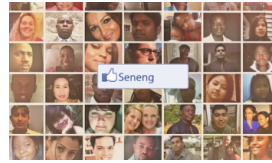


Based on a True Story

FOUNDATION:
THE EVERLASTING
ARMS



YTD INDICATED
DECISIONS
28,973,056



MERRY CHRISTMAS!
"IMMANUEL" —
GOD IS WITH US!



EMILY IN "ANNIE, JR"
NEW FRIENDS, 8
PERFORMANCES

 **THE FIELD IS THE WORLD** 
The Skinner Family Prayer Letter



Incarnation > Indwelling > Transformation > Witness

Dear Family and Friends:

Central to our Christmas celebration, and our Christian doctrine, is a colorful word: "incarnation." It literally means an "enfleshment." The first 18 verses of John 1 make it clear Jesus' coming was God's way of "fleshing Himself out," as we might say about the process of expounding a difficult concept by means of example or extended commentary.

Jesus is a self-exposition of God. Hebrews calls Him the "Apostle and High Priest" of our profession in chapter 3. That means He was "sent out" to us by the Father in order to *represent God to us*, and He returned to heaven, remaining in human flesh, to *represent us before His Father*.

We are also an enfleshment of God, "temples" of the Holy Spirit. Through us, Christ's mission is still worked out in this world: the gospel goes to the poor, the brokenhearted are healed, the bound and blind are delivered. But believers are also left in this world to experience sorrow and grief. As Second Corinthians 4-5 puts it, Jesus is made manifest in *both these ways* through us, as treasure

**"In Jesus, God spelled Himself out in a way we can all understand."
—Greg Laurie**

in these earthen vessels. Sometimes that effect is seen most clearly when the lion's mouth is stopped. (Hebrews 11:33) But sometimes, it's when that "roaring lion" (1 Peter 5:8) does his worst.

Global Media Outreach has a long-standing partnership with Harvest Ministries. Harvest's founder, Pastor Greg Laurie, knows about some of the devil's worst intentions. On July 24, 2008, his 33-year-old son was killed in a highway accident.

It's too hard for me to imagine what it would be like to lose a child. His transparency about it on the radio always touches me. To many who are curious or skeptical about Christianity, this kind of circumstance becomes a reason to sit up and watch a little closer.

If you listen to Pastor Greg's "New Beginning" radio broadcast, you may have heard him talk about the "Start Friend" program. That's us! Training for the volunteers is provided by members of the team I lead. Like our partnership with Turkish evangelist Isik Abla, our work with Harvest Ministries has been a great opportunity for us to learn from one of our partners who is among the foremost evangelists of our day.

Pastor Greg has always used quotes and experiences from public figures from celebrities like Madonna or Jim Carrey that unmask the empty hopes of the materialistic worldview. Skeptical listeners might understandably wonder: what would he do when his own hopes for his son were

dashed? Would his church or worldwide ministry blame him for retiring after such an experience? Probably not; but what would that say to anyone who had heard the truth about how we Christians are the most miserable of all if we have our hope in this life alone? (1 Cor. 15:19)

Pastor Greg admits that he doesn't think the pain will ever completely go away. But at a time when some of Christianity's most visible spokespeople's actions deny their professions, His consistent (and accelerating) priority for reaching the world for Jesus reflects that sure and certain hope into which He has entered into the veil to anchor us.

I pray that in the 2014 Christmas season, you and me and all God's people show greater evidence of that anchoring priority.

Merry Christmas from the Skinner Family!

Mike Skinner *Cindy Skinner*



In December, Emily was in McKinney Youth Theatre's production of "Annie, jr."



Emily (15) played two parts: the butler Drake and the unnamed "star-to-be" arrival in New York City who sings a solo during Annie's first visit downtown. It was a wonderful experience and an opportunity to make new friends!