

December 2008–January 2009
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Branding Iron

of the Bill Rice Ranch Murfreesboro, Tennessee



From the President

The Spirit of Christmas

by Evangelist Wil Rice IV

I don't mind telling you that I love Christmas. In fact, I confess great affection for many of the same trappings that fascinated me as a child.

I love Christmas music. I ordered some in July and allowed myself to start listening in October! I am listening to Christmas music now as I write!

I love Christmas traditions. I am hopelessly sentimental and have passed on family Christmas traditions to my children while adding a few of my own.

And yes, I do enjoy giving and receiving Christmas gifts. I've been known to make educated guesses as to what I will receive based on the package's weight and shape. That is why my wife added some large rocks to a box containing a brand new Bailey cowboy hat she had gotten me for Christmas. I thought it was crooked of her, but I suppose you have to fight fire with fire!

And I love (I know, that's the fourth time I've used that word) Christmas Eve. "The Night Before Christmas" is poetry and anticipation and the highlight of the month, all in one.

But what about December 26th? I'd almost forgotten that there were any more days in December after the 25th! The day after Christmas is the day of leftovers and let-down, the beginning of gift returns and buyer's regret.

But do you suppose it was that way the day after Christ was born? To the few who took notice of God's Gift, do you think there was more joy before or after Christ came? Are we to eagerly anticipate the celebration of Christ's birth, as I always do, only to dread an uncertain future in the coming year?

If you fear this present world as hostile to Christ in this New Year, then stop and remember. Herod could not kill Him; the Devil could not side-track Him; and the tomb could not keep Him. "Christ was born to die," but He did so on His own terms.

And have you considered that Christ not only came to die, He came to leave! Christ was not expelled from the planet He co-created, He chose to leave! In fact, He said it was good for Him to leave. Why? It was good because He would be preparing a place for His own. And He would leave a Comforter. His leaving did

not mark the end of Christmas; it marked the beginning of a new day, a New Year, if you will.

Galatians 4:4 says, "But when the fullness of the time was come, *God sent forth His Son....*" That is Christmas. God sent His Son to save us! Verse 6 goes on to say, "And because ye are sons, *God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son....*" That is a New Year! God sent His Spirit to comfort, guide and enable us!

God has "sent forth the Spirit of His Son"! The world may still be hostile to Christ and to those who love Him. In fact, the Lord Jesus said it would be that way. But the Spirit of Christmas is not a feeling; the Spirit of Christmas is a Person. The angel who appeared to Joseph prior to the birth of God the Son told him regarding Mary that the Son, "which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost." The Spirit of Christmas is the Spirit of God!

The God Who came in human flesh now indwells the human heart of each one who has trusted in the Christ of Christmas. So, we not only have joy in the Christmas season celebrating Christ's incarnation, we have hope and confidence in a new year celebrating the enabling of the Spirit of God's Son!

The
Spirit of Christmas
is *not* a FEELING;
the Spirit of Christmas
is a PERSON.

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by Evangelist Bill Rice III

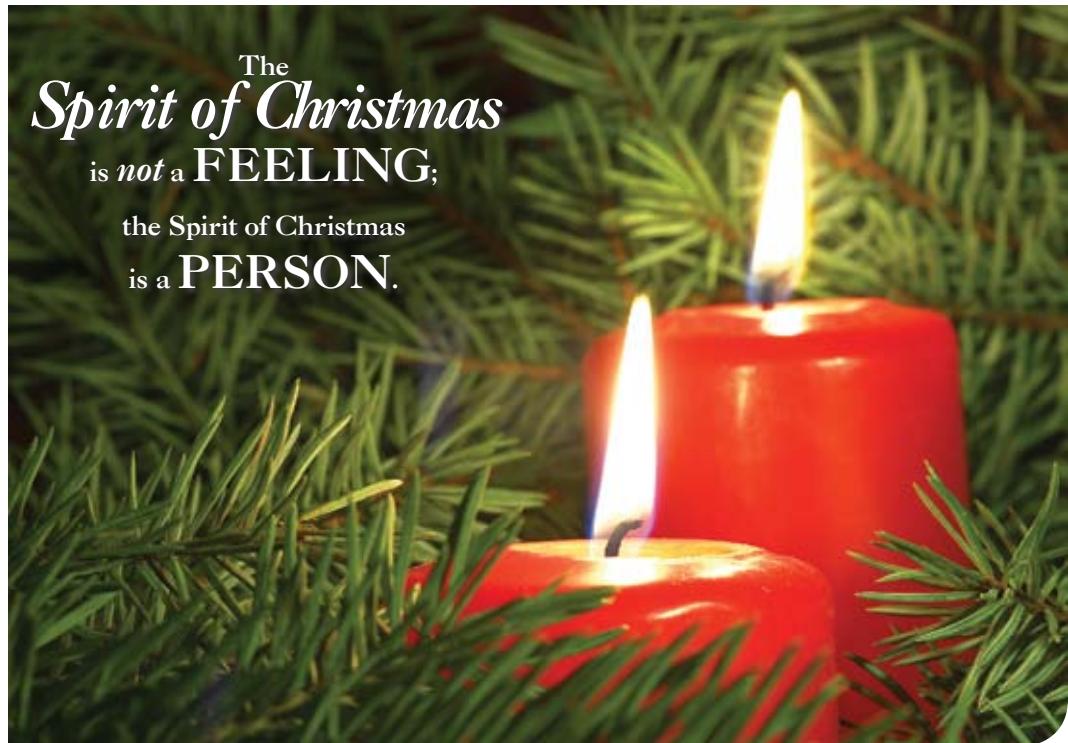
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'TIS THE SEASON...

by Evangelist Bill Rice III

Christmas! Isn't it a wonderful time? Well, isn't it? It would seem that the answer to that question is often up for grabs! We are occasionally told that Christmas is, for some, a time of loneliness. For others, we are reminded, it is a time of despair. "Miserable" is a word I have seen to describe the feelings and mental state of some at this time of the year.

Certainly, I can understand the heaviness of a heart that would result from missing a departed loved one at a time of year which underscores the importance of home and family. Not being able to be with people you love is destined to bring a sense of loneliness.

However, I am convinced that most of the disquieting spirit that may exist during this holiday season comes because of a misunderstanding of the two words "getting" and "giving." Christmas is a time to receive and to give, is it not?

Take a look at these two words. I know the word "get" is not very poetic, but it is part of Christmas. When we receive a present—if I may make a simplistic point—we "get" it! It is enjoyable to receive gifts, but it is important to remember that a gift is a gift.

Okay, so I am being simplistic again, but it amazes me how many people miss this point.

Needs at the Ranch

Have something else you think the Ranch might need?
Feel free to ask. And thanks for thinking of us!

- Metal Chop Saw
- Mig Welder
- Jack Hammer (Electric or Air Compressor)
- Rock Drill
- Leather Sewing Machine
- Concrete Mixer
- Sheet Metal Brake

If you have a lead on any of these items or you would like to make a donation of one of these items to the Ranch, please contact Dale Stover, 615-893-2767, ext. 105 or dstover@billriceranch.org

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Remember the old tale that as a child, if you were good, you would get presents? Well, how can they be presents if you have to be good to get them! A present is not earned. It is not necessarily deserved. A gift is a gift! When you receive a present, it says a lot more about the love of the person giving it than it does about your deserving to receive it.

Forgive me, but if dear old Santa brings presents only to those who are nice, rather than the naughty, then why not just save money from your job and buy your own!

I am not trying to be cynical here, but thinking that one deserves presents can only lead to disillusionment and, dare I say it, even despair. They are presents. They are gifts. I do not deserve any of them. They can only come to me because of the love of another.

And now the word "giving." This is truly the wonderful part of Christmas. It is what Christmas is all about. The Wise Men gave. God the Father gave. That is what we celebrate at Christmas time. Yes, you and I do receive many benefits from the fact that God does give. But what we celebrate at this time of the year is the fact of His giving! And giving is something that no one can take from you or me at this time of year.

Conceivably, any of us could live through a Christmas in which we receive nothing. But



they simply do not make the Christmas in which you and I cannot give! Giving is where the joy is. It's more blessed than receiving. The Lord Jesus said so! I do not have to see the light in a child's eyes to know that it is a blessing to give. I do not have to see the gladness in a missionary's heart to know that my support of the work is beneficial. I do not even have to know the recipient of a gift to know that giving is worthwhile. I have God's promise. Giving is rewarding and giving is a blessing. This was demonstrated to us hundreds of years ago when God the Father, by example, declared the treasures of giving, and the Lord Jesus Christ certainly gave, as well. The Bible tells us that even though Christ endured the cross and despised the shame of it, He knew that the following exaltation provided the right to joy.

It is Christmas time. This is a time of receiving, not things we deserve, but gifts. And more importantly, this is a time of giving. We can give and be blessed for it. No circumstance can alter that truth.

BACK AT THE RANCH...

BILL RICE RANCH

OUTREACH

People saved every month through:

- Revival Meetings in local churches
- Summer Camps & Retreats
- Deaf Rallies
- **West Branch on the Move** events
- Bill Rice Christian Academy
- Philippine Deaf Camp
- New York City Evangelistic Trip

2008

RENOVATION & BUILDING

Projects completed by Ranch staff, volunteer labor and generous gifts:

- Front Entrance (Phase 1)
- Administration Building upgrades
- Volleyball Court Roof
- Deluxe Room renovation
- Buildings painted
- West Branch lumber milling

2008



West Branch

by Evangelist Troy Carlson

Doing What You Believe In

Have you ever had someone assume something about you that was simply not true? I suppose all of us have. Probably most of us would rather not know all the false assumptions other people make about us. I think this because I have found out on more than one occasion that my assumptions were not true! Shame on me!

Several years ago a good friend and I were discussing a theological position. In the course of the conversation, my friend said to me something like this, "Well, I know you believe that because you work for the Bill Rice Ranch." But his assumption was wrong. "No," I responded immediately. "You have it backwards. I work at the Bill Rice Ranch because I believe that."

We all should live by Bible convictions. Sometimes it is easy to follow those convictions, while sometimes it is not. Difficulty may come not because people are antagonistic to you but, in some cases, just because of circumstances God allows.

For instance, at the Ranch we believe that "it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe" (1 Cor. 1:21). We also believe revival is a return to Bible principle and that Bible preaching is a catalyst for revival. You cannot return to something you

do not know or are not reminded of. That is where preaching comes in. Preaching helps people, families, and churches to be revived by confronting them with Bible truth.

For sixteen years the Lord allowed West Branch to use revival preaching in a conducive atmosphere to see many lives change. This took place in a variety of camps and retreats as we worked with many local churches around the Southwest.

For the past few years we have not had the privilege of having our own facility. That is the Lord's plan for now. But these circumstances do not change our passion for revival. So we have had to find a way to do what God has called us to do—to do what we believe in. That is why we have traveled the West conducting **West Branch on the Move** conferences and rallies. It is because we believe preaching helps people—it brings them back to revival truth. We continue to pray that the Lord will provide us opportunities to do what He has called us to do. Thank God He does!

It is not that we believe we are anything special, just that preaching is God's special, anointed method for bringing revival to Christians' lives.

Recently we were in Santa Maria, California to conduct a **Families on the Move** Conference.



After the conference, the host pastor indicated ways he knew already how the weekend of preaching had wrought changes in families of his church. We are scheduling another conference there in 2010.

The next weekend we were in Colorado for a **Men on the Move** Conference where ten churches participated. Many gentlemen remarked how God used the conference to help them draw closer to the Lord. We are scheduled to be there again next year.

Many miles were traveled. Months were spent planning for these events. Thousands of dollars were spent in preparation. You could say that it wasn't easy—but it is what we believe in. Revival preaching helps people. May God help us to always be dedicated to that truth.

One year ago we had goals to meet. However, we could not know all that the Lord would do through the ministries of the Ranch this year. From outreach to new publications to renovations, **the Lord has provided many victories**. Here is a snapshot of the past eleven months.

GROWTH

From new communications and publications to increased attendance and enrollment:

- First Light, Pardner Club, Bill Rice Christian Academy, **West Branch on the Move**, and Family Week growth
- New publications: Ready or Not; Morning Song, 3rd Edition and Devotions for the Deaf (1 Thessalonians through Titus and Galatians & Prison Epistles)

2008

SPECIAL BLESSINGS

- The 56th summer of Christian camping in Middle Tennessee with ministry to teenagers, juniors, Deaf and families (from all parts of the country and even South Korea)
- Deaf ministries started
- A large summer staff and a faithful permanent staff



2008

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE HAS DONE! *What will God do in 2009?*

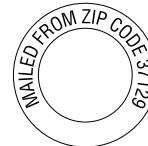
Goals for the future here are specific. Reaching those goals comes only as the Lord provides through His people. You can see what was accomplished in 2008. The Lord knows what we need to do in 2009. As we get ready to do that, **would you prayerfully consider making a special end-of-the-year gift to the Ranch?** There is no question that the Lord has done much. There is also no doubt that He has used people like you to make it possible through generous financial gifts. **Your gift this month will help provide for our staff to accomplish His goals and to rejoice in it!**

2009

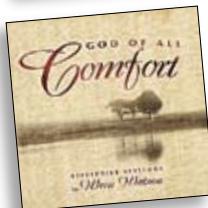


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Bill Rice Ranch PUBLICATIONS

Sing We Now of Christmas

Familiar Christmas carols sung with harmony as only sisters can.

God of All Comfort

Beautiful variety of songs reminding us of our Father—the God of All Comfort.

We Are Thine

Uplifting men's vocals with solos, duets, quartets, and ensembles.



Christmas Special!

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for two-weeks only: December 1-12.

Order on billriceranch.org or call 1-800-253-RICE.

NOTE: Prices DO NOT include shipping & handling.

Bring your FAMILY and come see us!

13th annual HOMESCHOOL CONFERENCE & COMPETITION APRIL 2-4, 2009

Wil Rice IV, speaker

A great time of fun, fellowship, practical help in homeschooling, and competition for homeschool kids. Special programs and activities will be available for all ages. Nurseries will be provided for all services and sessions. The entire family is encouraged to attend!

Register by February 28th and receive a FREE \$10 voucher for Cowboy Town or Booktable!



FAMILY WEEKS

Why come to a Bill Rice Ranch Family Week?

- A perfect family vacation for less money
- Tons of activities for every age group
- Rest and relaxation
- Fellowship with Christian families from around the country
- Great food—all you care to eat
- A great place to reunite with extended family
- Uplifting Bible preaching

**Family Week FULL
JUNE 29-JULY 3**

Rick Flanders & Shelton Smith

**Family Week II
JULY 19-23**

Wayne Hardy & Chris Miller

Wil Rice IV & Bill Rice III
will speak both weeks!

Save \$15

on camp next summer!

Register by January 31st
to receive the lowest rate
for camp next summer in
the Youth or Junior programs.

Deaf ages 9-19 are invited for one week FREE!

Go to billriceranch.org for more details.

BILL RICE RANCH SUMMER 2009



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