

The Messenger

COLDWATER CHURCH OF CHRIST

Dec. 15, 2013



Why I don't celebrate *Christmas*

Melissa and I have a tiny little Christmas tree in our tiny little camper. We exchange gifts, sing carols, and deck the halls. We spend hours with family on or around December 25th and celebrate the blessings and gifts that God has graciously given unto us. We drink eggnog, watch Christmas movies, and wish others "Season's greetings" or "Merry Christmas".

But we don't celebrate Christmas.

Perhaps it would be more accurate to say that we don't celebrate the religious aspects of Christmas. While many throughout Christendom and many in the churches of Christ chose to commemorate the birth of Jesus during the month of December, we politely refrain. We don't believe that teaching and meditating upon the birth of Christ is inherently sinful, nor do we condemn those who chose to focus upon the birth of Christ during this time of year. In fact, we know that the virgin birth of Christ is one of the core beliefs of New Testament Christianity. Nevertheless, when December 25th rolls around we chose to celebrate the cultural aspects of the holiday instead of recognizing the 25th as the culmination of the Advent of Christ.

Many Christians might think it strange that the "preacher" doesn't have a nativity scene in his home or office. It might seem even more ...

This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you... (1 John 1:5).

**VISITORS,
WELCOME!**

Sunday:

9:30 a.m. Bible Class

10:30 a.m. WORSHIP

1:00 p.m. WORSHIP

Wednesday:

7:00 p.m. Bible Class

We have Bible classes for
all ages & Pew Packers
each Sunday at 12:30

P.O. Box 321

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ELDERS

Billy Bland

Seth Daniel

Jim Jackson

W. Timothy Wilkes, Sr.

DEACONS

Jason Bayless Jared Brown

Jerry Davis Jeffrey Ferrell

Ron Johnson Andy Ratliff

PREACHER

Clifton Angel

... peculiar that, as a preacher of the Gospel, I habitually neglect to preach on the birth of Jesus the Sunday before Christmas Day.

You might wonder why Melissa and I chose not to celebrate the birth of our Lord in December. If so, here are a few reasons why.

1. The Bible never commands or even suggests such an observance.

The New Testament, while beginning with the birth of Christ, is entirely silent regarding the celebration of Christmas. None of the Biblical writers allude to such a commemoration of our Lord's birth. Instead, the weight of the Biblical narrative as recorded in the Gospel accounts focuses much more on His death and the culmination of His ministry than upon His birth in Bethlehem. While we are explicitly commanded to commemorate the sacrificial death of our Lord every first day of the week by partaking of the Lord's Supper (Matt. 26:26-29; Acts 2:42; 20:7; 1 Cor. 11:23-26), we have no scriptural precedent for remembering His birth. While regularly focusing upon the birth of Jesus is not sinful, the Bible doesn't command or suggest such.

2. We don't really know when Jesus was born.

Many Christians falsely believe that Jesus was definitively born upon the 25th of December, yet the Biblical text itself—our only reliable source regarding the birth of Jesus—is conspicuously silent regarding the specific details of His birth. Mark writes nothing about the birth of Christ. John's statements regarding the incarnation of Christ are relegated to one verse (John 1:14). The only extensive texts that we have regarding the birth of Christ are found among the writings of Luke and Matthew. Neither of these inspired writers provide a date for the birth of Jesus. They tell us where He was born, to whom He was born, why He was born, and who came to visit when He was born, but the Holy Spirit did not see fit to give a specific date for His advent.

We aren't even entirely sure the year for his birth, much less the specific date. There's even some pretty [compelling evidence](#) to suggest that Jesus was born during one of the spring months instead of the tradition December date.

3. December 25th wasn't connected to the birth of Christ until the fourth century.

The New Testament was completed by 96 AD. Between the establishment of the church (AD 33) and the final words of the book of Revelation (ca. AD 96) there is not a single mention of any celebration of the birth of Christ. [Even first and second century Christian writers fail to reference any such commemoration of the Lord's birth.](#) Irenaeus (c. 130–200), Tertullian (c. 160–225), and Origen of Alexandria (c. 165–264) do not mention anything which might resemble Christmas. While Clement of Alexandria (ca. 150–215) makes reference to several suggested dates for the birth of Christ he does not even mention the 25th of December as a possibility. The earliest mention of December 25th as the date of the birth of the Son of God dates from [a mid-fourth century Roman almanac](#). The [first Feast of the Nativity](#) was held in Rome in AD 336.

The incarnation of Christ is essential to the Gospel and not to be downplayed; yet, much like the Gospel writers themselves, New Testament Christians chose to focus upon the sinless life and atoning death of Christ to a greater extent. We commemorate His death weekly in partaking of the Supper and reflect regularly upon His birth in conjunction with study and devotion. I am thankful that my Savior took upon human flesh and was laid in a manger in Bethlehem. I am grateful that angels heralded His birth, that shepherds visited him, and that the wise men—How many were there again?—laid numerous gifts at His feet.

Even more so, I am thankful for the freedom I have in Christ to celebrate the birth of my Lord every day, even December 25th if I so chose.

—written by Chris Clevenger
www.chrsclvgr.com

Teachers Needed!

Each of you are to be commended for your continual service in the church through teaching our Bible classes that we offer on Sundays and Wednesdays. A new quarter begins January 5, which is rapidly approaching. Please see Jeffrey Ferrell if you are willing to teach a class next quarter. Thank you, again!

Sermon Review

It's Not About Me (Part 1 & 2)

(1 Corinthians 8:1–11:1)

- I. Problem Expressed (8:1–13).
- II. A Powerful Example (9:1–27).
- III. A Practical Exhortation (10:1–11:1).

NEWS & NOTES

Please Pray

Ruth & Elizabeth are traveling to visit family; **Jared Brown** and family; **Joe Owen**, neck surgery Dec 18; **Inez Neyman**, been battling bronchitis/cold symptoms following her procedure; **Betty Tuggle**, arthritis in eye; **Wiley Tuggle**, had laser procedure done on his eye; **Sue Cobern**; **Helen Bowman**.

Far East Missions
Fishers of Men
NetCasters

Family & Friends

Janet Colvett, has shown improvement but was set back by stomach virus; **Vicky Davis Family**, Jerry's aunt, passed from cancer; **Eli Williams**, his cancer has returned and he will begin treatments again; **Bobby Gayton**; **Marie Sims**, Ashby Johnson's mother, cancer treatment now, surgery January; **James Cooper**, Jan's brother, stomach cancer; **Vicki Angel**; **Ray Maples**; **John & Anita Simpson** & family, John is scheduled to have another surgery in January; **Martha Hatfield**, Lynn's grandmother, has stage 4 cancer; **Cindy Jones' family**; **LaJuan Collums'**, receiving treatments for cancer, battles other health problems also; **Virginia Johnson**, wife of gospel preacher Roger Johnson, has stage 4 lung cancer; **Juanita Wooten**; **Joy Angel**, battling various health problems; **JoAnn Prestage**, Sara Norris' sister, cancer; **Tasha Higginbotham**, in need of a kidney transplant; **Linda Perkins**, Tim West's mother-in-law, leukemia; **Mac Owen**; **Bob Spurlin**; **Ally Jo Kelly**, toddler with leukemia; **Brad & Sheri Daniel**, in efforts of adoption of baby Faith; **Carly Wright**, 3 yr. old with liver cancer; **Joe & Josephine Johnston**, and their sons, Charles and Chris; **Frederick Bland**; **Carla Carlson**.

Birthdays

12/17 Kaiden Ferrell
12/22 Dalton Owen
12/23 Jeremy Moore
12/24 Daniel Owen
12/27 Reese Kinney
12/30 Renee Davis

Anniversary

12/13 Jerry & Renee Davis

Get Involved!

Elders & Deacons Meeting -- Dec 22
Between services

Singing Night -- Dec 25 -- 7 PM

5th Sunday Devo -- Dec 29 -- 1 PM

Bible Bowl -- Jan 18 -- Gen 25 - 27
At Looxahoma, 10:30 AM

Standing in the Gap Lectureship
January 24 - 26, 2014

Privileged to Serve

Sunday, December 15

Morning

Prayer Before Class	Joe Owen
Announcements	Clifton Angel
Song Leader	Andy Ratliff
Lord's Supper:	
Preside	Jim Jackson
	Payton Jackson
Assist	Billy Bland
	Timothy Wilkes, Sr.
Opening Prayer	Seth Daniel
Sermon	Clifton Angel
Closing Prayer	Ron Johnson

Afternoon

Song Leader	Andy Ratliff
Opening Prayer	Jerry Davis
Sermon	Clifton Angel
Lord's Supper	Jim Jackson
	Payton Jackson
Closing Prayer	Jeffrey Ferrell

Wednesday, December 18

Song Leader	Andy Ratliff
Prayer	Jason Bayless
Invitation	Clifton Angel
Prayer	Joe Owen