



Unca Frank's Christmas, A Son Made All The Difference

Elder Charles Moore

Frank grew old as others grew tired and died. He outlasted them all and often wondered why. If long life

Franklin Chaney was by all accounts what you would call a crank. For years he had lived alone in his upper flat, Vera having gone to be with the Lord many years past. He was pretty set in his ways and by all accounts, especially those of his nieces and nephews as well as his own children, you might say he was eccentric on the verge of "old crab." His brothers and sisters had passed away and only Frank was left to represent that particular layer of family. He had never been one much for talk or anything frivolous or loud. He attended all the family gatherings but sat on a dining room chair in some shadowed corner of the room with a beer in hand not saying much. The little ones usually gave Unca Frank a wide berth. Where others stood he seemed to loom.

Frank had worked hard all of his life. Married young and barely able to keep an apartment and a bride on the meager salary of a warehouse clerk, he had to work two jobs just to keep things going. The babies came quickly and before long Frank and Vera were Frank, Vera and family.

Frank never quite made it in the way of success..

As the years went by and the kids grew up, went to school, got married and left home and town, Frank trudged on through life. He and Vera took an occasional vacation but they really never even had had a decent honeymoon. With the nest empty they thought that perhaps now life might be kinder to them. But then Vera got sick and there were those terrible medical bills. There just didn't seem to be a let-up. So, Frank trudged on until it seemed that life, family, even marriage had passed him by. When Vera died he sold the house and moved into the upper flat. All that was left was reflecting upon what might have been, of the life that got away and just couldn't be retrieved.

So, apart from family gatherings, Frank spent his time mostly alone. There was Vera's cat and parakeet to keep him company. The kids visited from time to time but when their families got bigger, their time got smaller.

was a reward he couldn't figure out what he was being rewarded for. As a husband he had given it his best shot, but had missed the mark. As a father he worked hard to provide food and warmth but provided little in the way of support or love. No, he had been pretty much of a failure and he knew it. That's why when he attended those family gatherings he loomed large but quiet in the corner. He didn't say much because he didn't feel he had much to say. He missed his wife and he missed his kids. But, most of all, he missed life. Bitterness has knocked on the door of his heart and he swung the door wide open.

It was now Frank's eighty-second Christmas and the family had gathered at his nephew's house. After dinner Frank found his place in the corner, anchored himself silently and waited for the time to pass when it would finally be appropriate to ask for hat and coat and go home. But there was one more amenity to suffer until that time could come. There was a new baby in the family, a little

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great-grandson. Baby passing, a family tradition, was about to take place. The little bundle passed from arm to arm and lap to lap. No one seemed to notice much but kept talking and laughing the entire passage. That is until it came to 'Unca' Frank's turn. Plop! Eight pounds of sweetness found its way into his lap and Unca Frank stood blankly staring into the face of life itself. A single tear crossed his furrowed cheek, a lonely crossing since none had passed that way for many years. He picked the baby up and kissed it, never realizing how sweet a kiss could be. His was a bittersweet kiss, bitter in its regret and sweet in its promise. He stayed for supper that night. He didn't say much but all could tell that somehow Unca Frank had changed. Before he went home he straightened a few ornaments on his nephew's tree and asked to hold the baby one more time. He liked the feeling it gave him. Somehow he felt closer to Vera and the kids. "Thanks!" he whispered to the baby as he handed him to his mother. "And, Merry Christmas!"

A child changed his heart and made a great difference in Unca Frank's life. There was one child, even sweeter and full of heavenly goodness who came to the world to show it what real love and life consists of. That Child has changed the heart of the world and has made all the difference in this world.

"Then the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord." (Luke 2:10 -11)

In the iconic Christmas movie, *It's a Wonderful Life* George Bailey gets to see what kind of town Bedford Falls would be without him. He found it was a very dark and different place, inhabited by a people without hope, a lot like Unca Frank. But George's birth - and how much infinitely and eternally more Jesus' birth - gave hope and showed goodness to a dark and dangerous world. "For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace." (Isaiah 9:6) Jesus has made all the difference.

REMEMBER—

JESUS IS THE REASON FOR THE SEASON!

Cyberspace News

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Greetings and may each of you have reflected on God's blessings and thanked Him for them on Nov. 24. I want to urge each of us to thank God every day and not limit it to once a year. Most of our family gathered here. We were happy to have Seth and Abby from Cleveland as well as the close-by children and grandchildren. Kerry and Kathleen Johnson want to share exciting news: Daughter Leanne and son-in-law Jon Huang had a baby boy born on 11/11/11. Max Parker weighed 6 lbs. 7 oz. Daddy was present for the birth - an answer to prayer. Jon had to leave the next day for a business trip to Singapore. Grandma Kathleen was happy to stay with Leanne and Max while Daddy was away. Max is the first grandchild for both sides of the family so he is sure to get a lot of love!

Last month I had three beautiful sets of twins in the pictures. I have had questions about who they belonged to—Mary & Kaitlyn belong to Michael & Doreen Moss. They are the grandchildren of Carol Chapman Moss. Chaise & Alyson are Walter Layton's 2 year old grandchildren. Klohie & Zohlie belong to Brandon and Jamie Carothers and are Dave & Terrie Fedor's 4 year old granddaughters.

I have received some beautiful condolence letters from outlying members about my sister Jean this month. We do miss her and appreciate all your love and care. We need to keep praying for Michael Moss, Terri Powers, Leah Sottile, Rip & Norma Ripley, David & Ruth Charles, Ellen Momberger, and Violet Chapman. All are struggling with health issues. Sue Trueman flew to Arizona to spend time with daughter Terri Powers.

We were so happy to greet Leslie Miller from Kansas at church one Sabbath. Lynn & Rob Vaughn entertained about 20 of the Charles clan on Thanksgiving. They enjoyed their new kitchen space and could all eat at one 'big' table! Kathy & Joe Smeltzer spent Thanksgiving with daughter and son-in-law Carrie and Joel DeHaan and grandson Caleb in Traverse City.

Roy & Bennie Gee entertained friends on Thanksgiving and family on Friday.

Deborah & Jim Stoner had a family gathering at their home on Thanksgiving. Mama Dorothy Layton was happy to be there with her daughters Deborah & Karen for the day.

Sally Smeltzer's son Brad, had open heart surgery recently and he came through fine. Brad is Joe Smeltzer's brother also.

I am writing this on the last day of November and cannot believe that the year has gone by so fast. Have a great December and write me your news!

Michigan Report

Aurine Moore



This day in history: We don't really know all that we have to be thankful for when we have no catastrophes. On November 30, 1630, the official count of the number of people who died from plague in Venice was tallied at 16,000 people. Then again, God gives us people that bless our lives. In 1858, John Landis Mason got a U.S. patent for his invention that has come to be known by his name, the Mason

Jar, used for safely preserving food.

Our first Sabbath this month was spent celebrating Thanksgiving with our friends from the Petersburg Church of God Seventh Day. We always enjoy the Bible studies with them, this one led by Paul Vanderhorst and the special meals with their congregation. Marie from their congregation led a simple but clear message for the children of the congregation and we met one of their associate members who was visiting for the week, Bruce Clawson. Kathy Smeltzer, their guest speaker, had earlier in the day told an interesting story about the comparison of the descendants of Maximilian Juke and Jonathan Edwards. The non Christian Juke family tree was filled with cheats, villains and louts but the Christian Edwards' family tree was filled with teachers, Pastors, lawyers and Senators. Later she talked about "To Whom Do You Belong" and really challenged us to think about in whom do we trust, whose work are we doing, and what company do we keep?

Following the service that day, Charlie and I went to pick up grandson, David Fasbender, who now lives with them and is helping them to grow young(er), in heart if not in body. Thanks to the instruction and encouragement of his teacher Diane Begeman, David has recited all the books of the Old Testament after two weeks of study with Poppa Moore. Diane and David seem to have a mutual admiration society which is fun to see.

Bekah Smeltzer had written a very interesting report for her studies at Michigan State University comparing Christianity and sports - pointing out that while sports can provide a place of belonging, so too and more so does the church, where we belong.

Elder Charlie Moore spoke on being a Good Soldier of Jesus Christ, talked about how there is a spiritual war we must engage in and that battles are not won by the faint of heart.

We visited the Magnum Nursing Home this month, without many of our Petersburg friends. Consequently we were pleased when Melinda Begeman ably provided the organ accompaniment for the singing. I thought again, what a blessing it was those many years ago when she decided to learn to play.

Violet Chapman, who has been a significant blessing and inspiration to many of us in the church over the years, has entered a hospice program. She is very ill and not expected to live much longer. Please pray for her and her family as she goes through this stage of her life. We recently sang a Christmas carol, There's a Song in the Air, and several members rejoiced as they remembered a time years ago when she sang that song for us.

Several of our friends and members have been having tests and pains: Sydney Begeman, Brandon Carothers is having some shoulder problems and Charlie Moore has a partial tear in a muscle in his shoulder.

Until next month, if you desire to never be lost, travel with God.

Recently while we were eating lunch after church one Sunday, my youngest son asked me what the highest number I had ever counted up to was.

I said I didn't know. Then I asked him how high he has counted.

"5,372," came the prompt reply.

"Oh," I said. "Why did you stop there?"

"The sermon was over."

- from Weekly Church Laughs Newsletter from Christianity Today

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Oh, to Be a Kid Again

Decisions were made by saying "eeny-meeny-miney-mo."

Mistakes were corrected by simply exclaiming, "Do over!"

Money issues were handled by whoever was the banker in "Monopoly."

Being old referred to anyone over 20.

It was magic when Dad would "remove" his thumb.

It was unbelievable that dodge ball wasn't an Olympic event.

Nobody was prettier than Mom.

Getting a foot of snow was a dream come true.

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Jon, Leann and Max

Kathy Smeltzer



A
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Bekah & Alexander Miller



Were you
Thankful?



Elder Charlie



Terrie Fedor visiting with one of the residents at
Magnum.

