



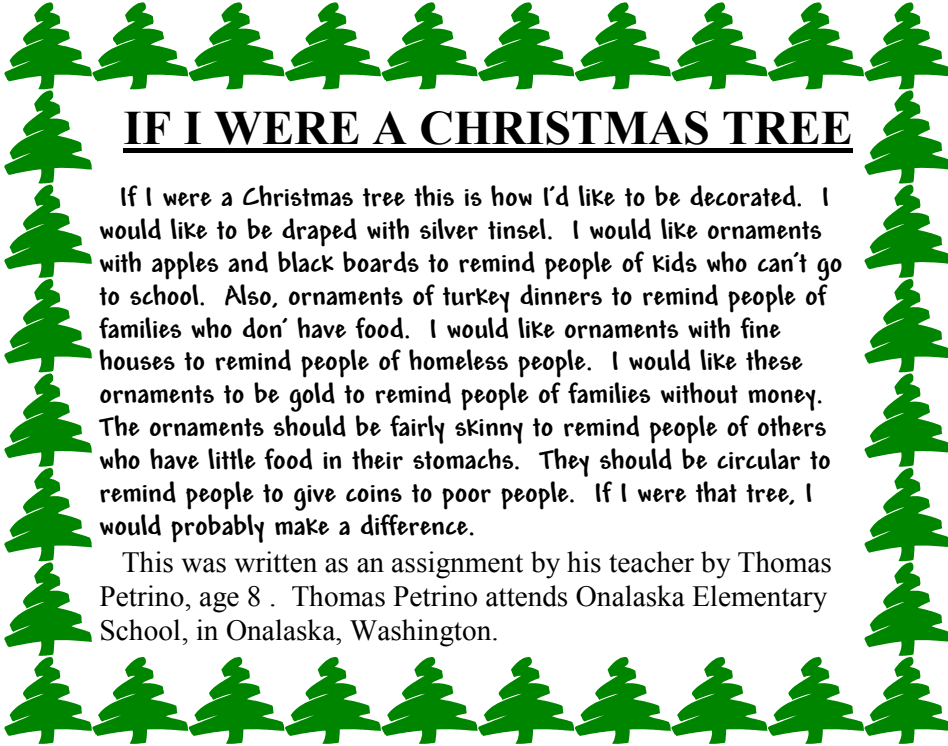
CHURCH OF GOD BANNER

onalaskachurchofgod.com



DECEMBER 2004

FIRST CHURCH OF GOD: 3RD. AVE. & HWY. 508 ONALASKA, WASHINGTON 98570



IF I WERE A CHRISTMAS TREE

If I were a Christmas tree this is how I'd like to be decorated. I would like to be draped with silver tinsel. I would like ornaments with apples and black boards to remind people of kids who can't go to school. Also, ornaments of turkey dinners to remind people of families who don't have food. I would like ornaments with fine houses to remind people of homeless people. I would like these ornaments to be gold to remind people of families without money. The ornaments should be fairly skinny to remind people of others who have little food in their stomachs. They should be circular to remind people to give coins to poor people. If I were that tree, I would probably make a difference.

This was written as an assignment by his teacher by Thomas Petrino, age 8. Thomas Petrino attends Onalaska Elementary School, in Onalaska, Washington.

"What?"
"I forget."
"Go to sleep!"
Sniffle, sniffle...cough.
"Daddy, I need something. I have a cold."
Thump, thump, thump.
"Here, have a cough drop and a sip of water."
"Daddy, could you leave a light on in the hallway?"
"So that's it."
It was dark.
What we can't see frightens us. Light reveals, dark covers up.
"I'm not afraid of the dark," she said.

"Oh, come on. There must be times..."
"No, never."
"Why is that? Do you have super powers like night vision?"
"I guess you can say that. I have faith. I call it the light inside."

There are times in life when everything seems dark. It is in that darkness we feel most vulnerable. Faith is the light in the darkest hours of our lives. God will show you the way out, but He doesn't always light the path.

Believing in God is like carrying a flashlight. When the lights go out you don't fear a thing because you know that you hold the power to light the way.

Sometimes He expects us to walk in faith, step through the darkness and "into the light."

"If you knew Who walks beside you on the way that you have chosen, fear would be impossible." Dr. Wayne Dyer

"I believe in you!"
Bob Perks

Bob@BobPerks.com copyright 2004

"INTO THE LIGHT"

By Bob Perks
Bob@BobPerks.com

"Could you shine that light over here?" he said. "I can't see where I'm going."

He was climbing down the embankment looking for the hubcap from his car. It was late and he didn't see the pothole in the road.

"I thought you were aiming for it," his friend joked. "I mean, you hit that thing right on the mark, BOOM!"

They both laughed about it, but when it happened he swerved off the road nearly hitting a tree. It wasn't funny then.

It was dark.

"I'll just get out here," I said to my friends.

"We'll take you right up to the door," he offered.

"No, this will be fine," I said. "It's not too far up the road from here."

I stood on the side of the road and watched as they disappeared into the darkness.

Turning toward the road I needed to walk, I suddenly realized how very dark it can be in the country in the middle of the night. I walked slowly at first. That is until I heard something in the woods.

I ran so fast I couldn't feel my feet hit the ground.

It was dark.

"Daddy! Daddy!"

"What's wrong?"

"Ummmm, can I have a drink?"

"You just had a drink, go to sleep."

"Daddy, I forgot something."



As most of "NO!" you know, my first wife Gloria passed away in July of 2003 after a long battle with cancer. Whenever I hear of someone who is stricken with this terrible disease it brings back difficult memories.

Last week I received an email from Bob Perks a writer whose works I have used in my Newsletter for the past several years. I am including his letter and am asking you to pray for his wife, Marianne. But don't just pray for Marianne, please remember Bob in prayer as he travels the dark road beside his wife. The care-giver is often forgotten and struggle with the illness of their loved one without anyone to encourage them. I praise God that I had those who stood beside me as I walked with Gloria during her illness.

I gazed out my window and the world suddenly turned black. I could hear her crying as she continued her conversation on the phone. I felt selfish standing there when I needed to be next to her. I returned to the table and sat with my head in my hands, listening as her conversation continued.

When she hung up the phone we embraced, weeping openly, holding, squeezing each other as if never letting go would make it all go away. The evening was unusually silent. No television to make us laugh or music that normally would lift our souls. Later, trying to fall asleep, we tossed and turned in bed. I felt like I was smothering. I needed to get up periodically to try and catch my breath.

Like clockwork, our two dogs awakened on schedule at 5:00 a.m.

I was eager to get up so I rushed out of the room closing the door so she could sleep a little longer.

The dark days of Autumn found me standing in the spot light at the top of the driveway. Watching the dogs so they didn't run off, I was feeling empty and out of touch with reality.

"Maybe this is a dream," I thought to myself.

Earlier that evening there was a steady, gentle rain. The leaves that longed to let go of the two huge trees just behind our house, had fallen overnight. Ricky and Lucy waded through them like fresh fallen snow.

Out of the corner of my eye I saw someone standing there. It startled me.

Up to her ankles, barefoot in yellow and gold leaves stood my wife, Marianne. She was beautifully wrapped in a full white fuzzy robe that draped down to the ground. She looked like an angel.

We stood a few feet apart just looking at each other, that is until she began to cry again. It wasn't a dream at all.

This is the most difficult thing for me to write about.

My wife Marianne has...breast cancer.

Please, please oh, God...please pray for her.

+++++
Marianne's cancer is invasive lobular carcinoma.

A favor to ask...Please...If you could find it in your heart to send a note of encouragement to her (please no alternative treatment, product promotions etc.) Just a note to tell her you'll pray for her, I would be forever grateful to you.

**Marianne Perks
P.O. Box 1702
Shavertown, Pa. 18708-1702**

Bob & Marianne do not have any medical insurance, please pray and ask God if He would have you help them during this difficult time.

Pastor Mulkins

THE MOST DIFFICULT THING TO WRITE ABOUT

*By Bob Perks
Bob@BobPerks.com*

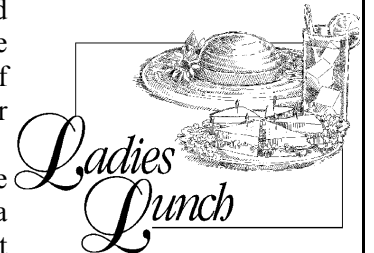
It had been a long difficult week. Like sitting next to a time bomb, praying that it would never go off. Seconds churned slowly, painfully like dripping acid on my mind. Hours seemed like days until suddenly it was all over.

It was one of those things that seem unreal. Like having a bad dream you hope you'll wake up from, but you don't. I can remember anxiously waiting for the final word and yet, hearing it, I still could not accept it. That is until she turned to me with tears in her eyes, then shaking her head she whispered, "yes."

I had no idea how to react. I stood up and headed to the front door slamming my fist into it screaming,

WCG'S LADIES LUNCHEON

On Saturday, December 11 the WCG will be hosting their Christmas Luncheon. This is a potluck luncheon opened to all the ladies of our church.



There will be a gift exchange of hand made items for those who wish to participate.

Ladies if you have not attended one of these luncheons, why not come and find out just how much fun they are?

It will begin at 12:00 noon in the Fellowship Hall. If you have any questions you may contact Mert Horrocks at 978-4380.

ALASKA'S HAPPENINGS

SUNDAYS

SUNDAY SCHOOL 9:45 AM
MORNING WORSHIP 11:00 AM

*Potluck Sunday
December 5*

**EVENING SING &
PRAISE SERVICE 6:00 PM**

*There will be no evening service
Here on December 5 so we can
participate in the Community Carol
Sing at the Community Presbyterian
Church*



TUESDAYS

**KID'S CLUB
3:30 - 4:30 PM**

*There will be no Kid's Club on
December 21 and 28.
Kid's Club will resume following the
Christmas break.*



WEDNESDAYS

MEN'S BREAKFAST



THE BURGER BAR 6:00 AM
SOUP & SANDWICHES 6:00 PM
BIBLE STUDY 7:00 PM
"THE PURPOSE DRIVEN LIFE"
DRAMA PRACTICE



THURSDAYS

HOME BIBLE STUDY



ELVA SMOOTS 1:00 PM
809 GISH ROAD



SATURDAYS

PRAYER MEETING 6:00 PM



CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 7, 2004
5:30 PM



WCG LUNCHEON

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 11,
2004
12:00 PM



WCG'S CHRIST BIRTHDAY OFFERING



SUNDAY, DECEMBER 19
11:00 AM



Christmas Eve
SERVICE

CANDLE LIGHT & COMMUNION SERVICE

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 24
6:00 PM

COMMUNITY EVENTS

COMMUNITY CAROL SING
AT THE
COMMUNITY PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH

SOUP & ROLLS: 5:30 PM
CAROL SING: 6:30 PM



SENIORS ON THE GO
POTLUCK

12:00 NOON

CHRISTMAS LUNCHEON FEATURING THE VOETBERG FAMILY

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 14

AT

CENTRALIA COMMUNITY CHURCH OF GOD

3320 BORST AVE.

CENTRALIA, WASHINGTON

COST

\$2.50

*Please let Pastor Mulkins know if you are planning on attending.
They need a meal count.*

MINOR TRAVELING UNATTENDED

By Jerry Seiden

Right before the jet way door closed, I scrambled aboard the plane going from LA to Chicago, lugging my laptop and overstuffed briefcase. It was the first leg of an important business trip a few weeks before Christmas, and I was running late. I had a ton of work to catch up on. Half wishing, half praying I muttered, "Please God, do me a favor; let there be an empty seat next to mine, I don't need any distractions."

I was on the aisle in a two seat row. Across sat a businesswoman with her nose buried in a newspaper. No problem. But in the seat beside mine, next to the window, was a young boy wearing a big red tag around his neck: Minor Traveling Unattended.

The kid sat perfectly still, hands in his lap, eyes straight ahead. He'd probably been told never to talk to strangers. Good, I thought.

Then the flight attendant came by. "Michael, I have to sit down because we're about to take off," she said to the little boy. "This nice man will answer any of your questions, okay?"

Did I have a choice? I offered my hand, and Michael shook it twice, straight up and down.

"Hi, I'm Jerry," I said. "You must be about seven years old."

"I'll bet you don't have any kids," he responded.

"Why do you think that? Sure I do." I took out my wallet to show him pictures.

"Because I'm six."

"I was way off, huh?"

The captains' voice came over the speakers, "Flight attendants, prepare for takeoff."

Michael pulled his seat belt tighter

and gripped the armrests as the jet engines roared.

I leaned over, "Right about now, I usually say a prayer. I asked God to keep the plane safe and to send angels to protect us."

"Amen," he said, then added, "but I'm not afraid of dying. I'm not afraid because my mama's already in Heaven."

"I'm sorry." I said.

"Why are you sorry?" he asked, peering out the window as the plane lifted off.

"I'm sorry you don't have your mama here."

My briefcase jostled at my feet, reminding me of all the work I needed to do.

"Look at those boats down there!" Michael said as the plane banked over the Pacific. "Where are they going?"

"Just going sailing, having a good time. And there's probably a fishing boat full of guys like you and me."

"Doing what?" he asked.

"Just fishing, maybe for bass or tuna. Does your dad ever take you fishing?"

"I don't have a dad," Michael sadly responded.

Only six years old and he didn't have a dad, and his Mom had died, and here he was flying halfway across the country all by himself. The least I could do was make sure he had a good flight. With my foot I pushed my briefcase under my seat.

"Do they have a bathroom here?" he asked, squirming a little.

"Sure," I said, "let me take you there."

I showed him how to work the "Occupied" sign, and what buttons



to push on the sink, then he closed the door. When he emerged, he wore a wet shirt and a huge smile

"That sink shoots water everywhere!"

The attendants smiled.

Michael got the VIP treatment from the crew during snack time. I took out my laptop and tried to work on a talk I had to give, but my mind kept going to Michael. I couldn't stop looking at the crumpled grocery bag on the floor by his seat. He'd told me that everything he owned was in that bag. Poor kid.

While Michael was getting a tour of the cockpit the flight attendant told me his grandmother would pick him up in Chicago. In the seat pocket a large manila envelope held all the paperwork regarding his custody. He came back explaining, "I got wings! I got cards! I got more peanuts. I saw the pilot and he said I could come back anytime!"

For a while he stared at the manila envelope.

"What are you thinking?" I asked Michael.

He didn't answer. He buried his face in his hands and started sobbing. It had been years since I'd heard a little one cry like that. My kids were grown -- still I don't think they'd ever cried so hard. I rubbed his back and wondered where the flight attendant was.

"What's the matter buddy?" I asked.

All I got were muffled words "I don't know my grandma. Mama didn't want her to come visit and see her sick. What if Grandma doesn't want me? Where will I go?"

"Michael, do you remember the Christmas story? Mary and Joseph and the baby Jesus? Remember how they came to Bethlehem just before Jesus was born? It was late and cold, and they didn't have anywhere to stay, no family, no hotels, not even hospitals where babies could be born. Well, God was watching out for them. He found them a place to stay;

a stable with animals."

"Wait, wait," Michael tugged on my sleeve. "I know Jesus. I remember now." Then he closed his eyes, lifted his head and began to sing. His voice rang out with a strength that rocked his tiny frame. "Jeeesus looooves me-thiiiiiii I knowwwwwww. For the Biiiiible tells m e e e e e e sooooo...."

Passengers turned or stood up to see the little boy who made the large sound. Michael didn't notice his



audience. With his eyes shut tight and voice lifted high, he was in a good place.

"You've got a great voice," I told him when he was done. "I've never heard anyone sing like that."

"Mama said God gave me good pipes just like my grandma's," he said. "My grandma loves to sing, she sings in her church choir."

"Well, I'll bet you can sing there, too. The two of you will be running that choir."

The seat belt sign came on as we approached O'Hare. The flight attendant came by and said we just have a few minutes now, but she told Michael it's important that he put on his seat belt. People started stirring in their seats, like the kids before the final school bell. By the time the seat belt sign went off, passengers were rushing down the aisle. Michael and I stayed seated.

"Are you gonna go with me?" he asked.

"I wouldn't miss it for the world buddy!" I assured him.

Clutching his bag and the manila envelope in one hand, he grabbed my hand with the other. The two of us followed the flight attendant down the jet way. All the noises of the airport seemed to fill the corridor.

Michael stopped, flipping his hand

from mine, he dropped to his knees. His mouth quivered. His eyes brimmed with tears.

"What's wrong Michael? I'll carry you if you want."

He opened his mouth and moved his lips, but it was as if his words were stuck in his throat. When I knelt next to him, he grabbed my neck. I felt his warm, wet face as he whispered in my ear, "I want my mama!"

I tried to stand, but Michael squeezed my neck even harder. Then I heard a rattle of footsteps on the corridor's metal floor.

"Is that you, baby?"

I couldn't see the woman behind me, but I heard the warmth in her voice.

"Oh baby," she cried. "Come here. Grandma loves you so much. I need a hug, baby. Let go of that nice man." She knelt beside Michael and me.

Michael's grandma stroked his arm. I smelled a hint of orange blossoms.

"You've got folks waiting for you out there, Michael. Do you know that you've got aunts, and uncles and cousins?"

She patted his skinny shoulders and started humming. Then she lifted her head and sang. I wondered if the flight attendant told her what to sing, or maybe she just knew what was right. Her strong, clear voice filled the passageway, "Jesus loves me -- this I know..."

Michael's gasps quieted. Still holding him, I rose, nodded hello to his grandma and watched her pick up the grocery bag. Right before we got to the doorway to the terminal, Michael loosened his grip around my neck and reached for his grandma.

As soon as she walked across the threshold with him, cheers erupted.

From the size of the crowd, I figured family, friends, pastors, elders, deacons, choir members and most of the neighbors had come to meet Michael. A tall man tugged on Michael's ear and pulled off the red sign around his neck. It no longer applied.

As I made my way to the gate for my connecting flight, I barely noticed the weight of my overstuffed briefcase and laptop. I started to wonder who would be in the seat next to mine this time...And I smiled.

LAWYERS ACCIDENT?

A very successful lawyer parked his brand new Lexus in front of the office, ready to show it off to his colleagues. As he got out, a truck came along, too close to the curb, and completely tore off the driver's door of the Lexus.

The counselor immediately grabbed his cell phone, dialed 911, and it wasn't more than 5 minutes before a policeman pulled up. Before the cop had a chance to ask any questions, the lawyer started screaming hysterically.

His Lexus, which he had just picked up the day before, was now completely ruined and would never be the same, no matter how the body shop tried to make it new again.

After the lawyer finally wound down from his rant, the cop shook his head in disgust and disbelief. "I can't believe how materialistic you lawyers are," he said. "You are so focused on your possessions that you neglect the most important things in life."

"How can you say such a thing?" asked the lawyer.

The cop replied, "My God, don't you even realize that your left arm is missing? It got ripped off when the truck hit you!!!"

"Oh no!" screamed the lawyer. "WHERE'S MY ROLEX?"

◆ Received from Susan Olsen