



MERRY CHRISTMAS



"Christmas began in the heart of God. It is complete only when it reaches the heart of man."

Author Unknown



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Christmastime: A Season for Light by Mike Rehm

Christmastime is a season for light ~ I love the candles and lights displayed in our homes and community especially during Advent and Christmas. Longer nights and cooler temperatures deepen our longing for the stimulation of light and warmth. A well lit candle catches our gaze. It draws us in. It has the capacity to turn even the darkest corner into a sanctuary of safety and peace. Dark places are in need of such graces. Some have said it was in such a place they were able to once again embrace life – to celebrate and treasure it.



When I am seeing well, the lights of Christmas have the capacity to remind me of the audacious words of God who proclaimed, "Let light shine out of darkness" [2 Cor. 4:6]. Listen carefully and you'll hear these astounding, hope filled words echoed throughout the Bible. There they are in the creation account. You'll hear the theme of light within the songs of Israel. Listen as the prophets proclaim the light and hope of all ages is come! These, and others, give voice to a well founded hope that no matter how bleak the surrounding darkness, light is promised. Light out of darkness...something out of nothing? Warmth from deadness and cold? God boldly says, Yes! We are privileged to see our Heavenly Father do over and over again what he initiated from the start.

As blessed recipients of his unmerited goodness, Mending the Soul is able to see first hand the redemptive and restorative work of the gospel as it shines forth from the winter and deadness of abuse. The strategy of our soul's enemy is to forever isolate from God those who are impacted by the sin of abuse. But we have the tremendous privilege of taking the light of the Lord Jesus into the dark places where he has purposed to shine the brightest!

May the lights of Advent be for us tangible reminders of how blessed we are as recipients of all that God offers us through his Son.

Almighty God, you have shed upon us the new light of your incarnate Word, giving us gladness in our sorrow, your presence in our isolation. Fill our lives with your light until they overflow with gladness and praise through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. ~ David Silk

Celestia Shares From Her Journal

This was a November 9 entry in my journal this year...

"The secret of life is to have a task, something you devote your entire life to, something you bring everything to, every minute of the day for the rest of your life and the most important thing is, it must be something you cannot possibly do! ~ Henry Moore.

"The passion, no... obsession of my life is to make others as successful as I can in mending a broken world. This mending can only happen as we center it on the love of Jesus Christ. Because broken people need healing before they can help someone else find healing, our effectiveness with others comes out of our own transformation."

"I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God." Romans 12:1-2



The Gift of Grace by Dagny Mallory



"Unto You"
James Van Fossan

Coming Soon...

Our website will soon have a gallery of healing artwork by James Van Fossan. A portion of every sale will be donated directly to Mending the Soul Ministries!

Thanks James...

www.mendingthesoul.org

"Abuse casts a shadow
the length of a life-
time."

~ Herbert Ward

I met Steve and Celestia Tracy on November 30, 2006. That day will forever be etched in my mind...partly because of the love they so freely extended, but mostly because of the story I am about to share with you.

The entry in my prayer journal that day began like this:

Gracious Lord - I guess I don't spend enough time at the foot of the cross. I don't fully comprehend the sacrifice made for me or I don't accept that it was for me. I can see so many that it is for, but I'm not one of them. I know logically that everyone on earth is included, but there is a barrier somewhere inside me. Maybe I have not learned how to accept Your grace. Maybe I don't believe that it really belongs to me. I have always felt I needed to work to gain acceptance and this is a free gift. I don't look the part and I certainly don't act the part of someone who deserves such a gift. It's not that I want to reject it - I just don't know how to accept it. I know You can teach me. I know you will Lord. I ask that you help me to hear and understand in my heart Your gift to me. To embrace it with my whole being. To be facedown in worship because I am there. I know this is possible. I felt it when I realized you loved me. Please help me accept that you forgive me.

That same night my husband and I were out for the evening when we got a call from our children explaining that some "Holiday Elves" had left a Christmas package on our doorstep. This was the first of many deliveries to our family...12 to be exact...one for every day of the 12 days of Christmas. I didn't understand why we had been chosen to receive these things. It wasn't until about day five or six that I realized how simply we would accept these presents...every time there was a package...we chose to take it and open it. We could have left it sitting outside, but we didn't. We could have brought it into the house and not unwrapped it, but we didn't. We intentionally opened each gift and used it for the purpose it was created and given. We hadn't done anything to deserve this outpouring of love. We didn't need these gifts. We didn't expect these gifts. We didn't ask for these gifts. Wrapped in these packages was His message of the simplicity of accepting His Gift of Grace.

On Christmas Eve we received the last of the gifts along with a letter signed...a family just like you. In that letter this family thanked us for helping God teach their family about His grace and love. I was amazed how the Lord taught both families such similar lessons even though the parts they played were so very different. The precious things we learned the Christmas of 2006 will be cherished in our hearts forever. May this Christmas bring so much more to you and your family than money could ever buy.

Abba Father - Thank you Amazing Lord for this experience. Thank you for those in our lives that listen to Your prompting and allow You, Father, to touch us in ways we never imagine. You are an Amazing God. We worship You for the birth and death of Your Son this Christmas as we celebrate The Gift of Grace.

HELPS by Missy Gryder

HELPS—Highlight Emotional Learning and Personal Safety—is a project created by Dr. Missy Gryder to promote the personal safety and social and emotional development and health of elementary-aged children in kindergarten through fifth grade.

HELPS is continuing to serve children in three public school districts in the valley. Early in the new year, HELPS will begin offering after school classes for children as well.

Missy recently spoke at the City of Phoenix Family Advocacy Center's CHAIRity Event in November to share successes from HELPS' summer school partnership that served children at the Hope VI Project in downtown Phoenix.

Upcoming Events visit www.mendingthesoul.org

- Domestic Violence Conference at New Life Community Church January 16, 2009.
- Facilitator Training May 2009
- MTS Fundraiser Event

My MTS Group Is Over. .. Now What? by Christine Stephenson

I hear the same question over and over again every time I finish facilitating a MTS Small Support Group. *"It's over. Now what do I do?"* Women and men get to the end of a group and realize that they have bonded to the others in the group. They realize the group has provided support and encouragement and a safe place to connect with others who have similar experiences and feelings. The knowledge that this community and sharing is at an end is difficult and many wonder what the next step is.

One of the MTS hub churches is pioneering a post-*MTS small support group* program. The plan is to start a once a month meeting where all the women (the same can be done for the men too) who have participated in a MTS group through this church will meet. At this monthly meeting there will be a MTS facilitator who will lead a devotion, answer questions (provided earlier by the attendees) regarding issues they continue to face—shame, boundary issues, and so on followed by discussion and prayer with each other. The aim is to provide a forum where the women can continue to support each other in their healing journey, have some of their concerns addressed, be encouraged by each other and continue to connect with others who have had similar experiences. It will be exciting to see how this develops, to report on the progress and to help other hub churches and groups with suggestions, ideas and guidance on how to set up this program.

If your church or organization would be interested in a similar program call for information - 866-535-5044, option 2.

PASCH Conference

This past October Steve and Celestia were privileged to speak at the annual International PASCH Conference in Washington, D.C. PASCH (Peace and Safety in the Christian Home) is a non-profit evangelical abuse prevention ministry similar to Mending the Soul. Steve gave one of the keynote addresses on "The Culture Wars over 'Family Values': Have We Forgotten Social Justice?" as well as a workshop on sexual abuse and shame. Celestia led a workshop on "Community Partnerships: A faith based healing model for abuse survivors" in which she shared the MTS model and showed what God is doing in our community. It was a great joy for us to allow others around the country to be blessed by what God is doing through our wonderful MTS family here in Arizona! For pictures of the PASCH conference (including a smiling Celestia and Peggy Bilsten), you can go to the PASCH web site at: <http://www.peaceandsafety.com/articles/40>.

A BIG THANK YOU—to our supporters

We are thankful for your faithfulness to our work this past year. You have enabled MTS Ministries to impact many lives. We recognize we are in difficult economic times and so your sacrifice in supporting MTS means more than we can even possibly say. During these tight financial times we find ourselves in, we are sad to note that in this past year abuse continues to increase and in many cases has become even more prevalent. In the Democratic Republic of Congo the incidence of sexual violence is unprecedented and continues to increase at an alarming rate. In the US we continue to come across more and more incidences of abuse. The tight constraints of our economy does not help the situation. Yet, in the midst of all this there is tremendous hope and redemption. God continues to touch hearts in a deep way and bring healing. Many abuse survivors, church and community leaders and organizations are rising up determined to learn how to help those wounded by abuse. MTS continues to train these bold leaders and provide resources for this work. This past year MTS has accomplished so much because of your support in prayer, time and finances. Would you consider continuing to be a valuable and integral part of our ministry? Would you consider a year end donation and/or becoming a regular monthly supporter in 2009? There is still much to do and we need your help. Please consider partnering with us to bring hope and healing to the broken. Thank you for being the hands, feet and heart of Jesus in this broken world.

Thank You from the MTS Team

Consider donating to



*"I will honor Christmas
in my heart, and try to
keep it all the year."*

Charles Dickens

MENDING THE SOUL MINISTRIES

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Christmas Prayer

Morning came especially early to me. The economy, family needs, nations in peril..., yet Christmas just around the corner. There's only one thing to do: pray.

Father, there are so many needs in our world, nation, neighborhoods, and homes! Yet this is the season to remember...remember Your gift of our Savior. I hand these heart-felt needs to You, Abba. Thank You for them as they remind me how much I need You. Thank you for Mending the Soul counselors and friends who are walking with survivors through their healing journeys. Thank You for always listening and that You stand ready to help.

Your daughter, Janet



"He has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the broken-hearted"

Isaiah 61:1

The Gift So You Could Live

A cross laid in a wooden box, does that seem apropos?
Should it not be a baby wrapped in swaddling clothes?

Do we celebrate on Christmas only that this child was born?
Or do we move beyond and remember the day His flesh was torn?

Should we keep Him in the manger as a tiny little one?
Or praise Him in His glory for the amazing work He's done?

He chose not only birth and death but life for you and me.
So this is a reminder of His gift at Calvary.

This cross laid in a wooden box is what He chose to give.
The birth and death of Jesus Christ...
The gift so you could live.

Dagny Mallory 12/06



For more information on MTS Ministries resources, products, speakers or training, please visit our website at:

www.mendingthesoul.org

Or call us at

866-535-5044

Would You Join Us in Prayer?

Please pray specifically for:

- The Domestic Violence Conference on January 16.
- The facilitator training May 29-30, 2009.
- The many women and men we know who have been deeply wounded by abuse.
- The MTS Team as they plan and prepare for 2009.