

## Hidden Gifts

A homeless man, a voiceless choir, a nursing home evangelist. Gifts are hidden in surprising places... *page 9*

## Slowing Down to Hear

Discover what can be accomplished when we slow down enough to hear God and wait for His leading... *page 10*

## Hope of Heaven

Novembering brings remembering those who have passed away and embracing the hope of Heaven... *page 5*

## Growing up at the Door

From Youth Pastor to Adult Life Pastor, Al Schuck celebrates twelve years of ministry within our doors... *page 18*



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**know**

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K I N G D O M : N O W November/December 2006 ∞

# Misfit Christmas

By Jennifer Klitzke



Jeremiah and Vanessa Gamble will perform an original two person, 14 character musical comedy, "Misfit Christmas"

*"Drama is a powerful tool that can open hearts and touch people where they live."  
— Dan Webster*

For those who have been around Open Door over the years know that "misfits" fit here. How much more apropos is it for Jeremiah and Vanessa Gamble to perform a two-person musical comedy called "Misfit Christmas"? We'll meet a tone-deaf angel, an absentminded census taker, a cud-chewing cow, and a little drummer girl. They are among the charming characters that share their offbeat stories about the first Christmas. On the weekend of December 23-24, Jeremiah and Vanessa will deliver fourteen characters in all, nine sing-a-long Christmas carols and countless laughs. It will be fun for all ages.

**T**he Gambles' journey began in 1992, when they first attended Open Door as Bethel theater majors. These poor college students didn't have enough money for a car, so when Sunday rolled around, they bummed a ride with anyone headed to Open Door.

When they became a dating couple with wheels, Jeremiah and Vanessa decided to make Open Door their

church home. Four years later, they married. It wasn't long after, that they heard Senior Pastor David Johnson share a stirring message about "stepping up to the plate."

"This was a defining moment," Vanessa said. "We had attended Open Door for a while and it felt like God was nudging us to do more than just come and listen."

*Continued on page 15*



## Want to give?

There are several ways you may participate financially.

Some people choose to give weekly, bi-weekly or monthly. Some give cash, others write checks or give by electronic contribution. However you choose to give, we encourage you to do so thoughtfully and with prayerful intention.

### Online Giving is Safe & Secure!

Go to [www.thedoor.org](http://www.thedoor.org) and click on "Online Giving" in the Quick Links.

### Electronic Contributions

To initiate an Electronic Fund Transfer (EFT) to Church of the Open Door from your checking or savings account:

- Complete and sign the authorization form (available at the Welcome Place on the weekends) or call ext 1182.
- Return the form to the church office along with a voided check or savings deposit slip.

### Donate Your Car

If you'd like to donate your car, or even your boat, call ext 1180.

### Stock Donations

If you would like to donate stock:

- Call ext 1103, with the name of the stock you are contributing and the number of shares.
- Give your broker the following account information:  
Church of the Open Door  
Home Base Account Number:  
1101-2182-0225 DCT# 0235

### Benevolent Fund

See page 19.

### Education

For classes related to stewardship and financial management, see page 4.

Year-to-date, 2006

July 24 - Oct 22 \$1,821,808

\$0

\$2,140,385

Difference >>> - \$318,577



## Ever Wonder? By Ameer Buster

Have you ever wondered what happens after the offering basket passes by each weekend? OK, maybe not. Here's a glimpse. Cash and checks for \$20, \$50, \$200, \$1000 and more are added to online donations during the week. This becomes the giving total published in the next week's bulletin.

The giving total ranges from \$80,000 to \$190,000. Sometimes the bulletin reports that we are behind our budgeted goal by two or three hundred thousand dollars.

Has this shortfall ever overwhelmed you? It does for me, and I wonder what difference could I possibly make. I know that God doesn't expect me to single-

handedly fix the deficit, but I know I need to do my part.

So far this year 2,831 households have contributed to Open Door. My giving is added to 2,830 others and together we bring in those huge numbers.

The next weekend after I've given, I sometimes subtract the gift I made from the total to see what the number would be without me. Sometimes my gift moves the balance to the next ten thousand. If this has never occurred to you, maybe give it a try. It's a great way to realize that each gift is vital to the whole and that each of us can make a difference. ∞

Ameer Buster works on staff as the Assistant Business Administrator and attends Open Door.

## Misfit Christmas (continued from page 1)

The Gambles signed up to serve with the set up and tear down crew. This was back in the nomadic days when Open Door rented the Robbinsdale High School gym.

Along the pathway of saying "yes" to serve, Jeremiah met Geoff Wold. He happened to be a theater major as well. In the conversations that followed, Geoff and Jeremiah began to wonder, "How might God use our theater gifts to serve Him?" They decided to press into God weekly and pray for His leading.

Around that time Jeremiah set out to the East coast for a theater conference. This placed him in the path of Corey Mills. Small talk led to an amazing discovery – they both lived in the Twin Cities, and they both attended Open Door!

Back home, Jeremiah invited Corey to the weekly prayer gatherings. This was where Corey and Geoff met – or rather reconnected. They happened to be long lost high school friends!

Meanwhile Vanessa became friends with performing arts majors, Nadine, and Corey's wife, Betsy. While the men gathered to pray, the women prayed. Later they realized that they were praying for the same thing: how God might use their performing arts gifts to serve Him. The men and women formed a "Group of Six" and began to pray together.

"It was a sweet time with the Lord," Vanessa said, "like an "upper room"

experience the Bible describes in the second chapter of Acts."

For several hours they reverently worshipped, prayed, and communed together. Jeremiah said, "There was no agenda. We just pressed into God and asked for His leading."

Several gatherings later, the group felt urged to form a drama team at church. At the same time, the Open Door leadership wondered about ways to convey the upcoming Christmas season. Vanessa sang with the worship team and learned of the opportunity to perform. Group of Six was prepped and ready to go.

The Christmas of 1999, Group of Six debuted a drama called "Waiting for a King". The Robbinsdale gym was transformed into a theater-in-the-round. The centuries past Christmas story was revealed in a unique and contemporary way: creative simplicity, neutral costumes and light propping, spot lights, dancers, worship, and story narration. All of this prepared the way to the coming of a King.

Group of Six was a hit! Many from the Open Door community were touched by this contemporary expression and out-of-the-box encounter with the King. The drama team was invited back to perform at the next Good Friday and Easter services and the following Christmas weekend.

In 2000, life events began to disperse the group. Nadine moved to Canada, Geoff moved to California, Corey and Betsy started a family, and Jeremiah and Vanessa did the same and launched a theater company called "Theater for the Thirsty".

Starting out, Jeremiah performed an original one-man show called "The Rough and the Holy". A couple years after that, Vanessa sensed God nudging her to join the stage with him.

Six years later, "Theater for the Thirsty" has nine original dramas including "Misfit Christmas". Each performance is filled with life-giving truth expressed

through entertaining and imaginative theater. It's fast-paced, soul-stirring and marvelously crafted. And it all began eight years ago when four theater majors, a music major and a dance major cleared their agendas to press into God for His leading. ∞

"A Misfit Christmas" will be presented Saturday, December 23 at 5pm and Sunday, December 24, 9 and 11am.

Jeremiah and Vanessa Gamble now live in North Minneapolis with their two children and attend Sanctuary Covenant Church. They are excited to be part of a church that began with the help of Open Door.

