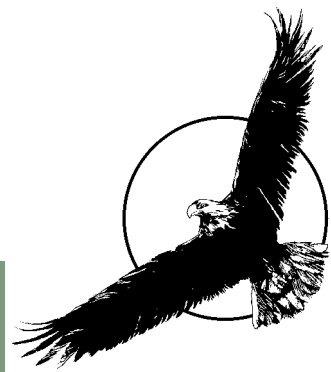


The Messenger



MOUNTAIN BIBLE CHURCH

Volume 23 Issue 1

January 2011

“Ignorance Is A ‘Blind Instrument’ Of Destruction”

The way Simon Bolivar actually said these words of ‘self prophecy’ was, “An ‘ignorant people’ is the blind instrument of its own destruction.”

I don’t believe it’s always their fault, but Christians and their leaders must learn from the trends we see. What has happened in Christian ministries is this; instead of serious study in the Bible and participating in discussions that wrestle with biblical ideas, concepts and ethics, Christians often find a likeable leader and then, without rhyme or reason, entrust our spiritual thinking to that leader. That leader is expected to tell the people what they are supposed to believe relating to biblical purposes, moral principles, and philosophies of ethics.

With the commitment to build their own legacy of greatness, these leaders often mystify and even replace the pure teachings of the Scriptures with their own ideas. Christians are all too often willing to adopt the ideas and opinions to these dominant and compelling leaders as their moral com-

pass. As these authoritative leaders retire or die, their followers are left without the skill to discern pragmatic biblical truths for themselves. They connected with the leader but missed the relationship with God. These ‘Christians’ will either find someone else to do their religious thinking for them again, or become cynical about their faith because it no longer makes sense to them. They have neither the faith nor the skills to train their children in the ways of God. And so it goes, from one generation to the next.

The model of this crisis is easily seen in today’s world of politics. Voters dutifully march to the poles to vote but their voting will largely reflect what the mass media and the Coliseums of the entertainment industries have been saying about the propositions and candidates. When they later realize the political jargon was designed to mislead them from the outset, they become cynical about the whole political process. They voluntarily give up their right to vote because they quit thinking for themselves about politi-

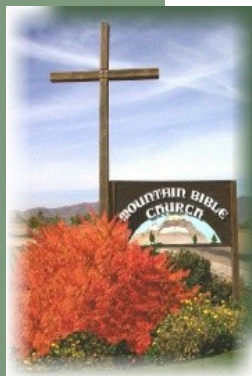
cal issues. They didn’t learn the urgency of applying the skill of cognitive reasoning to political issues so; they give up! The next step is to become shrouded in cynical ignorance. Don’t let that happen to you.

We all must commit ourselves to **learn and use** the process of acquiring knowledge by the use of reasoning, discernment, and perception. To become cynical is a choice that is often wrapped is a prior choice to remain ignorant of the issues to be studied and understood. The challenge is to keep our brains and our hearts engaged in the processes.

Everyone is ignorant of many things but there are some areas that choosing to remain in ignorance will extract immeasurable consequences. The greatest disaster of all is when one chooses to remain ignorant about Jesus Christ.

Notice the priorities God gave Ezra to reestablish returning Israel as a blessed Nation.

"And you, Ezra, according to the wisdom of your God which is in your hand, appoint



Ignorance Continued...

magistrates and judges ... even all those who know the laws of your God; and you may teach anyone who is ignorant of them." Ezra 7:25 (NASB77)

History has demonstrated that ignorance is a blind instrument of destruction; not caring whom it destroys. The death of religious literacy among those who make and administer the law has created a moral crisis in our land. Because, for the most part, Christians have abandoned training in the skills of cognitive reasoning, they have covered themselves in a snug little blanket with the CAPITAL CASE LETTERS spelling, **'IGNORANCE IS BLISS!'** Too many Christians have said, "We'll let the Pastor do our religious thinking for us." The problem is that

this security blanket has been set on fire by the fraudulent Devil and it's indiscriminately destroying the people and society it holds in ignorance. Listen to how Asaph tells us that to understand life we must go to the one who created life.

"I tried to understand all this. But it was too hard for me to see (17) UNTIL I WENT TO THE TEMPLE OF GOD. THEN I UNDERSTOOD what will happen to them. (18) You have put them in danger. You cause them to be destroyed. (19) They are destroyed in a moment. They are swept away by terrors." Psalm 73:16-19 (ICB)

Mountain Bible Church has chosen to remain an independent fellowship these many years; not because there aren't some

benefits to being a part of a denomination, but because the Scriptures never release us to rely on a few 'theologically elite' to tell us what to believe. It is our responsibility to search the Scriptures daily to make sure we are not ignorant of them. When you come to Mountain Bible Church we hope to challenge you to participate in serious Bible study. We offer you an abundance of opportunities for learning and practicing the skills to think for yourself about the Scriptures. We offer excellent teacher/trainers from the worship services to the Sunday Morning 9am adult study to the many 'Small Groups' held here at the church buildings and in homes around our community. I urge you to get involved.

"...Remembering you in my prayers, (17) that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him, (18) having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, (19) and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe..." Ephesians 1:16-19 (ESV)

Consider making your New Years resolution to participate in church every Sunday you possibly can this year.

Have a wonderful New Year! Pastor Marv

Birthday Party For Jesus At The Stephens

Despite the rain, 11 children and 5 adult helpers arrived with umbrellas on the Wednesday of Christmas vacation. A Christmas song, "Good News Bells," was sung to the tune of Jingle Bells to start the party.

Krazy Kards, a game to help memorize the Bible verses, made learning fun as the children read the verse in various positions. Like sitting on someone's lap, or reading through their legs upside down.

The Christmas story was a cartoon video and rhyme, a comedy, yet serious, with many Christmas carols included. A neighbor of the Stephens loaned it for use when Ruth Morris, M&M's wonderful story lady, was busy and could not attend.

After the video, Steve Stephens ran a team game of picking up Christmas bows in the decorated garage.

The singing of Happy Birthday Jesus was delayed while the traditional candle wouldn't light for all

to blow out. The cupcakes served were decorated to look like a package to remind the children of their Bible Verse, "*the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.*"

The ice cream served was not too cold or the milk with flavored straws to detour the eating because a heater was used to warm the garage. One of the mothers suggested we sing Christmas Carols which was a fitting ending to a fun time.

The party was a success in the Stephens eyes because they always pray for the party to be a witness in the neighborhood. Only two of the children who came were from the invitations handed out at the Good News club held at the Tompkins School and our own church. Please pray the children will understand what a great Savoir we have.

Submitted by Cappy Stephens

Not Another Resolution

Thankfully, our God is the God of second chances. For my sake, I'm just glad He doesn't stop with second chances, but gives us 70x7 chances to get it right. The New Year is an opportunity to examine past mistakes and work at correcting them.

The Bible is a book full of second-chance real-life characters. Some call the chapter of Hebrews 11 a gallery of faith. I consider it more a list of people who took advantage of second chances. The one who strikes a chord with me is Sarah, maybe because she's female? That is one woman who made some real bad choices, but finally got on the right track. Hebrews 11:11 states, "By faith, Sarah herself also received strength to conceive when she was past the age, because she judged Him faithful, Who had promised."

Judged Him faithful? Really? How about that time when she got tired of waiting to have a child and insisted that her maid-servant have a child with her husband, Abraham? Then, she accused him of being responsible for her misery. If that weren't enough, she mistreated her maidservant, Hagar, causing her to run away into the desert.

Judged Him faithful? Really? How about that time when she was eavesdropping at the entrance of the tent and overheard the Lord telling Abraham that she, Sarah, was to have a baby? Granted, she was 90-years-old, when she laughed at the thought of that one. If that weren't enough, she lied to the Lord and said she hadn't laughed.

It isn't easy to admit that there are times when I've behaved rather badly.

Like Sarah, I can be manipulative, impatient, accusing and generally miserable. Yet, Sarah shows up in Hebrews, among those great, flawed, sinful men and women of faith. It gives me confidence that my name will be among those of whom God is not ashamed to be called their God. (Heb 11:16)

A new year and one more chance to get myself on the right track. That's when God reminded me that I can't do it alone. "Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit," He says. (Zech 4:6)

Happy New Year. It's time to take a second chance, or maybe fifth chance, or more. Just keep going forward, growing more each year in love and faith, to be the person God has created each of us to be. To be the best I can.

Written by Carol Shy

JUST FOR LAUGHS:

'MR. CLARK, I HAVE REVIEWED THIS CASE VERY CAREFULLY,' THE DIVORCE COURT JUDGE SAID, 'AND I'VE DECIDED TO GIVE YOUR WIFE \$775 A WEEK,' 'THAT'S VERY FAIR, YOUR HONOR,' THE HUSBAND SAID. 'AND EVERY NOW AND THEN I'LL TRY TO SEND HER A FEW BUCKS MYSELF.'

JUST FOR LAUGHS:
A MAN IS RECOVERING FROM SURGERY WHEN THE SURGICAL NURSE APPEARS AND ASKS HIM HOW HE IS FEELING. 'I'M OKAY, BUT I DIDN'T LIKE THE FOUR LETTER-WORD THE DOCTOR USED IN SURGERY,' HE ANSWERED. 'WHAT DID HE SAY,' ASKED THE NURSE. 'OOPS!'

TEACHER TRAINING MEETING FOR
SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHERS

JANUARY 29

8:30AM TO 11:00AM

FELLOWSHIP HALL

A Simple Gift

A LETTER FROM A VISITOR TO THE CHURCH... DEAR PASTOR SLIFER, A NOTE TO LET YOU KNOW HOW MUCH I ENJOYED THE CHRISTMAS PROGRAM ON DECEMBER 19, 2010 AND THE CHRISTMAS EVE PROGRAM. I AM IN AWE OF ALL THE TALENT IN YOUR CHURCH AND THE WAY THE PROGRAMS WERE PUT TOGETHER. VERY IMPRESSIVE! THANK YOU FOR MAKING THIS CHRISTMAS EXTRA SPECIAL. SINCERELY, DORINE JACOBS

The Tehachapi Hospital Guild is a group of volunteers who provide services for the hospital. Betsy belongs to the Guild and volunteers in the Thrift Shop that is managed and staffed by the Guild, and that is where this story takes place.

The Thrift Shop receives useable items from civic minded individuals. The items are inspected, sorted and priced for sale at a nominal price that maybe as low as \$0.25 on up to \$5.00. Larger items such as furniture may be sold for more but still at a very reasonable price.

The story I want to relate begins with the donation of a pair of little boy's shoes. They were brown suede, high tops with LED lights that activated on motion. They were like new but didn't fit the grandchild they belonged to. When

Betsy placed the shoes on the counter to be priced and displayed, a poorly dressed lady picked up the shoes to inspect them. As she placed the shoes back on the counter the red LED lights started to sparkle and so did her eyes. I imagine that those shoes became a treasured Christmas gift for her small son or grandson.

This is not the end of the story. The money generated by the Thrift Shop is not a small amount as it approximates \$10,000.00 a month and all of it from used items such as that pair of little boy's shoes. The money is used by the Guild to purchase needed equipment for the Hospital. It will astonish you when I tell you that one of the gifts this year was a donation of \$300,000.00 toward the purchase of an upgraded 16 slice CT scanner for the

Hospital after the old CT scanner quit working.

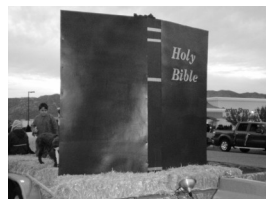
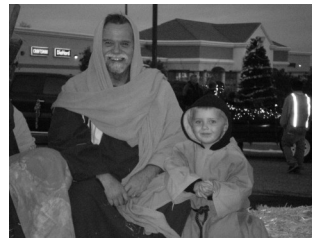
A simple pair of shoes and other donated items became a unique and valuable piece of medical equipment that will allow the hospital to better treat thousands of patients. This was made possible by a series of selfless acts, and unlike a traditional Christmas gift this giving goes on through-out the year and is of enormous value.

I Love the Christmas season and all that it means and I enjoy being with people that display a Christmas-like 'mind-set' all year long. It seems to become their way of life.

"If you wish to be complete, go and sell your possessions and give to the poor..."
Mathew 19:21

Written by Dr. Sam Conklin

CHRISTMAS
PARADE 2010
PHOTOS



Dear Prayer Warriors

I enjoyed reading in December's issue of The Mountain Bible Church Messenger, Heidi Skeels's testimony of her coming to accept Jesus as her Lord and Savior. This occurred while she was attending a C.L.A.S.S. 101 a couple months ago. Soon after, she and her friend Megan Hendrix took the next step together in being baptized and that showed understanding, wisdom and obedience.

Heidi and Megan are blessed and many others will be blessed because of their decision to be followers of Christ. They will have important roles in life as they live their lives together with Christ. It is a great thing to know the Savior early in life.

My wife and I, along with so many of you, have been praying for all the children and young adults here at MBC, and elsewhere too. We also pray for and thank God for the volunteer leaders and staff here at MBC dedicated to teaching our youth the truths about Jesus. Truths like knowledge of scripture and God are important, but it has to go beyond that too - the real goal is to have a relationship with Him and that happens only when we accept

Him as Lord of our lives and invite Him into our hearts.

A very important piece of scripture has been made known to me recently and I want to make it known to you, or in many cases remind some of you. I know that many of you are already aware of this most important prayer. The notion that we don't know how to pray for someone really comes to an end right here: Colossians 1:9-14 *"For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you and asking God to fill you with the knowledge of His will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding. And we pray this in order that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please Him in every way: bearing good fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God, being strengthened with all power according to His glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience, and joyfully giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of light. For He has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, in whom we have re-*

demption, the forgiveness of sins."

Congratulations to all those who made that all-important act of obedience this year in stepping forward to publicly acknowledge Jesus Christ as Savior and accept His gift.

Congratulations to all the teachers and staff at Mountain Bible Church and to all the prayer warriors at MBC. We have made it through a very challenging year and we are heading into another. Only with the grace and love of our Lord Jesus can we expect to share in His victory in 2011, so let us be steadfast in our faith and complete the good work.

You are invited to a short prayer session each Sunday at 10:10am in room #3 (between services). The scripture previously mentioned is the theme of our prayer effort, and is directed to those that the Lord places upon our hearts.

Congratulations to Heidi and Megan and all those who made the most important decision of their lives - without question!

All for Jesus, Andy Ohmit

SENIOR CITIZEN SPEAKS OUT.....

A COLLEGE STUDENT AT A RECENT FOOTBALL GAME CHALLENGED A SENIOR CITIZEN SITTING NEXT TO HIM, SAYING IT WAS IMPOSSIBLE FOR THEIR GENERATION TO UNDERSTAND HIS.

"YOU GREW UP IN A DIFFERENT WORLD," THE STUDENT SAID LOUD ENOUGH FOR THE WHOLE CROWD TO HEAR. "TODAY WE HAVE TELEVISION, JET PLANES, SPACE TRAVEL, MAN HAS WALKED ON THE MOON, OUR SPACESHIPS HAVE VISITED MARS, WE EVEN HAVE NUCLEAR ENERGY, ELECTRIC AND HYDROGEN CARS, COMPUTERS WITH LIGHT-SPEED PROCESSING ... AND UH..."

TAKING ADVANTAGE OF A PAUSE IN THE STUDENT'S LITANY, THE OLD GEEZER SAID, "YOU'RE RIGHT. WE DIDN'T HAVE THOSE THINGS WHEN WE WERE YOUNG; SO WE INVENTED THEM, YOU LITTLE TWIT! WHAT ARE YOU DOING FOR THE NEXT GENERATION?" (I LOVE SENIOR CITIZENS!)

Laws Of The Lighthouse

SAM AND BETSY
CONKLIN HAVE BEEN
NAMED TEHACHAPI'S
CITIZENS OF THE YEAR
2010.
CONGRATULATIONS!

The greatest day of lists is still New Year's Day. And the number one list is the list I call the Laws of the Lighthouse.

The Laws of the Lighthouse contain more than good ideas, personal preferences, and honest opinions. They are God-given, time-tested truths that define the way you should navigate your life. Observe them and enjoy secure passage. Ignore them and crash against the ragged rocks of reality.

Smart move. The wise captain shifts the direction of his craft according to the signal of the lighthouse. A wise person does the same.

Herewith, then, are the lights I look for and the signals I heed:

-- Love God more than you fear hell.

-- Once a week, let a child take you on a walk.

-- Make major decisions in a cemetery.

-- When no one is watching, live as if someone is.

-- Succeed at home first.

-- Don't spend tomorrow's money today.

-- Pray twice as much as you fret.

-- Listen twice as much as you speak.

-- Only harbor a grudge when God does.

-- Never outgrow your love of sunsets.

-- Treat people like angels; you will meet some and help make some.

-- 'Tis wiser to err on the side of generosity than on the side of scrutiny.

-- God has forgiven you;

you'd be wise to do the same.

-- When you can't trace God's hand, trust his heart.

-- Toot your own horn and the notes will be flat.

-- Never let the important be the victim of the trivial.

To sum it all up:

Approach life like a voyage on a schooner. Enjoy the view. Explore the vessel. Make friends with the captain. Fish a little. And then get off when you get home.

Max Lucado

SNOWED IN

OLE AND LENA WERE SITTING DOWN TO THEIR USUAL CUP OF MORNING COFFEE, LISTENING TO THE WEATHER REPORT COMING OVER THE RADIO. "THERE WILL BE 3 TO 5 INCHES OF SNOW TODAY AND A SNOW EMERGENCY HAS BEEN DECLARED. YOU MUST PARK YOUR CARS ON THE ODD-NUMBERED SIDE OF THE STREETS." OLE GOT UP FROM HIS COFFEE AND REPLIED, "JEEZ, OK."

TWO DAYS LATER, AGAIN THEY WERE BOTH SITTING DOWN WITH THEIR CUPS OF MORNING COFFEE AND HEARD THE WEATHER FORECAST: "THERE WILL BE 2 TO 4 INCHES OF SNOW TODAY AND A SNOW EMERGENCY HAS BEEN DECLARED. YOU MUST PARK YOUR CARS ON THE EVEN-NUMBERED SIDE OF THE STREETS." OLE GOT UP FROM HIS COFFEE AND REPLIED, "JEEZ, OK."

THREE DAYS LATER, THEY BOTH WERE ONCE AGAIN SITTING DOWN WITH THEIR CUPS OF COFFEE AND THE WEATHER FORECAST WAS, "THERE WILL BE 6 TO 8 INCHES OF SNOW TODAY AND A SNOW EMERGENCY HAS BEEN DECLARED. YOU MUST PARK YOUR CARS ON THE..." AND THEN THE POWER WENT OUT SO OLE DIDN'T GET THE REST OF THE INSTRUCTIONS. HE SAID TO LENA, "JEEZ, WHAT AM I GOING TO DO NOW, LENA?" LENA REPLIED, "AW, OLE, JUST LEAVE THE CAR IN THE GARAGE."

ONE SUNDAY A PASTOR TOLD HIS CONGREGATION THAT THE CHURCH NEEDED SOME EXTRA MONEY AND ASKED THE PEOPLE TO PRAYERFULLY CONSIDER GIVING A LITTLE EXTRA IN THE OFFERING PLATE. HE SAID THAT WHOEVER GAVE THE MOST WOULD BE ABLE TO PICK OUT THREE HYMNS.

AFTER THE OFFERING PLATES WERE PASSED, THE PASTOR GLANCED DOWN AND NOTICED THAT SOMEONE HAD PLACED A \$1,000 BILL IN OFFERING. HE WAS SO EXCITED THAT HE IMMEDIATELY SHARED HIS JOY WITH HIS CONGREGATION AND SAID HE'D LIKE TO PERSONALLY THANK THE PERSON WHO PLACED THE MONEY IN THE PLATE.

AND THERE SAT OUR ROSIE ALL THE WAY IN THE BACK SHYLY RAISED HER HAND. THE PASTOR ASKED HER TO COME TO THE FRONT. SLOWLY SHE MADE HER WAY TO THE PASTOR. HE TOLD HER HOW WONDERFUL IT WAS THAT SHE GAVE SO MUCH AND IN THANKSGIVING ASKED HER TO PICK OUT THREE HYMNS. HER EYES BRIGHTENED AS SHE LOOKED OVER THE CONGREGATION, POINTED TO THE THREE MOST HANDSOME MEN IN THE BUILDING AND SAID, "I'LL TAKE HIM AND HIM AND HIM."

FOR LAUGHS:
A LITTLE BOY
WENT UP TO HIS
FATHER AND
ASKED: 'DAD,
WHERE DID MY
INTELLIGENCE
COME FROM?'
THE FATHER
REPLIED. 'WELL,
SON, YOU MUST
HAVE GOT IT
FROM YOUR
MOTHER,
CAUSE I STILL
HAVE MINE.'

ONE PARTICULAR
FOUR-YEAR OLD
PRAYED,
"AND FORGIVE
US OUR TRASH
BASKETS
AS WE FORGIVE
THOSE WHO
PUT TRASH IN
OUR BASKETS."

For Help and Answers

Call the church office-----822-7541
Crisis Prayer requests-----Call Christine, 822-8849
Change address or phone-----822-7541
Doctrinal questions-----822-7541
Wedding questions-----822-7541

Hospital visits-----822-7541
Counseling Information-----822-7541
Child dedication Service-----822-7541
Student Ministries (Junior High to College)-----822-7541
Membership/Baptism-----822-7541

The Messenger of Mountain Bible Church

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Distribution: Neya Kuithe

Sunday Morning Services at Mountain Bible Church: 8:30 and 10:30

Children's Programs are available at the same times.

Infant care (0-2 years) is available in the nursery.

Senior Pastor: Dr. Marvin D. Slifer

Children's Ministries Director: Lori Henry

Youth Ministries Director: Christy Boyd

Human Resource Director: Christy Boyd

Trustees for 2011: Dennis Birks, Robert Garcia, Paul Smith, Ed Weston, Michael White, and Ron Williams.

Elders for 2011: Dennis Collins, Sam Conklin, Ed Dunlap, Dae Lantz, Dave Lawrence, and Andy Ohmit.

The Messenger is published monthly. All submissions to The Messenger are due the twentieth (20th) of each month. We would like contributions of news articles, photos and other information from the Youth Group, Men's and Ladies Bible Studies, Missions Team, Let's Eat Cafe, Energizers and Praise Team. Please remember to put your name on the article so we can give proper credit.

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