



The GOOD NEWS

December 2022

Page 1

Magazine

It's just 'once' a year to some...

By Mike Parry


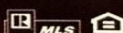
Have you ever really thought about it? I mean, Christmas? Look around at what's going on in your world. Once a year you'll find your neighbors putting up twinkling, flashing lights. Lawn ornaments and wreaths. For what? For some it's to outdo the neighbors or wanting to fit in. For others it's a way to celebrate what we've all be taught, the coming of a baby in a manger surrounded by wise men with gifts. You see, for many this time of year is for being 'thankful' (Thanksgiving) and 'joyous' (Christmas). Many seem to be happier, more giving, and friendlier, because it is what we were taught to do. We were taught that during this time you don't want to be looked on as a Scrooge, or Mr. Grinch. You find yourself donating to causes because of a wonderful marketing campaign that pulls at your heart. This goes on year after year from that time of Thanksgiving to Christmas and then, BANG, it's over. The New Year is upon us and it's back to the same old

same old. Our thankfulness and joyous feelings start to diminish. We find ourselves in the same rut until 11 months later and we do it all over again.

I look back on my life's journey over the last 69 years and have seen myself following that pattern. A few years back, I started to really think about what Christmas meant to me. Who was this baby in the manger? And why was this baby named Jesus so important and what was I supposed to know? Why was so much focus put on Thanksgiving and the 12 days of Christmas and not each day of the year? For me, I needed to focus on that baby named Jesus. I remember not ever hearing much about the early days of Jesus, the man, other than he spent a lot of time in the synagogues. He was learning as we all did. Then came the 40 days in the desert where I believe this Jesus found himself. His Spirit. The Spirit that God had given him at birth. During His time in the desert, Jesus became Christ conscious. And what does that mean. Well, higher consciousness is the consciousness of God or, in the

words of Dawn DeVries, "the part of the human mind that is capable of transcending animal instincts." As always, I like to check out what others think, so I went to the internet and found this from Yogapedia. "Christ Consciousness is an awareness of the higher self as part of a universal system. Although it can be interpreted in several ways, a common understanding is that Christ Consciousness is the state of consciousness in which a person has found self-realization and unity with God or the Divine. A deep spiritual bliss. Although Christ Consciousness is not intended to relate solely to the personality of Jesus Christ it makes the combination of Christian language with Eastern religious and philosophical concepts make it a controversial term to some. (con't page 2)



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The GOOD NEWS

December 2022

Page 2

Magazine

(Click here for Video)

(Continued from page 1)

It was named after the spiritual elevation Jesus achieved during his mortal life and is symbolic of the enlightenment attained by spiritual masters after a period of suffering. (40 days in the desert) This is a common concept among many different religious traditions and is not unique to Christianity.

As such, Christ Consciousness is available to all those who seek awareness and spiritual awakening, regardless of their personal religious adherence." Seems to me that one must experience a life changing event or great suffering to truly force themselves to look deep within. Finding out who you really are.

May I be bold enough to say that if we were all Christ Conscious, each of our days would be filled with thankfulness and joy, regardless of what's happening in the world around us. I believe then, and only then will we see true changes happening.

Comments?

Mparry57@gmail.com



By Michelle Muff

In the movie series, "The Chosen" we watch a depiction of Jotham a lowly shepherd in a dramatic unfolding of birth of our Lord Jesus Christ. I have adapted part of the script below as an imaginative description of the possibilities of healing from Christ the King on the night of his birth in the city of Bethlehem. Jotham stumbled on the road and felt a pain in his leg. He hobbled on a wooden crutch. Jotham's leg was wrapped in an old, soiled bandage. It had just seemed like yesterday when he fell out of a tree as a young boy. He recalled the pain searing through his body. His family did not have money to take him to a doctor, so his leg did not heal properly. He walked in constant pain. Jonathan was a shepherd, and he knew he was the least of the least.

He saw himself as the lowest of the low despising himself. The other senior shepherds bullied him, spit in his face and ridiculed him for being slow. Even though Jotham was lame, he had a heart of hope. He knew one thing, there was hope in redemption in the prophecy of a Messiah. Jotham did not read, but he had spoken to others in his tribe that had told him the Messiah, the king would soon be born.

Jotham was trying to get to the shepherd's camp as best as he could, but his pain slowed his pace down. His leg ached and he was cold. He shivered on the chilly night. The moon and the stars shone brightly. One star looked amazingly bright, and he wondered why? He stumbled into the shepherd's camp late, weary, and hungry. The lead shepherd told him to go out into the pasture to watch the sheep. Jotham moved to the outer rim of the pasture where the sheep resided to keep a watchful eye. Suddenly, the earth shook, and a great light appeared in the sky. (Continued on page 2)

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He looked up blinded by what he saw. Angels were lighting up the sky singing glory to God in the highest. They spoke of a newborn infant, the Messiah born in a stable in Bethlehem. The angels told the shepherds to go in haste to see the infant king. Jotham was amazed at this news, and he looked at the faces of the shepherds, they too appeared to have changed in their appearance having heard the same message. They raced in the direction of the star to find the newborn king.

Jotham's heart was full of joy as he ran as fast as he could to find the newborn king. As he ran his bandages fell and he began to run with no limp. He felt energized! Jotham dropped his cane and barely noticed so excited by the news. By the time he reached the stable God had healed him. He rejoiced and knelt in front of the lowly manger and gave glory to God in the highest, praising God for sending the Messiah, the Newborn King. Tears fell from his face as he realized the significance of this moment, grateful for the healing and the miracle he experienced.

MEDITATION: Take a deep breath. Slow down the pace of your breathing. Imagine what it would be like to be in the nativity scene with Mary, Joseph, and the baby Jesus. Take a few seconds and take in the scene looking around you at what you see. (pause) Next take a few seconds to inhale deeply the smells of the stable. What do you smell? You may smell the cows and the hay. You wonder, how could your king be born in such a lowly place? (pause) Next take a few seconds and find something in your scene that you can touch. Would you dare ask Mary to hold the infant? Reach out and ask in your imagination and see that Mary in her goodness allows you to hold the newborn King. You smile as you grab his tiny little hands. (pause) Stay here awhile and move into gratitude to God and praise your creator Abba Father God for sending his son to save you.

May your family and your loved ones rejoice in healing and joy knowing the birth of the Newborn King. May the memory of the night when God became man and humbled himself as a

tiny baby in a lowly stable becomes real and experiential as you imagine the possibilities of him healing you of your sorrow, your misery, and physical pain. Merry Christmas!

If you are interested in watching "The Chosen" you can YouTube "the chosen season 1" and the title "The Shepherd-A story of the first Christmas"

Michelle Muff is owner and therapist of Compassionate Counseling Services, LLC. serving men, women and teenagers struggling with mental health and relationship difficulties. She provides individual, please feel free to contact Michelle at michelle@compassionmn.com or look up Compassionate Counseling Services at www.compassionmn.com Schedule your free initial consult by clicking the red schedule an appointment button.



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The Best Gift

By Katie Nelson

Do you remember the best birthday you've ever had? Did it include an awesome gift? Did you get to go somewhere special? Did you spend it with all your favorite people? I would guess that on that birthday, you felt celebrated. You felt seen. You felt remembered. Christmas in Jesus's birthday. I wonder how He feels about his birthday party. Does he feel celebrated, seen and remembered when we rush to buy gifts, stress about seeing relatives, and become consumed with getting it all just right? "So, while this world rejoices and celebrates your birth, I treasure you, the greatest gift Unequaled in your worth." **-Mary Fairchild**

Jesus's birthday isn't about us having to bring Him a gift, but rather God giving us the gift of His son - the most precious present and presence we could ever ask for. John R. Rice said, "You can never truly enjoy Christmas until you can look up into the Father's face and tell Him you have received His Christmas gift." His gift is salvation. His gift is peace. His gift is Himself. Pastor David Jeremiah explains, "The primary reason he (Jesus) came to earth was to perform a rescue mission. -Jesus also mentioned a secondary goal. He said, 'My purpose is to give them a rich

and satisfying life" (John 10:10). When he said those words, he was talking about sheep again. He said that a false shepherd simply uses sheep; a true shepherd loves them enough to give his life for them. 'I have come not -only to rescue you,' he was saying, 'but to help you see all the wonderful possibilities that life can hold for you. I want you to squeeze every single drop of joy out of this life. And if I -didn't come to show you, you would never know how.'

The miracle of Christ's birth and the reverberating impact it had on eternity is so monumental that the celebration cannot be contained to a day. It needs to be spread throughout an entire month. But let's not stop there.

Calvin Coolidge said, "Christmas is not a time nor a season, but a state of mind. To cherish peace and goodwill, to be plenteous in mercy, is to have the real spirit of Christmas."

If you haven't had a chance to, I hope you'll take a few minutes to reflect on the meaning of Christmas. Have you received God's gift of Jesus? Do you see Him as the best gift? Why or why not? Share your thoughts with someone or find a trusted friend and ask them what they think.

If you're looking for a way to reflect this Christmas, I created a 5 Minute Daily Prayer Journal. In it, you'll find helpful ways to

connect with the Lord through simple journal prompts.

To order, you can go to my website katies-journal.org. I hope you have a wonderful holiday season and a Merry Christmas!



By Katie Nelson

Wanna win this Weatherby Element 12 gauge shotgun? (synthetic)



For every registered wild game animal, (whether it is a whole deer, deer trim or any other wild game brought in) you will receive one entry into the drawing. Must be 18 years or older to win. The winner will pick up the gun from Ahimans.

The drawing will take place December 31st and the winner will be announced on Facebook and via phone call.

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The GOOD NEWS

Page 5

Magazine

Merry Christmas

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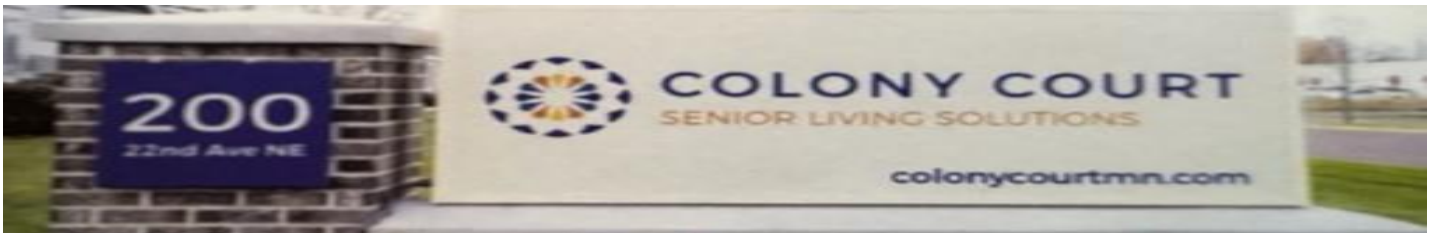
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Say Hello to Margaret Schwarz

This month of December 2022 brings us to introduce another of our newer residents, Margaret Schwarz.

Margaret was born into the Clarence and Meta Lentz family on their farm outside of Minnesota Lake, in August of 1934. She attended school in town and graduated in 1952. Margaret met her future

husband, Adolf, while attending church as a child. They married after she graduated, then they worked on a farm for a few years before moving to Waseca. Adolf and Margaret raised 2 children together and spent what little free time they had playing cards with family and friends, being active in their church, going to the movies, and working in their garden. Margaret also spent

much of 35 years working at EF Johnson's before retiring. Recently Margaret had some health issues that made it impossible for her to live at home alone. Since she is a cousin of the Worke family, who own Colony Court, it was a no-brainer to choose it as her new residence. "It's hard to live away from home and my flowers, but I like what goes on here, and the people are very nice." We think you're nice too, Margaret, and Welcome!

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The GOOD NEWS

December 2022

Page 6

Magazine



**By Jill Courtney,
Director**

TEAM Academy is a free K-6 grade public charter school. You can enroll online at www.team.k12.mn.us. For questions contact: 507-833-8326 or courtney@team.k12.mn.us.

Our whole school took a visit to the Children’s Theater last month to see their production of How the Grinch Stole Christmas. This was an amazing event for our students, as many had never been to a play before! The play was great, and we highly recommend seeing it! Because of a grant we received from the Waseca Area Foundation we can offer a Lego Club at TEAM this year. They have been meeting for a month now and working on where energy comes from and how it is distributed, stored,

and used. Then put their super powered creativity to work to innovate for a better energy future. Right now, students in 2nd and 3rd grade are working to power a model of a wind turbine, energy storage model, and carousel. They will also create a team model based on their own energy journey. During the process they will explore, create, test, and share their ideas. The students love the Lego Club, and we cannot wait to grow it more every year!

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December 2022



The Good News

Magazine

KYROS, what is it?

By Mike Parry

Harnessing the power of technology to increase positive recovery outcomes for the more than 30 million people affected by substance use disorder across the United States is Kyros' mission. Since it began offering digital support in September of 2021, Kyros has seen 90-100 percent growth quarter over quarter, and is currently powering over 30 partnering programs in Minnesota including sober houses, treatment programs, and other government supported efforts.

Kyros has a local contractor by the name of Charity Steinbrink and I asked her to explain why she joined KYROS. "I chose this field because I, myself was once tied up in addiction and dealing drugs, with having overcome it, I know first-hand how hopeless and lost addiction can make you feel." Steinbrink went on to say, "I want to show others that you can recover and live a successful life! My goals are helping individuals with addiction and substance abuse with recovery and supporting and providing the individual with the resources he /she may need for a successful recovery, helping the individual come up

with a recovery wellness plan with motivational interviewing. All of this will assist with reentry into the community and help learn how to repair and mend relationships with loved ones, attend community functions that help maintain sobriety."

Charity Steinbrink is self-employed, backed by Kyros out of Minneapolis. Kyros, a Minneapolis-based digital platform intended to help people with substance use disorders navigate the recovery process. Contact csteinbrinkcprs@refocusrecovery.org Phone 507 438 4796



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A Soldier's Christmas

T'was the night before Christmas, he lived all alone in a one-bedroom house, made of plaster and stone. I had come down the chimney with presents to give, and to see just who in this home did live.

I looked all about, a strange sight I did see: no tinsel, no presents, not even a tree.

No stocking by the mantle, just boots filled with sand; on the wall hung pictures of far distant lands.

With medals and badges, awards of all kinds, a sober thought came through my mind.

For this house was different, it was dark and dreary. I found the home of a soldier, at once I could see clearly.

The soldier lay sleeping; silent, alone, curled up on the floor, in this one-bedroom home. Not how I pictured a US soldier.

Was this the hero of whom I'd just read, curled up on a poncho, the floor for a bed?

I realized the families that I saw this night, owed their lives to these soldiers who were willing to fight.

Soon 'round the world, the children would play and grownups would celebrate a bright Christmas Day.

They all enjoyed freedom, each month of the year, because of the soldiers like the one lying here.

I couldn't help wonder how many lay alone on a cold Christmas Eve in a land far from home.

The very thought brought a tear to my eye; I dropped to my knees and started to cry.

The soldier awakened and I heard a rough voice, "Santa, don't cry. This life is my choice.

I fight for freedom, I don't ask for more; my life is my God, my country, my corps."

The soldier rolled over and drifted to sleep; I couldn't control it, I continued to weep.

I kept watch for hours, so silent and still, and we both shivered from the cold night's chill.

I didn't want to leave on that cold, dark night, this guardian of honor, so willing to fight.

Then the soldier rolled over, with a voice soft and pure, whispered, "Carry on Santa, it's Christmas Day, all is secure."

One look at my watch and I knew he was right, "Merry Christmas my friend, and to all a good night."

Author: A peace keeping soldier stationed overseas

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