



Christian
Veterinary
Mission

cvm.org

19303 Fremont Ave N
Seattle WA 98133
206.546.7569

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Serving in His Love

“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten son that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.” (John 3:16, NASV)

Though December 25 is the date that Christians celebrate the incarnation of God in the form of a baby, we do not know the actual date that this event occurred. In my mind, the date is not of great importance. But the fact of the incarnation and the love that prompted it are worth dying a physical and emotional death for.

As I consider the love that is the reason for the incarnation, I am brought to tears. Some say that in leaving His home in heaven, Jesus knew that He would be reunited with the Father and therefore His becoming like man was not that big of a deal. I do not agree. The apostle Paul wrote, *“Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, being made in the likeness of men.” (Phil. 2:5-7, NASV)* Can you fathom what it means to be the Creator of the universe, to be in authority over all that exists, to have all power, then to choose for a time to not use that power and authority, to choose to become like an indentured servant, to even take on the body of a helpless baby?!

The incarnation is an amazingly big deal! This passage in Philippians speaks of the submissiveness and dependence on others to which Christ submitted himself. *Doulou* is the Greek word that is often translated as “servant”. But it is better translated as “slave”. Perhaps the translators wanted to avoid the negative connotation of slave when choosing to translate *doulou* as servant rather than as “slave”. Philippians

2:6,7 does not suggest that Jesus ceased to be divine. Quite the contrary, we are taught in Colossians 2:9 (NASV): *“For in Him all the fulness of deity dwells in bodily form.”* Yet God divested Himself of His honors and glories in the spiritual realm to become a slave. Therefore, the incarnation is an act of submission! The motivation for the submission is love – for you, for me, for all of mankind, for all eternity!

This year, as Christmas approaches, may you think not only about the babe in the manger, shepherds, and magi, but more about the God that out of His great love humbled Himself to become a slave so that He could suffer and die for you. And as the new year approaches, may we all seek ways in which we can follow Christ’s example of leadership through submission. May we be so in awe of God’s faithfulness and goodness that we are willing to trust Him and be obedient - whatever the cost!

I am reluctant to deviate from the themes of humility and submission, but an update on my situation is in order. Though it has been eleven months since I submitted my work permit application, I have not gotten a ruling on my application. Other missionaries that I know have either voluntarily left the field indefinitely or been denied the permits they need to legally serve as missionaries or have received permits good for only one year. (In the past permits had a two-year duration.) It seems likely that I will have to re-apply under a different organization’s registration.

God has used the past several months that I have been in the USA to address some medical issues like getting a pacemaker and surgery to determine that I do not have

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ovarian cancer. I still have not had the knee replacement surgery that I need. That is scheduled for December 9th. Your prayers for a successful outcome will be greatly appreciated. Additional prayer requests:

- That God will open and close doors to make it clear to me where and how I can best serve Him in the future
- That people everywhere will discover the peace and joy that comes from a life submitted/surrendered to Christ
- That our persecuted brothers and sisters in Christ will be both bold and discerning in their witness for Christ

In partnership with you and with Christ Jesus,

Margaret