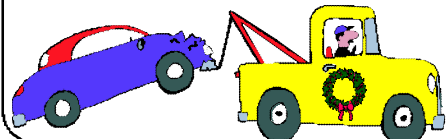


Christmas Recovery



Gabriel L.
Mancino

Sometimes I have thought how nice it would be to have the money, time and knowledge to be able to drive up and down the motorway, helping stranded people with car problems. All types of cars are out there needing to be recovered—even new and very expensive ones! Many times I've driven past stranded vehicles much newer and far more costly than the one I was driving. The same is true about people. When a massive motorway disaster happens, *everyone* following gets stuck, regardless of the make, model or condition of their car. And that is just what happened. In a very real way, you and I were there when sin first entered the world. This is why Christmas had to take place to recover us all. Christ was God's only means for our recovery.

It was the love of God that caused Him to send "a Recovery Vehicle" after us when our "car" (the human race) broke down. Because of Christmas and what can proceed from it, recovery can take place in the home, at the job, in the school system, in the halls of politics and in every corner of society. No one can say that *THAT* isn't relevant!

It may appear that Christmas itself needs to be recovered. But that is not actually true, though the human race is making a wreck of things, then goes around trying to put filler in the many damaged places. The centrality of Christmas is Christ, and He does not need to be *recovered*, but *rediscovered*. Jesus Christ is fine—the human family is not.

Right now Christ is going up and down trying to help as many as will allow Him. Many are rightly fearful of strangers, but you need not be afraid of Christ. Jesus attracted the empty, hungry heart of that wonderful "woman at the well" (see John

4), by saying, "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, 'Give Me a drink,' you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water." She believed that the Messiah would come (which we celebrate at Christmas), and it was *first* to this dear woman that Jesus openly declared in reply to her stated belief, "I who speak to you am He." **What a Christmas Revelation! What a Christmas Recovery!**

The Boy Who Hid...

(continued from front page)

and the other children were going to sing. Then I ran out of things to say and simply waited there beside him.

And as I waited, a small, chilled hand crept into mine.

"You know, Tommy," I said after a bit, "it's kind of close quarters under here. Let's you and me go out where we can stand up."

And so we did, but slowly, in no hurry. All the pressure had gone from my day, because, you see, I had my Christmas sermon. **Flattened there on the floor I realized I had been given a new glimpse of the mystery of this season.**

Hadn't God called us, too, as I'd called Tommy, from far above us? With His stars and mountains, His whole majestic creation, hadn't He pleaded with us to love Him, to enjoy the universe He gave us?

And when we would not listen, He had drawn closer. Through prophets and law-givers and holy men, He spoke with us face to face.

But it was not until that first Christmas, until God stooped to earth itself, until He came to dwell with us in our loneliness and alienation, that we, like Tommy, dared to stretch out our hands to take hold of love.

From God's Revivalist

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A paper for all people everywhere...
and with a personal touch! **Free!**

The London Christian Standard ...and Provincial

"Lift up a standard for the people." **Isaiah 62:10**

Gabriel L. Mancino - Editor. Printing in London since 1983
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The Boy Who Hid From Christmas

by Henry Carter



I was working feverishly on my Christmas sermon—the hardest time in any minister's year to find something fresh to say—when the floor mother appeared at the study door. **Another crisis upstairs.** Christmas Eve is a difficult day for the emotionally disturbed children in our church home. Three-quarters of them go home at least overnight and the ones who remain react to the empty beds and the changed routine.

I followed her up the stairs, chafing inwardly at the repeated interruptions. This time it was Tommy. He had crawled under a bed and refused to come out. The woman pointed to one of six cots in the small dormitory. Not a hair or a toe showed beneath it, so I addressed myself to the "cowboys and bucking broncos" on the bedspread. I talked about the brightly lighted tree in the church vestibule next

door and the packages underneath it and all the other good things waiting for him out beyond that bed.

No answer.

Still fretting at the time this was taking, I dropped to my hands and knees and lifted the spread. **Two enormous blue eyes met mine.** Tommy was eight, but looked like a five-year-old. It would have been no

effort at all simply to pull him out. But it wasn't pulling that Tommy needed—it was trust and a sense of deciding things on his own initiative. So, crouched there on all fours, I launched into the menu of the special Christmas Eve supper to be offered after the service. I told him about the stocking with his name on it provided by the women's society.

Silence. There was no indication that he either heard or cared about Christmas. And at last, because I could think of no other way to make contact, I got down on my stomach and wriggled in beside him, bedsprings snagging my suit jacket. For what seemed a long time I lay there with my cheek pressed against the floor. At first I talked about the big wreath above the altar and the candles in the windows. I reminded him of the carol he

(continued on back page)

KING HEROD STILL LIVES! Herod tried to have the Christ-child murdered, and that same evil is still evident today; some evil is clearly "a few rapped" Christ and the Bible are attacked non-stop. The latest is via the book-trilogy, & the movie starring Ms. Kidman and Mr. 007. This time it is GOD that is to be killed, and the child gets to lead the squad! Just what London youth need to hear, right? Evil is RAPIDLY snowballing—promoted, protected, applauded! SEE MORE ABOUT THIS, WITH A FEW WEB LINKS, ON INSIDE BOTTOM; both sides.)

CHRISTMAS BRINGS ITS MESSAGE OF HOPE AND TRUE PEACE

Jesus said "MY peace give you; not as the world gives...let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid" (John 14:27). Longfellow, the great American poet (buried in Westminster Abbey), wrote of it is peace even during the horrific Civil War, saying "hate is strong and looks the esch of peace on earth, goodwill to man." Even in our modern world Christ can give true peace!

God's Contribution to Christmas

(Adapted)

A practical & Biblical look at different "sides" of Christmas.



We should pause and ask ourselves what lies behind all this surge of good will and generous feeling at Christmas? What actually happened to bring all this about? In what way does it involve you and me? The answer to these questions will be found when we consider what "the divine side" of Christmas involves.

The **human side** brings us cultural traditions, trees, tinsels, greetings, gifts and the date on the calendar—all human additions to a divine reality. This does not mean to say human traditions are wrong or evil, though certainly the **human side** contains much excess and perversion which God could never approve. Admittedly, much of even the moral and proper **human side** of Christmas has been high-jacked and defiled by worldly profiteers.

But there **IS** a **divine side**. God so loved the world that He gave. The gift that God gave, and the gifts that the "wise men" gave to the Christ Child have long been the basis of our attempts to express thanksgiving and love to God and one another at this glorious season.

There is **grief** at Christmastime as well as **gladness**. Some have buried a dear loved one during the Christmas holiday while others are making merriment, exchanging gifts and singing, "Noel, Noel." They have wept silently by the grave as they laid aside a loved one. Some of these dear ones have been ushered into eternity because of the sinfulness of our day. Drunken

drivers, drug addicts, gang culture with guns and knives, wild parties, sensuous orgies have resulted in the death of many. This happens throughout the year, but no less during the Christmas and New Year holiday—sometimes the consequences of the perverted **human side**. One little mother has immortalized her deep grief in the following words:

*"My purse is full of money,
I cannot buy a toy,
Only a wreath of holly
For the grave of my little boy."*

But, thank God, there is a **divine side** to Christmas. It is possible to become so involved in *proper* or *perverse* aspects of the **human side** that we forget the gift that God has given. The **divine side** is stupendous, grand, glorious. "*The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth*" (John 1:14). "*Immanuel* (Matt.1:23)—*meaning God with us*," is the wonder of the ages. If we would stop and take a good look at ourselves, the wonder of it would grow. Animosity, bitterness, ill will, spite, refusal to forgive, down right hellish hatred and hostility are Satan's branded mark on much of the human race, and yet in the face of all this miserable and barren spiritual waste, the Son of God appeared.

He appears as **light**. "*In him was life and the light was the light of men, and the light shines in darkness and the darkness comprehended it not*" (John 1: 4,5). Literally the darkness could not put out the light that God sent into this world; Jesus is "*the true light that lights every man that comes into the world*" (John 1:9). BUT BE CAREFUL, for the devil can counterfeit light, as well... and so can religious people that help him! (see 2 Cor. 11: 13,14). Satan peddles his false light, like those in London whispering "tobacco, tobacco and DVD, DVD!" **Christ is also our Peace**, for as the Bible says, "*suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of heavenly hosts praising God and saying, 'Glory to God in*

Gods Contribution to Christmas (continued from left)

the highest and on earth peace, good will toward men." (Luke 2:13,14). Sadly, many have the "peace" of a silenced conscience. Jesus said "*MY peace I give to you*" (John 14:27). Choose **HIS** peace! **Christ is Love incarnate**. "*God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son*" (John 3:16).

Involvement in the human side of Christmas is optional, but the divine side is imperative. We must not miss the message that "*God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not charging their sins to their account and has committed to us the ministry of reconciliation*" (2 Cor. 5:19). God has given us a Savior, not a psychologist; a Redeemer, not an adviser. He has not left us in ignorance, but has given us the "Wonderful Counselor" (Isa. 9:6). God's people are not under the dominion of "*the prince of the power of this world*" (Eph. 2:2), for God has established "*the kingdom of His dear Son*" in their hearts (Col. 1:13). May the wonder and grandeur of Christmas fill our heart. This is the time of the year when Christians exalt, rejoice and praise God for the matchless gift He has given in His Son.

Let us take our attention, for the moment, from the shepherds, the wise men, and even from the manger scene. What did the coming of Jesus to the world really mean? What was His purpose in coming? Well, to put it simply, Christ came into the world to be your Savior and mine. He said of Himself. "*The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost*" (Luke 19:10). John 3:17 states that "*God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved.*"

So let us always bear in mind the **divine side of Christmas**—that God provided a way by which you and I might find forgiveness for our sins, and be restored to the right relationship with Him in love and holiness. Unless you experience the joys of forgiveness, the

warmth and *apparent* pleasure of your Christmas festivities will pass away. You will find yourself in the same routine and toil, wondering what life is all about.

God had you and me in mind when He sent Jesus into the world to be your Redeemer and mine. It is the greatest demonstration of love the world has ever known. Why should God love you and me? Because He cannot do otherwise. St. John said, "*God is Love*" (1 John 4:8). God's love is demonstrated by His mercy. Yes, there is mercy for you and me in the love of God. St. Paul knew this. It was the greatest experience in his life. He said, "*This is a faithful saying,... that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief. Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy*" (1 Tim. 1:15-16).

This Christmas can be the turning point in your life. I know many will enjoy the carols, remember friends by sending them cards, buy gifts for loved ones and friends ...but after all that is done, may I ask you to do one thing more? Will you sincerely open the door of your heart in prayer, and ask the Lord Jesus Christ to come in, and be your Savior and your Lord? Does this sound almost too simple to be true? Bear in mind that our Lord said, "*Except you be converted, and become as little children, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven*" (Matt. 18:3).

Christ put aside His divine privileges, and humbled Himself to come to our rescue, which demanded of Him a terrible price (see Phil.2). Therefore, we too, are to humble ourselves, and abandon our worldly wisdom and our own "goodness," and be humble enough to confess our sins and seek His pardon. This is the path to real relationship to God and experience such as you have never dreamed could be yours. Only then is a person able to appreciate the true meaning and purpose of Jesus' coming, and God's contribution to "Christmas."



(from back page-in red): MANY comments are on the internet regarding the new book/movie, The Golden Compass. I can say very little here. The author's stated objective is "to undermine the Christian faith, and kill God"—the God of the Jews and Christians, not Allah! It is so sad that society fights so strongly the very thing they need: true relationship with God. See links



Search Google: "Thinking Christian by Tom Gilson The Golden Compass." Also "An Emboldened Compass by Tom Gilson." Also "The Golden Compass -Questions I've been asked, answers I've given by Jeffrey Overstreet." — We wish our readers a wonderful and blessed and Christ-filled Christmas, and a Happy New Year! London, we need God badly! (not mere "religion.")

We meet at Christ Church on the corner of Brent Street and Heriot Road in Hendon (NW4) at 5:45 pm Sundays. Nearest Tube: Hendon Central.