

THE MORE EXCELLENT WAY (the way of Christmas)

If the way of love is about giving specific gifts that meet the need of the moment, then Christmas is the celebration of the most excellent gift of all - the gift of Christ. He is our needs met. Unwrap God from all the Christmas finery - we tend to cover up God with our holidays - and we find embodied love. A holy passion for oneness that not only came to us, but stayed with us... stayed all the way to death, even death on a cross.

Pure love comes and walks the earth to bring good news of great joy to all people. Pure light comes and shines in the darkness to enlighten the heart of every man. Pure righteousness comes and overcomes sin and evil in order to set captives free. Pure life comes and defeats death so that whosoever will believe in Him may never perish but abide forever in His eternal life.

And to think, He didn't have to come... or did He? Since He is love, was He not compelled by love? Compelled to meet the deepest needs of His rebellious creatures? Perhaps the only way for God to be God is to "freely give us all things" (Ro 8:32). None of the "all things" are detached from Him. None of the "all things" are found apart from Him. All of the "all things" are in Him! Meaning what? He comes to give Himself to us. Meaning what? The more excellent way is about what we're willing to give, not get. Ultimately, love is giving the gift of our self.

The incarnation, crucifixion, burial and resurrection of Christ demonstrates that the love of God - the more excellent way - is always personal. Jesus Christ is God's personal expression of Himself. Jesus Christ is God's personal way to Himself. Jesus Christ is God's personal gift of Himself. Jesus did not come to teach us, encourage us, coach us - He came to be with us. Immanuel - God with us - in Person!

Instead of sitting on high in the bright sunshine of His radiant glory, He, Himself came in person and tramped around in the muddy messes of human sinfulness to be with us. The way of with-ness, not distance. The way of the giving, not getting. The way of the personal, not the propositional. The way of love, not law. The more excellent way... the way of Christmas!



- **Tax-deductible contributions** - may be made to *One In Christ, Inc.* by mailing your gifts to the address above.
- **Messages and sermons by Steve** - can be listened to or downloaded at www.stevepettitmessages.com or may be requested on CD by mail at the address above.
- **Conferences and events led by Steve** - can be arranged by calling Steve at 386-418-0913.
- **To receive this newsletter electronically** - email your request to OICnewsletter@gmail.com

Praise Reports & Prayer Requests



Please return to us any changes to the address label on the back



GREETINGS

Especially in light of the meditation on the other side, saying "Thank You" from a distance seems to be so inadequate. Yet, at times, it's the best we can do. The faithful and loving gifts of prayer, support, encouragement - of yourselves - to us and to *OIC* are appreciated beyond measure. To those who have been on the journey with us from the beginning and to those we have met in the past year, we value your personal contributions and are so grateful for the giving of yourselves into our lives.

One of the reasons we so enjoy our February retreat here in Alachua is that we get to share our "gifts" (i.e., you!) with one another. People we see throughout the year in Texas, Kentucky, New York, South Carolina and parts in between get to meet and share life with one another. This year's theme is "Living Means Christ" from Philippians 1:21. We hope you can join us, whether for the 20th time or the 1st time. Make your reservations by January 15th, 2013. Come to Florida and be warmed - spirit, soul and body!

One In Christ, Inc.
13820 NW 172nd Avenue
Alachua, Florida 32615

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED



CALENDAR



DECEMBER

2,9,16,23 CCF (*No CCF service on the 30th*)
4 **OCALA STUDY** ****NOTE CHANGE****
11 Alachua Study
14 Sparr Baptist

JANUARY

25-27 San Antonio, TX

FEBRUARY

15-17 One In Christ Retreat, Alachua, Florida

MARCH

1-3 Baton Rouge

ALACHUA, FLORIDA WINTER RETREAT **"Living Means Christ" - Feb 15-17, 2012**

\$280 couple (all inclusive)	Includes: lodging,
\$155 single (2 to a room)	conference fee
\$240 single (1 to a room)	& 5 meals
<u>Or</u>	
\$65 person conference fee & 3 meals	(no lodging
<u>Or</u>	or breakfast)
\$20 person conference fee	

RESERVATIONS:

\$50 per person DUE BY JANUARY 15th
No reservation fee necessary to attend meetings only

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