

Police Christmas Carol Service Address 2009

Thursday 10th December 2009

At the start of my address this evening, I would like to thank Steve Lloyd, Chair of the Bedfordshire Christian Police Association for inviting me to speak at your annual Christmas Carol service. It has been a delight to share in this, my first carol service of 2009.

Now, there always say confession is good for the soul, so I want to say some of mine. Advent, which are these days in the lead up to Christmas are particular difficulty time for me. I'm simply not talking about the utter impossibility of walking purposefully and in straight line in Bedford City Centre during Christmas weekend or even in the lead up. Nor am I reflecting on the fourteen possible renditions of Hark the Herald that we will be subjected to in the next few weeks until every single carol service. Neither am I contemplating the annual testing of the robustness of my relationship with my mother as we prepare ourselves for the buying of Christmas gifts, remembering to make sure I don't buy the same present as last year.

No. Though all of these are difficulties indeed, and if you are not too depressed, there's another one. On what date is it appropriate to start saying 'Have a good Christmas' to people? There are complex calculations to make: distance from Christmas divided by the likelihood of seeing the person again before December 25th multiplied by remembering whether they are on your Christmas card list in the first place. For indeed, friends are sending me text messages with Christmas greetings in them and it's only just past the 1st of December.

In this modern world, we seem to lose why someone comes and Christmas is about an important coming, that is of the Lord Jesus Christ. The secular meaning of Christmas is very **predictable**.

We all know what is going to happen when. Santa comes while we are asleep and then little children wake up at about 5.00am excited and wake everyone

else up. Then we open our presents and the living room turns into Clinton cards with all the wrapping papers on the floor and more toys than Toys R Us. We might go to church and share in the Christmas Day fun at church. We come home and eat the traditional Christmas dinner and then crash out to play a new video game and watch a video before mum calls you all to watch the Queen give her yearly Christmas message to the nation then we decide to sleep for 10 minutes, well its like that in our house. Then back to the video game or film before the trip to the pub and you sing your hearts out like we did at the Old Folks party yesterday.

PREDICTABLE but so is the sacred Christmas message.

The Innkeeper hasn't built an extension.

The angel's turn up as expected and sing to suitably, shocked shepherds.

Herod is just as nasty as ever

And the wise men make the same mistake going to see Herod

God arrives in human form and people cannot see the point of it all but it wasn't always like that. A couple of Mila ago this story would be on all the front pages more than the ups and downs of Prime Minister, Gordon Brown. The tabloids screamed about it. The broadsheets covered it too. The papazaie were out in full force camped out in Galilee. Well only if they had existed and had been given a lead by someone selling this public scandal with.

Headlines such as -

Priest struck dumb in church. Was God saying something, is God saying something, don't we all wish this happened more often.

Dumb Priest's 70-year-old wife to have baby. Medical experts say it can't happen but God says it can says Church Press Officer.

Pregnant 14-year-old girl claims it a miracle. Medical experts say it's not possible but doctors say she is intact and her partner is staying with her.

EXCLUSIVE, DUMB PRIEST SPEAKS AGAIN. ONLY IN THE JUDEAN GET THE FULL TEXT OF THE NAMING SERVICE, WHICH WENT ASKEW.

BEASTLY SCANDAL.... GIRL GIVES BIRTH IN COWSHED.

The Christmas message has many eye catching, pity and shocking headline. After this talk you might want to think of some more. After, not during but before you do I've found a story in the news of the known world. I am respectable young man and usually don't read it but for research I found it. It is usually full of rubbish and full of swearing. But I looked in the archives just this once.

After the Census edition I have found this story

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- of course the news of the known world was written in the language of the time. Latin.

Let me put it in English -

Entomologist becomes Ant. Just before he did it, Leading expert on Ants, Professor Ivor Longlegs said "If I am to fully understand and relate to ants and communicate with them as I've studied them all my life. I surely must become one" and then he was gone.

Shocking stuff? It is a crazy notion that a professor might become an ant. It isn't worth the press attention if it got any. Entertainment or the academic world.

Yet it echoes the powerful truth of the Christmas message as one Christmas song by Graham Kendrick is entitled “Earth lies spellbound in darkness”.

Christians, believe God created everything in the world and the Universe, which is so vast. God made everything. The bits we can and can't see. God is so big we can't point of how vast he is.

The God of this decides that to communicate with his creation he is going to send his son. And doing that, all human hopes and dreams are to be fulfilled in Christ. He who is all wrapped up becomes one of us.

A small human.

This is, I believe, more shocking than the story about the Ant. Respectable people and the academic world back me up to a certain degree. Yet this is the true message, which Christians hold on to at this Christmas time. God becomes man and dwells among us.

God dwelt among us a little village and was born the same weekend the ruler of the time was showing how good he was. God's chosen people knew this was happening. Prophets like Isaiah predicted it and Jews were on the look out for him.

When the news that he arrived were sent by angels, we got headlines like

Shepherd's X FILED

This was only news, which was the known news, as people in the know didn't want to know about the extra-ordinary and this is true today too as we see in many peoples live, our society is like the time of Jesus as the story of Christmas yet it forgets what Christmas is about. The Extra-ordinary of God sending his son and a hook on which to spend money on booze for a 3 day party. People don't want to know about the extra-ordinary events of Jesus

birth. For if this story is true, then Jesus, wrapped up as a mere human is GOD and his life is more important for life than whether the guys for Pop Stars the rivals win Christmas number 1 or whether it snows.

The essential truth is that the baby Jesus is God. God wants us to take notes about him and his life as Jesus Christ. We need to see the Christmas story for what it really is.

To see God in Jesus and look at how we make our life using the teaching of Christ.

So as we get sorted for Christmas with the shopping still to be done and parties still to attend, let us remember

CHRISTMAS SHOCKING : IT'S ABOUT THE EXTRA-ORDINARY REALITY WHEN GOD CAME TO EARTH IN AN ALMOST UNNOTICED BUT SUPER NATURAL WAY TO DEMONSTRATE THAT THE GREATEST BEING WHO EVER IS, LOVES EACH ONE OF US, CARES FOR US AND WANT TO MAKE OUR LIFES THE BEST IT CAN BE AS HE UNDERSTAND US.

Let us be, like Mary, and be surprised by the message of Christmas and how it comes to us.

Let us be shocked out of allowing Christmas to be one long party and pass by as we respond what the living God is telling us to do.

We need to look at the best expert of life to get the most out of our life's.

That true expert is JESUS, ALL WRAPPED UP and comes in an extraordinary way.

To whom be Glory and Praise forever. ***Amen.***