Outreach Center Network News Letter

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### THE GEESE AND THE SNOWSTORM

There was once a man who did not believe in God, let alone the story that God was born human. He and his family lived in a farm community. His wife was a devout Christian and raised her children in the faith. He sometimes gave her a hard time about her belief and mocked her religious observances. "It's all nonsense--why would God lower himself and become a human like us? It’s a ridiculous story.".

One snowy Christmas, she and the children left for church while he stayed home. After they had departed, the winds grew stronger and the storm turned into a blizzard. He sat down to relax before the fire for the evening. Then he heard a loud thump, something hitting against the window. And, still another thump. He looked outside but could not see anything. So he went out into the cold, windy winter night for a better view. In the field near his house he saw a flock of geese. They were apparently trying to get to a warmer area down south, but they had been caught in the snowstorm. The storm had become too violent for the geese to fly. They were stranded on his farm. They had no food or shelter. They were unable to do more then flutter their wings and fly in aimless circles. Being a farmer who loved animals, he wanted to help them. He thought to himself, the barn would be a great place for them to stay. It is warm and safe. They could spend the night and wait out the storm. So he opened the barn doors for them. He waited, watching them, hoping they would notice the open barn and go inside. They did not.

He moved closer toward them to get their attention. But out of fear, they moved away from him. So the farmer went into the house and came back with some bread, broke it up, and made a bread trail to the barn. They still did not catch on.

Getting frustrated, he went over and tried to shoo them toward the barn. They panicked and scattered into every direction -- but the barn.

Nothing he did could get them to go into the barn where there was warmth, safety, and shelter. The farmer exclaimed in frustration, "Why don't they follow me? Can't they see this is the only place where they can survive the storm? How can I get them into the one place that will save them?"

He thought for a moment and realized that they just would not follow a human. They needed one of their own kind to lead them. He said to himself, "If only I could become like one of them. Then they would follow me and I would lead them to safety and save them.."

At that moment, the impact of his words hit him. The words reverberated in his mind: If only I could become like one of them, then I could save them.

With that, he understood God's heart towards mankind...and he fell on his knees in the snow. Author Unknown

### Christmas Outreach Center Gathering Activity

Have people share among themselves at their table

1. What decoration would you be?

Tinsel, Tree fairy, ornament, Christmas tree, large illuminated Santa

1. What is your earliest memory of Christmas?
2. Which was your most memorable Christmas?
3. What is your favorite carol or song?
4. With which character in Bethlehem do you identify and why?

Joseph, Mary, Shepherd, an angel, Magi, animal near the manger

If you could send a Christmas card to the world this year, what would you write inside it?

This was taken from Torch magazine, (an England-based organization) issue five, 2010

### CHRISTMAS TRIVIA

Taken from the Pittsburgh Outreach center monthly news letter

December 2012

For your convenience, each answer immediately follows its associated question.

1. Which President first put up a Christmas tree on the White House Lawn?

A. Theodore Roosevelt

B. Warren Harding

C. Franklin Roosevelt

D. Harry Truman

Answer: B. Warren Harding

2. "The Christmas Song" (Chestnuts Roasting by an Open Fire) was written by Mel Torme but made famous by:

A. Frank Sinatra

B. Dean Martin

C. Nat King Cole

D. Tony Bennett

Answer: C. Nat King Cole

3. Which common spice was once a Christmas Plant?

A. Parsley

B. Sage

C. Rosemary

D. Thyme

Answer: C. Rosemary

4. All of the following are popular Christmas Trees except:

A. Fir

B. Chestnut

C. Spruce

D. Pine

Answer: B. Chestnut

5. Pick the celebrity whose name doesn't belong:

A. Noel Coward

B. Yul Brynner

C. Lana Turner

D. Judy Garland

Answer: C. Lana Turner

6. Why is part of the Yule Log always saved?

A. To light next years log.

B. For Ashes for Ash Wednesday

C. To roast Chestnuts

D. To roast marshmallows

Answer: A. To light next years log.

7. The famous poem that begins "Twas the Night Before Christmas" was written by:

A. Mark Twain

B. Hans Christian Anderson

C. Clement Moore

D. Dr Seuss

Answer: C. Clement Moore

8. Which of the following was not a name of one of the Three Wise Men?

A. Melchior

B. Balthazar

C. Methuselah

D. Caspar

Answer: C. Methuselah

9. On the eighth day of Christmas, my true love sent to me eight:

A. Maids a Milking

B. Geese a laying

C. Swans a swimming

D. Lords a leaping

Answer: A. Maids a Milking

10. The Sugarplum Fairy appears in what famous Christmas story?

A. Novel, A Christmas Carol

B. Poem, A Visit from St. Nicholas

C. Ballet, The Nutcracker

D. Movie, Miracle on 34th St.

Answer: C. Ballet, The Nutcracker

11. Which is known as a Christmas Pie?

A. Pumpkin

B. Lemon Meringue

C. Mince

D. Steak and Kidney

Answer: C. Mince

12. "Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer" was first sung by:

A. Bing Crosby in 1943

B. Perry Como in 1960

C. Gene Autry in 1949

D. The Three Chipmunks in 1958

Answer: C. Gene Autry in 1949

13. All of the following countries have a male Santa Claus except:

A. The Netherlands

B. Italy

C. France

D. Brazil

Answer: B. Italy

14. Which famous cartoon character tried to steal Christmas?

A. Mr. Magoo

B. Charlie Brown

C. Black Pete

D. The Grinch

Answer: D. The Grinch

15. The country and western hit by Elvis in the 50's was:

A. White Christmas

B. Jingle Bell Rock

C. Silver Bells

D. Blue Christmas

Answer: D. Blue Christmas

16. Plum Pudding a traditional Christmas dish in England contains all of the following ingredients except:

A. Raisins

B. Brandy

C. Sugar

D. Plums

Answer: D. Plums

17. Which famous Christmas carol appears in Dickens' book "A Christmas Carol"?

A. Joy to the World

B. Good King Wenceslaus

C. God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen

D. Little Drummer Boy

Answer: C. God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen

18. The Movie Miracle on 34th Street takes place in which famous department store?

A. Sears

B. Macys

C. Saks

D. Bloomingdales

Answer: B. Macys

19. Which famous Christmas song was originally written for another holiday?

A. Jingle Bells

B. Frosty the Snowman

C. Deck the Halls

D. Silent Night

Answer: A. Jingle Bells

20. Which little girl wrote to the New York Sun to find out if there was a Santa Claus?

A. Scarlett

B. Virginia

C. Angela

D. Valerie

Answer: B. Virginia

### 1 CORRINTHIANS 13 CHRISTMAS VERSION

If I decorate my house perfectly with plaid bows, strands of twinkling lights and shiny balls, but do not show love to my family, I'm just another decorator.

If I slave away in the kitchen, baking dozens of Christmas cookies, preparing gourmet meals and arranging a beautifully adorned table at mealtime, but do not show love to my family, I'm just another cook.

If I work at the soup kitchen, carol in the nursing home, and give all that I have to charity, but do not show love to my family, it profits me nothing.

If I trim the spruce with shimmering angels and crocheted snowflakes, attend a myriad of holiday parties and sing in the choir's cantata, but do not focus on Christ, I have missed the point.

Love stops the cooking to hug the child.

Love sets aside decorating to kiss the husband.

Love is kind, though harried and tired.

Love doesn't envy another's home that has coordinated Christmas china and table linens.

Love doesn't yell at the kids to get out of the way, but is thankful they are there to be in the way.

Love doesn't give only to those who are able to give in return but rejoices in giving to those who can't.

Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

Love never fails.

Video games will break, pearl necklaces will be lost, golf clubs will rust.

But giving the gift of love will endure.

Merry Christmas!

-- Sharon Jaynes

### Final Thoughts

In upcoming issues we can and will look at many of the same topics as well as others. If you have questions, thoughts or suggestions, please send them to me or post them on the blind ministry email list.

Pastor Dave