest member in December. Jill says, "I want to say thank you for accepting me into the congregation and look forward to getting to know all of you better. I thank God for directing me to Fellowship."

The Lord has given Jill the ability to paint, write, create newsletters, clean and help with children. She would like to paint a children's mural in the church building and is interested in serving in the church nursery.



Congratulations!

Redell Thompson & Fawntrella Willis were married on December 23 in Toledo, OH.

Calendar

Jan. 10	Nursing Home Ministry (2:00 PM)
Jan. 22	Missionary Ministry Report (PM Service) Darin & Kathy Ishler—Kenya
Jan. 25	January Annual Meeting (7:30 PM)
Jan. 28	Men's Prayer Breakfast (8:30 AM)
Jan. 30	Youth Ski Trip