

The Christmas Thing

For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. John 3:16 KJV

For unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Isaiah 9:6, KJV, Handel's Messiah

It's Christmas, with all the joy and frenzy and shopping, and food, and family gathering, and it's **THE CELEBRATION OF OUR SAVIOUR'S BIRTH!** Can you say Hallelujah! I love Christmas...I simply love it!

Baking

Most of you know I own a wholesale commercial bakery and I'm very busy this time of year. In September I start baking [Christmas cookies](#) to be shipped all over the country. It is the part of my business that I enjoy the most. I love creating the cookies, buying the boxes, ribbon, and ornaments for packing, and sending them to all the folks that look forward to them every year. It's a labor of love, and I enjoy



this part of the Christmas preparations the most. That might sound crazy to some of you, but my great-great grandfather was a restaurateur, confectioner, and amazing baker in Philadelphia, PA. He also owned an ice cream

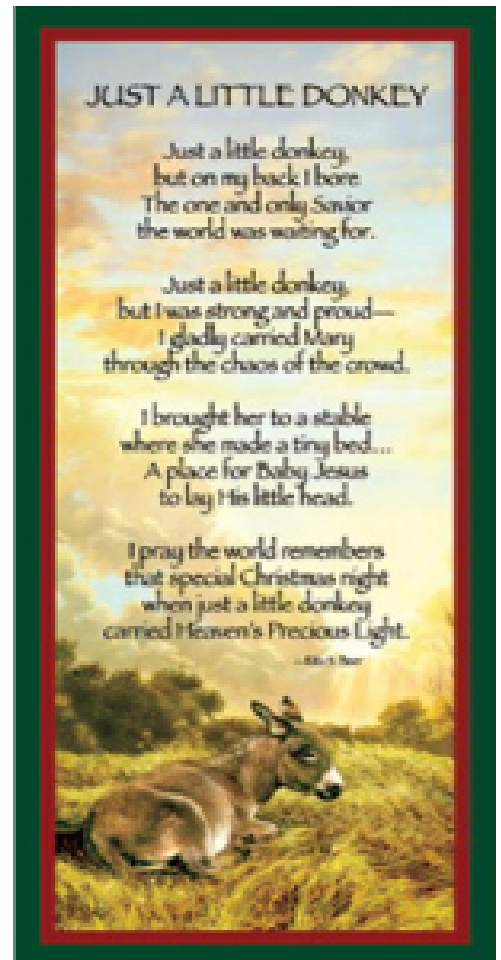
shop along with his three restaurants. G. Byron Morse actually developed the pinafore bread that became the Hoagie bun. So, the baking gene runs in my blood. This, however, is not what Christmas is all about...yet, it too is a part of the joyous celebration and the joy of giving.

Christmas Cards

Christmas cards are special for me. Every year, the local Christian bookstore runs a 60% off sale on Christmas cards the day after Christmas. Since I've lived all over the country, we send out over 100 cards every year, and we want them to express the truth of why we celebrate the birth of Messiah. So, I'm there at 7 a.m. the morning after Christmas.

My sweet friends in Florida sent us a beautiful Christmas card this year that I want to share with you. Like the cards I choose, this one relays the essence of Christmas...it was the Christ child, born for us, to die on a cross for our sins, so we could approach the throne of God with the blood of Jesus having washed away our sins, gone, not just covered over, but gone. This card was so lovely in its message, I simply had to share it. So here it is:

JUST A LITTLE DONKEY



Just a little donkey, but on my back I bore, The one and only Savior, the world was waiting for.

Just a little donkey, but I was strong and proud—I gladly carried Mary through the chaos of the crowd.

I brought her to a stable where she made a tiny bed...A place for Baby Jesus to lay His little head.

I pray the world remembers that special Christmas night, when just a little donkey carried Heaven's Precious Light. **Rita S. Beer**

I hope the sentiment in this card touches your heart as it touched mine. It is the story of the King of Glory who humbled Himself to come to earth as a baby, to die on the Cross for all of us. The cards are special greetings to those we know and love who are brothers and sisters in the faith, and they are a part of Christmas, but not the full essence, just a part

of the whole celebration of the King's birth.

Decorations

There are not many places in America bereft of Christmas decorations, except perhaps Dearborn, Michigan. Many of the yards and windows of homes are adorned with lights and wreaths put up around Thanksgiving. Holley Gerth wrote about the wonderful Christmas Wreath:



"The Christmas wreath is more than just a decoration...it's a special reminder of Jesus, the reason for our celebration. The circle of a Christmas wreath is a never-ending ring, a reminder of eternal love from our Lord and King. The Christmas wreath is a sign of welcome, inviting all to enter in...a reminder of Christ's invitation for all to come to Him. The middle of a

Christmas wreath is a bare and empty space, a reminder of what life would be without Christ's love and grace. So, each time you see a Christmas wreath hanging from a door, may your heart rejoice in the One that Christmas is truly for!"

When I was a child, my mother and I would get on the train and go into Chicago to see the decorated store windows on State Street; Marshall Fields, Wieboldts, Carson, Pirie, Scott and Company, Goldblatts, and so many more. In the 1950s, there were amazing crèche displays in the store windows...and of course Santa and the reindeer. The crowds were enormous. Decorations were everywhere.

When I see all the homes alight with decorations, I think of them as candles on the Saviour's birthday cake. This is another part of the celebration of Messiah's birth, and it

speaks to believers and non-believers..."We have lighted up our homes to celebrate the birth of the Saviour of the World."

Shopping

Then there's the shopping. Since I have owned my bakery for 23 years, my shopping has to be finished before Thanksgiving and ready to ship to out-of-town family the Monday after Thanksgiving. I really don't like to shop during December, especially on the weekends, and I don't do Black Fridays...not ever. Having said that, the joy of the celebration is in the majority of stores. The time goes quickly for employees when it's busy and they all seem to be smiling and happy and saying, Happy Holidays or Merry Christmas. Of course, I prefer Merry Christmas, but Happy Holidays is from the original, [Happy Holy Days](#). So, when I'm wished "Happy Holidays," I always answer them with, "Merry Christmas to you and Happy Holy Days!" This is the south and we're in the buckle of the [Bible Belt](#), so everyone smiles! Shopping is the part of Christmas where we buy gifts to give to our family, friends, and those less fortunate, to share the love of the Christ child whose birth we celebrate.

One of my wonderful Christian cyber buds sent me a short email of vast import. When you're out doing the hectic last-minute shopping thing, remember this story,

"Who Started This Christmas Stuff?"

A woman was out Christmas shopping with her two children. After many hours of looking at row after row of toys and everything else imaginable; and after hours of hearing both her children asking for everything they saw on those many shelves, she finally made it to the elevator with her two kids.

She was feeling what so many feel during the holiday season time of the year – overwhelming pressure to go to every party, every housewarming, taste all the holiday food and treats,

getting that perfect gift for every single person on our shopping list, making sure we don't forget anyone on our card list, and the pressure of making sure we respond to everyone who sent us a card.

Finally the elevator doors opened, and there was already a crowd in the car. She pushed her way into the car and dragged her two kids in with her and all the bags of stuff. When the doors closed, she couldn't take it anymore and she stated, "Whoever started this whole Christmas thing should be found, strung up and shot."

From the back of the car, everyone heard a quiet, calm voice respond, "Don't worry, we already crucified Him."

For the rest of the trip down in the elevator, it was so quiet you could have heard a pin drop. This year, don't forget to keep "the One who started this whole Christmas thing" in your every thought, deed and words. If we all did it, just think of how different this whole world would be.

It's not simply the baking and cooking, it's not the cards, or the decorations, it's not the shopping, or the family gatherings, it's all of these things! It's because this is the month of the birthday celebration of the King of Glory, the Messiah.

Ahh, yes, the "*Christmas thing*." The "*Christmas thing*" is Christ. The "*Christmas thing*" is the Saviour of the world, the "*Christmas thing*" is that He came and died for all of us, the "*Christmas thing*" is the joy in knowing that we have everlasting life because the perfect, sinless, creator of the world shed His blood for us, the "*Christmas thing*" is that **God loves us so much** that He sent His only begotten Son to die for us. The "*Christmas thing*" is that we are to celebrate His birth with joy, love, peace, kindness and gentleness. And we're to share our reason for that joy!

So, for the month of December...you might want to answer those

who say Happy Holidays or Merry Christmas with a resounding,
“Happy Birthday Jesus!” That’s the *“Christmas thing!”*

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