

the *Good News* banner

Thoughts from the Pastor

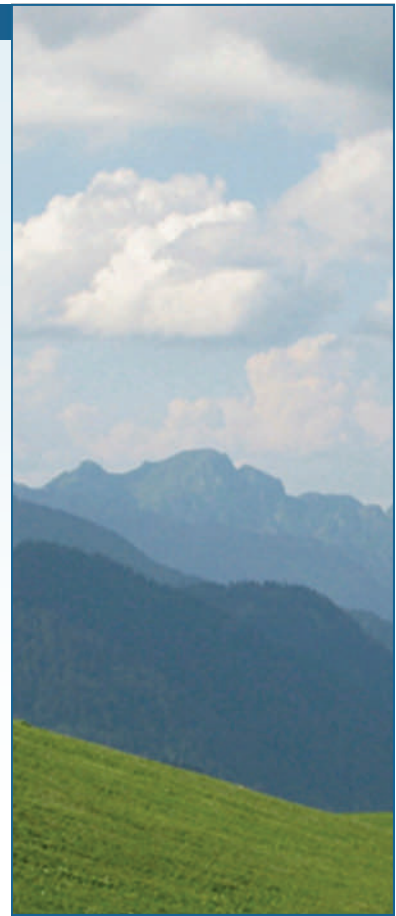
By Jack Gill

It was the perfect temperature outside. Late at night, with a clear sky and a full moon, I pulled out my telescope and set it up in our very dark yard. After taking some time to examine the planet Jupiter and four of its moons, I then put on a filter for my lens and took to examining the moon. It was incredible! What looks so smooth and round to the naked eye was now found to possess mountainous, jagged edges on that bright sphere! As I looked at that object that now appeared to be so close, I began to think of how many millions of people have seen that same moon. Every human being that has seen the light of the sun has seen this bright circle in the sky! From George Washington to Galileo, Caesar to Christ, King David to Adam...all human beings have been exposed to the light of this bright object. Millions of people have watched it rise in the night, or lower in the morning...but few have actually stood upon its surface.

It was July 20, 1969. After years of rocket building, testing, training, practices, and fundraising, the day had finally come. The Apollo 11 spacecraft finally settled down on the surface of the moon. From the radio we heard those words that have been almost an iconic phrase stated by Neil Armstrong, "The Eagle has landed." For the first time in the existence of mankind, human beings had touched down on the moon.

It was only a short time later that two of the men on that capsule would then leave their spacecraft to actually set foot upon it. It was an amazing moment, with all of the world watching. Again, we heard another phrase that was stated and that nearly everyone can quote. Neil Armstrong declared with his first step, "That's one small step for man, one giant leap for mankind."

At Christmas, we find another event that is similar, and yet nearly opposite in many ways. It was similar in that someone had left their habitation to go to another world. Jesus Christ left heaven to enter into our sphere. It was one small step for God, but one giant leap for the good of mankind!



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November Attendance

11/6/11

Sunday School	
Adults	113
Children	135
Total	248
Worship	
Auditorium	
1 st service	180
2 nd service	347
Classes	
1 st service	11
2 nd service	31
Total	569

11/13/11

Sunday School	
Adults	96
Children	98
Total	194
Worship	
Auditorium	
1 st service	118
2 nd service	363
Classes	
1 st service	4
2 nd service	33
Total	518

11/20/11

Sunday School	
Adults	114
Children	140
Total	254
Worship	
Auditorium	
1 st service	161
2 nd service	318
Classes	
1 st service	7
2 nd service	26
Total	512

It was different in many ways though. Instead of traveling up into space, Jesus traveled down to the earth. Rather than moving to what seems like the infiniteness of space, Jesus entered into the world of the finite. The astronauts had the entire world watching and waiting. Jesus entered into obscurity and poverty. Mankind took great pride in what he had accomplished in his effort to reach the moon. Jesus entered into complete humility as He was despised and rejected by men. While mankind's achievement of reaching further and higher seemed to show us our growing abilities, I believe that Jesus' emptying of Himself is the greater feat. Christmas is the time when we remember what Philippians 2:5-7 instructs us:

...although He existed in the form of God, (He) did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men....He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus EVERY KNEE WILL BOW, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth. (Phil. 2:6-10)

As you see that moon this December and think about how great of an accomplishment it was for mankind to be able to walk upon it, let it remind you this Christmas that Jesus came to walk among us—a far greater achievement with much greater results—and let it move you to gratitude towards our God!

Administratively Speaking

By Debbie Stevenson

It's time to join Blue Ridge Community Builder! On December 4 and 11 we will have computers available in the foyer demonstrating this new great tool for connecting with your church family and for helping the church staff serve you. Here are just a few things to help us all...

Up-to-date information – You can go online by login/ password protection to update your own information as well as contact others within our church family. You no longer have to call me to get it, I don't have to contact you for updates, and if you are in your car without a directory, you can just login and look up the info yourself.

Church Calendar & Facilities Availability – You can look at the calendar and see what's going on church wide and in your own groups, as well as see if a room is available for your meeting and reserve it all online.

Group Involvement – LIFE group leaders can communicate with their entire group at once, update with prayer needs within the group, and recap the group discussions for those who may have missed it. This is also great for other interest groups, missions teams or Bible studies.

Sharing Needs – We now have a way to share needs within groups or the whole congregation, i.e. “I have a refrigerator to give away”, or “I’m looking for a job.” Ministry leaders can post volunteer needs as well.

Privacy Settings – Each person has a personal profile, and can choose which information to make available to their groups, circles of friends, staff, leadership, or the congregation through personal privacy and communication settings. The more information that is provided the better you can be matched with service opportunities or with other ways to connect with your church family. And note that the login link is “https” indicating it is a secure website. The majority of the information is no more than we have already had available in our printed church directory.

Giving – Your personal giving record is available to you on your personal profile page at any time. As of January 1, 2012, online giving will be done through Community Builder, and it’s very easy to sign up if you have not done this in our old system.

It is our hope that Blue Ridge Community Builder will enable us to more effectively serve you as you are serving others and building community.



Women’s One-Day Retreat

By Heidi Berry



LIVING OUT THE GOSPEL

Intrigued by the title? Good. Then read on.

The Women’s ministry team is hosting another One-Day Retreat on January 21, 2012. This retreat gives our women an opportunity to hear testimonies and good teaching from our own Blue Ridge women, fellowship with others and meet new friends, all while being able to sleep in their own bed that night (and save lots of money too).

Plans are well underway and God is already orchestrating the day to be tailor made to YOU! Put this on your calendar. More details to follow about registration.

AWANA

By Geni Hall

What better way to welcome the winter month of December than with Beach Night on December 4th! Clubbers are asked to wear their best summer attire (no swimsuits please) and come ready to play. Everybody's gone surfin!

On December 11, Silent Night is back by popular demand from the leaders. The night will be quiet as everyone will whisper their verses. It will be a great time to quietly let God's Word sink into our hearts.

Pitter-Patter Night on December 18 will be our chance to bless some babies! Romania Reborn is an incredible ministry our church supports. Romania Reborn is a small non-profit organization dedicated to providing "hope, help, and homes for children." Specifically, they sponsor relief and missionary work among orphans, abandoned babies, and other needy children in Romania. We are going to challenge each club to fill a baby bottle with spare change. For more information on this dynamic ministry, please check out <http://romania-reborn.org>.

December 4 Beach Night
December 11 Silent Night
December 18 Pitter- Patter Night
December 25 **NO AWANA (Christmas)**



Parents..... Mark Your Calendars



On March 30-31, 2012 Blue Ridge is hosting a parenting seminar with Tedd Tripp, well known author of *Shepherding A Child's Heart*. We believe this seminar will be inspiring and offer sound advice to parents with children of all ages! Be praying about inviting your friends and neighbors who would benefit from Tedd Tripp's wonderful teaching.

Tedd Tripp is the senior pastor of Grace Fellowship Church, Hazleton, Pennsylvania. He has three adult children and nine grandchildren. Tedd is a graduate of Geneva College, B.A. in History, Philadelphia Theological Seminary, M. Div.,

and Westminster Theological Seminary, D. Min. with an emphasis in Pastoral Counseling.

The seminar will be held Friday evening, and Saturday morning, ending by 12:30. The topics to be covered are:

- Getting to the Heart of Behavior
- Helping Our Kids See The Glory of God
- Early Childhood: Helping Our Children Live Joyfully Under Authority
- Childhood: Helping Children Understand How to Identify Attitudes of Heart
- Teenagers: Helping Young People Embrace The Gospel As Their Own Living Faith

Also, plans are being made to include a wonderful children's program during the sessions for those parents who want to come but childcare would be an issue. Keep watching for registration details soon.

Missions

“Lessons Learned So Far”

(An excerpt from Breana Paist’s calendar book for Week Three of her summer spent in Ghana)

- The significance of eternity spent in glorious heaven with perfect bodies (don’t quite see it when I’m healthy and surrounded with health, as when I’m sitting in a hut with a woman decayed by leprosy)
- Contentedness is choosing to be satisfied with the good God has given me now & not longing after more
- Do not look for immediate fruit from ministries. You’ll only frustrate yourself.
- Let go of control. All your fantastic ideas to bless others; the things you feel you need to get done—let go. It’s okay. God will bring it if it’s bueno for you.
- Just a greater hunger & thirst & longing to {know, understand, believe} God more.

There are countless lessons I’ve learned from traveling to serve in different countries. A lot of things I never would have learned if I had just stayed in Purcellville.

I have been on quite a few trips to do mission work in the past six years. I have also heard many reasons why people choose not to go on missions trips. And there are a lot of reasons to not go and many of them are legitimate. Because yes, from now until you go will be harder because you will have to scrimp and save and fundraise. Yes, you would have to rearrange responsibilities and schedules and commitments. Yes, you would get hot and tired and dirty and possibly sick.

But how can I explain to you that following God in this way—when you’re not even convinced this is what He is saying you should go do—following Him just because you know it would be good, you know you would serve Him and you would grow as a Christian—following Him because you don’t want to settle for an ordinary life, but you want to invest in a kingdom that will last forever—following God because you want memories of going to an orphanage and playing with a little boy who pretends he is Batman ... how can I express to you that saying yes is worth it? If you are seeking God in this decision, I promise you won’t wake up some morning next year and say, “I really wish I hadn’t gone on that trip.” So go...

SUMMER 2012 – 10-DAY MISSIONS TRIP TO BELIZE (CENTRAL AMERICA)



Come to Belize with us. Get outside your comfort zone, do something for God that is beyond any attachment to benefitting yourself, see a different part of the world, step out in faith so that you *need* God—need Him to provide. When you do these things, you get to see God work in ways you never would have if you had just stayed on the bank of the river.

For more information about Blue Ridge’s Belize Trip 2012, please contact Rich Shipe (rich@brbible.org or 540-338-2299) or Gil Paist (glp2026@hotmail.com or 540-338-8351).

Experience A Victorian Christmas

DECEMBER 3, 2011

Three Event Times
10 Am, 1 Pm, 4 Pm

THE EXPERIENCE IS ABOUT TWO HOURS IN LENGTH

FREE
for all ages

* Make a toy

* Enjoy English Tea

* Play Victorian Parlor
Games

* Create a Christmas
Card for Our Troups

* Sample period holiday
treats

Blue Ridge Bible Church
770 S. 20th Street
Purcellville
www.brbbible.org

ALSO FEATURING

Dicken's
A Christmas Carol

By the Blue Ridge Drama Team

Christmas Eve Service

Come remember the reason for the season this Christmas Eve at "Let There Be Light," a special service at Blue Ridge Bible Church on December 24 from 6 to 6:45 p.m. Enjoy singing many familiar carols along with the Blue Ridge Children's Choir as we light the candles of advent and retell the Christmas story. We will have postcards advertising this service for you to pass out to your neighbors and friends.



Your Neighborhood Food Pantry at Christmas Time

What more appropriate time is there than the season of Christ's birth to consider how we can enjoy God's grace and extend His glory, right where He's placed us? If you are still looking for a practical, tangible way to minister to the lost, make an effort to volunteer once during the season at our community food pantry!

Delivering food: Six BRBC teams currently deliver food on a rotational basis to families and individuals right in our Western Loudoun community. Interested in helping show God's provision to your neighbors? Consider delivering once a month. Wednesday afternoon and Saturday morning slots available.

Sorting & Shelving: Help out behind the scenes—opportunities during weekdays! Perfect for families.

Donating food: Extra box of pasta in your pantry? Grocery store running a special on canned vegetables? Drop off non-perishable items in the container in the upper level foyer (lower level container coming soon!).

Tree of Life Ministries offers **additional opportunities** to minister, including its Lifeskills, Shelter, Healthcare, and Relief branches. Visit the PBC website—Tree of Life's sponsoring church—for additional details: <http://www.purbap.org/pages.php?name=communitymissions> or contact Brittany Paist (703.975.8039 / brittany.paist@gmail.com).

Additional Thoughts From Pastor Jack

This is the concluding segment on the past three month's study on suffering:


For the last three months I have been discussing suffering from Paul's writings, as well as Acts and the gospels. However, when studying a theology of suffering, an examination of Acts and of only Paul's instruction on the matter is somewhat incomplete. For anyone who claims to be a follower of Christ though, these two resources leave no room to hold to the belief that suffering is not part of God's plan for them. It is only after death that anyone can see an ultimate relief from suffering. Until then, every Christian must embrace the teaching that God not only will see them through it, but that He can accomplish much because of it.

Our culture today is one that lives for safety and comfort. Paul and the other apostles not only did not have that mentality, they *could not* have it! In the earliest days of the church, its members were continually threatened to speak out for Christ. Rather than pray and ask for safety, they instead prayed for boldness, only asking that God take note of the hostile actions against them (Acts 4:27-29). Later on, as Peter and the apostles began to teach and were imprisoned for preaching the gospel, the Pharisees had them beaten and ordered to no longer teach and preach about Jesus (Acts 5:40). Note their response: "So they went on their way from the presence of the Council, rejoicing that they had been considered worthy to suffer shame for *His* name" (Acts 5:41).

These instances demonstrate that a Christian must have a biblical view of suffering and trouble that will usually run against the cultural perspective. Our goal is not to try to avoid suffering, but to grow from it, looking to Jesus and the apostles' examples for guidance. Just as they were not above suffering and great difficulty, neither is the follower of Christ. Just as God accomplished much good through the sufferings of Christ and the apostles, so too will God continue to work through us and our suffering. While we often will not understand why we must undergo the struggles and sufferings allotted to us, we can trust that God is at work. "What God has done in the past is often a model of how He will work in the future—though He is creative in how He will do it."¹ We may not always understand our circumstances from our perspective, but we can trust in God's faithfulness.

¹James E. Allman, "Acts of the Apostles" (lecture, Dallas Theological Seminary, Dallas, TX, June 20, 2011).

December 2011

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
				1	2 Refuge College and Career Home Group (7.30 p.m.—9.30 p.m.)	3 Experience A Victorian Christmas (10 a.m., 1 p.m., 4 p.m.)
4 Worship Services (8:30 a.m. & 11:00 a.m.) Sunday School (9:45 a.m.) AWANA (4.00p.m.—5.30p.m.)	5 Scouts & Cub Scouts AHG Moms in Prayer (9:30 a.m.) Women's Prayer	6	7 Children's Choir (7.00 p.m.—8.00 p.m.) Worship Practice Youth Group (7.00 p.m.—9:00 p.m.)	8	9 Refuge College and Career Home Group (7.30 p.m.—9.30 p.m.)	10 Men's Breakfast (7.00 a.m.—9:00 a.m.) Ladies Christmas Brunch
11 Worship Services (8:30 a.m. & 11:00 a.m.) Sunday School (9:45 a.m.) AWANA (4.00p.m.—5.30p.m.)	12 Scouts & Cub Scouts AHG	13	14 Children's Choir (7.00 p.m.—8.30 p.m.) Worship Practice Youth Group (7.00 p.m.—9:00 p.m.)	15 Newsletter Deadline	16 Refuge College and Career Home Group (7.30 p.m.—9.30 p.m.)	17 Men's Breakfast (7.00 a.m.—8.30 a.m.)
18 Worship Services (8:30 a.m. & 11:00 a.m.) Sunday School (9:45 a.m.) AWANA (4.00p.m.—5.30p.m.)	19 Moms in Prayer (9:30 a.m.)	20	21 Children's Choir (7.00 p.m.—8.30 p.m.) Worship Practice	22	23	24 Christmas Eve Service (6:00 p.m.)
25 Christmas Day Service (11:00 a.m. only) 	26	27	28 Worship Practice	29	30	31

Blue Ridge Bible Church

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Blue Ridge Bible Church

Communicating Christ,
Building Believers,
Sending Servants.

Christmas Version of 1 Corinthians 13

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

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

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

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

Love stops the cooking to hug the child.

Love sets aside the decorating to kiss the husband.

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

Love doesn't yell at the kids to get out of your way.

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

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

Love never fails. Video games will break; pearl necklaces will be lost; golf clubs will rust, But giving the gift of love will endure.

Merry Christmas!