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Hampden Heights Sentinel

Highlights:

- I do pacts with Jesus Page 2
- Wise men still seek Him Page 3
- Can a diet change save your life? Page 4
- Cooking, walking, and health lectures Page 5
- You are all my family! Page 6

Index:

- Grace's Outpost Page 2
- Recipe of Month Page 2
- Mission Trip Page 3
- Observation Post Page 3
- Book Review Page 4
- Health Ministries Page 5
- Meet a Member Page 6
- Children's Page & Church Info. Page 8

Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. -- 2 Corinthians 5:17-- KJV

RJA News Corner

by Lee Stahl, Principal

HAPPY HOLIDAYS

At Reading Jr. Academy, Ms. Cindy's Pre-K and Kindergarten class has been busy spreading the holiday spirit to other children in their neighborhood. We had a classroom toy and book drive and donated 2 large 30 gallon bags full of toys to MARY'S HOME, a shelter for young, single mothers. Mary's Home empowers young women to change their lives by providing up to 2 years of transitional housing and supportive services in a loving and caring environment. Mary's home is located at 726 Upland Ave. in Reading.



RJA: Educating Today and for Eternity!

Grace's Outpost by Ashley Richards

“Behold, I am doing a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert.”
Isaiah 43:19, ESV

I love new beginnings.

I have regrets in this life. Don't you? I regret not going for that walk earlier this afternoon, before the rain picked up. I regret those three chocolates I shoveled into my mouth not half an hour ago. I regret putting off those errands, those phone calls, those little tasks, that I should have done a week ago, but I just keep saying, *Oh, I'll do it later.* I regret not saying yes to the blind date my friend tried to set me up on almost a year ago (or, more specifically, not living as spontaneously as I would like to. I'm probably better off without him in my life, if the rumors about him are to be believed).

And those are just the little things. That says nothing about the regrets of working in fast food for the past four years, when I had dreams of taking on the world, loving orphans and encouraging missionaries and pastors, feeding the hungry, clothing the homeless, nurturing lonely souls, sharing Jesus with the world. That says nothing about years of regret from battling with depression for seven years with little relief. All those wasted years. That says nothing about obesity, about loneliness. The big things.

Regrets plague you—plague me. With doubts, with questions, with self-recriminations. That is, perhaps, why I love New Year's Eve so very much.

I don't do resolutions. To me, that word carries with it inevitable failure. *Resolutions* have almost become the running gag-line of the holidays. Does *anyone* actually keep them? Maybe they do, but I've not met one person who has kept to their resolutions. That they broadcast, anyway.

What I *do* do, however, are pacts with Jesus. They seem more attainable. Sure, I may fall, but if anyone knows my failures, it's Jesus, and if anyone can pick me up and set me on the right path again, after I fall and get scraped up *again*, it's Jesus. So each week after Christmas, I bring my wish list to Jesus. To finally, *completely* kick that one sin that I can't seem to expel from my life, no matter how much I hate it *and* me when I fall back into it. To live and eat healthier. To believe in myself. To love Jesus intimately after all the doubts Satan tantalizes me with. To be happy. To not worry. To get back into writing stories. Whatever is on my heart in that one week.

And then, in those last few minutes before midnight, I commit my life back to Jesus just before the new year comes creeping in. I give to Jesus my desires, and ask that His will be done. I trust in Him to make me a better person, to guide my life in the direction He wants me to go in, and I do my very best to hold up my end up the bargain.

Do I fall? You bet I do. Do I trust in God 100% of the time? No, I don't even do that. But I still try, and I still try to honor Him with every breath.

And that's the beauty of new beginnings. Every New Year's Eve, every new week, every sunrise, every sunset, *every second that I breathe*, I can stop in my tracks, riddled with regret, and let it all slough off. I can bow my head to the ground, let the self-recrimination and failure and regret just slide off, like a too-big coat, turn to my Father, and receive hope. A new beginning. Is there anything better?

Praise the Lord for New Year's Eve, And every new breath. I'd be lost without it.

Recipe of the Month by Elizabeth Hill

Here is a very easy recipe for fudge that used to be my husband's favorite. It is still a favorite of my niece. I used to make it every Christmas just for them. I hope you enjoy it as much as they have.

Foolproof Chocolate Fudge

- 3 (6 oz.) pkgs. semi-sweet chocolate chips
- 1 (14 oz.) can condensed evaporated milk (not evaporated milk)
- dash salt
- 1 1/2 teasp. vanilla (I use a little more)
- 1/2 cup chopped nuts (optional)

In heavy saucepan, over low heat, melt morsels with condensed milk. Remove from heat.

Stir in remaining ingredients. Spread evenly into wax paper-lined 8 inch square pan.

Chill 2 to 3 hours or until firm.

Turn fudge onto cutting board, peel off paper and cut into squares.

Store loosely covered at room temperature.

One of the easiest desserts you'll ever make not just for the holidays, but for any occasion!

Mission Trip Update

by Ashley Richards

Greetings from Mission Trip Central!

I hadn't included a mission trip update last month, mainly because we had just turned in our group application and were still waiting to hear something, and I really had no news to report. I am happy to report that I have new information regarding the trip, however, and I am excited to see our trip advance.

I was in contact with the group coordinator, Kim Haas, at Maranatha Missions in the week that this update is being penned, and she has conveyed to me that she has received our application and our country will be determined for sure within a week or two of this article being published. The site location will take a little bit longer to decide. She has told me that it looks like Brazil is likely to be our destination, but she will be able to tell me for sure by the middle of January. The two cities in which Maranatha is most concentrated (in Brazil), at this stage, are Belém and Salvador, and, should we be sent to Brazil, it is very likely that either one of those cities is where we would end up going.

Both cities are situated on the eastern coast of Brazil, Belém near the mouth of the Amazon River (near the northeastern tip), and Salvador being in the central part of Brazil's Atlantic coastline.

If you would like to participate in a tangible way in helping our group prepare for our trip this July, one way you will be able to help (in the near future) is a fundraiser we are in the middle of organizing with Panera Bread. The premise of the fundraiser is that they will provide us with flyers, and when you make your purchase on a certain night (more details will be forthcoming as they become clear), between 4:00 p.m. and 8:00 p.m., they will donate a certain percentage of the sales to our mission trip. The percentage (between 10-20%) depends on the number of sales transactions—the more sales transactions, the higher the percentage of the sales they will donate toward our trip (therefore, if you wanted to help by participating in this fundraiser, and your family went to Panera Bread on the night of the fundraiser, and there are five of you, if you

pay each person's meal individually (turning in a flyer with each purchased meal), rather than including all five people's meals on one check, it would go further toward helping us get a higher percentage of the sales. It won't affect the cost that you pay for your dinner, but it will help to ensure that we are able to raise more money.). As we get more details ironed out, we will have the finer details (including the date) and we will be able to distribute the flyers, but I wanted to bring it to everyone's attention so that the church is aware. It will most likely be a Monday night.

Please keep us in your prayers. As of right now, 26 people have committed to going on the mission trip, and fundraising is underway. There are so many components to organizing this mission trip, and so many things that could go wrong (and, praise God, so many things have gone right so far!). Please ask the Holy Spirit to work through this trip and make a lasting impact for God's Kingdom because of the preparations for the months leading up to the trip

and the actual trip itself in July. Praise God, the Holy Spirit has led us this far. Please pray that the Holy Spirit will continue to lead us in all aspects of this trip.

If you were/are unable to go on the trip this year, but still would like to help, please come see me. Or contact me (by email at ashrichards1988@hotmail.com, or by telephone at 610-207-7573). There are several components of the trip in which we could use your help.

On behalf of our mission team, I want to thank you all for your prayers and all you've done to support us already!

Until next month, Ashley

The Observation Post

by Bob Kondracki

Wise Men Still Seek Him

This was the heading on the Christmas cards we sent out this year. It was no accident or coincidence that our family selected these particular cards. We always deliberately choose cards that have a religious theme to them. But this particular card especially caught my attention with the message it loudly proclaimed.

More so than all the other cliches I was reading. I also noticed that there were plenty of boxes of these cards left on the shelf... and it all got me to thinking.

Christmas has always been a great holiday for exhibiting generosity, sharing good times with friends and family, elaborate festivities and decorations, etc.

Just a great time to be cheerful and merry and try to forget about life's problems, perhaps just for a moment anyway. But for most of my life there also has always been an emphasis and understanding underlying the gift giving and merry-making... the real reason we celebrate the holiday. That was never in question...until somewhat recently.

Make no mistake, a change has been slowly occurring for years now. But today there seems to be real momentum building for a radical shift in thinking regarding how our so-called "Christian" nation views and celebrates Christmas. Of course I guess this shouldn't surprise anyone. With the growing commercialization and emphasis on spending money..(continued on page 7)

The Book Review by Stacy McLean

This month's book review is on **Forks Over Knives (The Plant-Based way to health)** with 125 recipes edited by Gene Stone.

The summary of this book was eye opening, therefore here it is: What if one simple change could save you from heart disease, diabetes, and cancer? For decades, that question has fascinated a small circle of impassioned doctors and researchers-and now, their life-changing research is making headlines in the hit documentary **Forks Over Knives**. Their answer? *Eat a whole-foods, plant-based diet*- it could save your life. It may overturn most of the diet advice you've heard-but the experts behind Forks Over Knives aren't afraid to make waves. In his book *Prevent and Reverse Heart Disease*, Dr. Caldwell Esselstyn explained that eating meat, dairy, and oils injures the lining of our blood vessels, causing heart disease, heart attack, or stroke. In *The China Study*, Dr. Colin Campbell revealed how cancer and other diseases skyrocket when eating meat and dairy is the norm- and plummet when a traditional plant-based diet persists. And more and more experts are adding their voices to the cause: *There is nothing else you can do for your health that can match the benefits of a plant-based diet*. Now, as **Forks Over Knives** is introducing more people than ever before to the plant-based way to health, this accessible guide provides the information you need to adopt and maintain a plant-based diet. There is a DVD as well.

This book features numerous doctors, and other books related to this topic. From the author of **The China Study**, **T. Colin Campbell, PHD**, explains some significant studies. He wanted to investigate why cancer is more prominent in different parts of the country- and to see how lifestyles impact the unusual rates of diseases. Campbell states, "It was a huge undertaking-we collected data from 130 villages involving 6,500 adults and their families. What we found based on evaluation of the complex relationship between multiple diet and lifestyle factors was that the consumption of whole, plant-based foods offered the best strategy for creating health and preventing serious diseases."

Also, the author of **Prevent and Reverse Heart Disease** **Caldwell B. Esselstyn, Jr. MD**, explains some significant studies. He began his long-term study because, after performing surgeries on many women with breast cancer, he quotes, "I wanted to decrease the number of patients rather than simply wait for the next one to arrive".

He performed 2 decades of global research, finding that whenever people ate a plant-based diet, cancer and cardiovascular disease were rare. He quotes, "To do the study, we recruited 24 patients from the clinic's cardiovascular department, people who had basically been told to go home and prepare for death, and put them on a plant-based diet. Every one of them who

followed the diet lived without any more incidents of heart disease." "It takes time for people to catch on" he says. "But it will happen. The trigger will be larger studies that will be so compelling that specialists will have to offer the option of a lifestyle change to patients." Esselstyn has been preaching advantages of a plant-based diet ever since.

Wow! Those are some amazing findings. You're probably wondering how to get started. I am glad you're thinking that way. I will share some more valuable information and then will let you know step by step how to make gradual changes to a better and healthier lifestyle based on this wonderful insightful book.

Dr. Caldwell Esselstyn's studies show the Western diet of processed oils, dairy, and meat destroys the lining of your blood vessels and leaves a plaque buildup that inhibits blood flow. He quotes, "cardiovascular disease is a food borne illness. Change your food, and you change your life", he says. Awareness is very important, what we are not aware of, we cannot change. I am sorry to say some negative things; however you need to know some facts and some history before we move on. I will present more positive information later though. We always need to remember that God is still in charge of everything and we need to rely on him, not the world. Philippians 4:13 "I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me."

Here are some statistics to make you aware of: Most Americans have poor health. In the U.S. because of all the freedom choices in food, there are so many diseases. The Center for Disease Control estimate that 7 out of 10 people suffer and die from chronic diseases. The rate of suffering keeps increasing, some in part due to diet. Diabetes has increased to 90%, "2/3 of adults are either overweight or obese, and obesity rates for children have doubled over the past 30 years. An estimated 57 million Americans are experiencing pre-diabetic symptoms". A vast number of people are becoming aware that lifestyle choices can have a powerful effect on their health. Those choices to look at are nutrition and what we put into our bodies to make us healthy.

We want to gradually make changes to accommodate a healthy diet. People need to decrease if not eliminate fatty, salty, sugary junk foods and animal based foods. I felt the need to share this valuable information with you from the author as he wrote it: "But could the answer to our health problems be a relatively straight forward one? Could it be that the best way to promote health and to avoid disease isn't to take large quantities of medicines, or to rely on complicated medical procedures? The answer is yes! The formula for good health may be as simple as this: Eating a whole-food, plant-based diet.

(continued page 5)

The Book Review (continued from page 4)

That's what the world of Forks Over Knives is all about, and it's a message that is resonating with audiences nationwide. A plant-based diet is a very simple one. It consists of avoiding anything that came from a source that ever had a face or a mother. In other words, avoiding all meat (including fish) dairy and eggs."

O.K., so your thinking-how do I do this and what do I eat. Well, the very best foods that mother nature offers: fruits, vegetables, grains and legumes. These foods are usually known as side dishes; however they create the best nutritious meals possible. "A healthy, plant-based diet is also composed of whole foods. That means avoiding refined foods such as olive oil, white bread, artificial foods with chemical additives. "

But not to worry, because this great book not only has key principles for changing your diet slowly, it also contains lot of recipes that are nutritious and easy to make. Half this book is information and the other half is "Recipes". Also, there are more resources listed on books related to this topic. Here are a few key principles of the plant-based, whole foods, Forks Over Knives diet:

Eat Plants- Eat whole, minimally refined fruits, vegetables, grains, and legumes (beans, and peas families.) A well-structured, plant based diet will meet all your nutritional needs- for calories, protein, vitamins, and minerals- without calorie counting , portion control or measuring. "It's the easiest way to eat."

Avoid Overly Processed Foods- These foods include bleached flour, refined sugars, and extracted oils. White flours, sugars, and extracted oils.

Avoid Preservatives and Additives-You can be eating whole foods that don't need additives to make them taste so great!

Eliminate Dairy-Humans have no nutritional need for cow's milk. It was designed for a baby calf to grow from 70lbs. to about 1,000 lbs. in one year. Dairy products increase the risk for chronic diseases.

Consider a B12 Supplement

Don't worry about not getting enough protein

--Plant foods contain plenty of protein, and a whole foods, plant-based diet provides an appropriate level of dietary protein around 10% of total calories. That proportion exceeds the level required for most people. This information is straight from the book. The conclusion: Dr. Esselstyn quotes, "Plaque does not develop until the endothelium, or the lining of the arteries, is injured- and it is injured every time people eat meat, dairy, fish, and chicken. This cannot be emphasized enough." Forks Over Knives has many personal stories that include lives being saved by switching to a whole-foods, plant based diet even after a lifetime of illness.

Again, there is also a DVD, and you can find the book or DVD at libraries, online, or in book stores.

Health Ministries by Arleen Johns

As I write this I can hear Bob's voice in my head, "how come you didn't write for November's newsletter? I expect an article for December, SOON!" (Not word for word). Well Bob! I did write for November's newsletter. It was on my to-do list- SEND NEWSLETTER. Then we left on our 2 week vacation. It was right where I left it, in a word doc on my computer. OOPS!

In November over 20 attendees enjoyed a variety of soups and were given a packet of recipes to try at home. Carolyn Hetrick gave a very helpful, informative talk on 10 ways to prevent Diabetes.

Healthy Dish Showcase- December 13 was our last cooking class/lecture series of the year and we invited you to take your turn at fixing one of the recipes, or one that we fixed during the 2015 season. There were a number of wonderful varieties of dishes to try. Thanks to everyone for being a good sport and taking a turn. And the survey says... keep Health Ministry going. We enjoyed it.

Wayne and I want to thank all of you for supporting Health Ministry this year. We could not have done it without the help of Lorraine, Shirley and Eric-all those dishes to wash and chairs and tables to put up and take down. And a big thank you to Carolyn for jumping in with your vast wealth of knowledge, giving us information on a variety of topics, and providing tips as we all try to become healthier. Also for the many dishes you prepared and the hours on the phone organizing and planning. We look forward to another great year. If you are interested in joining our Health Ministry team, speak with Wayne or Arleen Johns. 610-926-2634

Looking ahead: Some of the ideas bouncing around in my head are CREATION health series for Spring, and possibly another series in the Fall, with a spattering of cooking, walking club, and health lectures on single topics of interest. If you have a specific need, please feel free to contact us.

Have a great and healthy new year!

Meet a Member by Ashley Richards

This month's candidate for the Meet a Member section is someone we have all heard of, and I hope know, but it might be a bit unorthodox, and definitely unexpected. I was impressed with the thought, *It was just Christmas—tell them about Me!* and I knew I couldn't resist. I believe Jesus still speaks to us, so I sat down tonight and asked Jesus some questions. And this is what He told me. Some of the answers were a bit unexpected, but they reminded me of Jesus' gentle, teasing sense of humor and His deep wells of love.

I generally start off my interviews with the question, *how did you come to have a relationship with Jesus?*, which seems like a rather stupid question to ask Jesus Himself, but it sort of just popped out. (Don't you ever do stupid things in Jesus' presence?) His answer sort of took my breath away, though, so I'm leaving it in. "You mean, how did I come to have a relationship with Me?" He asks with a wide grin. "I think the better question is, how did I come to have a relationship with all of you? My existence was meaningless without you in it, so I created you. But sometimes I'm still waiting on you for the relationship."

When asked if Jesus has any family in the church, he replied, "Yes!" with a wide grin, His infectious excitement catching. "You all are My family! But there are still so many others yet to come." His shoulders stoop and bone-deep sadness flits across His face for just a millisecond—I barely caught it, but it makes my soul cry.

I wonder how He bears up under the pain of all those lost souls, when I can only imagine what it's like.

Next I ask Him how He is involved in the church.

"How am I not involved in the church?" He asks with a wink. He explains to me that the church is an extension of who He is. The church is His family, meant to be His manifestation and the representation of His love and mission on earth. He could have spoken of the Holy Spirit's work in advancing the Kingdom of God, or His death on the cross to give Christianity purpose, but instead He focuses on His relationship to the people of His church, and I can't help but notice that that's everything to Him. "I would like to be more deeply and intimately in-tune with every single person who calls me Lord. I want the church to trust Me enough to lead it in the direction it should go. Sometimes this happens, but it's hard for some people to trust Me, or to take the effort to make Me a priority in their lives."

When asked what His favorite part of the church is, He responded, "What is my favorite part of the church? The people! I love them so much."

"What are some of your hobbies?" I asked Jesus then. "Tell me about yourself."

"I love loving humanity, encouraging them, building them up..." he said, and I am starting to think that Jesus has a one-track mind.

I think sometimes we lose track of the fact that Jesus is a part of our body, rather than a relic we keep around for good luck, or because we're stuck in our ways. Jesus *wants* to be known by us. I'm busy, you're busy—we're all busy. I get it. But in this new year, with the fresh start allotted to us, I hope and pray that we don't lose sight of how important it is to consciously choose to follow and love and *know* Jesus. Both now and forever.

What are five things about you the members of Hampden might not know?

"Um, well, they may already know these things, but these are five things I don't want them to ever forget..."

1. I love you. (No, not him—okay, yes, I love him, too, but we're not talking about him. We're talking about you. And I love you. You believe it when your boyfriend says it, or your daughter, so why can't you believe it when I say it? I. Love. You. Don't feel like you have to prove something or accomplish something or overcome something for this to be true! I love you. Please let's be friends. Please come love Me, too. I wouldn't have died for you if I didn't want to spend forever with you. Believing and loving are different.)

2. I love them. (Did you hear that? I love *them*, too! Just like a mama protects the children she loves, or a boyfriend stands up for his girlfriend, I love them, too. *Stop* hurting them!

Why all the bickering and hatred? Why do you tear each other down? I love *you*, but I also love *them*. Can't you please just love each other, too? I want you to be happy together when I take you all home.)

3. I miss you. (When was the last time we hung out? Do you even know what I'm like? Why is it enough for you to believe that I'm real, if you don't want to spend time with Me? Isn't that sort of the point? I have so much I want to tell you, so many gifts I want to give you. But I'm not a Santa Claus, and I'm not the UPS. You can't receive My gifts if you're not paying attention. I can't share My love with you if you're not here.)

4. My ways are not your ways. (Heh, you might have already picked up on this one, eh? Sometimes I'm so misunderstood and I wish you could understand Me for what I really am. Stop trying to fit Me into molds. I'm not a Mother Teresa in the sky, or a genie in a bottle. You doubt Me because you expect Me to always give good things to those I love, but even mothers don't always give every good thing to their children. Bad things happen, but that doesn't mean I'm bad. Terrible things happen, but that doesn't mean I don't love you. If only you could see the big picture, you could see that what I do and why I do it is the best possible thing for you.)

(continued on page 8)

The Observation Post (continued from page 3)

Black Friday, Cyber Monday, stores opening on Thanksgiving, Throw a Tantrum Day when you don't get what you want on Christmas.... (mostly kids but some adults too) etc., etc. ad- nauseam. Add to that the politically correct attitude and liberal agenda (read; lack of ethics or morals) that permeates our country and you have a recipe for change, much of it unsavory.

Now don't get me wrong. I do not want to appear hypocritical. My own children and family are "well-taken care of" on Christmas, just as much as anybody. I think every parent wants to have an excuse to spoil their kids, at least once a year, or twice if you include birthdays. And generosity is certainly a trait of God is it not? I am reminded of Matthew 7:10-12. If you have any doubts, look it up. And of course we want our children to have cherished memories of their childhood Christmas's that most of us parents have, and wouldn't trade for anything in the world. I don't believe God frowns upon the good will and generosity that accompanies the holidays. But, just like for example a glutton with food...there is a limit, and even good things can become corrupted and bad when abused, and then obscure the real purpose. And the many years past of the slow erosion of the principles and true meaning of Christmas has clearly started to escalate in our present times.

So as a result, we are quickly cultivating a paradox in our society regarding Christmas.

The atheists/agnostics claim to be offended by the inclusion of Christ and all the religious connotations associated with celebrating Christmas as a national holiday. So, of course the politically correct contingent say we have to accommodate them....can't offend the good citizens of our great country by having a national acknowledgement of a religious figure, you know. Doesn't matter that this country was founded on religious freedoms and beliefs. You see, we're smarter today than we were in the past. Our thinking has evolved at this point. We've become more enlightened to other people's feelings and lifestyles. Of course it doesn't matter that the same rights don't apply to me when I say that I'm offended by their wanting to change something traditional and sacred to me, and remove the very essence of why we celebrate the holiday. Why isn't anybody paying any attention to me when I say we should remove things like MTV, or pornography, or any other form of garbage from our society because it offends me and others? "Well, you have a choice" is the common reply. "Nobody's forcing you to participate in things you don't like" (although that's debatable when certain things are forced upon you by our government). So OK, with that kind of reasoning from our politically correct friends, why doesn't that also apply to them? If they don't like the idea of celebrating a religious holiday, why can't they just ignore it like they ask me to do with other things? Different rules for different fools I guess.

Nobody's forcing them to engage in a Christmas celebration, just like nobody forces me to celebrate Ramadan or some other holiday I don't believe in. And nor am I petitioning anybody to change it because I don't like certain things about it either. It's like saying, "I really like apple pie but I don't want the apples in it. I just want the cinnamon, the nutmeg, and the flaky crust, I just don't want the apples. But let's keep calling it apple pie though."

So for those who want to remove Christ from Christmas, what exactly are they then celebrating anyway? Free enterprise? The thriving economy? Decadence and over indulgence? Spending too much money on gifts for ungrateful people with entitlement attitudes? Exactly what is the reason for them to celebrate Christmas if it's not Christ's birth? They don't even want to acknowledge Christ's name in holiday greetings. "Let's just say 'Happy Holidays' instead" They choose to ignore the fact that the holiday is named CHRISTmas, with the emphasis being on Christ for a reason, and not WALMARTmas, with the emphasis on greed and spending money.

When pressed as to why they are then celebrating the holiday if it isn't for Christ's birth, the anti-Christians will propose, "Well, we're celebrating peace, love, and good will toward men. We're celebrating sharing and family. We're celebrating merriment and joy, yada, yada, yada. Problem with that explanation is that, without Christ there is NONE of that! The Bible clearly tells us in Romans

3:10-12 that we all are inherently evil. Now the PC may argue that man is basically good at heart. The Bible says differently. And the condition of our world certainly supports the Bible's assertion. So, by their own reasons as to why they celebrate this holiday, they indirectly acknowledge God, the author of all good things, who they are so loath to recognize, as the reason for the celebration!

So we continue to snowball toward this philosophical paradox in our country; we have a holiday called Christmas, but we don't want anything about Christ to be a part of it.

Perhaps Christmas will one day formally evolve into exactly what it is becoming, a celebration of spending, economic growth, prosperity, and consumerism. It's also debatable whether some of those things are worth celebrating or not. Perhaps then maybe we can rename the holiday something else and remove Christ's name from it altogether, before the PC dishonor and besmirch it any more than they already have. Maybe we can also move the celebration of the Lord's birth to the closer, more accurate date that He was actually born on. And then maybe the PC, and the non-believers will let us alone in peace to celebrate and honor Christ, and show Him the reverence He truly deserves.

Even though we've become more technologically advanced, scientifically smarter, more educated today, we also unfortunately have regressed in our wisdom by equal measure.

"Wise men still seek Him." It is not a cliché. It is not a philosophy we only pretend to engage in until we can get to the presents on Christmas day. It is a philosophy subscribed to not in regard to our education, social status or financial level, but by the degree of insight, or wisdom we genuinely possess.

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We're on the Web! See us at: www.HampdenHeightsChurch.org

The Children's Page by Ashley Richards

Followers of Jesus

B A R T H O L O M E W A P R E S J N A B
E S Y H G R A R W I V M E I T A O A O M
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Andrew
Bartholomew
Cieopas
James
Joanna
John Mark
Joseph (of Arimathea)
Jude
Lazarus
(Mary of) Magdalene
Martha
Mary

Matthew
Mathias
Nathanael
Nicodemus
Paul
Peter
Philip
Silas
Simon
Susanna
Thaddeus
Zacchaeus

Did You Know?

Did you know that there weren't necessarily three wise men that came to see Jesus when He was born? The Bible really doesn't give us an actual number. Many people assume it was three wise men only because they brought three gifts: Gold, Frankincense, and Myrrh.

Meet a Member (continued from page 6)

Even if you don't see Me, or understand Me, please, please, please believe that My intentions are always for your best possible future. I love you way too much to put you through misery for misery's sake.)

5. I'm coming soon! (Aren't you excited? I'm so, so, so excited! You'll get to see Me! You'll get to touch My scars and hear My voice! I'm counting down the days. I'm already planning the things I want to do with you. I can't wait to show you all the things I've created. I can't wait for you to meet your guardian angel.

I can't wait to bring you home. We can be together forever! Are you jumping up and down, too?)