

Shine in 2009

By Bob Young

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In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus' first recorded discourse, Matthew's gospel records these words of Jesus, "You are the light of the world" (Matt. 5:11-16). Our congregational theme for the last several years has reflected this idea. Although Jesus is the light of the world (John 8:12), we are the light of the world as we imitate him. We **seek** light so we will not walk in darkness, and we **shine** to make it easy for others to find the pathway and walk in the light. Light has come into the world but the world does not comprehend it, and in fact has rejected it. Paul writes of those who reject the light because their deeds are evil. Evil doers are active at night, not in the daytime. Light is to be **shared**—when my candle lights my own path, it also lights the path of those around me.

We are considering an update for our theme in 2009, but whatever motto we may select will not relieve us of the responsibility to let our lights shine. We will never escape the obligation to walk in the servant footsteps of Jesus. The words of Jesus, *It is more blessed to give than to receive* (Acts 20:35), will never go out of style for genuine Christians.

One church Jan and I attended gives unique names to its classes and ministries (thus escaping Young Adult 1, Young Adult 2, Auditorium, etc.). I remember teaching or attending the Encouragers, Builders, Sowers, Upwards, and VIP. The latter class (Voices in Praise) spent more time than normal at the beginning of class in singing. One of the ministries of that church is called Pathfinders. The name says it all!

In Matt. 5:16, Jesus called his disciples to "let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in Heaven." Regardless of what we choose as a motto and vision as we move into the future, I trust we will continually shine brightly in the world. Rob Long, a former student of mine, recently reminded me of an acronym that suggests what this means. To be a light in the world means that we **Share** Jesus, **Honor** Jesus, **Imitate** Jesus, recognize our **Need** for Jesus, and **Exalt** Jesus. Let's SHINE in 2009.