



Youth Pastor
Jon Wimmer

Grapevine

"I am the vine, you are the branches..." John 15:5

Christmas

Let's celebrate the Savior!

By Pastor Jon

Let's take a look at a family whose story, from the very start, was on a collision course with the Savior of the world!

For those who have families, Christmas is often a time to gather, to miss, or to remember. We gather to build closer relationships, to anticipate the return of those who are missed because of distance, and to remember those we love who have passed away. And all the while the most important aspect of this family time is remembrance of our Savior's Birth. Let's take a look at a family whose story, from the very start, was on a collision course with the Savior of the world!

Herod, also known as Herod I or Herod the Great, reigned over Galilee and was known for his gigantic building projects in Jerusalem and other parts of the world, including the rebuilding of the Second Temple in Jerusalem. Little did he know that the prophet Jeremiah had already spoken of something more significant for which he would later be remembered. When the Magi came from the east and reported that they had followed the star and come to worship the one born King of the Jews, Herod feared he would lose his throne. It was then that the words of Jeremiah 31:15 were fulfilled, "This is what the LORD says: 'A voice is heard in Ramah, mourning and great weeping, Rachel weeping for her children and refusing to be comforted, because her children are no more.'" Herod had every young male in the vicinity of Bethlehem executed. God had other plans, however, and warned Joseph to take his family to safety prior to the attack. So this is the family legacy left by Heod to his son, Herod Antipas.

Herod Antipas did not have the scope of responsibility that his father had held, or the accomplishments of which to boast. He inherited his portion of his father's territory when he died. After divorcing his first wife, the Scriptures pick up the story of how he then stole his brother's wife. This act was condemned by John the Baptist for which John was imprisoned. Later, at the request of his new wife's daughter, he had John the Baptist beheaded. It appeared that this one family had been given enormous opportunities to be introduced to our Savior and understand His place as the focal point of all history, and yet they missed their chance. Upon his arrest, Jesus was brought before Pontius Pilate for trial and he later handed him over to Herod Antipas, in whose territory Jesus had been active. His father had tried to execute Jesus as a boy and now he had the opportunity to condemn Jesus or set him free as an adult. Instead, he sent him back to Pontius Pilate to be dealt with passing up one final chance.

This Christmas whether you are alone or have a large family, you are either a follower of Christ or someone else is on the throne of your life (as was the case for both Herods). Wherever you find yourself as you sing Silent Night, you have an even greater opportunity than the Herods did to take advantage of your encounter with the Christ Child. You have the entire story of God's redemption in the Bible. You might accept him and worship him as the Magi did, but don't make the mistake of Herod Antipas and send Him away into the sea of your holiday busyness for someone else to handle.

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GEBC Missions Update

**Is
God
Calling
You
?**

Happy Birthday Jesus!

'Tis the season to praise our awesome God, the King of kings and Lord of lords. It has been quite an amazing year. The Brinkley family is back home safely from serving in Niger. Melissa Meyer has been serving in Kenya. The Purviance family is continuing to serve in the Philippines and recently received another year of funding. Rachael Staton served in China for three months teaching English and now she is finishing up her senior year of college.

Isaiah 6:8 – *Then I heard a voice of the Lord, saying, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" Then I said, "Here am I. Send me!"*

Is God calling you?

Thank God for all of our missionaries and their willingness to go where God has called them and the great sacrifices they have made in doing so. Thank you, the church body, for your consistent support in fulfilling the great commission.

Mathew 28:19 – *"Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit,"*

Thank God for GEBC and all of our leadership. May God bless you this holiday season.

Happy Birthday Jesus,

The Mission Committee

*Continue to
pray
for the
Missionaries*

Christmas when I was a child—by Jon Wimmer

When I was a child we had many Christmas traditions, but I really enjoyed moving around the house to the various nativity sets that were in different rooms and playing with the characters included in each. I would usually think about the Christmas story culminating in the birth of Jesus. Then I would try arrange the characters in different formations and different poses if they could be manipulated to do so. Finally, they would fight much like my army men and in the same fashion there was always a one-on-one finale and I'm sorry to say the winner was not always baby Jesus. Nonetheless, when all the holiday cheer was spread, all the memories made and presents opened, the one thing that always remained in my heart and mind was Jesus. So I suppose it was fitting that upon my return from Israel that I brought my parents an olive wood hand-carved nativity which I purchased in the town of Bethlehem. To date (as far as I know), this nativity has never participated in any battles!

Merry Christmas!
Pastor Jon

Focus Family



Meet The Minihan Family

I have the great pleasure of introducing you to Brian and Nicole Minihan. This family proudly announces to everyone who enters their home that they serve God. They have Joshua 24:15 hanging on their wall so that everyone knows "... as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord." What an awesome public statement of their faith.

Growing up, Brian always knew about God and believed in Him, but did not have a personal relationship with Him. When he started dating Nicole, he began attending church with her. Brian really enjoyed going to church and listening to Jim's messages. He then realized that he needed to ask Jesus into his heart and began a relationship with Him. In August of 2005 Brian was baptized in Rife Lake during the GEBC campout. Nicole had the honor and privilege of baptizing him. Nicole asked Jesus into her heart at the age of 10 after attending a Baptist church with her dad's girlfriend who later became his wife. She had always gone to a catholic school and church and it was never emphasized to her that she needed to have a personal relationship with God. When she went to the new church, she started to learn that God wasn't just some big almighty power in the sky, but He was also a loving Father who wanted to have a personal relationship with her. She couldn't ask Him into her heart fast enough. She was baptized at that same church shortly after.

They have been married for 5 ½ years and have 4 children. Their children are Alyson (11 years old), Noah (8 years old), Ethan (5 years old), and Lily (21 months old). Brian and Nicole met while they were in junior high school and they graduated from Bethel High School. Brian also has an Associate's degree from Clover Park and is a lineman for Lakeview light and power. Nicole received her Bachelor's degree from the University of Phoenix and worked in HR before starting the most rewarding job in the world, being a stay at home mom.

Brian moved to Washington 25 years ago from Virginia and Nicole moved here 17 years ago from Oconomowoc, Wisconsin. Nicole is the oldest of 3 siblings, while Brian is the youngest of 4 siblings. Brian has fond memories of walking over to his grandma's house after school when he was 7 or 8. She made him soup and talked to him about his day. Some of Nicole's fondest childhood memories are hiking and taking trips with her family. Her dad always looked for something "new" to try and he brought his family along for the ride.

Nicole began attending GEBC with her family when she was 14 and Brian began attending when they were dating. When asked what they like most about GEBC, they answered, "First we would have to say what has kept us coming back each week even when we lived in Tacoma was and is Pastor Jim and his sermons. We also love the worship part of the service. The people at GEBC are wonderful and the kids programs are great!" The Minihans are leaders for AWANAs and are currently involved with the Children's Church. They are working hard to make the program strong by switching the curriculum and looking for volunteers.

Brian and Nicole really enjoy spending time as a family. In fact "hanging out with the kids" is their favorite hobby. Their perfect vacation would be taking the kids to the Great Wolf Lodge for a few days. They also like to go out to eat. Nicole loves Italian food and could eat at Olive Garden every day. Nicole is a stay at home wife and mother who loves to shop when she gets the chance. If Brian is home to give her some time off, she likes to take it easy and maybe take a nap. Brian enjoys his days off when he gets to sit back, relax, and not have to do anything or go anywhere. Nicole loves to read anything except true crime stuff. Brian loves to read old comic books. Brian likes vanilla bean ice cream and his favorite movie is "Goonies". Nicole likes mint chocolate chip ice cream and "A Few Good Men".

I hope that you enjoyed reading about Brian and Nicole Minihan. When you see them at church, thank them for being such an inspirational family. Also, if you are looking for a place to serve, contact them about volunteering for Children's Church during first service!

By Trish Richardson

MOPS

What is MOPS? MOPS stands for Mothers of Preschoolers, a program designed to nurture mothers with children from infancy through kindergarten. MOPS recognizes that these years are foundational in a mother-child relationship and are filled with unique needs. Over 4,000 MOPS groups meet throughout the world, with over 200 in Washington alone, and 96 in other countries. It's exciting to be part of such a large organization of women who are all in the same stage of life. There are varying ages and backgrounds, all sharing the same desire—to be the best moms they can be!

MOPS International exists to encourage, equip, and develop every mother of preschoolers to realize her potential as a woman, mother, and leader in the name of Jesus Christ.

This is a mommy's play group, run by moms for moms. We meet together twice a month at church, coming together to enjoy a hot breakfast and much-needed time out. Our meetings are designed to provide opportunities to relax while the children are being cared for, make new friends, enjoy adult conversation, learn a new skill or craft, hear guest speakers, and be involved in group discussions on topics of interest to mothers of preschoolers.

So why MOPS? We have MOPS because when you become a mom, whether first or fifth time, young or thirty-something, married or divorced-whatever the circumstances-mothers are in need of guidance, support, affirmation, and most importantly friendships. We have MOPS for the woman deep in post-partum depression, struggling to keep her head above water; for the military mother of four children whose husband is deployed overseas for a year; for the mother whose husband just left her and she's on her own with little ones; for the mom new to our area with no family support; for the mom considering leaving her husband because she can't see any hope; for the mom contemplating suicide; for the mother who's never heard of Jesus.

How is MOPS a ministry? The MOPS leaders here at GEBC have a desire to reach every mom in our community with the love of Jesus Christ. Mark 14 tells a story of a woman anointing Jesus with perfume. This story teaches us that it's not about what we do, it's that we are to do what we can. So we, as leaders of MOPS, do what we can. We can love and befriend another mom, and be the light of Christ, so that's where we start.

This journey of motherhood is filled with trials, tears, joys, and rewards, and the friendships and community here at MOPS will encourage and equip these beautiful women to be the best mothers they can be. Attendance this year has reached 83 women from all around our community. We thank our pastors and church family for their continued support of this ministry and ask for your continued prayer.

"...Let (our) light shine before men, that they may see (our) good deeds and praise (our) Father in heaven." Matthew 5:16.

"Pray that the Lord your God will tell us where we should go and what we should do." Jeremiah 42:3

Blessings,

Kristina Linkem
Co-Coordinator
GEBC MOPS



A 3rd Grader explaining God!

"One of God's main jobs is making people. He makes them to replace the ones that die so there will be enough people to take care of things on earth."

"He doesn't make grown-ups, just babies. I think because they are smaller and easier to make. That way, He doesn't have to take up His valuable time teaching them to talk and walk, He can just leave that to mothers and fathers."

"God's second most important job is listening to prayers. An awful lot of this goes on, since some people, like preachers and things, pray at times besides bedtime."

"God doesn't have time to listen to the radio or TV because of this. Because He hears everything there must be a terrible lot of noise in His ears, unless He has thought of a way to turn it off."

"God sees everything and hears everything and is everywhere which keeps Him pretty busy. So you shouldn't go wasting His time by going over your mom and dad's head asking for something they said you couldn't have."

"Atheists are people who don't believe in God. I don't think there are any in Chula Vista. At least there aren't any who come to our church."

"Jesus is God's Son. He used to do all the hard work like walking on water and performing miracles and trying to teach the people who didn't want to learn about God. They finally got tired of Him preaching to them and they crucified Him."

"But He was good and kind like His Father and He told His Father that they didn't know what they were doing and to forgive them and God said OK. His Dad (God) appreciated everything that He had done and all His hard work on earth so He told Him He didn't have to go out on the road anymore, He could stay in heaven. So He did."

"And now He helps His Dad out by listening to prayers and seeing things which are important for God to take care of and which ones He can take care of Himself without having to bother God. Like a secretary only more important."

"You can pray anytime you want and they are sure to hear you because they got it worked out so one of them is on duty all the times."

"You should always go to Church on Sunday because it makes God happy, and if there's anybody you want to make happy, it's God."

"Don't skip church to do something you think will be more fun like going to the beach. This is wrong! And, besides, the sun doesn't come out at the beach until noon anyway."

"If you don't believe in God, besides being an atheist, you will be very lonely, because your parents can't go everywhere with you, like to camp, but God can."

"It is good to know He's around you when you're scared in the dark or when you can't swim very good and you get thrown into real deep water by big kids."

"But you shouldn't just always think of what God can do for you. I figure God put me here and He can take me back anytime He pleases."

"And that's why I believe in God."

by Danny Dutton, age 8, from Chula Vista, California, for his third grade homework assignment to "Explain God."