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FEATURES

6 Mission possible

Vietnam vet returns to war zone to minister to the former enemy

10 On parade

Mother Goose to fly down Main Street a day early

14 Bubble-wrapping our kids

Protecting young people from emotional harm is a noble aim, but have we gone a bit overboard?

16 The gospel of right choices

18 Giving back

Holiday offers opportunities to demonstrate gratitude by helping others



COLUMNS

5 Dean Nelson | in plain sight

Setting a bigger table

24 Mark Larson | on the mark

Relishing the beauty of junk

25 Daniel Jenkins | reality check

Dealing with grief during the holidays

26 Janice Thompson | on the money

Practically speaking... Coping with sudden wealth

27 Michael Foust | purposeful parenting

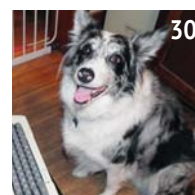
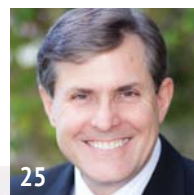
3 things to teach your daughter about true beauty

28 Leo Giovinetti | inspired living

Gratitude for both the good and the bad

30 Joanne Brokaw | that's *life*!

How to have a tail-wagging Thanksgiving



DEPARTMENTS

20 Tunes

21 Outtakes

22 Community news

Is it time to go digital-only?

As we approach the end of our second year publishing *Refreshed* magazine, the reality of economics is forcing us to consider becoming a digital-only magazine. As more and more advertisers reduce their marketing budgets and move most of what remains into the online world, dollars allocated towards print media continue to dissipate.

We would hate to see this magazine no longer be available on the street in front of restaurants, at libraries, or in grocery stores and coffee shops. It's the only local, faith-based magazine bringing refreshing stories of hope and inspiration to San Diego readers.

Stating it frankly, we simply have never been capitalized sufficiently to sustain operational costs without adequate advertising revenues to cover the costs of printing and distributing tens of thousands of copies each month.

As a result, we are now considering multiple alternatives: Should we revert to a lower quality newsprint publication? Should we move to a semi-monthly or quarterly schedule? Should we become a digital-only magazine?

Somehow we would like to think that there are individuals, organizations or business leaders in San Diego who have more than enough financial resources and who have a passion for using the media to reach our community with the positive truth of God's love and redemption. If you know someone like that, maybe you should encourage them to step forward.

In the meantime, in order that you may stay informed about our future plans, please go to www.refreshedsandiego.com and click on "Join our email list" at the top of our home page. Those on this list will automatically receive a link to our digital magazine which, by the way, reads very nicely on an iPad or other electronic notebook.

What are your thoughts? Send a personal email to lamar@refreshedmag.com. We would love to hear from you.

Lamar & Theresa Keener

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Setting a bigger table

The holiday season usually involves family, and for some people that's a good thing.

For others, not so much.

The first book I had published was about being a new father. That led to a lot of other writing about family. For one article in particular I asked my kid's public school teacher if I could ask the kids in her kindergarten class for their perspectives. The teacher agreed, so one by one I asked each 5-year-old to define "family" for me.

Here are some of their responses:

"The people who love you and take care of you."

"People who are together and love each other."

"Who you live with."

"People that are related to each other and love each other and sometimes have a pet."

"People in a group and they're living in a home. It's some people who you know."

"People who buy you presents."

"A family is someone who can take care of you so you have someone to live with, so you don't live alone. They need to love you. In my family, on Friday, I get to Rollerblade. Thursday I have dance."

"Where there's a lot of people in your house."

"A mom, a dad and a dog."

"All the people in my house is a family."

"A mom, a grandma, a grandpa, and an aunt."

"A family is where people live."

"A family is whoever sits around your table at supper."

That's what 5-year-olds think. Each one of those statements has some wisdom in it.

Robert Frost defined it pretty well in his poem, "Death of a Hired Man," only he substituted the word "home" for

the way I am using the word "family:" "Home is the place where, when you have to go there, they have to take you in."

Families love irrationally. What other group, club or association allows a membership regardless of intellect, appearance or achievement?

Jesus had his own view on what a family was. Interestingly, it does not coincide well with recent attempts by political and religious leaders to define it. Mark 3:35 describes a scene where Jesus was teaching in a very crowded house, when his mother and brothers arrived and asked to see him.

"Who is my mother? Who are my brothers?" he asked. The account continues: "Looking round at those who were sitting in the circle about him he said, 'Here are my mother and my brothers. Whoever does the will of God is my brother, my sister, my mother.'"

That's a big family. A redefined family.

In Matthew 23:9 Jesus says, "Do not call any man on earth 'father'; for you have one Father, and he is in heaven." When Jesus called James and John to follow him, they were mending fishing nets with their father, Zebedee. "He called them, and at once they left the boat and their father, and followed him" (Matt. 4:22).

As a young boy, when his parents couldn't find him, he was in the Temple. Worried, they asked him why he wasn't with them on their journey. His answer may sound precocious, but it is consistent with what Jesus believed was truly central to the revelation of God in the world. "Why are you surprised to find me in my Father's house?" he said. (Luke 2:49)

Perhaps one of the most compelling ways Jesus addressed the family issue was from the cross. As he looked down,



"Jesus saw his mother, with the disciple whom he loved standing beside her. He said to her, 'Mother, there is your son'; and to the disciple, 'There is your mother'; and from that moment the disciple took her into his home." (John 19:26-27)

With that, Jesus redefined family. He is telling us, "Wherever I am in the center, you have a family." It isn't our blood that binds us—it's Presence.

So at family gatherings this fall and winter, maybe we could reconsider the word "family" and set a bigger table. I promise there will be enough room.



Dean Nelson directs the journalism program at Point Loma Nazarene University in San Diego. His book about seeing God in everyday life is "God Hides in Plain Sight: How to See the Sacred in a Chaotic World."



Dick Paff stands near an artillery fire base near the Cambodian border in the Central Highlands of Vietnam in 1970.

Vietnam veteran Dick Paff poses with a man who was forced to have an anti-American tattoo placed on his arm when he was drafted into the North Vietnamese Army.



Paff carries an elderly patient from an upstairs exam room to the first-floor pharmacy so she can pick up her medications.

MISSION POSSIBLE

Vietnam vet returns to war zone to minister to the former enemy

by LORI ARNOLD

Missionary volunteer Dick Paff was gingerly escorting an elderly patient up the stairs of a medical clinic in Vietnam when he noticed a tattoo on the gentleman's aging arm. Paff turned to the interpreter and asked him to translate the writing on the tattoo.

It read, "I hate all Americans."

Through the interpreter the patient apologized to Paff for the tattoo, saying that he was forced to endure the perma-

nent ink job after being drafted into the North Vietnamese Army as a 16-year-old boy.

Although 44 years have passed since Paff returned home from a 14-month tour as an Army supply clerk in Vietnam after also being drafted, the memories of war-era hostilities are as fresh as home-made pho.

"I told him that the past is the past and that we could now be friends," Paff, 70, said. "We shook hands and em-

braced.”

Such sentiment was unthinkable in 1970 when Paff arrived in Vietnam after completing basic training and supply clerk school. His first assignment was to a brand new artillery fire base near the Cambodian border, where he worked in a construction gang that was building platforms for 155mm guns.

“The first time my fire base was attacked happened in the middle of the night,” he said. “As I grabbed my M16 rifle and ran to my assigned foxhole, I said a quick prayer for strength.

“I admit I was quite scared as mortar shells were exploding nearby. I immediately felt the peace that passes all understanding, despite the danger. Yes, I was still scared, but I had an inner peace that the Lord was with me.”

It was during that moment that Paff said he truly understood the adage that there are no atheists in foxholes.

“I saw that saying come to life in Vietnam,” he said. “Fortunately for us, most of the firing at our artillery fire base was outgoing, rather than incoming. But occasionally we were attacked by sniper fire and/or mortar shells. Often on Sunday in chapel very few guys showed up. But without fail, on the Sunday after an attack the chapel was full. My self-righteous side sort of snickered at this behavior, but I am glad that many guys were exposed to the truths of the gospel by attending these services.”

The logistics of providing worship services in the middle of a war zone were not easy—or safe.

“Each Sunday a chaplain would fly into our remote area and conduct a worship service,” said Paff, committed to his Christian faith since his teens. “When it was very dangerous to fly, due to increased enemy activity in our area, dedicated American missionaries, who chose to stay in Vietnam, despite the dangers



Dick Paff carries a young man with paralysis back to his grandfather after he was examined by a Vets With a Mission doctor.

of the war, would come to our base and conduct the service.”

The dedication of those chaplains and local missionaries, Paff said, helped to strengthen his own faith under the dark cover of war.

“While there I got word that my cousin had been killed as he served in the Marines in a different area in Vietnam,” he said. “Another sad part of my experience there was seeing so many of my fellow soldiers turn to alcohol and drugs, instead of to the Lord, in times of stress.”

Despite the personal loss and pain, Paff said he learned to love the Vietnamese people in the midst of a conflict that killed 1 million nationals and 58,000 Americans.

“They have had so much foreign domination, war, and destruction down through the centuries,” Paff said. “China controlled them for 1,000 years. France took them over for 100 years. Japan invaded and occupied them during World War II. And then, of course, Vietnam.”

As was well documented at the time, the animosity did not end when the soldiers landed back on American soil.

“My regrets have to do with the eventual outcome of the war and the way the returning veterans were treated by a generally ungrateful nation,” Paff said, adding that he agreed with President Ronald Reagan’s assessment of Vietnam

years after the war ended: “Ours was a noble cause.”

“We were attempting to keep the people of South Vietnam free from the shackles of repressive communism,” Paff said.

Back to school

With the war behind him, Paff came to La Mesa to visit his parents before heading to Chicago, where he was close to finishing up his master’s degree in social work before being drafted.

But, for the second time in two years, his plans were derailed.

“I had the excellent good fortune of meeting a certain young lady that caused me to decide to stay in the San Diego area,” he said.

A year later he married Nancy, that certain young lady, and renewed work on his Master’s degree at the University of San Diego. Both became teachers while raising two children, now grown. The couple has two grandchildren.

Over the years, Paff admits his heart and mind would often wonder back to Vietnam.

“I had a yearning to go back and to do something positive for the people there,” the National City resident said. “I guess you might say that the Lord gave me a burden for the well being of the Vietnamese.”

A few years ago, after 33 years in the classroom, mostly as a social science and physical education teacher at Hilltop Middle School, Paff retired. Joining him was Nancy, who taught at Crawford High.

With time more a friend than an enemy, Paff did an Internet search for volunteer groups serving in Vietnam. Vets With a Mission popped up on his screen. The nonprofit is dedicated to bringing healing, reconciliation and renewal to the people of Vietnam.

"I was very impressed with the scope of their ministry," he said, adding that he believes the Holy Spirit directed him to the Vets With a Mission.

In 2009, the Paffs made the first of three two-week missions trips to the Asian nation to assist medical teams.

Paff admits the initial trip back triggered deep emotions, something he said Vets With a Mission not only understands, but also addresses as it also



Dick Paff poses with one of the Vietnamese pastors who works with Vets With a Mission.

serves the servers.

"A whole lot of healing occurs within the souls of each volunteer who returns," Paff said, adding that bunkers and captured American tanks are among the war remnants still visible throughout the country.

"That was a bit depressing, but we also felt gratefulness that we were back to help the people there and to share the love of Jesus with them."

While the war relics may remain, much of the animosity has elapsed with each passing decade, in part because at least 70 percent of Vietnam's population was born after the fall of Saigon, according to the online site Facts and Details.

During one of his mission trips, Paff said he was able to jog through the capital city of Hanoi wearing an American flag T-shirt without invoking a single "dirty" look.

"The Vietnamese overwhelming have been friendly to returning Americans," he said. "Despite the government propaganda about the evil Americans, most Vietnamese welcome us to their country."

Ministry opportunities

As tensions have thawed, the ministry opportunities in the Communist country are endless, though still controlled.

"While the people supposedly have freedom of religion, in reality the church

A ministry of reconciliation

Army veteran Bill Kimball, who was part of the 1968 Tet Offensive in Vietnam, founded Vets With a Mission in 1988 as a way to not only help the country rebuild its ravaged infrastructure but to also help heal wounded souls.

Since its founding the South Carolina-based ministry has treated more than 100,000 people, thanks to the volunteer efforts of more than 70 medical teams from the United States. About 25 percent of the teams, both veterans and civilians, consist of non-medical volunteers, many of whom have helped to build or remodel 40 medical clinics in mostly rural areas.

Dick and Nancy Paff have made three trips to Vietnam, most recently in May. Nancy has worked primarily in the

pharmacy; Dick has volunteered with patient services.

"The treatment rooms have always been upstairs in clinics that do not have elevators," he said. "So a big part of my job is to assist many patients—and sometimes carry them—up and down the stairs."

The couple has also helped to lead ministry time for their traveling teammates.

"Each morning before we travel out to the rural clinics, we have a time of daily devotions and prayer led by one of the team members."

In addition to addressing the physical needs through medical care and structural projects, the ministry, now led by Executive Director Chuck Ward, is dedicated to moving residents be-

yond the stigma of war through reconciliation. That commitment is reflected in the ministry's theme Scripture verse, 2 Corinthians 5:18: *"All things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ and has given us the ministry of reconciliation."*

"At the VWAM medical clinics, whenever we have an elderly male patient we identify them as to whether they were on our side in the war or if they were our enemy," Paff said. "If they were on the 'other side' we present them with a friendship pin with the American and Vietnamese flags and tell them that we were once enemies but now we come in peace."

Learn more at www.vetswithamission.org.

and believers are subjected to a lot of subtle persecution and harassment by the government,” he said. “The number of Christians in Vietnam is increasing but the percentage of the population that is Christian is quite small.”

Hoping to increase those numbers, Vets with a Mission works to widen its influence by partnering up with local spiritual leaders who conduct follow-up visits with patients.

“Getting to know the Vietnamese pastors we work with has been a special blessing,” Paff said. “They are so dedicated to spreading the gospel. They have been jailed and persecuted for their faith. They are an inspiration to all of us who have been fortunate to live in a more free society.”

At the heart of that gospel message, he said, is a compelling freedom-instill-



Nancy Paff sits with some of the Vietnamese English students who interpret at the Vets With a Mission medical clinics.

ing promise that’s custom-made for a region that’s tasted the bitter fruits of war.

“Forgiveness is a major theme of the Bible,” Paff said. “Many Bible-believing Christians, including myself, tend to forget that Jesus commands us to love our enemies. My trips back to Vietnam have helped me in this area.

“There are so many opportunities out

there to serve needy people around the world. Another major theme of the Bible is to help those in need. Along with ‘Love thy enemy’ this command is often ignored or put on the back burner. I would encourage every Christian retiree to look into the possibility of getting involved in some way with a group that is serving others in the name of Christ.” ■



Patients line up to be treated at the medical clinic’s triage station near Hue, Vietnam..

On parade





Mother Goose to fly down Main Street a day early

by LORI ARNOLD

Kirk Berquam is looking forward to a leisurely outing with his family at the 69th annual Mother Goose Parade, a pre-Thanksgiving tradition in El Cajon since Harry Truman was in the White House.

It is now one of the biggest parades on the West Coast, parade organizers are hoping a switch from Sunday to Saturday will increase its numbers even more. The parade steps off at 10 a.m. Nov. 21. It is a significant change for the parade, which has historically been held the Sunday before Thanksgiving.

Berquam, pastor of Harvest Time Assembly of God Church, and many of his El Cajon peers are applauding the move.

"We are rejoicing," Berquam said. "It's just great news all the way around. All the church people can participate and go without feeling guilty."

His church, mostly seniors, is located two blocks south of the parade route.

Although Mother Goose has been held on Sundays for years, the peaceful co-existence was challenged in 2012 when the parade changed its start time from 1 p.m. to 10 a.m.

"It literally kept a lot of people from coming out to participate," Berquam said.

Although the afternoon start time created some logistical problems for parishioners trying to navigate around

IF YOU GO

WHAT: 69th annual Mother Goose Parade

WHEN: 10 a.m. Saturday, Nov. 21

WHERE: Starts at Ballantyne and Main in El Cajon, heads east to Johnson Ave., then right to the bridge before Parkway Plaza

WHAT: Floats, marching bands, classic cars, drill teams, horses, dignitaries, clowns

THEME: Super Heroes

INFO: www.mgpcelcajon.com

street closures while trying to get to church, it was a problem pastors were willing to work with. The morning start time, however, only served to exacerbate the parking and transportation issues. Members were then faced with the dilemma of whether to miss church to attend the family-oriented event.

"Kids should be in church on Sunday," said the Rev. Dave Peterson, adding that the Rose Parade and Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade are never held on Sundays.

Peterson, former pastor of St. John's Lutheran Church, was one of several pastors who contacted the Mother Goose Parade Association about the time change.

So did Kevin Miller, administrative pastor at Foothills Community Church, one of the city's mega churches.

"When they shifted it over to Sunday morning it was, 'Come on guys, let's work together.'"

It was during that initial contact with the association that Miller said he realized the organizers could probably use some help, so he volunteered to serve on the Mother Goose committee, assisting with a fashion show fundraiser. Miller said he explained to organizers that if they avoided a time conflict with the churches it would likely benefit the parade association by opening up a large volunteer pool from church members.

"One thing that Foothills has, which a lot of churches have, is we've got people. Last year they called our bluff," he said, adding that the time was switched back to the afternoon. "It was still in a time slot that had some issues."

This year, Mother Goose officials announced that the parade would move from Sunday to Saturday. The start time is back at 10 a.m.

No one from the association was available for comment on the day change.

The parade will also be in its second year of a route change. The parade now starts at Ballantyne and Main, heads west to Johnson Avenue, where it turns right, heading north and ending at the bridge before Parkway Plaza, the city's regional mall.

Miller said his congregation produced



PHOTO BY MINDS EYE PHOTOGRAPHIES | BRYAN DAVID MEYER

at least 40 volunteers last year and leadership was working to double that number this year.

"It seemed to have some impact," he said. "We're working to develop a network of churches to help support something that is really important to the community."

A gift to the children

The Mother Goose parade was the brainchild of Thomas Wigton Jr., who rallied local businessmen to sponsor the event as a gift to the children. The first parade, drawing 25,000 spectators, was held on a Friday night before later switching to Saturdays. But as the popularity of the parade grew, drawing well in excess of 250,000 people, Mother Goose and her entourage were moved to Sundays when most Main Street businesses were closed.

"It's really a return to the parade's roots," said Wayne Clark, associate pastor of First Baptist Church of El Cajon.

His church, located on a plaza a stone's throw from Main Street, was among the most impacted of the churches. When the time was changed to 10 a.m., his congregation moved their Sunday worship services on Mother Goose weekend to Friday night.

"There is a lot of impact for the

churches in the area," he said.

First Baptist will keep the Friday night service this year to allow the completion of carpet installation, but it plans on reverting to its regular Sunday time next year.

"One of the realities of life is that having it on Sunday was less impactful because most businesses were closed," he said. "But now the impact is about the same, whether it's on a Saturday or a Sunday, but it does make an impact on the folks that use Sunday mornings for church."

An outreach tool

Peterson, who now serves as visitation pastor at Christ Lutheran in La Mesa, admits he is thrilled about the witnessing opportunities the day change could provide for the church community.

"That's a real possibility to get people involved and, like what we did before, to maybe have a float."

Years ago, while Peterson was still at St. John's, the congregation entered its own float featuring the Pepper Tree Gospel Choir, named for a majestic old specimen on the church property. The float, he boasted, won first place in its division. Because the parade time didn't conflict with Sunday services, many in the congregation were able to attend.

Whether assisting with a high-profile float or working behind the scenes, Miller said the parade offers Christians a prime opportunity to live out their faith through service.

"Whenever churches rub elbows with the community for a worthy cause, something that benefit our community, it gives us a chance to roll up our sleeves and work alongside people who may not have any relationship with Jesus," the Foothills administrator said. "We get to know each other, you get to know the character of someone."

He said it's also a perfect opportunity to erode many negative, preconceived stereotypes people may have of Christians. He calls it myth-busting.

"That gets chipped away, that gets destroyed by individuals working out in the community," Miller said.

"It's just getting a better understanding of the church and the role it serves. We want to lead and serve. Let's be visible. Let's play well with others and change people's minds."

Changing of minds, Peterson agreed, can be a really good thing.

"I think enough people were being heard and they listened," he said of the association. "That's wonderful. I think it's a great sign. I think God will bless it." ■

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Bubble-wrapping our kids

Protecting young people from emotional harm is a noble aim, but have we gone a bit overboard?

by JOHN STONESTREET

Maybe you've heard that phrase "killing them with kindness"? According to some, that may be what our culture is doing to today's college students, at least psychologically.

Peter Gray, a research professor at Boston College, sees what he calls "declining student resilience." At one major university, "emergency calls to counseling had more than doubled over the past five years. Students are increasingly seeking help for, and apparently having emotional crises over, problems of everyday life."

Gray said that one student felt traumatized because her roommate had called her a nasty name. Two others sought counseling because they'd seen a mouse in their off-campus apartment. They called the police, who, he says, "kindly arrived and set a mousetrap for them." *The Atlantic* calls this kind of thing "the coddling of the American mind."

Many of these emotionally stunted students can't handle a bad grade, and their professors live in fear of negative student reviews or lawsuits. Or as one director of counseling said, "There has been ... a decrease in the ability of many young people to manage the everyday

bumps in the road of life."

What's going on? Dan Jones, the past president of the Association for University and College Counseling Center Directors, points at parents, saying, "[Students] haven't developed skills in how to soothe themselves, because their parents have solved all their problems and removed the obstacles. They don't seem to have as much grit as previous generations."

In other words, there's been way too much helicopter parenting!

Cameron Cole, a youth pastor in Alabama, knows that overly protecting our kids isn't biblical. Pain, after all, is part of spiritual growth. "On Jesus's way to redeeming the world he encountered betrayal, injustice, torture, violence, condemnation, imprisonment, and alienation," Cole writes. "How deluded I am when I think an alternate path exists for my child's 'hoped for' service to God's kingdom. He will not wear the crown ... unless he bears a cross."

Too many kids take the easy path, which is the only path they've ever known. They're afraid to fail so they avoid risk at all costs. But our faith teaches us risky obedience to God, knowing He's in control.



I'm reminded of this point every time I speak with my friend Naghmeh Abedini, the wife of imprisoned pastor Saeed. Jesus said, "I'm with you always." And let's not forget, "Nothing shall be impossible." So let's share this bracing perspective with our sons and daughters, and live by it.

And let's not forget that college students in former generations followed this God of the impossible. In 1886, Dwight L. Moody presided over a meeting of 251 college students in Massachusetts. They came from all over the country, and eventually an interest grew in foreign missions. As ChristianHistory.net reports, one of the students, Robert Wilder, organized a meeting for all of those interested in missions, and 21 young people showed up. He later wrote, "Seldom have I seen an audience under the sway of God's Spirit as it was that night. The delegates withdrew to their rooms or went out under the great trees to wait on God for guidance."

When the conference was over, 100 students had committed themselves to become overseas

missionaries. It was the start of a movement that saw tens of thousands of people carry the gospel around the globe. Is such a passion still conceivable for us?

Yes! But the key is what I learned in my years of teaching teens and college students: Remove the bubble wrap. And like Moody, encourage them toward a God-sized vision for their lives. Help them see their giftedness and how it relates to the needs in their world, so that they can pursue their role in God's restoration of all things under the lordship of Christ.

And as their leaders, parents, and mentors we need to give them permission to try ... and room to fail. ■



John Stonestreet is the director of Strategic Partnerships for the Chuck Colson Center for Christian Worldview and is heard on Breakpoint, a radio commentary (www.breakpoint.org) that is broadcast on 400

stations with an audience of eight million.

THE GOSPEL OF RIGHT CHOICES

by TIM WALKER

There's more than one way to get to where you need to go. It's why I don't just look up directions on the maps app on my phone. I also check out Google maps.

Sometimes they are in sync, other times they provide different ways to get to my desired destination. So I choose the one that seems clear to me at the time.

Not necessarily the one that gets me there the fastest.

The Old Testament is filled with stories of people who made choices.

And many times, they chose poorly.

Sometimes they went left, when they should have gone right.

Sometimes they lied, when they should have told the truth.

Sometimes they gave into temptation, when they should have run.

Sometimes they just made a huge mess of things.

And while there are many stories in the Old Testament that are cautionary tales of bad choices, there is a bigger story—God's story—that was being told.

It's a bigger story . . .

One that is about a God who redeems bad choices.

One that is about a God who isn't limited by the choices and actions of us.

One that is about a God who chooses to let us be involved, but doesn't depend on it.

We see a God who is bigger than our choices.

When we only look at the choices people make, we take God out of it.

When we believe that we are on some kind of invisible path, and that if we decide our next step incorrectly that it will crash our world, we limit God.

I'm not saying we shouldn't do our best to make good choices.

I do believe that our choices can bring some really good or bad things in our lives.

But I also know that no matter how much I eat the right things, I may still get cancer. Or hit by a bus.

Or if I save money like a miser that there still may be something that wipes me out financially.

Or . . . Well, you get the idea.

I am saying that we shouldn't live in fear of making the wrong choice.

Sure, we should seek wisdom. We should see what God has to say about it in the Bible—whether through a principle or direct command. We should do our research. We should get advice from smart people.

But ultimately God is bigger than my choices.

He gives me instructions, wisdom on how to make good choices through His Word, the Bible.

And even when I choose something that has an undesired result, I can trust that as I lean into Him, He can redeem that choice by either bringing good out of the situation and/or bringing good from me with the things He teaches me.

This is all so much bigger than me.

He can take the good or the bad, and use it to make me more like Him.

He can use my perfect steps or missteps to tell His story of redemption. ■



Tim Walker is a husband/father/writer who is navigating faith, marriage, parenthood and mid-life. Follow his blog at www.timswords.com.





A volunteer serves Thanksgiving dinner to guests of The Salvation Army.

Giving back

Holiday offers opportunities to demonstrate gratitude by helping others

For many families, volunteering on Thanksgiving or throughout the holidays is as big a tradition as eating turkey, stuffing and pumpkin pie. San Diego, known for its generosity, offers plenty of opportunities for those who wish to spend at least some of their holiday serving.

San Diego Rescue Mission

The San Diego Rescue Mission, which provides ongoing transitional assistance year-round, hosts hot meals on three holidays annually—Thanksgiving, Christmas and Easter—in an effort to combat isolation for those living on the

streets or who are otherwise lonely.

In addition to the hot meals, prepared under the guidance of local restaurant chefs, each of the special holiday events offers a time of worship music, the distribution of small care packages such as toys and hygiene kits, and information about long-term recovery programs.

Although all of the volunteer serving slots are filled, the mission can use volunteer help for outreach from 8:30 to 11 a.m.

For more information, send an email to dkrakauer@sdrescue.org or call (619) 819-1897.

www.sdrescue.org

The Salvation Army

For three decades the Sierra del Mar division of The Salvation Army has presented its Thanksgiving Day community meal for the hungry and homeless. It's so popular, in fact, that all of its 300 or so volunteer slots filled up by mid-October. But plenty of other opportunities remain, including its annual Christmas Day meal.

Registration is already open and like Thanksgiving, the positions are expected to fill up quickly. Applications are accepted on a first-come, first-served basis.

Other holiday volunteer needs include hosting a toy drive. The charity is

Will you help make a difference?

seeking businesses, clubs, families and other groups who are willing to collect toys to help meet The Salvation Army's target of 50,000 toys. Once the toys are collected, volunteers will also be needed for distribution.

In addition to its holiday programs, The Salvation Army is also in need of year-round volunteers to help with feeding programs at numerous corps centers countywide. Other opportunities include helping children with homework or handing out boxes to the needy. For more information, call at (619) 446-0238.

www.sandiego.salvationarmy.org

Run to Feed the Hungry

The Thanksgiving Day Run to Feed the Hungry 5K and 10K, which partially benefits the San Diego Food Bank, is in need of volunteers for advance projects and race day work. Advance work includes stuffing packets and packet distribution. Race day tasks include check-in, race T-shirts distribution, merchandise, clean-up crew course monitors, start/finish lines and water stations.

www.sdrunforthehungry.org

The Salvation Army Bell Ringers

The Salvation Army depends on hundreds of volunteer Bell Ringers for its annual Red Kettle Campaign, a major fundraiser for the Christian nonprofit, at retail outlets across the county.

Money raised through the campaign is used to provide toys for kids, coats for the homeless, food for the hungry and countless social service programs year-round.

The ministry accepts individual, families and groups for the project, though volunteers must be at least 18. Orientation and training are also provided.

Opportunities are available downtown, South East San Diego, Central San Diego and East County.

www.sandiego.salvationarmy.org

San Diego Food Bank

As the largest hunger-relief organization in San Diego County, the Jacobs & Cushman San Diego Food Bank distributed 22 million pounds of food last year, serving, on average, 370,000 people per month from its 80,000-square-foot warehouse.

All of that work is dependent on vol-

unteers—some as young as 6 years old—who inspect, sort and package tons of food for daily distribution.

Specialized tasks include assembling food packages for its Senior Food Program, Moms & Children Food Program, Food Assistance Program, and the Food 4 Kids Backpack Program.

The food charity accepts individual and group volunteers.

The Food Bank maintains a user-friendly volunteer page that clearly outlines needs, guidelines and procedures for all volunteer types.

www.sandiegofoodbank.org



The image shows the cover of the 'San Diego Christian Directory 2015 Edition'. The cover features a night cityscape with fireworks. To the right of the cover, a list of features is provided: Print, Online, Digital flipbook, Downloadable PDF, Mobile-accessible, and Facebook. Below the list, a smartphone and a tablet are shown displaying the directory's content. The text '2015 EDITION AVAILABLE' is written diagonally in the top right corner of the advertisement.

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Sanchez shows diversity in 'Grand Symphony'

Ricardo Sanchez, a Grammy-nominated, Dove Award-winning worship leader at John Hagee's Cornerstone Church in San Antonio, has released his latest album *Grand Symphony*.

His debut project with Difference Media, the album was co-produced with legendary worship leader Israel Houghton along with Mark Townsend. The producers describe the 12-song album as Sanchez's most pop-oriented release to date.

Showcasing Sanchez's international influences, *Grand Symphony* includes the electronically-pulsing "Halle, Halle," penned by Sanchez and Houghton; "Take Over," an acoustic guitar-driven message of surrender and gratitude; the bilingual declaration of praise, "Por Cristo"; and "Love the Name," featuring acclaimed singer/songwriter Brian Courtney Wilson.

Over the years, Sanchez has helped to pen "Power of the Cross," "I Call Your Name," "Great God," and the Dove Award-winning "The Power of One."

Newboys release theme song for 'God's Not Dead' sequel

Picking up where they left off, the Newsboys new single "Guilty" will serve as the theme song for the upcoming Pure Flix



motion picture, "God's Not Dead 2."

"As a band, our primary goal is to communicate a powerful message through music," frontman Michael Tait said. "With 'Guilty,' we wanted to deliver an anthem that carries an important message for today. 'Guilty' is a song for all Christians, as we seek to honor God each day in every way, no matter the cost. We pray it will help encourage and empower Believers—in our country and around the world—to live boldly for Him."

The movie sequel is scheduled for release the first part of April and stars Melissa Joan Hart, Jesse Metcalfe, David A.R. White, Sadie Robertson, Robin Givens and Fred Thompson. The Newsboys will also make a special appearance in the film.

The band's original "God's Not Dead," Newsboys' chart-topping, Platinum-certified single, inspired Pure Flix's 2014 hit film of the same name.

Baloche updates hymns for 'Christmas Worship Vol. 2'

Paul Baloche, whose songwriting has included worship standards such as "Hosanna," "Our God Saves," "Your Name" and "A New Hallelujah," has put his skills to work in creating *Christmas Worship Vol. 2*. The album released on Oct. 2.

Produced through Integrity Music, the album marries Christmas classics with vertical worship lyrics designed to express God's glory. Collaborators include All Sons & Daughters, Kathryn



Scott, Lenny LeBlanc, Onajé Jefferson and Graham Kendrick.

Baloche's vision for the project was to aim higher than nostalgia; higher than recreating the sounds of the season.

"There is so much content and beauty and theology in a song like 'Hark the Herald Angels Sing' and 'What Child Is This?,' but most of these traditional carols are not vertical in nature; not speaking to the Lord," Baloche said.

Nicol Sponberg adds contemporary touch to timeless hymns

Former missionary kid and founding member of the Dove Award-winning Selah where she performed with her brother Todd Smith, Nicol Sponberg has released a solo album of popular hymns.

Awake My Soul includes such classics as "Sweet Hour of Prayer," "In the Garden," "Holy, Holy, Holy," and "He Leadeth Me."

In her distinctive, husky voice, Sponberg brings each song to life with the prayer that its words will speak to listeners as they do to her.

Sponberg and her husband experienced the loss of a 10-week-old child from AIDS. That loss came just one month after the death of her infant niece, the daughter of her brother Todd and his wife.

But with each heartache, Sponberg chooses to see the good. "It makes us treasure our children more," she says. "We had three miscarriages after losing Luke, and you realize it's just such a gift to bring a child into the world. I don't know if I would appreciate my children as much if it hadn't been for all the loss. There are things that just don't matter anymore. Suffering just changes you. It humbles you whether you want it to or not."



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Liberty Bible College & Seminary

IMAX to show stunning Jerusalem film

San Diegans will have an opportunity to tour Jerusalem and some of its holiest sites without having to leave the county, thanks to a new IMAX film set for release Nov. 20 at the Reuben H. Fleet Science Center.

"Jerusalem" showcases some of the city's most stunning features in 3D, thanks to rare access granted to the filmmakers. It is narrated by English actor Benedict Cumberbatch, and archeologist Dr. Jodi Magness, who travels underground to solve some of this city's greatest mysteries. Five years in the making, "Jerusalem" also highlights rare and breathtaking aerial footage of the Old City and the greater Holy Land to create a rare cinematic experience.

Presented by National Geographic Entertainment, the not-for-profit secular film highlights why the city is considered sacred ground to the Christian, Jewish and Muslim faiths through the eyes of three teen girls from each faith perspective. Each of the girls' families has long-standing ties to the region.

All charitable proceeds will go back to the Jerusalem Foundation and Hebrew University for projects benefitting the city's inhabitants.

Originally released in cultural institutions in select cities in September 2013,



Above, the new IMAX film "Jerusalem" features stunning views of the old city. Right, an ancient tomb stands out as one of the many historic sites featured in the film.

the movie has been touring numerous cities worldwide.

Visit www.jerusalemthemovie.com for information and theater times.



PHOTOS BY DUSTIN-FARRELL

VeggieTales creator releases new project

After a 10-year hiatus from filmmaking, VeggieTales creator Paul Vischer has released "Galaxy Buck," a new storytelling video series. The project includes familiar characters from Vischer's best-selling series "Buck Denver Asks ... What's in the Bible?"

In "Galaxy Buck" Vischer has created a space trilogy that dares to take the good news about God's love to the far reaches of the galaxy. The first in the series, "Galaxy Buck: Mission to Sector 9," released in October.

"Buck Denver and Friends learned a whole lot while making 'What's in the Bible?' and now it's time to put that knowl-

edge into practice," Vischer said. "Where better to do that than in deep space? 'Galaxy Buck' gives us a whole universe to explore while showing kids what following Jesus looks like in real life.

"It isn't enough to know our faith. Through a group of lovable, space-faring puppets, 'Galaxy Buck' will help kids learn to live their faith. I'm excited for families to join us for the ride."



Buck Denver takes on the universe in the new VeggieTales video series "Galaxy Buck."

St. Mark's UMC hosts art show

SAN DIEGO — St. Mark's United Methodist Church continues its 2015 Digital Art Show "Reveal The Peace" through Nov. 22.

The exhibit features any work that was made using a computer application to create or significantly modify the artist's work, including camera work and graphics.

New to the exhibit this year is a separate contest for youth.

The show is open to the general public from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturdays on Nov. 7, 14 and 21. Additional viewing times may be arranged in advance.

For more information, call (858) 273-1480.

Luncheon stresses priority, planning

SAN DIEGO — Professional Women's Fellowship will hold its monthly lunch meeting from noon to 1:30 p.m. Nov. 19 at the Handlery Hotel in Mission Valley.

The guest speaker will be Betsy Ringer, of iBloom Business and Life Coach, who will present a session on prioritizing and planning. Topics to be explored include how to take a reality check on your business and personal life, identify priorities so you can live into them, discover your brilliance zone, strategize goals in seven life areas, learn how to do annual, monthly, weekly and daily planning and begin creating your ideal schedule.

Professional Women's Fellowship holds meetings once a month so that women can connect for genuine relationships, receive personal challenges, gain insight, be encouraged and network.

Tickets are \$25 for members and \$35 for non-members. Admission at the door is \$40.

Learn more at www.pwfsd.org



Betsy Ringer

Annual Pastor's Luncheon features Dennis Rainey

SAN DIEGO — KPRZ 1210 AM will host its 10th Annual Pastors Appreciation Luncheon, featuring speaker Dennis Rainey, from noon to 2 p.m. Nov. 5 at the Four Points Sheraton.

Rainey is co-host of FamilyLife Today, a nationally syndicated program that airs daily on KPRZ. Since the 1976 launching of FamilyLife, a subsidiary of Campus Crusade for Christ, the ministry has grown into a dynamic and vital ministry that offers families blueprints for living godly lives.

Advance registration is required, but there is no fee for the event.

Doors open at 11 a.m.

The hotel is located at 8110 Aero Drive. For more information call (858) 535-1210 or send an email to susanna.lopez@salemsandiego.com.

Craft and Collectibles Fair at MCVF

SAN DIEGO — The Women's Ministry department at Mission Valley Christian Fellowship will be hosting a Craft and Collectibles Fair from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Nov. 14 in the church parking lot.

The church is accepting applications from outside vendors. Vending spaces are \$35 and benefit the church.

The church is located at 6536 Estrella Ave.

For more information, visit www.mvcf.com or call (619) 683-7729.

A peek at land, life restoration

SAN DIEGO — Plant With Purpose's "Restoration at Work" Lecture Series continues at 5:30 p.m. Dec. 10 at the ministry headquarters.

The ministry holds the lecture series once a quarter to give updates on its field programs and how they are impacting lives and land.



Dennis Rainey

The lecture runs until 7 p.m.

The office is at 4747 Morena Blvd., Suite 100.

Learn more at www.plantwithpurpose.org or call 1-800-633-5319.

Homeschool drama in Lemon Grove

LEMON GROVE — The Grace Christian Drama Club will present "Ann of Green Gables," Nov. 6 to 8 and 13 to 14 at Lemon Grove First Baptist.

All performances are at 7 p.m., except for the Nov. 8 show, which is set for 5 p.m. In addition, 2 p.m. matinees will be offered on Nov. 7 and 14.

Ticket prices range from \$10 to \$15.

The church is located at 2910 Main St.

Grace Christian is a homeschool satellite program affiliated with Mission Valley Christian Fellowship.

For more information or to purchase tickets contact William Burt at (858) 248-1951 or send an email to William-burt.grace@att.net.

Gala to benefit childhood cancer foundation

POINT LOMA — The Olivia Hudson Foundation will host its annual Holidays in San Diego Gala from 5 to 7 p.m. Nov. 15 at the Valley View Casino Center (formerly the San Diego Sports Arena).

The night will include special music, a silent auction, an opportunity drawing, and more. All proceeds will go to fund the Olivia's Kids Against Cancer program, a program of The Olivia Hudson Foundation.

The foundation is named in memory of local girl who died of pediatric brain cancer just days before her 4th birthday. Her parents established the charity to provide better treatment options so children experience fewer disabilities from these diseases, to support the families of children with cancer and to educate the

public about the disease.

Tickets are \$30 per person or \$50 per couple and can be purchased online.

Learn more at www.oliviahudson-foundation.org

Tips to becoming a happy mom

SAN DIEGO — San Diego resident Arlene Pellicane has released her fifth book, “31 Days to Becoming a Happy Mom.”

A mother of three, the book embraces traditional values that she believes are the keys to “happier moms... and ultimately happier children and families.”

Topics covered in the book include “A Mom’s Quest for Happiness Isn’t Selfish,” “Preparing My Child to Meet a Bully,” “Someday, You May Not Be Number One,” “Leave Me Alone, I’m Hiding in the Bathroom” and “Being a Parent Comes before Being a BFF.”

Pellicane, whose previous works include “31 Days to Becoming a Happy Wife,” “31 Days to a Happy Husband” and “31 Days to a Younger You: No Surgery, No Diets, No Kidding,” has been featured on The Today Show, FOX News and several other national media outlets.

Learn more at arlenepellicane.com.

Helping the divorced through the holidays

EL CAJON — Shadow Mountain Community Church will host its InTransition Divorce Care class from 7 to 9 p.m. Nov. 9 in the Family Ministries Classroom.

The topic for the class is “Surviving the Holidays!” Organizers plan to provide encouragement, as well as tips on how separated or divorced adults can discover new ways to enjoy the holidays.

The cost is \$5, which includes a DivorceCare Holiday Survival Guide.

The church is located at 2100 Greenfield Drive.

Learn more at www.shadowmountain.org.



Heavenly and crafty hands

SAN DIEGO — Mira Mesa Presbyterian Church will hold its annual Heavenly Hands Crafts Bazaar from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Nov. 14.

A wide selection of handmade arts,

crafts and baked goods will be available along with a drawing for a beautiful handmade quilt with a Christmas theme.

The church is located at 8081 Mira Mesa Blvd.

For more info, call (858) 578-2150.



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MARK LARSON

Relishing the beauty of junk

To quote from a great Charles Dickens novel, “It was best of times, it was the worst of times. It was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity.”

So opens “A Tale of Two Cities,” released back in 1859. Lots of big words in his books, words not often used in today’s social media. OK, “epoch” is old school, but sometimes I wonder if many people even understand the meaning of the word “wisdom” today. We all seem to know foolishness, too often turning it into life’s No. 1 priority. “Belief” is still part of conversations, but often in promoting things like “Believe in something bigger...the Powerball Lottery.”

Dickens was the rock star of his day and, in an age without television, Facebook, Twitter or SnapChat, his stories connected with everyday people. He also filled auditoriums with his live readings and lectures, in a time without electronic amplification.

Most Americans think only of Dickens’ “A Christmas Carol,” not knowing any of his many other important works. He was a sharp critic of the deplorable conditions in the 19th century world, a social commentator before it was cool and such things became non-stop in modern-day media.

Even with such colorful written portraits of his unforgettable characters, Charles Dickens didn’t just write for the sake of writing. He wanted his readers to see things differently, to be tuned in to the needs of others—eventually rising to seeing things from a higher (yes, even God-inspired) standard, with new perspective.

As we hit the holiday season full-speed, I think it’s a good idea to think more deeply about such contrasts in life. More importantly, this is a perfect time to embrace a fresh concept of thanks-

giving.

It would be easy to write a typical seasonal article here about counting our blessings and needing an “attitude of gratitude.” Of course that’s essential, and none of us every really does that 100 percent of the time. There’s plenty of room for improvement.



And I’m deeply grateful for so many things in life. For example, I’m glad that about a year from now the presidential election will be over. And maybe the Padres will get to the baseball playoffs. And then there’s the Chargers.

I’m thankful to wake up and breathe to take on another day, each day. I love my family, faith and friends. I’m blessed to live in the greatest nation on Earth, filled with liberty and personal freedom. It’s not perfect, but find me a better place on the planet. There isn’t one.

Each day is also jam-packed with so many little things to be enjoyed, even though often they’re taken for granted.

But I am especially thankful this year for... (wait for it!)... **the JUNK in life.**

Junk? Are you serious, Mark?!?!?

Indeed I am. Dickens wrote beautifully about the discards, the garbage and pain and misery in life. It wasn’t only to make for a compelling story, but to cause a shift in how his readers thought. He wanted people to sense the needs around them, in their own neighbor-

hoods, becoming driven to do things differently.

My friend Richard loves junk, too. We always laugh about how he gathers special “treasures” on his early morning runs around town.

You have to know he’s the kind of guy who starts a day with a thought like this: *“Hey, I may have time to climb that mountain before breakfast.”*

On most, if not all, of his multi-mile physical fitness excursions, he picks up lots of new treasures (read: junk). Scraps of this or that, parts of old furniture, odd quirks of nature, you name it. When he arrives back home he can look like the old truck on “Sanford & Son,” heavily laden with refuse, on legs. I’m just glad he keeps up with his tetanus shots.

He doesn’t see the crummy side of what he gathers, he only thinks of what he can make of it. Richard just seems to know by instinct that there’s usefulness and often great beauty in that which is dumped out by someone else.

The junk is the catalyst to restoration, renewal and new life for that which seems only refuse and the stuff of outcasts.

That’s a Dickensian message, and more importantly it’s a God message in these crazy, turbulent times.

This season and beyond, I want to be most thankful for life’s junk. And imagine the possibilities when it causes transformation to take place.



Larson is a longtime Southern California radio/television personality. His voice is heard on KPRZ 1210AM and his weekday talkshow airs 6 to 9 a.m.

on AM 1170 “The Answer.” He’s also a news analyst on KUSI TV. Learn more at marklarson.com.

Consider that grief is actually a gift
that helps you restore your soul.

Dealing with grief during the holidays

Editor's note: In his piece on handling grief over the holidays, regular contributor Daniel Jenkins shares his personal journey over the loss of his father, the Rev. Elmer Jenkins. Rev. Jenkins was a long-time pastor in East County who founded several still-thriving churches. His contributions to the community will be long-lasting and we are certain the Jenkins family is not alone in mourning his loss.

As long as I can remember I have gone over to my parents' home for the holidays. Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Years Day were always spent with extended family members at the old homestead.

This holiday season is going to be different.

My dear father died unexpectedly last January and this will be the first year to experience the holidays without him. Dad barbequed and carved the turkey or ham at Thanksgiving. He would always read the Christmas story from the Bible before we broke out the presents. We had certain traditions and stories that were always told over and over again during the holidays.

I wonder how all this will change with Dad gone. How is it going to feel if we try to keep it the same? Will we decide to do things differently?

Most of all, I'm wondering how my mother is going to cope with the inevitable changes.

One thing is certain: we aren't going to just let the holidays pass by as if Dad's death didn't happen. There's really no right or wrong way to celebrate the holidays while still grieving a loved one, but we are going to do it together as a family and have several options in place, depending upon how we feel.

The grief seems to be compounded by the fact that the holidays traditionally bring joy and happiness. Grief has

a way of confusing us. The "pangs of grief" seem to come and go, so you may find yourself feeling joyful one minute and then tearful the next. You might feel guilty for feeling happy, and then gut-wrenching sadness may sweep over you. It's all very confusing, especially since there is no time frame for how long the grieving process might take.



Our expectation is that this year is going to feel very different with Dad gone, and we know that there are many others out there who are experiencing the same feelings of loss. If this is the case for you as well, let me offer some suggestions that may prove helpful as you navigate the holidays.

In addition to planning ahead and keeping some of the traditions, it is advisable to stay connected with family and friends rather than isolate in your grief. You may have a desire to stay away from people, but isolation is the quickest way to turn natural grief into deep depression. Interacting with other people has a way of keeping a grieving person grounded in reality.

This first year we are going to spend some time as a family sharing favorite

stories about Dad. I know there will be laughter, tears, moments to offer comfort and moments to be comforted.

Anticipation of difficulties during a holiday can be as painful as the holiday itself, so having a plan with options can be very helpful. We have a tradition to identify a family in need and then anonymously provide the Christmas dinner, gifts, etc. Since Dad was big part of this tradition, we plan to continue it. This is what he would want.

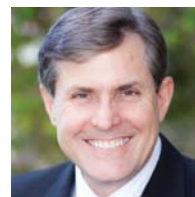
We might pull out some of the old family photo albums and talk about family vacations with Dad. If, in the moment, Mom is too overcome by the memories of Dad to enjoy the holidays, our "Plan B" is to switch venues and have a game night. Just having a backup plan is something of a comfort.

We also have small children in the family (grandkids!) and being able to focus on them and the future can bring relief if memories become overwhelming.

Consider that grief is actually a gift that helps you restore your soul. The holidays bring opportunity to work through another layer of the feelings of separation from the one you love. Grief is part of the healing process, and to avoid it is to only prolong it.

This year the holidays will be difficult for the Jenkins family, but we know where Dad is, and we know that our grief is just part of the healing.

May the holidays be a time of reflection and healing for you as well.



Daniel Jenkins, Ph.D. is a licensed clinical psychologist at Lighthouse Psychological Services in Mission Valley. He is also a professor of psychology at Point

Loma Nazarene University. Learn more at www.lighthousepsy.com.

JANICE THOMPSON

Practically speaking... Coping with sudden wealth

Doesn't the sound of *sudden wealth* sound amazing? Have you ever speculated about a large inheritance or winning the lottery—what you would do with the money and how wonderfully generous you would be?

Since trillions of dollars are expected to transfer to the next generation, let me provide some perspective on issues we wrestle through with people who find themselves on the receiving end of this equation. While sudden wealth can be a blessing, without the proper framework it has the potential to do as much harm as good.

Lots of 'friends'

If this windfall is a known event, the first things you may notice is that you have new-found friends and maybe even some long-lost relatives! This blessing can alter the dynamics of close friendships. Consider keeping this news private if appropriate. If not possible, prepare to set some boundaries.

If you choose to be generous with family and friends, do so in unconditional ways. Using money as a means of control can be manipulative and ultimately damage relationships.

Don't expect instant and endless contentment

We are warned throughout Scripture that wealth is fleeting. While wealth can certainly provide its privileges, it's no guarantee of happiness. The same temptations that affect all of us—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life—are amplified at this level. It is said that John D. Rockefeller, one of the richest Americans ever, was asked, "How much is enough?" His response? "One more dollar." In other words, you will never have enough money to make you content.

Do I really deserve this?

We've seen some come into large sums of money with a sense of guilt. Ultimately it is God's blessing that is being received. Thank Him for the gift and remember that you are God's chosen steward for this resource. Acknowledge His ownership and then consider how best to handle it in ways that honor Him.

Remember the story of the woman who poured perfume on Jesus in Mark 14? His disciples accused her of wasting it. Jesus, however, received the gift gratefully and said, "She has done a beautiful thing to me." In fact, He memorialized that act when He said, "Wherever the gospel is preached throughout the world, what she has done will also be told, in memory of her."

What do I do with the money?

The answer to this question is unique for everyone. Start by postponing any major impulsive decisions while you consider your long-term plans first. Surround yourself with a team of advisers, including a financial planner, estate planning attorney and accountant who, if possible, share your same worldview. As requests come from people who want to *share* in your blessings, prepare to answer them with something like "I need to run this by my spouse and/or financial adviser." This provides some margin to prayerfully consider next steps.

Giving back

It is clear that as financial stewards we are to give back a portion of the blessing that God gives to us. It is important to address this first as Proverbs 3:9 tells us we should give "first fruits." The most common form of giving

is the tithe, which literally means "tenth." This is a great starting point to evaluate giving.

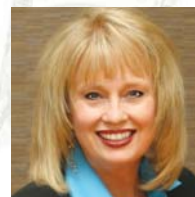
I find it interesting that when making \$100,000 a year people can manage to tithe \$10,000. When they receive \$2 million, however, all of a sudden they "can't afford" to give at least \$200,000.

Purposeful giving is one of the best ways to maintain a healthy perspective on wealth. When you decide to go beyond the tithe and give generously to needs that touch your heart, it takes the focus off yourself and onto your calling from God.

Take the time to explore the many efficient ways to maximize your giving, using tools such as trusts, foundations and donor-advised funds. Generous living and giving is a great way to turn this blessing into valuable teaching moments with the next generation.

If you're one of those who has been entrusted with sudden wealth, thank God for this wonderful blessing *knowing that true "wealth" is in your relationship with God*. And during this beautiful season of Thanksgiving may we all remember to...

Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. — 1 Thessalonians 5:18 (ESV)



Janice Thompson is a certified financial planner and co-founder/CEO of One Degree Advisors, Inc. A frequent speaker on financial topics and mentor for financial

professionals, she also serves on the board of directors for Kingdom Advisors. Learn more at www.onedegreeadvisors.com.

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3 things to teach your daughter about true beauty

My daughter Maggie is only 3 but she already knows what she wants to be when she grows up.

A princess.

But not just *any* princess. She wants to be a *beautiful* princess. And preferably, one who wears pink dresses. And does ballet.

Three years ago, I despised the princess craze. Why would I—I thought at the time—want my daughter to chase after an unattainable physical beauty that only resides in fantasies and Hollywood-style Disney movies?

But here I am, three years later, with a daughter who wants nothing more than to be pretty and to wear nail polish, and who wakes up every morning wanting to don the latest princess fashion.

How did I get here? Believe me, I didn't promote it.

As much as I'd love to blame Disney, I really can't. If I did that, then I might

as well blame the football manufacturer who designed the kiddie pigskin her twin brother recently used to break a light bulb. Just as he is naturally attracted to physical activity, she has a natural yearning to be physically beautiful. And that latter concept terrifies me.

It scares me to think about my daughter growing up in a culture where a simple trip to the grocery store can turn into a fleshly battle, with society screaming at every turn: "You're not beautiful enough!" There, on the billboard, is the perfect-looking Hollywood star, telling anyone who happens to look: "*This* is what you should look like." And there, on the cover of the checkout-line magazine, is that same woman, only this time she's lost half of her clothes and is promoting a "secret" diet and exercise routine that helped her lose all of that baby weight and get back down to 98 pounds!

Unless you have \$50 million, a live-in nannie, a personal trainer, time to burn and an air brush, who can compete with that? Our culture's objectification of women is to be loathed, but thankfully, Scripture gives us a better option. So what will I tell my daughter? This:

1 Worldly beauty is worthless.

Oh, sure, it will get you fame in the big city for about five minutes and the boyfriend of your dreams, but as soon as someone younger and prettier walks in, you'll be figuratively tossed in the back-lot dumpster along with all of the used Hollywood sets.

Think back to the female stars of your youth. Why aren't they popular today? It's simple. *They. Got. Old.* For a society that worships youth, aging is a no-no. The Bible warned us long ago: "*Charm is decep-*

tive, and beauty does not last" (Proverbs 31:30).

2 True beauty isn't worldly.

I tell my daughter she's beautiful each and every day, simply because she needs to hear her father affirm her physical appearance—or else one day she'll seek affirmation in boys who don't have her best interests in mind.

But I also tell her what God thinks about beauty: that He looks not at her outward appearance but at her "inner self" (1 Peter 3:4) and her heart (1 Samuel 16:7)—that is, whether she loves God and loves others. To God, true beauty is exactly the opposite of worldly beauty: To God, true beauty is eternal. To God, every single girl and every single woman—no matter what the world thinks—is "wonderfully made" (Psalm 139:14).

3 Princess dresses are ... well ... OK.

I want my daughter to chase first after God's heart, but it would be wrong to fight her innocent God-given impulses. Consider: Why are almost all of the warnings about beauty in Scripture directed toward women? Because women have a natural desire to be pretty.

I don't mind my daughter wearing a princess dress and wanting to feel physically beautiful—as long as she is chasing after inward beauty and as long as she keeps her outward beauty in perspective. That is, as much as a 3-year-old can.



Michael Foust is the father of four small children and blogs about parenting at michaelfoust.com.

Maybe not everything that happens
to you seems good at the moment...

Gratitude for both the good and the bad

“And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.” — Romans 8:28 (KJV)

I heard the story told recently about a king in Africa who had a close friend with whom he had grown up. The friend had a habit of looking at every situation in his life, positive or negative, and remarking, “This is good!”

him and took them to their village. They tied his hands, stacked some wood, set up a stake and bound him to the stake.

As they came near to set fire to the wood, they noticed that the king was missing a thumb. Being superstitious, they never ate anyone that was less than whole. So untying the king, they sent him on his way.

As he returned home, he was reminded of the event that had taken his thumb

and felt remorse for his treatment of his friend. He went immediately to the jail to speak with his friend.

“You were right,” he said, “It was good that my thumb was blown off.”

The king then proceeded to tell the friend all that had just happened.

“And so I am very sorry for sending you to jail for so long. It was bad for me to do this,” the ruler said.

“No,” his friend replied, “this is good!”

“What do you mean, ‘This is good’? How could it be good that I sent my friend to jail for a year?”

“If I had NOT been in jail, I would have been with you.”

All things are for good

Remember, maybe not everything that happens to you seems good at the moment, but God has a plan and He is always working all things together for *your* good!

Saying thanks to someone who has taken time to help you is reasonable. If someone saved your child from drown-

ing, you would say, “Thank you!” If someone gave you a winning lottery ticket, you would say, “Thank you!”

We tell the people who choose to be nice or considerate to our need “Thank You!” It’s in our DNA... we are people who can admire, respect, do good to others, appreciate, and be thankful. Grateful for all the many blessings we’ve received, either noticed or unnoticed.

When we get pulled over by a police officer and he lets us off with a warning instead of a ticket we say, “Thank You.”

If you believe that God has made the world and He has made you and given you life, hopefully you will say, “Thank you, Lord!”

The Bible says: *“For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.” — John 3:16-17 (KJV)*

An old country preacher once said: Nothing is ever settled until it’s settled right—and nothing is ever settled right until it’s settled with God.

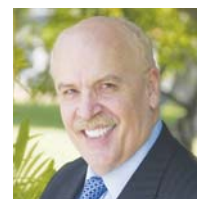
Enjoy this Thanksgiving with a renewed sense of gratefulness! Try being the first one to smile. Start your day by counting your blessings. If you choose to be happy instead of gloomy, do you know what will happen? You’ll be like a magnet attracting people who want to be joyful and happy. People will be attracted to your charm!

Happy Thanksgiving!



One day the king and his friend were out on a hunting expedition. The friend would load and prepare the guns for the king. The friend had apparently done something wrong in preparing one of the guns, for after taking the gun from his friend, the king fired it and his thumb was blown off. Examining the situation the friend remarked as usual, “This is good.” To which the king replied, “No, this is NOT good!” and proceeded to send his friend to jail.

About a year later, the king was hunting in an area of which he should have known to stay clear. Cannibals captured



Pastor Leo Giovinnetti is senior pastor of Mission Valley Christian Fellowship. A former entertainer in Las Vegas and Reno, Nevada, Giovinnetti is also the host of “Real Life Radio,” which is broadcast nationally.

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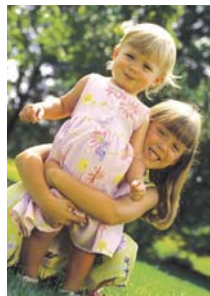
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JOANNE BROKAW

How to have a tail-wagging Thanksgiving

by BANDIT

Hi, everybody! My name is Bandit, and this month I am going to help Mommy write her column. She is supposed to be working on her book and she says she is too cranky to be funny.

Did you know that this is the time of the year when special things are happening? They are called holidays, and it's the most wonderful time of the year if you are a dog.

This month, we have the eating holiday called Thanksgiving. Thanksgiving is when your entire family comes to your house to eat your food and watch your TV and take naps on your couch.

Sometimes you want all of these people to come to your house. But sometimes you would rather be eating Cheerios and watching the Macy's Day Parade all by yourself.

The good news is that, if you are a dog, you can go hide when people come over. Dogs are allowed to be rude like that. The bad news is that, if you are a human, you have to pretend to be happy that you cleaned your house and are wearing clothes that are not pajamas.

Someone else who comes to Thanksgiving dinner at your house is Tom Turkey. Except he is not there to eat dinner. He IS dinner! He gets the special place in the middle of the table, with lots of potatoes, vegetables, rolls, gravy and pies. If you practiced your begging last month during Halloween, you can get some good treats at Thanksgiving.

Start by begging from your grandma. While she is eating dinner, go over to her chair, put your head on her lap, and give her the sad puppy eyes. Tell her, "Grandma, you are the most beautiful grandma in the whole world. I love you so much. Are you going to finish that turkey?"

If you don't have a grandma, then find a baby and sit under his chair. He will throw food to you and you won't even have to beg for it!

Another way to get some Thanksgiving food is to wait until everyone has just finished eating and they are tired and not paying attention. Then say, "Hey look! I think the cat is stuck inside the fridge!" When they turn their heads, jump up on the table and eat as much food as you can before your mommy catches you.

On Thanksgiving, you are also supposed to tell all of the things you are thankful for, like a warm house and family, and especially for mommies who leave Tom Turkey on the counter when they walk out of the kitchen to answer the telephone.

After Thanksgiving comes the best holiday of all: Christmas! That's because you get presents and you don't even have to beg for them! Santa just comes to your house when you are sleeping, and when you wake up there are lots of pretty packages under the tree for you to open. Some even have your name on them.

Just in case you didn't know, you should not pee on the Christmas tree. But even if you forget, or if you have been really naughty this year and accidentally bit the mailman, Santa will still bring you presents. Santa is forgiving like that. I think he shares an office with God.

Christmas is great because of the cookies. Your mommy will make cookies and your neighbors will make cookies and your grandma will make cookies and everyone will share their cookies. It will be a Christmas cookie festival! I especially like Grandma's sugar cookies with icing and sprinkles. I ate a whole bag of them by myself last year. But stay away from the chocolate cookies. They will give you a tummy ache.

Next month I will tell you a big story about Christmas. It is not all about



presents and cookies, you know. There is a baby, and a donkey, and maybe even a giraffe. But you will have to wait till next month to hear the whole story!

Mommy said to tell you that she is very thankful that you read her column and we both hope you have lots of tail-wagging Thanksgiving fun with your family!

Your pal,
BANDIT!!!!



Award-winning freelance writer Joanne Brokaw spends her days dreaming of things she'd like to do but probably never will—like swimming with dolphins, cleaning

the attic and someday overcoming the trauma of elementary school picture day. She lives with two dogs, a cat, six chickens and one very patient husband. Learn more at www.joannebrokaw.com.

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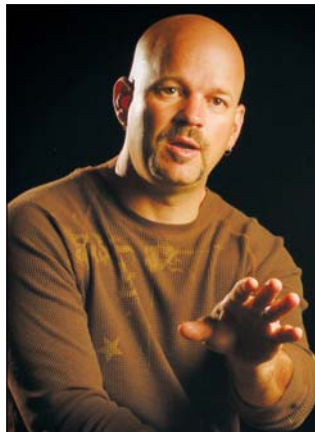
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