

December 2012

Time to Tell the Story

Philippians 4:6

Emphasis: Leading men to tell the story of Christmas.

Teaching: Christmas time is an ideal time to tell the story of Jesus Christ. People are searching for peace and hope in these uncertain times. What better message of hope could they receive than the message of Jesus Christ? Encourage the men of your church to be open to opportunities for sharing the real message of Christmas.

Contact the church office to determine your church's Lottie Moon Christmas Offering goal and how much your church has received toward that goal. Challenge the men in giving to reach the goal. Also contact your WMU director and discuss ways to cooperate in achieving the church's goal.

Consider the following ways, from the International Mission Board website, to involve your men in reaching your church's Lottie Moon Christmas Offering goal and telling the story.

Sunday Lunch - Instead of eating out for Sunday lunch, a group of friends took turns cooking for each other. Those who did not cook gave the money they would have spent on lunch to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering. You too can turn Sunday lunch or a supper club into something that will reach the world for Christ!

Sock it to Missions – Church members in one North Carolina church were encouraged to fill a sock with change and bills throughout the fall and bring them to church for the missions offering.

The \$4 Plan – The pastor of Calvary Baptist Church in Erwin, TN, devised an approach to the annual offering that he calls the "maximization and personalization" of missions. The personalization part of the plan included writing to and praying for international missionaries. Calvary Baptist Church members have traveled to several countries to help their adopted missionaries on short-term volunteer projects. And the missionaries have spoken at the church while home on stateside assignment. To maximize missions, the pastor challenged Calvary members to give two weeks' salary to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering, and he gave them a way to do it. He calls it "The \$4 Plan." Here's how it works: for example, if your net pay for a week is \$500, you gave \$4 from every \$100, and that equals \$20. Multiply \$20 by 50 weeks, and the amount is \$1,000. If you start with your first check in January, you can give two weeks' pay to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering by December 15. In the first decade of using this approach, Calvary members increased their gifts to missions by 1,000 percent.

Check the IMB website, www.imb.org, for other suggestions.

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Notes

When the men of your church participate in events like these, they will have the opportunity to tell the story of Jesus. Telling the story of Jesus has been around for a long time. The shepherds probably began the process. "After seeing (them), they reported the message they were told about this child, and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them." (Luke 2:17-18, Holman Christian Standard Bible).

When the shepherds had seen Jesus, they spread the word about what had been told them about this child, and everyone who heard their story was amazed at what the shepherds said to them. Everywhere the shepherds went they reported the message they had been given and what they had seen, to everyone they met. They became the first Christian evangelists. The miracle of Christ had touched them and they just could not keep quiet. They not only told their story in their town, they spread the news throughout the entire district where they lived.

They were just common people, yet the shepherds had enough faith to believe they were important to God. The message they had been given consumed them with a sense of urgency; everyone must hear their story. They could be compared to a scientist who has just discovered a cure for heart disease. However, the disease is now sin, and the only cure is the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross.

What does that have to do with us? We are Christ's witnesses and ambassadors, just like the shepherds. At Christmas, it is so easy to get caught up in the shopping, parties, travel, etc., that we forget the reason for our celebration.

The shepherds had it right. Christmas is about receiving God's gift of salvation. And Christmas is about telling the story of this miracle to your friends and family. That is what Christmas is all about. Someone like the shepherds received God's gift and told you the story. And you were given the greatest gift of all. Will you go and tell the story and give this same gift to others?

Mission Application:

- Cater a Christmas party for a small local business, community group, or Sunday school class, with proceeds going to Lottie Moon.
- Offer your house-cleaning services to families in the church or community. Let them know you intend to donate the money you earn to missions.
- Hold a yard sale and make money for missions while you clear out some space in your garage.
- Have a bake sale in the community.
- Sell handmade Christmas ornaments or decorations.
- Offer your decorating services to busy families. Many families would gladly make a donation in order to have someone help them get ready for the season.



HIS HEART HIS HANDS HIS VOICE