

From This Corner

WHEN THE TIME IS RIGHT ... GOD COMES

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“But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son” Galatians 4:4

It is a rather amazing thing that I became a preacher. My hometown church did everything it could to terrorize me during the holidays. I am convinced that they did not do this intentionally. It was a reality born of their enthusiasm for having kids participate and my severe reticence to be in the spotlight. I remember one year an appointment to memorize a few lines as a part of a Christmas program. When I protested I was led to believe it was my God-given duty to persevere. I was to “just do it” in the face of my own self-knowledge that this was a disaster waiting to happen. For what seemed like an eternity, I tried to memorize those lines. I worked on them while walking to school and back home again. I had sleepless nights not as a child might have over the anticipation of Christmas, but over the dread thought of getting up in front of my church family. I have no clue as to what those lines were. Were they scripture, a poem, or some bit of prose? God only knows.

The night of the Christmas program arrived and soon I was up front with knees knocking and lips quivering. The kid that was on before me was so nervous he wet his pants. This did not help. I remember getting three or four words into the piece and drawing a blank. From there out it was stumbling though lines fed to me in a loud whisper from the director as I resisted the feeling I could and should pass out. William Cooper’s words have ever since had meaning for me: “I’ll sing thy power to save, when this poor lispng, stammering tongue lies silent in the grave.” (“There is a Fountain Filled with Blood”)

Shortly after that event, it came to me that God wanted me to be a preacher. Go figure. Many years have passed and one of my great joys during the course of my ministry has been to preach at Christmas time. I share this story not to embarrass the wonderful people of the Lyndonville Church or myself. I share it as a testimony to the fact that when it is the right time God comes to save his people. That is what Christmas is all about no matter what we do to the holidays.