

Top Cover – Another Angle on Another Angel

Christ the Redeemer Church
January 10, 2010
Baptism of the Lord Sunday

Luke 3:15-22
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The writer of this River Jordan baptism Gospel story is Luke the physician. The doctor writes that the Holy Spirit descended in bodily form, like a bird. A dove from Above. A doctor wrote that.

Angels. Angles. I misspelled the word Angels last week in the subject title when I mailed out my Buddy's Annoying Angel sermon and got a ton of feedback about the word Angles. One lady wrote that both angles and angels can be annoying at times.

Another angle on Another Angel.

Rhonda in our church kept gently telling me the past several weeks and months that I needed to check with the Texas Veteran's office, specifically the Hazelwood Act, to find out if I had any unused Texas Veteran's Educational benefits that I could transfer to Daniel to pay his tuition and fees in a state university.

I listened politely but discounted her and the information because I knew I did not have any such unused education benefits. I used all of mine up 25 years ago. But she gently kept pushing me week after week, month after month. Just check, she said.

I checked this week, mostly due to her gentle pressure. I was shocked to find out that I had 150 semester hours of unused Texas Educational benefits available to me under the Hazelwood Educational Act here. All 150 hours are transferable to Daniel. Tuition and fees for over 4 years of college work. Paid for. At 2:00 pm this past Wednesday the transfer was made to Daniel from my education account. I had to accept and then he has to accept.

If Luke can call a bird an angel or Spirit from above, then we can also call a dog being with us and Buddy during his last days or a woman at church angels also. Or Lisa or Sherry or Rhonda can be called angels.

Rhonda the angel never gave up. She just kept quietly telling me to respond to some unused blessing that I had access to but did not know about in life.

Every person I have told this story to this week has celebrated with us. Amity said it made cry her tears of happiness for us. This is a family story. Share with me my tears, as you have, and I will share with you my joys. Which you are doing.

It was tough for Daniel to come home to a house missing a Buddy this past week. We all need some Top Cover from above in life. To comfort us.

In Boston at Hanscom Air Force Base in 1998, I took photos of the chapel, a WWII P-51 airplane static display, a Minuteman soldier statue, and the Revolutionary Concord Bridge. I then had a company make this throw blanket with these photos on it. I loved designing it for it speaks of the birth of our nation, planes which I loved watching fill the skies when I was a kid, and the military and nation served honorably and eagerly. We sold these blankets as a fund raiser for the chapel. I bought and kept several extras and lugged them through several moves since then, not really knowing why I was keeping them.

Last month I sent one with Daniel to give to Nora's father Dr. Albert Tegeler. He is a vibrant soccer-playing, effervescent doctor with a brilliant mind and huge heart who has just begun pancreatic cancer chemo treatments in Germany. I told Daniel to tell Albert that this blanket was designed by me for the church some years ago. I wanted him to have one of these blankets to keep him warm during these cold days of treatment and that he will need some Top Cover in life in the coming months. And that this Air Force blanket was to remind him of the Top Cover that is with him. Nora said that Albert is so proud of the blanket and shows his friends and that he has it on his favorite comfort chair.

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He sent Nora here this past week to her new university life and said, "It is time for her to begin her studies." She is entrusted to us by him and her mother.

Our baptism reminds us of Top Cover. Luke calls it *Descending from Above*. We simply have to respond, check into it if you may, and accept it in order to receive what is offered to us...God's Love. It is ours to accept, by Grace. It gently settles into our lives.

When Nora heard us tell Daniel about his tuition and fees being paid for, Nora simply said, "It is good to finally hear some good news."

It is good to finally hear some good news. Luke wrote with the same tone. It is good to finally hear some Good News in life.

I am looking forward to our huge Youth Party this evening at Alicia's and Mark's house. I was quite surprised to read on Facebook that Steve is not only hosting this party but that he is also having a golf chipping contest...that if anybody chips in a hole-in-one tonight from 25 yards they win \$20 from me (their preacher) AND I will shave my head. Great. More bad news! I have no more hair to give! Uncle.

Come, remember your baptism as a cross is marked on your forehead from water in this antique baptismal bowl, and take the bread and the cup and remember the Grace offered you before you even knew it existed in your name.

This week, when life gets difficult, say as Martin Luther would say to himself, "*I am baptized. I am baptized. I am baptized.*" May those words shape the week we face. Amen.

