

## 📖 Refocussing on the real Christmas

Yes it is that time of year. I do struggle with advertising that encourages people to spend money they so often don't have, and I find it difficult enduring the commercialism that comes into my life and home. In the light of this ever growing pressure, it is all the more important to focus on the real reason for the season. We need to look afresh at the significance and meaning of Christmas.

We need to ask ourselves some important questions. Why did Jesus come to Earth? Why did He come as a babe in weakness, fragility and vulnerability? Why didn't He come as the Son of God in all His glory and majesty, and just be done with it? Leviticus 1 verse 3 says this: *"If his offering is a burnt sacrifice of the herd, let him offer a male without blemish; he shall offer it of his own free will."* Jesus couldn't come as God or as a mature man because He wouldn't have been able to fulfil the requirements of the law, and thus provide salvation. So Jesus came at Christmas in fulfilment of O.T. law, to deliver us from the bondage of sin and death. Matt 1 verse 21 says *"And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins."*

There has been a lot of talk about euthanasia in recent years and behind euthanasia is a belief that after death there is nothing to worry about, a belief which the Bible clearly teaches is wrong. It concerns me that the supporters of euthanasia are ignoring this very important issue "what happens to us when we die?" Jesus' coming at Christmas highlights the fact that He is not only concerned with death itself, but more importantly what happens after death. It is highly significant that during Jesus' three and a half year ministry He made far more reference to hell than heaven. This only served to underline Jesus' deep concern about the destiny of a soul after death.

So the obvious motivation behind Christmas is the destiny of a person's soul. It is all about how Jesus made provision for each human being to know and realize their need of forgiveness for sin, as the result of His birth, death and resurrection.

Intrinsic to knowing Jesus as one's personal Lord and Saviour is the responsibility to make known the good news of salvation to others this Christmas. In the book of Ezekiel twice the prophet challenges the nation of Israel to be an effective watchman, and then states how God views those who neglect such a responsibility. Ezekiel 3 verse 18 says this: *"When I say to the wicked, 'You shall surely die,' and you give him no warning, nor speak to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life, that same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but*

*his blood I will require at your hand."*

Jesus is the answer to our struggle with sin and our fear of death. It seems that the majority of the Christian church doesn't consider the gift of eternal life worth giving, or just can't be bothered proclaiming "Christ is the answer to our sin." The greatest gift we can give this Christmas is Jesus.

Jesus also came to give us strength to live in obedience to Him which Luke 1 verse 79 says: *"To give light to those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace"*.

Christmas is not only about the deliverance from the penalty of sin, but from the power of sin. We in ourselves have no means of redeeming our souls from the curse of sin or the power of sin, it is only through the cross of Jesus Christ. Jesus through the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit enables us to walk in obedience to Him and to guide us day by day in our decision making, just as the star directed the wise men.

One last thing, Jesus came at Christmas to bring peace into a world beset by conflicts of all descriptions. Jesus was born to die and rise again, so that mankind may have peace with God. As a result of this peace with God, we can experience daily the peace of God in a fallen world. Although we live in a world that is characterised by stress and anxiety, we can experience the peace of God which Philippians 4 verses 6 and 7, spells out for us: *"Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."*

Maybe the best New Year resolution you can make is to commit to pray about everything in your life and not be anxious about anything. Now there is a challenge. Please excuse the pun.

Have a wonderful Christmas. May you experience the true meaning of Christmas this year, and may it be a daily reality as you go through 2010.

*Yours In Christ,*  
**Carl Carmody and the Challenge Team**

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## POINTS TO PONDER

Well what a year it has been. There is much to praise the Lord for and also many areas needing much prayer and direction from the Lord.

### Prayer Points

We praise the Lord for **Tim Pearce** and the work he is doing for challenge as web master, please also pray for his expanding role and additional work to supplement his income.

**John Palandri** has been appointed as Missions co-ordinator and will commence full time work with Challenge from 1st April 2010. The role will be to promote and expand the mission trips to a total of 4 per year. Please pray for the **Palandris** as they seek to raise personal support to come into the ministry.

As the Lord has continued to expand the work globally, please continue to pray for the finances of Challenge.

– **Nigeria**, producing the first paper in February 2010 in partnership with Ireland Outreach International, the Initial print run will be 30,000.

– **Liberia**, printing the first edition in 2010

– **India** currently have the paper printed in English only but have requested a Hindi, and then a Tamil language edition.

**New countries** – *Please pray specifically for finances, suitable printers, distribution network, follow up for these new countries.*

**2010 world cup edition** South Africa have requested 500,000 papers and South America have also requested 500,000 papers. Please pray for the finances to print these quantities and also for the effectiveness of the paper, for the people using and distributing the paper and for the follow up.

With the expansion of the work globally additional staff are required to write/edit and to do desktop work with the design and layout of the paper. Please pray that the Lord will bring into Challenge the right people.

The opportunities to expand the work in South America with Word of Life ministries. Currently there are 20+ countries waiting to receive the Challenge paper.

For the organisations that we partner with globally, who follow up and disciple those who make a commitment to Christ, through the paper.

Challenge board as they look to the future direction and expansion of the work

### Praise Points

The finances that have come in throughout the year enabling the ministry of Challenge to not only continue but



*Will and Ale Herndon serving with Word of Life ministries in Buenos Aires, Argentina, help prepare and print and distribute the Spanish Edition of El desafio (Challenge)*

to expand bringing the good news to many around the world.

**India** edition “Destiny” started well this year and the next print will increase to 100,000 copies. We praise the Lord for our partner AEF and the staff working in India.

**Malawi** 30,000 papers bi-monthly is being sponsored by one faithful church.

Approximately 10,000 Bibles are being provided through the generosity of the Bible Society for South Africa.

The 97,000 copies of the Christmas edition that will be distributed in Australia.

Safety of the Challenge team throughout the year and for the travel that Carl and others are involved with.

The positive feedback we are receiving both in the content and look of the paper and also its effectiveness as Churches seek to reach out into their community.

Challenge is producing 12 separate editions, reaching into 32 countries in various quantities and this is continuing to expand. We praise the Lord not for the numbers of papers going out but for the many souls coming into the Kingdom as the Lord blesses the paper.

Appointment of USA director **Eric and Caren Whitmer** and the personal support they have been able to raise. For the opportunities that are presenting themselves in the US.

For the demand for the paper in South and Central American countries and the appointment of **Will and Alejandra Herndon** as the Challenge director for South America.



## MY RESPONSE

Post to: Challenge Literature Fellowship, PO Box 978, Cloverdale WA 6985 or Fax to **(08) 9453 3006**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Post Code: \_\_\_\_\_

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with God's help I would like to be a partner in supporting the ministry at Challenge in the following way(s):

Prayer: Please send me updated prayer information

Financial: Please receive my:  Monthly  Quarterly  Yearly  One time contribution of:

\$50  \$75  \$100  \$200  Other: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Credit Card:  Visa  Mastercard

Credit Card #: \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

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**Please make all cheques payable to “Challenge Literature Fellowship”**