

Humble beginnings

When you reach a certain station in life, some perks accompany seniority. Oddly, one of mine is participating in various surveys. Gallup regularly taps me to fill out surveys, as does the Civiqs Group. Occasionally the Pew Research Center sends an invitation to share my opinions.

Perhaps you think answering a bevy of questions might be a waste of time. I dispute that position because public opinion drives much of what goes on in the political forums, media, and advertising. For me, it's akin to casting a ballot in an election to do my part to express the will of the people. Taking the time to affirm moral values in a cesspool of immorality reflects a Christian worldview and, one would hope, helps steer a course into the future.

The statement attributed to Sir Edmund Burkes, "The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing," is a possible paraphrase, but truth nonetheless. Suppose we go along with the herd and fail to express appropriate disappointment, disillusionment, or outrage. Understand that this also requires us to *do something*, not just *say something*. Without concrete actions, we will sink into popular culture's morass. We are each moral agents whose responsibilities include standing up and speaking up when necessary.

Two thousand years ago, an angel announced an audacious plan requiring the cooperation of a teenager engaged to be married. God launched a daring rescue mission by becoming one of us, growing in the water of the womb. Surprising as it might seem, the God of the universe was willing to lay aside the throne of heaven to lie in a manger filled with straw. The Missio Dei, the mission of God to save us from sin and ourselves, came from humble beginnings.

Angels announced the birth, shepherds watched in wonder, heavenly choirs sang, and darkness recoiled in fear. A notable tyrant sent emissaries to discover the whereabouts of the Christ-child. Paranoid and power-mad, Herod the Great sought to destroy the one who might usurp the throne. Bethlehem, the "house of bread," became a place of death as tiny martyrs fell victim to the age-old struggle for power. But the darkness did not win the day. The promised one escaped to Egypt to the safety of anonymity.

No doubt Joseph tired of angelic visits before finally arriving in Nazareth. Mary oversaw her charge carefully, sharing the faith and hope of her heart with God in the flesh. I can't help but wonder how many times these parents felt ill-equipped to parent the Lord of creation. Too soon, the boy became a man and left the familiar environs of his childhood home.

Called by God, baptized by John, and empowered by the Spirit, Jesus began a three-year journey. He called disciples, taught the masses, healed the sick, and confronted the power brokers of his day. Jesus fed the hungry, delivered the demon-possessed, and confounded even some of his most dedicated followers. God's anointed, only begotten Son walked on water, calmed storms, and mysteriously produced prodigious catches of fish.

If that were not enough, even raising the dead proved inadequate to convince the hard-hearted. Fearing Jesus' popularity, following, and unabashed threat to the status quo, those in power sought to stay in power at all costs. His people called for his death, and he hung on a cross until he breathed his last. Darkness grasped for victory but came up emptyhanded. His death sparked a new world religion that continues to change the world one life at a time.

God told us what he would do and, at just the right time, set a perfect plan in motion. Jesus did not conform to culture, and eventually, the Roman Empire bent into the arch of God's will. God continues to speak truth to power and calls us to do the same. Don't be defined by culture this holiday, be difference makers, risk takers, and justice seekers, using your faith to change the world.

"Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests." **Luke 2:14** **Pastor Kenny**

Calendar for the Week

Wednesday

9:00 a.m. Exercise

Friday

9:00 a.m. Exercise

Saturday

1:00 p.m. Baby Shower for Emma Hatchett

Sunday

8:45 a.m. Lexa Worship

9:00 a.m. Marvell Sunday School

10:00 a.m. Marvell Worship

Sunday

2:00 – 4:00 p.m. Lee Family Open House

Monday

9:00 a.m. Advent Study

Exercise

Wednesday – December 14

9:00 a.m. Exercise

a.m. Food Truck

5:00 p.m. Youth

7:00 p.m. Choir Practice

STEWARDSHIP REPORT

2022 Budget	\$193,280	
Needed each week	3,717	
Received this week	5,441	
Capital Improvements	50	
Poinsettias	200	
Food Pantry	100	Angels 120

ATTENDANCE

Lexa Worship	4
Marvell Sunday School	28
Marvell Worship	54 + 81
WOW & Youth	22