

# Have Yourself a Mystic Little Christmas

## Part 1

Holy Day greetings to all with tidings of great joy!

With all the hype and hysteria the season brings, not to mention the catalogs, blogs, articles, books...and of course, the ubiquitous Christmas TV specials, you may be wondering what else there is to say about Christmas. The truth is, what The Calling has to say about Christmas simply isn't said, or else is so buried in the aforementioned hype and hysteria that it just doesn't appear on the radar.

This is what The Calling really wants for Christmas.

At The Calling, we have problems relating to almost everything having to do with Christmas in America. When the first Christmas catalog arrives just after Labor Day, the first Christmas ad for this year's most violent video game appears soon after and the first 'War on Christmas' volley starts the day after Halloween, you might start to think we have a problem. In a world where millions of people are homeless and starving, Christians celebrate the birth of Christ with a materialistic orgy that exceeds all bounds of imagination and propriety with no end in sight.

Our dis-ease with Christmas is much more than just the materialistic orgy. In churches, we repeatedly and adamantly hear tell of 'putting Christ back into Christmas,' via ornate Christmas pageants and beautiful manger scenes. We're supposed to find inspiration in worshipping a baby that was born over 2,000 years ago. When so many of the world's babies are still being born in terrible conditions, we simply can no longer relate. We have the feeling that many others have similar, unsettled feelings.

The purpose of this writing is to state what Christmas **could** mean to all of us, what we think it **should** mean to most spiritual people, and what we **wish** it meant for us. We say **wish** because, to be honest, the meaning of the Christmas we want to have is not present reality. None of us have had a Christmas like this. The ideas are there, but the living, breathing, *experienced* reality of it? Not yet. Too much running around preparing, too many parties, too many distractions.

However, by committing these ideas to print, we are seeking rebirth and the opportunity to really do Christmas right – by being Christ-mas.

## What is mysticism?

'Have Yourself a Mystic Little Christmas' is obviously a play on the famous song **Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas**. But what is a mystic? What is mysticism?

'Mystic' and 'mysticism' are greatly misunderstood (and misrepresented) terms. Upon hearing the word *mystic*, most people tend to think about the occult: fortune telling, Ouija boards, palm reading, crystal balls and the like. None of this is remotely true. *Mysticism* is the desire to see and know, *directly*, the truths of God. A *mystic* is never content to sit in the pew and sing songs or read stories *about* God; a mystic wants to see God himself, a mystic wants to touch God herself, a mystic wants to become one with the Divine and know to his or her utter certainty the present reality of God. **That's** what we all want Christmas to be about. If you've read this far, we imagine that's what you want Christmas to be about for you, too.

If you want to be a mystic, what does it take to see, touch and become one with the Divine? First, we have to leave behind some of our traditions and beliefs.

## The Historical Question

One thing we have to give up is our endless arguing about the historicity (historical authenticity) of the accounts of Jesus' birth as found in the New Testament Gospels of Matthew and Luke. Our position about the historicity of these passages is quite simple: it's immaterial. Whether or not Matthew and Luke are scientifically accurate, deposition-quality reporting just doesn't matter. For The Calling, the entire historical question is meaningless. Every Christmas season, Pastor Ahyh says (tongue-in-cheek!), "If someone was to prove that the entire Jesus-thing was made up by a guy named Bernard from the Bronx in 1912, I wouldn't care!"

A mystic does not seek historical accuracy as a confirmation for truth. To a mystic, this baby may or may not have been born a couple of thousand years ago. A mystic is willing to say, "Okay, fine. Let's say he was," or just as easily say, "Oh, so you want to argue that he wasn't, and that the story is symbolic? That's fine too."

The existential reality (what exists here and now) is that we have these stories about past events. Whether they are scientific fact or pure myth just doesn't matter compared to **what these stories mean to us**, here and now.

Many claim these stories mean that God came to Earth to eliminate all sin and war. A mystic would respond, "I want to be the part of God who has come to Earth now to eliminate my sin and to eliminate war the best I can." Clearly, the

birth of this baby failed to solve Earth's many problems. War and rumors of war could not be more prevalent than they are today, with multiple actual wars in the Middle East and our manufactured wars on terrorism, drugs, poverty, cancer, diabetes, autism, illiteracy...even a war on war. And don't ever forget the war on Christmas itself. Clearly, the birth of the Prince of Peace isn't doing us much good when everyone is itching for a fight, ready to confront rather than discuss.

The mystic seeks to know what **will** do some good, here and now. The answer will not be found in history, but in our own living re-animation of the Divine story. That's what we're going to look at. We're going to look at the Christmas story from three perspectives: three perspectives that are the true burden on our hearts, the true excitement rejoicing in our hearts, and the three views of the Christmas story that we see as the hope for a re-birth within Christianity.

## **The Liturgical Church Year**

The further we stray from classical Christianity, the more strange such concepts as the 'church year' become to us. Millions of Christians are unfamiliar with the liturgical calendar or the 'church year,' and thus cannot know what it means or its power. We are losing touch with our roots, and these roots have their greatest meaning during the most powerful times of commemoration, such as Christmas. The word *liturgy* means repeated, or ritual. The liturgical year is an annual commemorative cycle we go through in order to *re-live* the most important parts of Christ's (and Christian) life.

The Christian liturgical year begins in early December with Advent, announcing the birth of Christ. It follows through Christmas into Epiphany, which is the appearance of the Lord, then into the forty days of Lent following Ash Wednesday, the day of repentance. Holy Week, the most important time of the Christian year, consists of Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Easter. Forty days after Easter comes Pentecost, the out-pouring of the Holy Spirit described in Acts. The process of Advent through Pentecost occupies just about half of the calendar year. Through the liturgical year we commemorate Christ's birth, his appearance at the temple, his ministry, death and resurrection; followed by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit that is meant to empower *all of us* as to be as Christ-like and Divinely guided as possible.

The church year gives us a connection to both the past and to the normal cycles of life. At the moment, Christmas is occupying everyone's minds. In more traditional churches, the liturgical year is commemorated in similar manner to how the secular world commemorates New Years' day, Valentines' day, income tax day, Memorial Day, the Fourth of July, Labor Day, Halloween and Thanksgiving – it's a Divine set of Holy Days superimposed on our secular holidays. These two worlds collide in homes, businesses, shopping malls and the

internet marketplace for all Christians during the months of November and December (and creeping all the way back into September!) While the churches are reminding us to put Christ back into Christmas, advertising screams reminders like “There are only 21 shopping days left!”

## **Christ = Messiah = Anointing**

The word “Christ-mas” is very interesting all by itself. By digging a little bit beneath the surface meaning of a word, we can see a relationship that we might have otherwise overlooked.

Our English word “Christ” comes from the Greek word *christos*, which is the Greek translation of a Hebrew word *meshiyach*. The word *meshiyach* (from which we get *messiah* and thus the word *Christ*) appears many times in the Bible, and not just in reference to Jesus. *Meshiyach* appeared any time a person was physically anointed with oil, or was symbolically said to have God’s anointing upon him. That person was ‘messiah-ed’ or ‘anointed.’ So originally, *messiah* meant the physical act of pouring oil upon someone. It was only later that *messiah* came to mean the power, honor or duty that the anointing conferred upon the person.

Through the centuries, the Jewish people developed the idea of a particular anointed one, higher than all the others and much more special. It is said that King David was ‘messiah-ed’ of YHWH, the physical anointing symbolizing the spiritual anointing God gave him. David was so beloved, powerful and important in the history of Judaism that he came to symbolize the *ultimate* messiah, the one who would have the true anointing that would eliminate suffering and war.

In summary, the history of *messiah* went like this:

- First, *messiah* meant the act of anointing with oil,
- Then, *messiah* came to mean the spiritual or secular power the anointing conferred, and finally
- It came to mean the ONE special, anointed *Messiah* of God, who would solve all problems on the Earth.

Prepare to be offended, because under these conditions, *Jesus was not **the** Messiah*. When the people of Jesus’ time called him the Messiah, what they meant was that he was the ONE anointed of YHWH, sent to eliminate all war and suffering on the planet. It didn’t happen. Jesus did not eliminate war and suffering, so to the Jewish people, Jesus couldn’t be **the** Messiah. Jesus’ fervent followers, the early Christians, decided the Jews didn’t know what they really meant when they used the word *messiah*, and 2,000 years of hatred and murder were born.

Let us explain with an example. Suppose you ask your ten-year-old what he wants for dinner, and he responds, "I want a hamburger." You proceed to give him broccoli and asparagus and say, "There you go, son. Your hamburger is ready." Perplexed, your boy says, "But that's not what I asked for!" and you respond, "Certainly it is, son. You just didn't know that *hamburger* really meant asparagus and broccoli."

This is what early (and continued) Christianity did to the Jewish understanding of their Hebrew word *messiah*, making it meaningless and wrong, and informing the Jews that what they were really looking for in their *messiah* was one who had God's spiritual anointing on him, who would usher in a spiritual kingdom, not a physical kingdom. In other words, telling the Jews what *their own word* is supposed to mean.

For the here and now, what is important to remember is that *Christ* means *messiah*, which means *anointing*. When we talk about Christ-mas, the *-mas* part means *birth*. Most people think about Jesus when they think this particular birthday, but Jesus' name wasn't *Christ*. *Christ* was a Greek word, a title conferred upon him after his death. Simply by moving the language back one generation, *Christ-mas* means *messiah-mas*, which means, literally, ***the birth of the anointed one!***

Ahhh, we're getting close to a mystical Christmas, because what mystics really want is to feel and to touch God. Mystics want God's anointing *themselves*. It is the mystic's desire to be God's anointed one.

It's one thing to sing songs on Christmas Eve about a baby born 2,000 years ago. It's another thing to believe that Jesus really did have God's anointing on him, and yet another thing to believe that he was the one chosen Messiah: the *only* one. But you know, mystics really don't care about any of this. What really matters to the mystic is whether or not *we are also God's anointed*, whether or not YHWH will pour out His anointing on us, too.

YHWH's anointing: that's what we really want for Christmas at The Calling. It's what we lust for more than any precious gift under the tree. What we most truly want is for you and me and every living soul to see and feel, to smell and *to know* that we live with God's anointing, to be devoted to serving God and His people, to being His Prince of Peace for our world in the present moment.

That, dear friends, is the beginning of what we mean by 'having a mystic little Christmas.' The anointing Jesus had still exists, and is available to anyone who will seek and ask for it. In this way, what happened 2,000 years ago becomes the *mystical center of our lives*, and we re-live and re-enact Jesus' example of YHWH's anointing *ourselves*.

## A Pause to Reflect

Slow down and take some time to think, really think. What would religion, the church and society be like if this Christmas we chose not to camp out overnight, rush the doors for advertised bargains and drive from one store to the next, all the while insanely seeking and competing for everything we can get? What if we stopped pretending that saying 'Merry Christmas' and singing songs about the birth of a child over 2000 years ago was how we 'put Christ back into Christmas?'

The one and only way to sincerely 'put Christ back in Christmas' is if God's anointing lives abundantly in you and your family.

Imagine what it would mean if every year during this time we found the anointing of God being renewed and refreshed in our lives, as part of the liturgical year and in connection with the sacred and secular cycles of life. How exciting, precious and priceless life could be!

The 'Christmas' we see around us is not exciting, precious or priceless: it has become tiresome, vulgar and valueless. We seek something that was made available to each and every human being through the demonstrated life of Jesus Christ: we seek to become the *mashiyach*, the Christ, the anointed of God. Without that, our lives are a mere shadow of what our lives could be.

Allowing Christmas to remain impersonal seriously diminishes the power that any of us have to help others have better lives. True power comes not from material goods – look at the power the United States has exerted with all of its material force in the Middle East, and see all of the evil and suffering that has resulted. Might does not make right. And yet, corporate Christianity seems stuck in the past, arguing about the historicity of this infant twenty centuries ago.

What we need is God, re-animated inside all of our hearts. That's what we will look at for the rest of this document.

## Symbolism

We're going to take a symbolic look at the Christmas story. The very idea of symbolism scares many people. We're sorry about this (and all) implanted fears. Still, we have signs and symbols around us constantly. For example, the Nike *swoosh* stands for the Nike company and athletic shoes. More, the *swoosh* brings excitement to mind, getting out there to "just do it," and accomplish great things. Nobody is afraid of Nike's *swoosh* and similar symbols.

The symbol we're talking about is the Bible, and in particular, the story of Jesus'

birth. What if that story symbolizes *you* and *your life*? That could get a little scary, because then you might actually experience the power of God and change the way you're living.

Symbolism is the basis of Jesus' favorite teaching tool, the parable. Here he is at Mark 4: 3-9 (NIV):

*"Listen! A farmer went out to sow his seed. As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up. Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow. But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root. Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants, so that they did not bear grain. Still other seed fell on good soil. It came up, grew and produced a crop, some multiplying thirty, some sixty, some a hundred times." Then Jesus said, "Whoever has ears to hear, let them hear."*

Did you hear? In this parable, the *seed* is the symbol. The seed represents the Word of God and the effect His Word, His Teachings, His Divine Inspirations, have within us. Will His Word find suitable soil? Will His Teachings grow within us, or are we too shallow? Are we rooted in God's Divine Inspiration? Is your inner Spirit growing and thriving, seeking the Light?

At The Calling, it is our communal prayer that this parable, these Words of God, might be born anew inside our hearts, that we can see the entire Christmas story as a symbol of our spiritual birth.

We hope this is not shocking to you. We know it could be a new idea for you. Please, be not afraid. The truth is, when you 'Have Yourself a Mystic Little Christmas,' the entire Christ-mas story becomes full of symbols about you, your spiritual life, and the people around you.

Mysticism often includes mystery; after all, the words are related. The Bible talks of a mystery that God has been brewing since the beginning of time, a mystery God has held in His heart. From Paul's words in Colossians 1, beginning with verse 24:

*"Now I rejoice in what was suffered for you, and I fill up in my flesh what is still lacking in regard to Christ's afflictions, for the sake of his body, which is the church. I have become its servant by the commission God gave me to present to you the word of God in its fullness—the mystery that has been kept hidden for ages and generations, but is now disclosed to the saints. To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles **the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.**"*

Read it again and again. The mystery of the ages and the fulfillment of the Word of God disclosed to the saints is that *Christ is in you*, and this is the hope of glory!

Paul started off his career helping to murder early Christians who stood in opposition to the world, as he understood it. (Sounds familiar, doesn't it?) However, in the book of Acts we read about Paul's personal encounter with Christ. Paul never met Jesus while Jesus was alive. Something major happened to Paul (maybe stroke or a seizure), and he lost his sight for a while. But while he was blind to the outer world, he could see Jesus the Christ in his inner vision, and was able to talk with him and learn from him. The Christ opened him to numerous revelatory visions. Paul became a mystic, his inner experiences far more real and powerful to him than anything that ever had or could happen in his outer world.

Your personal mysticism need not take you to extremes of blindness or hearing voices, but your personal mysticism *will* take you to a personal encounter and eventual oneness with the Christ and with God.

After his mystical union with Christ, Paul's ministry began. Paul was very clear about the importance of the mystery, that Christ is not somewhere 'out there,' did not abandon us when he ascended into Heaven, *but that Christ actually resides within us*. All of us.

Christ = the Messiah = the anointing of God = ***inside you***.

This is the 'mystery of the ages' that God has been preparing us to learn since the beginning! And it is exactly as Jesus said, "the kingdom of God is within you." The kingdom is where the King anoints his subjects, both literally and symbolically. Galatians 4:19-20: "*My dear children, for whom I am again in the pains of childbirth until **Christ is formed in you**, how I wish I could be with you now and change my tone, because I am perplexed about you!*"

Not only does Christ live within us, Christ will grow to fullness in us! Paul goes further at Galatians 2:20, where he says, "*I have been crucified with Christ [the anointing] and I no longer live, but Christ [the anointing] lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.*"

Indeed, the Bible says that *the Bible itself* is incomplete because you are to be one of the letters, one of the epistles that people will 'read' as scripture. Chapter 3, verse 2-3 of II Corinthians says, "*You yourselves are our letter, written on our hearts, known and read by everybody. You show that **you are a letter from Christ**, the result of our ministry, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the*

*living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts.”*

How incredibly exciting! **YOU are the *missing book of the Bible!***

## **The Real Christmas**

Christ cannot be formed in you (Gal 4:19), Christ cannot become the fullness of you (Gal 2:20), and Christ cannot become all that you are (2 Cor 3:2), unless the Christ is first ***born in you!*** For the Christ to be born in YOU is what Christ-mas is *really* about. It's not about singing songs and worshipping a baby born in a manger twenty centuries ago. It's not about acquiring stuff under the tree to the tune of 29% interest on the credit card.

### ***Christmas is about the birth of Christ in YOU***

Prepare for another shock. Jesus the Christ greatly desires to be reincarnated in you, as you - to be *born again*. In the Gospel of John, Jesus talks about being born again, and this is *exactly* the Christmas story. If Christ is going to be formed in you, then at some point Christ has to be born in you, and it is that moment you are truly *born again*. You are born to a new identity, a new consciousness, and a more refined way of living. Isn't this exciting?

Now we can look at the Christmas story in a brand new way.

## **Three Christmas Parables**

1. The first parable is the Christmas story explaining the birth of Christ within our souls, the moment when we receive God's anointing in our hearts.
2. Secondly, the Christmas story is a parable about your personal, physical birth – not just symbolically or spiritually, but that you, too, are born to be Christ in the world; that you are a son or daughter of God, born to flesh. You are born to be the Prince or Princess of Peace, and your physical birth means that God is with us, in the flesh.
3. The third and most important parable is once we understand that the Christmas story is about our birth to Christ-hood, and the Christmas story is referring to our physical lives, then ***we are free to see the Christmas story in every human being on Earth.*** The starving child, the refugee, the homeless veteran: each is the Christ child, the anointed one of God, the Child of Peace...and these Christs, *here and now*, matter much more than a baby born 2,000 years ago.

The idea that Christ is every person - that's the really exciting part. With this understanding, the hope and the promise of Christmas are truly reborn. Now, the hope and the blessing of Christmas are truly ours, without limitation.

Take your time as you read these next sections; allowing the symbolism, hope and beauty of these passages take on their fullest meaning. Experience the birth of Christ within your heart, perhaps for the very first time. Experience the sacred nature of every individual human being around you, for indeed, there is immense, immeasurable joy to this world, because the Lord of all time has come, and it's you and me and every person on Earth.

The Christ is all of us.

## **Part 2 – Christmas Parable Number One**

'Til Christ is Formed in You

Luke 1:26-38 is a most extraordinary passage:

*"In the sixth month, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary. The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you." Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favor with God. You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end."*

*"How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?" The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God. Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be barren is in her sixth month. For nothing is impossible with God."*

*"I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered. "May it be to me as you have said." Then the angel left her."*

There are many remarkable things here:

1. The anointing of God comes, announced and made possible by the Holy Spirit. We could argue endlessly about the historicity of the virgin birth. However, in the context about the birth of God's anointing in *you*, this symbolically happens inside your virgin *heart*, and God is the only power that can make it happen.
2. The birth of your Christ-spirit comes not from yourself, but is the gift of God. True Christian mystical communion can come to the point that Christ is

so completely in you that he is living his life through you, and that 'you' don't even exist. Your ego, your personal 'I, me, my,' dies. (The ego is the separated self, born when Adam and Eve partook of the fruit in the Garden.) In this deep, complete mystical experience, the ego is indeed 'crucified with Christ,' by complete identification with Christ.

3. The breath of God, beautifully stated, "God dies to Himself so that we can live, so that we can die to ourselves so that God can live." God breathes out, and when He breathes into (in-spires) the lump of clay, symbolically, Adam and Eve (humans) are born. When Adam and Eve finally ex-pire and their life-breath returns to the Godhead, they find it is no longer "they" who live but God, the anointing of God, Christ, who lives in and through them.
4. If we're going to be reborn to God, we have to recognize that it's not of our doing, because if we think it is, we're operating from ego. The anointing of God is the gift of God that can only be received. You can get in the way, but you cannot make the anointing happen any faster.
5. Relax into the realization that you had nothing to do with the fact that Christianity exists, nothing to do with the idea of the mystical anointing of God. The idea that the Christmas story symbolically tells of the birth of God within you: you had nothing to do with that. You physically clicked a mouse to be reading this document, and you are moving your eyes across the pages right now, but you had nothing to do with creating your computer or the mouse or these pages or the World Wide Web that makes reading the document possible.
6. You are an expression of Divine Love foretold by the angels, that God Himself would be coming to live in you. Born of a virgin, miraculously.

The Christmas story goes on to say there is a census, so Joseph and Mary go back to Joseph's hometown and, finding no room for them in the inn, the baby is delivered in the stable. Symbolically, this part of the story tells us the birth of the anointing of God in you has to compete with a number of other interests. There are football games to watch, parties to attend, shopping and cooking and sex and booze and of course, business as usual at the office. In its' beginning stages, the birth of Christ within you is not greeted very warmly because everybody inside the inn (inn-side) is partying and laughing and drinking and screwing. When the Christ is born, we can't ask the people of the town to *stop!* Nevertheless, on the fringes of our lives, outside of our culture and much closer to nature, (symbolized by the animals of the stable) the Christ child is born.

**The Birth of God in You Brings Great Riches:** What happens next in our Christmas story? As soon as the Christ child is born, great treasure is conferred upon him, symbolized by the gold, frankincense and myrrh. You might be a billionaire, but unless you have the abiding presence of God within your heart, you will be empty. You will be lonely. Gold, frankincense and myrrh were symbols of God's anointing, because in those days, (and although they were treasured

items) gold, frankincense and myrrh were used to confer anointing. A king would be given a golden scepter, and the frankincense and myrrh were fragrant resins used to make ceremonial anointing oils. (Pastor Ahyh's note: my dear wife anoints our bed with frankincense every time she changes the bedding by sprinkling frankincense oil on the sheets)

The symbolism of the three gifts of the wise men is wonderful. The anointing of God, the infant Christ that is born at Christmas, brings great treasure, riches beyond the imagination: the ability to love, to find peace and joy, real joy. Galatians 5:22-23 says, "*But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.*"

**The Anointing of God Grows to Fill You:** The Spirit of God that is now born within you, the messiah, grows like a tiny seed. You will grow to become a tree of Life, and your tree will bear fruit. The seed of the Spirit will grow to bear spiritual fruit with nine different characteristics: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.

**Joy to the World:** The Christmas story goes on to tell us that as soon as the child is born within us and the anointing is conferred with great riches, suddenly there is a multitude of the heavenly host singing "Joy to the world, the Lord has come." The Lord has come to you, and dwells within your heart. The Christmas songs are about *you*, and about *every human being* born.

**The Guiding Light:** The story tells of a great shining star in the East, symbolizing the light that is coming into your heart. It starts off as a tiny star far away, and grows until you yourself become the Light. In the beginning, the anointing of God is like a whisper in the din of the parties and fun going on at the inn. So too, the light starts off unnoticed, until the anointing of God grows and fills your heart to completeness. The Light of God fills you to totality until you are the shining star.

Thus is the Christ, prophesied of old, born in your heart. This birth is God's own miracle. The infant Christ starts small and quiet on the outskirts of your consciousness. The birth of your own inner Christ is the one who will truly save you from your sins.

## **Saved From Sin**

Matthew 1:20-21 says, "*But after he [Joseph, Mary's husband-to-be] had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, 'Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son, and*"

*you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins."*

All of us have masculine and feminine aspects within us; this can be mapped to the left and right hemispheres of the brain. The right brain is 'feminine,' the warm, romantic, creative and artistic side. The left brain is 'masculine,' being the cool, analytical, scientific/mathematic/logical side. The birth of Christ might begin with the right brain as an emotional response, let's say to a sunrise or a baby's smile, a passionate sermon...maybe a document on the internet. Eventually, the Christ consciousness has to be embraced by both the right and left sides of the brain, the yin and yang, in order to live fully within you. It is the indwelling presence of Christ, this anointing, that will save you from your sins.

*True* Christianity is about transcending ego and becoming more than we could ever ask or imagine. Part of the process of transcendence is to atone for, or deal with the problem(s) of our shortcomings and failures, our resentment, our hatred...our *sin*. The story of Christmas as a parable for your spiritual life is telling you that in order to truly deal with the problem of sin, it isn't enough to *believe* in Jesus...you must *become* Jesus with your own life.

Becoming one with God is the path of the mystic, and it's a life-long calling. The anointing of God that begets the Christ within your heart is the process and presence that will save you from your sin. Symbolically, as the young Christ grows, the idea of drinking, partying, sex and smoking at the inn loses its attraction. The young Christ becomes more attracted to the fruit of the Spirit, and love, joy, peace and patience (etc.) are what save us from our sin. This inner communion with the living, breathing presence of God is the true experience of God. Saying church-approved prayers, believing correct doctrine or going through a ritual by rote – none of these will not bring the true experience of communion with God.

The Christ, born in you on Christ-mas day, grows to fill your life entirely. Only that can save you from your sins.

## **Immanuel = God With Us**

Matthew 2: 22-23 says, "*All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: "The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel"—which means, "God with us."*

We've looked at the Christmas story symbolizing God being with you, in your heart. We've seen the Christmas story symbolizing the start of your born-again experience. God has to start *somewhere* in His Plan to fill you totally, and that 'somewhere' is the Christmas story. *Live it!*

## Part 3 – Christmas Parable Number Two

### God in the World

The Christmas story is more than just symbolic, and it's more than just your private experience of feeling God's grace inside yourself. Paul said in 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians, *"Be ye therefore imitators of me as I am of Christ. If we have been united with him in the likeness of his death, so too we will be united with him the likeness of his resurrection."*

We could spend hundreds of pages on this subject, but you will either get the point or not: the Christ story symbolizes the birth of God's anointing inside your heart, but *it also symbolizes the birth of **you** in this world.*

Your physical birth to your parents into this world was 'foretold' of old. You are a part of the Universe and have every right and all the means necessary to be here. You were born of biology (an utterly miraculous process), but you are so much more than biology. Science keeps looking for the elusive chemical that will finally define life, but it won't happen. Science is like a bunch of aliens inside a TV, pulling the TV apart and looking for the chip that generates the programming, but all the while, all the TV does is *transmit and receive a signal* that does *not originate inside* the box. Scientists say that consciousness is a function of neurons inside the brain, but consciousness does not originate inside the brain any more than football games, reality shows, comedies, and news broadcasts are somehow present inside your TV.

You were born to be God among us! As Paul said, you are that living letter – you are the only 'letter' from God that others may ever 'read!' If God wants to help someone in your life, you are the instrument by which God can do so. As a very common example, let's say you have \$1000 to give to a friend in need. If God were to miraculously deposit \$1000 in your friend's bank account (which God could easily do) and your friend spent the money, it's possible your friend could be prosecuted for bank fraud! Before our fancy computer technology, it was much easier for God to miraculously make money appear out of nowhere, but He can't do so now. If God made money fall out of the sky for you and you were to deposit it into your account, that deposit would be reported and you would have to come up with some kind of explanation to convince the Feds you didn't get the cash from drug sales or terrorist activities.

More and more, the only way God can give money or health or hope or beauty to someone who is hurting is by pouring it through you. *You, dear friend, are Immanuel. You are God with us!*

## Change Your Thinking

As your elder brothers and sisters, we are inviting you to change your entire way of thinking about yourself. Let the Christmas story be *your* story. That's what it really means to be a Christian: you too are Christ-like, and that Jesus' birth account echoes in you and reflects your own birth account. In Part 2 we discussed the Christmas story as symbolism for the birth of the Spirit within us, our religious awakening. Here in Part 3, we want you to realize that it's also about your physical birth and your physical reality. The Christmas story is your story. That's the deep meaning of the liturgical year: the birth of Christ becomes your birth, at Easter his death and resurrection become your death and resurrection...and His ascension into heaven becomes yours!

**You** are God with us. **You** are the Prince or Princess of Peace. **You** are the Lord of Lords, the Mighty One who has come to save us from oppression! The government shall reside on *your* shoulders. **You** are the Daughter of God, the Son of God.

Change your thinking about yourself. Like the Bible says, "*Consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus.*"

Perhaps you have realized that information about the true meaning of the Christmas story could cause some to become egomaniacal. It's quite true that some may fancy themselves to be God in the flesh to the exclusion of anyone else, which we know as extremism; sick, out of balance and diseased. Therefore, the story is not complete without Christmas Parable Number Three.

## Part 4 – Christmas Parable Number Three

### God Bless Us, Every One

*You* are simultaneously special beyond imagination, unique, prophesied of old, meant to be from the beginning, a miraculous work of the Universe...and so is *every other person on Earth!* *All are called* to the birth of Christ within our hearts, that we might be born again to our fullness. Every birth is accompanied by angels singing "Joy to the world, the Lord has come!" because *all are called* to be God in the flesh. We are not prepared to fully *live* until we wake up, intent to be the best imitator of Jesus we can be, helping others, serving, caring, feeding, clothing, loving, nurturing, healing – helping in whatever way we can with our unique anointing of God. Your anointing is not the same as mine, and mine is not the same as anyone else's, just as our interests and dreams are unique to us. When you use your anointing, what you are doing and who you are being will fill you with joy. As you employ your anointing in service to humankind, the fruit of the Spirit within you grows; blossoms...and you become love, joy, peace, patience,

kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.

Let's be real. Every child dying of starvation is baby Jesus in the manger. We have made no room for them in any of our 'inns' - or in our hearts. The United States alone spends between \$5-\$10 million per day to make war, but we cannot seem to find the pennies a day to keep these precious Christ-children alive.

Don't click past the next 'feed the children' infomercial. Look at the faces of the Christ-children. Look into their eyes. You will be looking into the eyes of a Christ child, perhaps born with an amazing anointing, living in horrible poverty with flies eating her flesh.

So please don't mind if we don't care a bit about the historicity of the accounts of a baby born in a manger 2,000 years ago. We do know, present moment, that there are hundreds of millions of people on Earth dying of starvation and treatable diseases. Every four seconds, a Christ-child dies of hunger, each precious human no less valuable than you, me or any president, tyrant or billionaire.

We also know that every person who is dying of hunger or treatable disease could be saved, healed and given a chance for life. It will happen when all the people who have plenty to share, awaken to who they came here to be: Christ in the flesh.

Dear growing Christs in the flesh, if you *really* want to have a Merry Christmas...

## Part 5 - Practical Applications

...then we have some recommendations for you.

1. Go online or call World Vision or another organization that allows you to get personally involved with a child in need. Through World Vision, you can develop a relationship with your child, send emails, birthday and Christmas cards and small gifts; you get a progress report every year – it's very sweet. We sponsor several children at The Calling. Go to [www.WorldVision.org](http://www.WorldVision.org) and sign up to take care of a Christ-child who would otherwise be without hope. A few clicks and you have saved a life! World Vision has a budget of approximately \$500 million a year. The militaries of the United States and Britain combined have a budget of approximately \$500 **billion** – *1,000 times more*. Wouldn't it just be *heavenly* if World Vision had the \$500 billion budget?
2. *Slow down*. Slow down from all the insanity we have created for our Holy Days. Don't add to the insanity by rushing around, attending all the parties, fretting over gifts and decorations and and and... Really, a perfect table

doesn't matter too much when dinner will be inhaled in the ten minutes between football games. Give yourself the gift of quiet. These are *Holy Days*.

3. In your gift giving, remember that *people are more important than things*. Find ways to use your things (dollars) to help those in need. Help a local food kitchen or shelter. Buy socks for the homeless. In your neighborhood, pay little favors forward. This is a mathematical truth: if everyone on the planet who has an excess would give to a person who has a lack, then there would be no more suffering on Earth. (it is shamefully simple, really)
4. This Christmas time, read and re-read the Bible stories in Matthew and Luke about Jesus' birth. Apply your reading to all three of the parables we've talked about. Apply it to the birth of Christ consciousness within you, your personal born again moment. Read it in the context of your personal life. Be bold! Do not be afraid to be God in the flesh! Don't fear thinking of yourself as the messiah, anointed to help save the world in your own way. As you listen to Christmas carols, think about the world's suffering Christ-children and open your heart to the Presence of God.
5. As the Christmas story echoes inside you and is reflected in your own eyes, you will see that your life has changed. You too are the messiah, the anointed one of God, and you will use your anointing to serve God's suffering children.

Our hurting world needs you, Child of Peace, Messiah of God.

Have Yourself a Mystic Little Christmas!

Written in Love,  
The Calling