

THOUGHTS

By Douglas W. Schroeder

SPEAKER ON THE WORD TODAY

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2020

Thoughts
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“A DIFFERENT KIND OF CHRISTMAS”

As we grow in years it becomes evident that birthdays, anniversaries, graduations, and other celebrations do not follow neat patterns. Some are ebullient, while others are frustrating, or even tinged with catastrophe. Holidays, too, take on an unpredictable character; the Fourth of July that the dog ran away, or the graduation, planned honeymoon, or anniversary trip that was scrubbed due to Covid-19.

There it is again, the wretched virus that seemingly has disrupted *everything!* Why should it be any surprise to us that now sizable Thanksgiving and Christmas events are “banned”? Why don’t we call out the military to enforce forced isolation? Perhaps we can shoot the bug! We have about as good a chance of doing that as avoiding it by distancing and wearing masks! All we have done is slowed down the inevitable – and crippled our global economy. Oh, yes, we have also pushed division to a new level, a new art form.

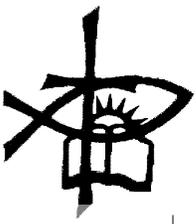
Enough of the Bah Humbug! On to the cheer! We are expecting something different this year. Perhaps we can anticipate more appreciation of health (goes without saying)! We appreciate the bonds of family that we are supposed to loosen, and the job that hasn’t been cancelled. We long for the “good old days” of a full church service. We are getting the merest taste of the inconvenience of Mary and Joseph, plodding toward Jerusalem with Mary pregnant with the Christ child!

Different is ok for us. Why? *Because we are Christians!* Our shopping got wrecked! It’s probably a good thing. Our massive dinner is scaled back. That allows us not to practice gluttony! We’ll miss the big party! Maybe sobriety will reign this year. WE CAN’T TAKE OUR TRIP TO THE BAHAMMAS! As if that is a birthright? How about meeting your pledge in offerings and being content? Save the money and watch how having a nest egg allays later worries and fear when an unexpected emergency arises.

THE MASKED SINGERS

On television they are frogs, robots and monsters, but in the pews they are ordinary people. The commonality is that they are attempting to sing *through a mask*. As I look out at the congregation I am impressed by the resilience of those who are not only braving potential exposure to Covid-19, but are attempting to praise God with a full heart by singing with a mask on their face!

Some individuals use God’s name as a curse or swear, but meanwhile others praise His name. Some scream profanities at others through masks, while the Christian – regardless of such obstacles – uses their mouth to bless others and praise God!



December

GASLIGHTING

Gaslighting comes from the psychological thriller movie "Gaslight", where an abusive husband manipulates things, such as the gas lights, in order to weaken his wife's mental state so that he can attempt to get away with murder and theft. An informative article (written from a secular perspective) appears here: [6 Warning Signs that You're Being Gaslighted \(msn.com\)](#). The article gives examples of verbal manipulation; "You're not hungry...", "I only did it because I love you," "I'm not... You're just paranoid," "No one will ever love you but me," "You made me do this," or "You're too sensitive."

How do you know if someone is mentally manipulating you? First, you suspect it. It requires honest appraisal of your own mental, emotional condition. Unduly harsh criticism, and/or controlling behavior *is abusive, whether recognized or not*. Some do this on a lower level, as they saw it modeled in their home growing up. Others are thoroughly manipulative, not only toward their purported spouse/lover, but to others in general. How consistent is the dismissive and controlling conversation? It's one thing for a person to have a bad day, but it's another entirely to daily be on the receiving end of dismissive, derisive comments!

Our culture sets up for lots of gaslighting because of cohabitation. Cohabitation is predicated upon selfishness, isolating one's weaknesses and covering them up. The only defenses of cohabitation are excuses, ranging from dismissal of faith to a plea for money. Some even attempt to shift responsibility to the government with statements such as, "The state makes it impossible to make it without living together!" That is a lie, because people can fairly easily make it financially, *if they accept responsibility to scale back their desires and live in a godly fashion, versus pursue worldly standards*. In a sense, the cohabiting couple, agree to a lie, then expect each other to be transparent in regard to them. That doesn't work, as when big secrets are kept, littler ones also are kept. There is no assurance that a "partner" would not leave or cheat. After all, both cheated to create a faux marriage state.

RADIOS FOR OUR LISTENERS!

Our initiative to distribute radios to groups of listeners, to multiply the transmission of the Gospel through TWT, is working! God is raising up listener groups in many cultures as a result of distribution of radios! The radios are typically a few dollars each.

The Word Today is once again sending hundreds of radios to areas of newer broadcasts. General support for The Word Today is for *transmission* of the program. If you wish to participate in funding radios for *reception* of the program, simply indicate with your gift that you would like to also support distribution of radios, with the intent on making cell groups of listeners – to grow the Body of Christ around the world!

Blessings!
Douglas W. Schroeder