

## **CHRISTMAS DAY 2012**

### **Christmas Day talk**

I don't know whether you have noticed but Christmas to me seems to be the season for signs. There are literally signs everywhere.

Signs in shops advertising Christmas gifts, Christmas specials, Christmas sales.

Signs wishing others a happy holiday, a safe festive season, a merry Christmas.

Signs on churches doing their bit to advertize their Christmas services along with the most eye catching statement about Jesus and Christmas that they can come up with, and of course the Americans lead the way in this.

Some Christmas signs I discovered on church notices boards in America were:-

JESUS CHRIST HAS A GIFT FOR YOU WILL YOU ACCEPT IT?

SANTA CLAUS NEVER DIED FOR ANYONE

ALL WE WANT FOR CHRISTMAS IS YOUR PRESENCE

WELCOME SEMI-ANNUAL WORSHIPPERS

MARY WRAPPED THE FIRST CHRISTMAS GIFT

WE KNOW YOU HAD TO USE GOOGLE MAPS TO REMEMBER WHERE THE CHURCH IS

WE'RE THE ONLY PEOPLE FORGIVING ENOUGH TO TOLERATE YOUR HORRIFYING  
RENDITION OF "SILENT NIGHT".

The other day I was driving past a local school and there was this young lady putting up their Christmas sign. She had this box full of little letters that she was placing one by one on the board. As I passed I noted that she had only put five letters right in the centre of the board at that point, and they were all the letter e. Obviously the message she aimed to put up had five e's in it.

Now there was no way I could have ever worked out the complete message from those five letters. I guessed it was a Christmas message and I presumed, being at a school., that it was a nice one. But that was all I could work out. I needed to see the whole sign to get the complete message.

I have this belief that many people go through life only seeing part of the sign(part of the message) when it comes to the Christmas story. They realize it was about the baby

Jesus being born and that's about it. And they walk away from Christmas happy with that.

But the fullness of the Christmas story is so much more. In fact the Angel told us that when he said to Joseph..... "Mary will give birth to a son, and you are to give Him the name Jesus, because He will save His people from their sins."

To celebrate Christmas without truly understanding why Jesus was born and what He came to do for you is to see just the e's and miss out on the life saving message of Christmas. That God became a man because you and I desperately needed a Saviour who would take our wrongs from our hearts and therefore enable us to face death with a visa, written in the blood of Jesus, that will get us into heaven.

That's why I feel that the most effective sign for Christmas is in fact a cross. And that's why I have put on this cross a Christmas wreath that reminds me of the crown of thorns, Jesus wore when He offered up His life for the sins of all. He died there to give us life and the ultimate gift of Christmas is received not in the stable, but at the foot of a cross. That's what I celebrate today, and I trust you do too.

~ A Baby's Hug ~

We were the only family with children in the restaurant. I sat Erik in a high chair and noticed everyone was quietly sitting and talking. Suddenly, Erik squealed with glee and said, 'Hi.' He pounded his fat baby hands on the high chair tray. His eyes were crinkled in laughter and his mouth was bared in a toothless grin, as he wriggled and giggled with merriment.

I looked around and saw the source of his merriment. It was a man whose pants were baggy with a zipper at half-mast and his toes poked out of would-be shoes. His shirt was dirty and his hair was uncombed and unwashed. His whiskers were too short to be called a beard and his nose was so varicose it looked like a road map.

We were too far from him to smell, but I was sure he smelled.. His hands waved and flapped on loose wrists.. 'Hi there, baby; hi there, big boy. I see ya, buster,' the man said to Erik.

My husband and I exchanged looks,  
'What do we do?'

Erik continued to laugh and answer, 'Hi.'  
Everyone in the restaurant noticed and looked at us and then at the man. The old geezer was creating a nuisance with my beautiful baby. Our meal came and the man began shouting from across the room, 'Do ya patty cake? Do you know peek-a-boo? Hey, look,

he knows peek- a-boo.'

Nobody thought the old man was cute. He was obviously drunk.

My husband and I were embarrassed. We ate in silence; all except for Erik, who was running through his repertoire for the admiring skid-row bum, who in turn, reciprocated with his cute comments.

We finally got through the meal and headed for the door. My husband went to pay the check and told me to meet him in the parking lot. The old man sat poised between me and the door. 'Lord, just let me out of here before he speaks to me or Erik,' I prayed. As I drew closer to the man, I turned my back trying to sidestep him and avoid any air he might be breathing. As I did, Erik leaned over my arm, reaching with both arms in a baby's 'pick-me-up' position. Before I could stop him, Erik had propelled himself from my arms to the man.

Suddenly a very old smelly man and a very young baby consummated their love and kinship. Erik in an act of total trust, love, and submission laid his tiny head upon the man's ragged shoulder. The man's eyes closed, and I saw tears hover beneath his lashes. His aged hands full of grime, pain, and hard labor, cradled my baby's bottom and stroked his back. No two beings have ever loved so deeply for so short a time.

I stood awestruck. The old man rocked and cradled Erik in his arms and his eyes opened and set squarely on mine. He said in a firm commanding voice, 'You take care of this baby.'

Somehow I managed, 'I will,' from a throat that contained a stone.

He pried Erik from his chest, lovingly and longingly, as though he were in pain. I received my baby, and the man said, 'God bless you, ma'am, you've given me my Christmas gift.'

I said nothing more than a muttered thanks. With Erik in my arms, I ran for the car. My husband was wondering why I was crying and holding Erik so tightly, and why I was saying, 'My God, my God, forgive me.'

I had just witnessed Christ's love shown through the innocence of a tiny child who saw no sin, who made no judgment; a child who saw a soul, and a mother who saw a suit of clothes. I was a Christian who was blind, holding a child who was not.. I felt it was God asking, 'Are you willing to share your son for a moment?' when He shared His for all eternity. How did God feel when

he put his baby in our arms 2000 years ago.

The ragged old man, unwittingly, had reminded me, 'To enter the Kingdom of God , we must become as little children.'

### **Christmas Day Service**

Luke 2:1-7.... Mary Cooper (David plays quietly Mary's Boy Child)..baby brought in

John 1:1-5, 14...John P (June plays gently Unto us a child is born)star is brought in

**Welcome and introduction**—**This** child born in some sort of cave or stable. **Whose** tiny body was placed in an animal's feeding trough after He was born, **is the reason** why we are here this morning. **We celebrate** His coming as the Word from the Father who became one of us.

**Carol: Mary's Boy Child**  
**Prayer**

**There is always** great excitement and joy at Christmas, and there should be, for the Saviour of the world is come. **What** an incredible act to praise God for. **And now our singers** will sing for us:-

**Ring those Christmas Bells.....**

## **CHRISTMAS GREETINGS**

**In our** celebration of Christ's birth we should always be conscious of the fact that he was born in a place that speaks of poverty. **And** that it was some years before Mary and Joseph returned with their child to their families in Nazareth. **Indeed shortly after** the visit of the wise men the holy family were forced to flee for their lives to Egypt as refugees.

**So it's fitting** that on this day we take up an offering... and as we do so the singers will sing another song called

**Choir: Little Donkey**

**Prayer** for the needy...sick...families

**Carol: Joy To The World**

Message: The Sign of Christmas

**Choir: The Angel's Carol**

**Carol: O Come All Ye Faithful**

Final words and blessing

**Video to end.**

## **Christmas Day Service**

Bible reading from Luke 2:1-7 (David plays quietly Mary's Boy Child)  
John 1:1-5, 14 (John plays gently Unto us a child is born)  
Welcome and introduction

### **Carol: Mary's Boy Child**

Prayer

### **Choir: Ring Those Christmas Bells**

Greeting time

### **Choir: Little Donkey...with offering**

Prayer for the needy...sick...families

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