

The OKLAHOMA BAPTIST

Serving Churches of the Baptist Missionary Association of Oklahoma

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Number 1

“When Faith Isn’t Enough”

“The world suffers greatly when Christians display poor testimonies. How can we show a lost and dying world the benefits of having a savior when our behavior is no different from theirs?”

**By Chris Gonthier
BMAO Moral Action**

The doctrine of eternal security is indeed a true doctrine found in the scriptures. Without a doubt the idea of once saved, always saved, gives assurance to the Bible believers allowing us to stand firm in our convictions.

The downside to this doctrine is the attitude many “Baptists” have when it comes to being fruitful.

“Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works. Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble. But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?”

James 2:17

I know that I am not the only one who has heard it be said that someone is saved, and they have their fire insurance policy.

Let me be clear as to my position on this concept; this is absolutely

unbecoming of a Christian. We should never have the attitude that just because we are saved that we should have no concern as to our behavior.

The world suffers greatly when Christians display poor testimonies. How can we show a lost and dying world the benefits of having a savior when our behavior is no different from theirs?

We often forget that saved people are supposed to be different.

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

Call it judgment, or call it discernment, but we all arrive at conclusions based upon what we observe in an individual’s life. We wouldn’t tolerate certain behavior from a spouse or a pastor or a deacon.

Yet we feel that our own actions, or inactions, are personal matters and shouldn’t be anyone else’s business. The problem is we forget that we are ambassadors for Christ.

“Now then we are ambassadors for

Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to God.”
2 Corinthian 5:20

What is an ambassador? Webster’s 1828 Dictionary, “1. A minister of the highest rank employed by one prince or state, at the court of another, to manage the public concerns of his own prince or state, and representing the power and dignity of his sovereign.”

So, Christians are representing Jesus as we manage the Lord’s affairs among the lost.

How does our behavior, the actions we take, represent our Lord and savior? Our mission in this life is the fulfillment of the Great Commission.

Matthew 28:19-20 says, “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.”

To be effective teachers, we must have good testimonies. It is ineffective to tell someone not to smoke if you have a pack of cigarettes in your pocket. It is hard to tell someone not to drink with a beer can in your hand.

So much truer it is to show a sinner his need for Christ when his behavior is no worse than your own.

There is a difference between telling and teaching, with teaching actually causing a change. There should be no baptisms without conversions, therefore, the implication of the Great Commission is that we actually help to facilitate change in people.

Lost people do what lost people do. Isn’t it time that the saved people live as we should in order to make a difference for the cause of Christ?

"From the Pastor's Pen"

By Wearthly Shank

"Silence is Consent!"

"And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them."

Ephesians 5:11

We read a lot in Scripture about separating ourselves from the ungodliness of the world. Paul spoke more than just a little on this subject in his letters to the various churches in his mission field.

Galatians 5, Ephesians 5 & 6, Philippians 1, and Colossians 3 are just some of Paul's admonishments for how we should walk with the Lord, not after the things of the flesh.

Not only are we to separate from the ways of the world, we are to "reprove them." To reprove means to bring under conviction. Paul told Timothy to "...reprove, rebuke, exhort with longsuffering and doctrine." [2 Tim 4:2]

My thoughts for our spiritual growth on this subject are that we must be more

aggressive in our spiritual walk; not just being a "silent" witness to wrong-doings but reproofing, rebuking, and exhorting those who are in the unfruitful works of darkness.

A "lifestyle evangelism" is good. It lets others see Jesus in us. But, I don't believe "lifestyle evangelism" can stand alone in witnessing Jesus. That's where reproofing, rebuking, and exhorting comes into play.

World Missions Day: 75 Years of Global Missions

BMA Global is excited to announce that World Missions Day is Sunday, February 23, 2025! This year is especially significant as it is the 75th anniversary of both the BMA and when the BMA sent its first missionaries!

In 1950 the Baptist Missionary Association was formed, uniting around a common purpose: "We believe in Missions for all the World." That year we sent our first missionaries, and we've never stopped. Who could have imagined we would send over 300 missionaries and partner with thousands of ChangeMakers who have planted churches in over 70 countries?

As an association, we have so much to celebrate. Over the past 75 years, God has blessed the BMA and its work across the globe as many have proclaimed, "Send me!" We are so thankful for those who have gone before us and laid the foundation that we are still building upon today.

We invite and urge our BMA churches to join us in this celebration by registering for World Missions Day. More information is available on our website, including ideas for how to celebrate, links for requesting materials such as posters and bulletin inserts, videos to share with your church, information about our missionaries, and t-shirts are available for purchase.

Also available this year is a special 75th-anniversary edition Gleaner magazine, which honors all our past BMA missionaries and looks to the future of BMA Global missions. Access these resources and information at bmaglobal.org/worldmissionsday.

These three tenets all indicate oral conversation. Rebuke is to point out sin, reprove is to bring under conviction, and exhort is to encourage strongly.

In speaking the biblical instructions to our friends and loved-ones, we must be careful that we do all things in LOVE. The admonition from the Scriptures should not come across to the recipient as a tongue lashing, or scolding.

Gentleness in tone of voice is a "must" when sharing the Gospel.

There are some very gifted men and women who can speak more forcibly to the right person, knowing when to "get tough" with their words, but for most people, we need to focus on soft speech.



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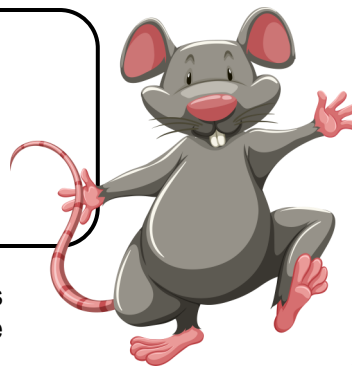
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"I Was Just Thinkin'"

By Narita Roady

"Consider the Rat"



will be safe. All we have to do is wait and trust in Him. We all need a little "ratty" stamina when it comes to trials.

RATS. The word sends shivers up most people's spines.

When the girls were younger we had a friend that owned a pet shop. While he was out of town he left them to feed and water the animals. In the back room was a huge white mother with a litter of 13 babies.

I still remember her long sharp yellowed teeth, pointed nose, beady eyes and long naked greasy tail. UGH! The girls would quickly lift the lid and toss in her meal as she always tried to attack and bite!

I couldn't blame her, that's a lot of babies to protect. Starting with their spread of the bubonic plague in 1665 (which was really the fault of their fleas!) rats have not been the object of affection. Non-domestic rats actually transmit at least 35 diseases.

Not everyone shares an aversion to our rodent friends. They are a very beloved pet and devoted owners even have clubs.

Rats are very intelligent, social and affectionate animals. President Teddy Roosevelt even had pet rats when he was in the White House!

I must confess I have been moved with great compassion and pity once, which compelled me to ask Jerry to let me have a hairless rat. It needed someone to love it!

As you probably have already guessed Jerry didn't share in my mission of mercy! So all bad character reports aside, they are pretty amazing animals and it wouldn't hurt us to practice some "ratty" characteristics in our lives.

Olympic athletes watch out! Rats are excellent swimmers. In the open sea they can swim a ½ mile and even tread water for three whole days! Add to these aquatic accomplishments the ability to dive up to 100 feet under water and hold their breath for as long as 15 minutes!

So forget flushing a rat to get rid of him. He can swim up the very plumbing pipes you flushed him down.

The Bible sometimes uses water to symbolize of severe affliction.

"Thou hast caused men to ride over our heads; we went through fire and through water..." Psalms 66:12a

"When thou passest through the waters..." Isaiah 43:2a

I can relate to the times I felt I was drowning in times of great crisis and problems. I even thought of treading water and how I was barely staying afloat. In many of those difficult times I wanted to just give up and give in.

The poor little rodent that has been sent down the toilet, traveling through the sewer (now those are some bad places!) or fallen into the river doesn't even think about giving up.

He doesn't even have the faintest thought that he might not make it. Why? To put it plainly, the Lord gave him that ability and simply trusts in it.

We've been given something too. When life crashes down on us with giant waves of despair and intimidating situations we have the ability to trust in the Lord.

With Him caring for us we can KNOW we will make it through whatever we face. Just look at the second half of those scriptures we read earlier. Psalms 66:12a ". . .but thou broughtest us out into a wealthy place."

Isaiah 43:2a "I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee."

Both verses end the same way, don't they? God will protect us, take care of us, see us all the way through, and we

Man's goal is to destroy rats. Poison in a tasty food is one of his weapons, but it is a weak arsenal of defense. A rat's sense of taste is so strong, it can sense as little as two parts per million of poison in whatever yummy morsel it is in!

The Devil is out to destroy us too. His "poison" is sin and he hides it in exciting, pleasing temptations. The world today is ripe with all sorts of snares that appeal to our flesh. Satan has something to tantalize each one of us and fall into his trap of wickedness.

Unfortunately Christians are not always as cautious as the rat, frequently rushing ahead to "gobble" up Satan's bait. God has also given us the capacity to detect the Devil's lethal offerings. When we regularly saturate ourselves in His Word, the Holy Spirit can alert us to his tricks.

"Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee." Psalms 119:11

Just as the rat has a distrust of man, so we should also have of Satan. We know his only desire is to hurt us; therefore we should be on our guard at all times through alertness and prayer.

"Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak" Matthew 26:41

"Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour." 1 Peter 5:8

A study was done where a device was connected directly into a rat's brain. As the rat performed tasks the scientists were able to record and see its brain waves and patterns.

An astounding discovery was made. As the rodent travels through an area he is doing more than just wandering. He is actually making a movie for future reference, learning every detail of his

("Consider the Rat," cont on pg 7)

Latest in Central Baptist College News

Homecoming 2025

As the fall semester begins to wrap up, we are looking forward to our Homecoming Celebration coming very soon! Mark your calendars for the weekend of January 31-February 1 for Homecoming 2025!

The weekend will kick off on Friday with our annual Chili Cook-Off. There will be several departments on campus that will compete, and many students will join in on the fun as well.

If you are interested in signing up to have an alumni team, please register online to bring and enjoy some amazing chili!

On Friday evening at 6:00pm, we are having an alumni/student hangout in A.R. Reddin Fieldhouse. This year, we are bringing back the carnival and will have hot chocolate, roasted hot dogs, and several games.

This will be a great event for all ages, and we are hoping to see many of our former students and their families there!

Saturday will be Homecoming Day, and it will kick off with a homecoming court reunion tea for all past and current court members. It will start at 9:30am, and we encourage any of our alumnae who have been on court to register and come enjoy this new event.

The annual Alumni Luncheon will be on Saturday at 11am, in the Dining Hall. Here we will recognize our Half-Century Club inductees and alumni award recipients and will be giving away some fun door prizes.

Homecoming games will begin at 1:00pm in Reddin Fieldhouse. The Mustangs and Lady Mustangs will be going head-to-head against Missouri Baptist, and during half-time of the second game, we will have the 2025 Homecoming Court presentation.

To register for the Chili Cook-Off, Homecoming Tea, or Alumni Luncheon, please visit cbc.edu/homecoming.

If you have any questions about these events, contact Alumni and Digital Communications Coordinator Mallory Guyton at 501.205.8875

or by email at mguyton@cbc.edu.

We look forward to seeing you soon!

New Vice President for Enrollment Management

CBC is pleased to announce the promotion of Steve Elder to Vice President for Enrollment Management. He most recently served as Interim Vice President for Enrollment Management, Division Chair, and Director of PACE and Online Studies. He has been employed with CBC for 9 years.

"Steve has been a proven leader on campus for many years," said CBC President Terry Kimbrow.

"Our Enrollment Management team has excelled under his leadership during the interim period. Most notably, our fall 2024 enrollment saw a seven percent increase in first-time freshmen, the first fall-to-fall increase in traditional students since 2016, and the first fall-to-fall increase in PACE students since 2013. The future looks bright."

As Vice President for Enrollment Management, Elder will serve as a member of the President's Executive Leadership Team. He will also oversee all aspects of

CBC's recruitment, registration, and retention strategies, provide supervision for all enrollment personnel, and oversee and analyze market conditions to consistently meet overall enrollment goals.

"I'm delighted to have Steve serving as Vice President for Enrollment Management on a full-time basis," said Executive Vice President Dr. Jeremy Langley.

"His diverse background in higher education gives him the skills necessary to lead our Enrollment Management division to new heights. I'm thankful to have him as part of our Executive Leadership Team."

Elder and his family are members of Westrock Baptist Church in Little Rock.

Central Baptist College, a four-year, private, liberal arts college owned and operated by the Baptist Missionary Association of Arkansas, is dedicated to transforming lives through education that integrates Christian faith and academic excellence in a Christ-centered environment.

Offering approximately 40 baccalaureate degree programs, CBC also boasts 16 athletic teams competing in the AMC conference of the NAIA and supports six fine arts performance groups.



CENTRAL BAPTIST COLLEGE
HOMECOMING 2025
JANUARY 31ST - SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 1ST



Central Baptist College News continued

Year End Giving

As we make our way towards the new year, many may think about making a year-end contribution to Central Baptist College.

Though receiving a tax deduction should not be the primary motivation for giving, it would certainly be financially responsible to make your donation before December 31 to enjoy a 2024 tax deduction.

CBC exists to TRANSFORM lives through education that integrates Christian faith and academic excellence in a Christ-centered environment.

With that in mind, every contribution made to CBC is a “transformational gift” because it is used to further the mission of the College.

CBC has several programs designed with you in mind. One area is our Gifts that Transform program. Through this we provide eight categories where you can designate your gift. These include the alumni fund, athletic fund, CBC fund, fine arts fund, friends of the library fund, PACE fund, scholarship fund, and student life fund.

Visit cbc.edu/transform for descriptions of the programs and services these funds support. Please take a moment to consider these focus areas and the impact your gift could have in the lives of the nearly 600 students that attend Central Baptist College.

However you choose to give, please know that we greatly appreciate your continued financial support of Central Baptist College.

Legacy Leaders is another giving program that was created to help alumni and friends of CBC give back. The purpose is to recognize individuals that believe in the mission and future of Central Baptist College.

In this program your level of contribution, whatever the amount, will have a big impact on the future of the college and in the lives of our students.

Memorial/Honor

Many people also consider a memorial or honor gift this time of year. When you give this way, a note will be sent acknowledging that you have given a donation (without revealing the dollar amount of the gift) to the family of the person you want to remember or to the person you want to honor.

To give online, visit cbc.edu/give.

If you prefer to pay by check, please make your check payable to Central Baptist College and include the name of the fund you wish to support on the memo line. Checks may be mailed to:

**Central Baptist College
1501 College Avenue
Conway, AR 72034**

If you have questions or need additional information, please contact Peggy Pillow at ppillow@cbc.edu or 501.205.8834.

Legacy Leaders

Central Baptist College is in the business of transforming lives. That is our mission and our greatest goal in everything we do.

Because of this, we strive to make our students' time here as constructive as possible, and we take great pride in our alumni and the impact that they are making in our communities and throughout the world.

In June of 2023, we launched a new program called Legacy Leaders, and over the past year, we have been very thankful for all the people who joined the program to give back to CBC and support our mission.

Legacy Leaders is a sustainable giving program meant to sustain, restore and connect alumni and friends of CBC. It was inspired by a similar group founded in 1981 by President Hoshaw called Minutemen.

This group was thus named because

of their readiness for instant service, and many of these men have been frontrunners in supporting CBC over the years.

The purpose of Legacy Leaders is to recognize individuals who believe in our mission and want to support us as we strive to do God's will.

Legacy Leaders has several giving options available from our Pillar Legacy Leaders who give \$10 a month to our 1952 Leaders who give \$250 a month.

Your contribution, whatever the amount, will have a profound impact on the future of the college and on the lives of our students.

We are asking all Alumni and friends of CBC to prayerfully consider joining the Legacy Leaders Program. Our mission is simple, but we need your help to accomplish it fully.

This year, 100% of enrolled students received an institutional scholarship. We are excited by this number and want to continue offering as much aid and support and as high-quality of education as possible to our students.

If you want to join us in our mission of transforming lives, please join Legacy Leaders and invest in us as we invest in our students.

To sign up for Legacy Leaders or for more information, visit our website at cbc.edu/legacyleaders.

If you have any questions, call Mallory at 501.205.8875 or email mguyton@cbc.edu.

Please continue to pray for us as we finish this semester and prepare for another great year. Thank you for your support of CBC!

Merry Christmas

I, along with the administration, faculty, and staff wish you and your family a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

We pray that God blesses you richly through this Christmas season.

"That Reminds Me"

By Jesse Spurlock

"Brain First, Then Mouth!"

Most of us have put our mouths in motion before our mind is engaged. Somehow it's embarrassing, but sometimes humorous.

One of my cousins was a very good artist. He painted wildlife, horses and old west scenes. He had sold several of those, but he hadn't had tremendous success.

Not because of the quality, but because his friends and relatives were the first ones to see them and thought they were great. But they also thought (and said) he ought to give them the paintings without cost.

One day, Glen was showing me some of his paintings. Before I realized I was going to say it I said, "These are really good! Why don't you sell them?"

He grinned and said, "Say! That's a good idea." I immediately knew I had put my mouth in motion before engaging my brain.

As a preacher, I've done that a couple of times. I was moderator for an associational meeting. One of my duties was to ask someone to bring a devotional to set the spiritual tone for the meeting. These aren't to be long, nor are they supposed to be anything controversial or deeply theological.

A young preacher whom I hadn't seen in awhile was there. This time of meeting is an ideal place for a young preacher to get some exposure. Since most pastors want to hear them it gives the young man an attentive audience. I asked him to bring the devotional. He was very happy about it and I gave no more thought to it.

However, when the young preacher got up to give his devotional, I was thrown into shock because he immediately told us he was divorced and didn't believe in remarriage after divorce.

To emphasize his strong feelings he declared he would never remarry and further it was a grievous sin for anyone to remarry after divorce.

That was his opinion and he was entitled to it, but it was much too divisive a subject to bring up in a five or ten minute devotional which was to set the tone for harmony in an associational meeting.

However, my shock wasn't complete on the subject, because obviously he had not idea what a devotional was. He went on for about thirty minutes. All of it was about divorce, the reasons, and his commitment to never remarry.

Due to the fact we practice freedom of speech in such meetings we don't cut someone off. I was in a real



quandary about how to handle this when he suddenly shut it down.

I think my comments when I resumed the moderator-ship was, "Well, that's certainly something to think about." I then immediately distanced the meeting from that experience.

However, I made a mental note to make sure my brain was engaged before asking someone to bring a devotional in future meetings.

James probably never heard, "Be sure your brain is engaged before putting your mouth in motion." But from his comments in James 1:19, he knew the principle.

"Wherefore my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak..."

Many problems have resulted from some who reverse James's instruction and are slow to hear and swift to speak. Personally, I've never had to apologize for being to slow with a decision or words, but I have at least regretted many decisions or words that were too hasty.

The Preaching Lab 2025 Conference

Don't be fooled by election results. Hostility against biblical and bold preaching is still in the air. But Paul encourages Timothy, and us, to share in the suffering, to be strengthened in Christ, to cut the word straight, flee youthful passions, and to preach the word, no matter what is going on outside the church doors.

In order to help us endure in this call, the Preaching Lab is asking three of the BMA's most long-tenured pastors to minister to us. Doug Brewer, Gary O'neal, and David McMurray will be working their way through Timothy over the two day conference, along with sharing some insights concerning burnout among pastors.

Start your year off strong by gathering with other preachers, whether you are a pastor, youth pastor, evangelist, missionary or church planter. You will be challenged, equipped, and encouraged.

You will forge brotherhood-type relationships that you can lean on in the hard days of ministry. The conference will be held January 10-11 in Little Rock at Oak Park Baptist Church.

You can register at tiny.cc/preachinglab2025.

College students can register for \$25.

“Consider the Rat,” cont from pg 3

surroundings. When he stops he plays this “movie” backwards reviewing how he arrived at his destination!

Nothing is more heartbreaking than to see a Christian brother or sister fall into the same sin over and over again and each time not have a clue as to why they continue to have the same problems.

The careless Christian walk is far too common. Living without a thought to God’s guidance and then be angry at Him when trials cannot be overcome.

Sin makes us spiritually sick and only by godly wisdom can we learn from our mistakes and apply this to other areas of our lives.

“Get wisdom, get understanding: forget it not; neither decline from the words of my mouth. Forsake her not, and she shall preserve thee: love her, and she shall keep thee. Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom: and with all thy getting get understanding.” Proverbs 4:5-7

How blessed we are that God will provide all the wisdom simply for the asking.

“If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.” James 1:5

Rats can survive almost anything! Decades ago, the poison Warfarin was developed as an effective poison that could override their sensitive taste buds. It worked . . . for a year, then they were seen eating it for food! There’s more testimony to their survival skills.

During the 1950’s in the Marshall Islands, atomic bombs were tested. Scientists returned to measure the bombs effects. Upon returning they found highly radioactive soil, devastated plant life, and a colony of completely healthy rats!

They have even been known to survive a fall from a five story building!

We forget as God’s children we are survivors too! He has a purpose for our lives and will carry us through the most difficult times.

Whatever is of God and His plans survives even Satan’s vilest attacks. Just

look at the Gospel message and the Bible, they are still going strong after 1000’s of year of his attempts to eradicate them.

It matters not how impossible the situation may appear, with the Lord we will endure.

“For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.” 1 John 5:4

Christians have a tendency to accept defeat at the first shot the enemy fires. With knees trembling and hearts pounding, they are shocked and wonder how such an adversity could be fall them. Scripture warns us of such times and reassures us we have already won the victory.

“These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.” John 16:33

The only way we cannot survive is to give into the enemy. We must remember, “What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?” Romans 8:31

When faced with insurmountable obstacles, rats don’t go over, under, or around them, they go through them! Mr. Rodent’s pearly whites are a force to be reckoned with.

Their jaws exert a pressure of 24,000 pounds, enabling them to chew through glass, cinderblock, wire, wood, sewer pipes and lead. Compared to the hardness of common metals a rat’s teeth are 5.5, while iron is 4.0, copper 2.5-3.0, aluminum 2.0, and lead 1.5!

When facing our mountains tend to throw up our hands and give up. We too have the strength and power to go through any roadblock Satan sets before us.

“I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.” Philippians 4:13

Just like the rat, we “eat” through our road block with one prayer and scripture

at a time, tearing down the Devil’s strongholds. Not wavering nor stopping, but moving forward in His power.

“For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;” 2 Corinthians 10:4

How different would our outcome be if we truly believed in God’s promises to conquer each wall of difficulty we encounter, and had the perseverance of our little rodent pest.

In case you haven’t noticed, rats are far from being on the “endangered species” list. The reason is obvious; they are great reproducers! A single pair of rats can produce more than 15,000 relatives in one year and 359 million in three years! In fact, Mrs. Rat will spend almost 100 percent of her life in the family way.

There is no doubt they are “family” oriented! Coupled with all their other fine qualities of fortitude they are truly making an impact on man’s life.

As believers we should be able to boast the same success in multiplying. If we followed the rat’s example, our churches would be full, God would never lack for workers, and our impact on the world could not be ignored.

What’s our problem? The Lord made it so simple; Go, Teach, and Baptize.

“Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost” Matthew 28:19

So it’s not in the plan but in our lack of responsibility to work His plan. Once again we need to be a little “ratty” and go where people are, get involved, mingle, and share the greatest gift we have to offer, instead of sitting at home in front of the T.V. or the computer.

Just as the Creator gave rats the capacity to enormously increase their families, He empowers us to greatly increase His family. Once you really think about it, being a little “ratty” isn’t a bad thing.

Eric Hoffer once said, “It is cheering to see that the rats are still around - the ship is not sinking”. Christ has not yet returned; we are still here. We have His Word, His strength His power to conquer the world for Him.

“A Simple Story, About a Glorious Birth”

Heaven's joy
A baby boy
Sent from the Father above.
A solitary angel
Sent to the shepherds
To bring this message of love.

A single star
Seen from afar
Announced the infant's birth.
A simple carpenter
And his bride
To cradle Him on earth.

It seems such a small
Insignificant way
For Jesus to enter this place
But Mary and Joseph
Wouldn't take the world
For this moment to gaze on His face.

How much more sedate could God have made the arrival of Jesus on earth? No fanfare, no fireworks, no grand celebration.

It's the very simple beginnings of a very amazing love story. It starts in the smallest village in Israel, kept somewhat hidden by a blessed mom and a bewildered dad.

An incredible birth announcement left only to lowly shepherds to tell the world.

I've examined several versions of the Christmas account in the Bible, in an attempt to understand the story more deeply. The words vary from KJV to NIV, but the story is the same.



An angel talks to Mary, Mary talks to Joseph.

In a wild expression of sacrificial love, Joseph decides to do...nothing.

The angel has a chat with Joseph.

A private wedding, and a quick trip to Bethlehem, and the story is almost over.

A silent night in a secluded stable suggests this event will go completely unnoticed by the world.

One lone angel terrifies a small group of shepherds, only to tell them, “calm down, no reason to be scared, just got a little story to tell you about a baby being born in a manger you need to seek and find.”

Then, Luke 2:13 springs into the Scriptures. Every version I read introduces this verse with the same word. “Suddenly...”

And suddenly there came with the messenger a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God, and saying, 'Glory in the highest to God, and upon earth peace, among men — good will.'

It's as if all of heaven had been waiting, watching, wanting to share the news, but breathlessly restraining their desire. Until all at once they can wait no more, and they explode through earth's sky, splitting time and space with the Word of God's rescue of His creation.

- * The relocation of His Son.
- * The redemption of His world.
- * The revelation of His love.

Wouldn't you think the grandiosity of this earth shattering news would merit a grander, earth shaking announcement. Surely we all believe it deserves more attention than what it received. Or do we?

The same message of the same

Savior goes almost overlooked every day we exist. Are we being just as secretive with the story He has commissioned us to tell?

Can we find the means, the method, the courage to make His presence known in our world this Christmas?

Isn't it up to us, His people, to share His story with those we know He desperately loves and longs for.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Preaching Lab

January 10-11

Oak Park Baptist Church
Little Rock, AR

See pg 6

World Missions

Sunday

February 23

Scholarship Gala

Central Baptist College

February 28, 2025

BMAO

Midyear Meeting

April 5

Shady Grove,
McAlester

BMAA

National Meeting

April 22-24

Pathway,
Waxahachie, TX