

THIRTY GOOD THINGS ABOUT 2009

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"Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning." —James 1:17

A variety of consequential things occurred in 2009. The swine flu spread around the globe. Businesses failed and people lost their jobs and the governments of the world tried to spend their way out of recession. The world dealt with slaughter, nuclear proliferation and dead celebrities. However, 2009 offered us more than tragedy. There were excellent things too, things worthy of a second glance as we celebrate the successful completion of one more year on the planet.

In January:

1. One thousand people gathered at a Harlem church to pray for Israel. The Senior Pastor of the Bethel Gospel Assembly, who organized the event, also invited Israel's Consul-General to New York to attend the prayer.

2. An US Airways Airbus A320 bound for Charlotte, NC crashed in the frigid Hudson River shortly after takeoff, and except for a pair of broken legs, all 155 passengers and crew escaped with minor injuries. The incident became known as the "miracle on the Hudson."

In February:

3. America celebrated the 200th anniversary of Abraham Lincoln's birth (which took place on February 12, 1809), remembering the tall, lanky man who loved true liberty, who dreamed in his day "of a place and time where America will once again be seen as the last, best hope on earth."

4. A Gallup poll released just in time for Charles Darwin's 200th birthday (the same day as Lincoln's) found that a mere 39 percent of Americans said they "believe in the theory of evolution."

5. Benjamin Netanyahu was asked to be Israel's next Prime Minister after an extremely close race with Tzipi Livni. Netanyahu is a conservative well known for his commitment to a unified Jerusalem and his support for Jewish settlers.

6. In Operation Cross Country, the FBI and police rescued 48 teen prostitutes, some as young as 13, from illegal sex trade rings in a sweep in which 571 suspects were arrested.

In March:

7. The annual Christian Youth Film Festival was held at the Fox Theater in Bakersfield, California. Joe Brown, the youth pastor at Heritage Bible Church, started the festival 15 years ago to give kids a creative outlet for their energy, one in which they create films on any topic (in line with a Christian world view.)

8. Stephen Baldwin, the youngest of the famous four Baldwin brothers, slammed the garbage coming out of Hollywood. He told CNSNews.com that Hollywood's constant

violence, vulgarity, and anti-family fare lead to all sorts of social decay. He added that pro-family films sell well and encouraged more conservatives to make their way into the industry.

9. Physicist Bernard d'Espagnat won the Templeton Prize for his concept of a "veiled reality" - one that lies behind the world that we can touch and see. His work in quantum mechanics involves experiments that demonstrate that the essence of reality goes beyond merely the three dimensions that we can directly experience.

In April:

10. Americans rallied at "Tea Parties" on capitol steps across the country on April 15, inspired by Rick Santelli's famous speech made from the floor of Chicago's CME Group. (For Americans, a "tea party" is a cheerful idea. It brings to mind the great glory of a bunch of grown men dressing up like Indians to toss the East India Company's tea into Boston Harbor. It's the fleshing out of a great "Huzzah!" to standing up against mad taxation and unfair political decisions. It bellows out a love for freedom and for self-government.)

11. Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas phoned new Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to offer him wishes for a good Passover. Netanyahu's office called the conversation warm and friendly, and both men spoke of their interest in cooperation and peace.

12. Dozens of Diplomats walked out of a UN anti-racism conference after Iranian President Ahmadinejad described Israel as "totally racist". While this isn't good news for Ahmadinejad or the UN, it shows that Israel has at least a few friends in the world.

13. Israel celebrated its 61st Independence Day on the 5th of Iyyar (April 29 this year) marking another year of Israel's successful survival in a hostile world.

In May:

14. The 58th annual National Day of Prayer was held on May 7th. Cities and churches throughout the nation held prayer gatherings to recognize God's goodness and to thank Him for the many blessings He has poured on America. Millions gathered to seek His guidance and protection for our national and local leaders, our communities, and our families.

15. Gallup released a poll showing that a majority of Americans now consider themselves "pro-life." This is the first time the majority has swung to the "pro-life" position since Gallup began tracking the data 15 years ago.

16. Gideons International celebrated a century of ministry. On May 31, 1899, two Christian businessmen decided to band Christian commercial travelers together for the Lord's service. By making Bibles readily available in major venues like hotels and hospitals, these businessmen offer hundreds of millions of people access to a Bible at least some point in their lives.

In June:

17. The people of Iran took to the streets to protest the results of the questionable Iranian elections despite the vicious backlash of the authorities. These protests demonstrate that the Iranian people are willing to stand up against tyranny, even at serious personal risk.

18. Stephen C Meyer's new book *Signature in the Cell* became available, showing that new discoveries about DNA provide modern scientific support for belief in an Intelligent Designer.

19. What is believed to have been an ancient Christian hideout was found in Israel's Jordan Valley. The 2000-year-old underground refuge may have served as a Roman army base or monastery or hiding place for Christians.

In July:

20. Scientists from the University of Manchester found cell-like structures in the skin of a hadrosaur, giving these scientists a view of the cell structure of dinosaur skin. Dr Phil Manning, Senior Lecturer in Paleontology at SEAES called the discovery "absolutely gobsmacking."

In August:

21. Texas high schools offer Bible literacy classes this new school year, in accordance with a 2007 Texas law finally going into effect. As expected, plenty of people criticized Texas for weakening the Church-State boundary, but others praised the state for working to brick-in an essential part of high school education in teaching, "students knowledge of biblical content, characters, poetry, and narratives that are prerequisites to understanding contemporary society and culture."

In September:

22. About two million students met at their schools' flag poles for the 20th See You At The Pole prayer gathering and asked God to bring moral and spiritual awakening to their campuses and countries.

23. Judge M. Case Rodgers ruled that Pace High School Principal Frank Lay and Athletic Director Robert Freeman did not violate a 2008 agreement with the ACLU when Lay asked Freeman to pray over a luncheon for Pace High's Field House dedication. Rodgers said the prayer was spontaneous, and there was seemingly no intent to violate the order. The men could have faced up to six months in jail and \$5,000 each in fines if the judge had ruled differently.

In October:

24. Abby Johnson, the director of the Bryan/College Station, Texas Planned Parenthood, switched sides in the abortion debate in the middle of the 40 Days For Life prayer campaign. After having worked at the abortion center for eight years, Johnson's heart was moved for the unborn, and she resigned her job on October 6. The 40 Days For Life campaign started in Bryan/College Station five years ago and has spread across the entire country.

25. The FBI rescued more than 50 teens forced into prostitution and arrested 631 people, including 60 pimps, on state and local charges. The sting took place in 36 cities over 72 hours as part of the Innocence Lost National Initiative.

26. Brianna Cardwell wore a T-shirt with the word "abortion" crossed out and handed out literature during non-class time as a part of the Pro-Life Day of Silent Solidarity sponsored by Stand True Ministries. She was told by her assistant principal at Randelman High School in

North Carolina to stop her activity and cover up her shirt. The school has since backed down after a pro-life legal group stood up for Cardwell's rights.

In November:

27. Louisiana's Choose Life License Plate Fund donated \$64,421.20 equally to 20 agencies that actively help pregnant women and women with babies in need. The license plate fund has been a huge help to pregnancy centers that offer women alternatives to abortion.

In December:

28. A simple Jewish home from the time of Jesus was found in Nazareth, giving archeologists more insight into what it may have been like to live there when Jesus was a boy. "They say if the people do not speak, the stones will speak," smiled Father Jack Karam of the nearby Basilica of the Annunciation.

29. Five-year-old Natalie Flores was rescued on Christmas Day, seven hours after having been abducted from where she was playing at her apartment complex in Phoenix. That evening, Officer Mike Burns saw a truck that matched the description of the one driven by Natalie's kidnapper, and the local law enforcement were able to chase the man down and rescue the child unharmed.

30. *"Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever."* - Hebrews 13:8

Happy New Year to everybody, in the name of Jesus the Messiah, the great King of the Universe.