MERRY CHRISTMAS

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# The essence of Christmas

REV. MARTIN ADHIKARY

THE thrones of Pharaohs and Herods have never fallen vacant in this world. The thought of the reign of terror perpetrated by Herod, the first century Judean king, to kill baby Jesus comes to mind at Christmas. At Christmas we celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ, who is also called the Prince of Peace in the Holy Bible. God has shared with man His moral and communicable attributes of holiness, peace, justice and righteousness. These make Man God's image-bearer. But due to Man's greed and pride, whether we blame Satan or not for this, Man has violated and disfigured that image. This has resulted in an alienation of Man from God, which in turn has resulted in Man's alienation from his true self, from his fellow men and from every other things in creation too. The consequences of these are seminal and are manifested in all the pains and agonies that wreck the human person both individually as well as corporately from the very dawn of civilisation.

At Christmas we commemorate the event when God in His unfolding and outreaching love sent His only begotten son Jesus Christ to reconcile man to Himself. Jesus came to the world as a human being to call man to come back to God in repentance for sin and get that image reinstated in his person. Through incarnation Eternal God, the Creator of the universe came to live with His creation in time and space and to personally visit man and to share with him his experience so that knowing His self-giving love man may come to receive back his true glory and dignity. This is the testimony to the eternal Logos, the Word and Wisdom of God about himself: "The Lord brought me forth as the first of His works before His deeds of old. I was appointed from eternity, from the beginning, before the world began. When there was no oceans, I was given birth, when there were no springs abounding with water; before the mountains were settled in place, before the hills, I was given birth, before he made the earth or its fields or any of the dust of the world. I was there when He set the heavens in place, when He marked out the horizon on the face of the deep, when He established the clouds above and fixed securely the fountains of the deep, when he gave the sea its boundary so the waters would not overstep his command, and when He marked out the foundations of the earth. Then I was the craftsman at his side. " (Proverbs 8:22-30). This Word of God became incarnated in God the Son in the person of Jesus Christ. This is echoed in the Prologue to the Gospel according to St John thus: "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made." St Paul, the greatest exponent of Christianity observed, "He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation..." (Colossians 1:17).

Christmas bring us this mystery and wonder beyond any human comprehension. So Christmas is also a time of wonder about God's peculiar way of dealing with man. So at Christmas we give our whole person to God in faith and trust in His supernatural power and love for our renewal and healing.

Christmas calls us to the Christian faith, which implies a change in heart and mind a turning away from sin and getting one's relationship righted with God. True faith is subjective, personal and vital. It is not just an emotional lip service or intellectual cogitation or articulation of certain doctrines and doxologies. True faith is verbalised and incarnated in action, expressed in day to day real life in harmonious relationships with other people, with God and also with other creations. The entire creation is known, sensed and understood in a set of relationships. Our human life is no exception to this. We live as we receive and let others receive from us. The spirit in which this is meaningfully and worthily done is selfless love. By giving us His Son God has not only shown but has given us the model of selfless giving for others. Christ calls us to live this life and calling in our daily life, in mundane as well as in our extraordinary affairs. Christianity has essentially a holistic message covering every aspect of life. There can be no dichotomy between what is holy and what is profane as such. True sense of holiness has to be holistic. Everything is within the purpose of the Creator. Everything has a meaning. He is concerned with every human person. Martin Luther King, Jr. said, "Any religion which professes to be concerned about the souls of people and not concerned about the social and economic conditions that can scar the soul, is a spiritually moribund religion only waiting for the day to be buried." John Went, Bishop of Tewkesbury (England) made this opening remark in his Foreword to *'Body and Soul'*, "In the history of the Christian Church a preoccupation with people's eternal destiny has led to a neglect of the injustice and suffering of this world. Too often the Church has been perceived as a strong defender of the *status quo* at the expense of the needs of the poor and vulnerable." What is needed is a definite shift in our paradigm in theological thinking, a down-to-earth interpretation of the Word of God.

To go back to the world scenario, we are appalled at the situation prevailing in the present world. We live in a world where greed and pride, horror and hatred, destruction and delusion, communalism and sectarianism seem to have been so overpowering. Killing of innocents, exploitation, tyranny and oppression, violation of human rights in diverse manners are commonplace all over the world. These days in our own country not a single day passes when we have no news of killing of people for a trifling reason. Rape of minor girls, dowry related deaths, acid throwing, bribery, corruption both at individual and institutional level and so on and so forth seem to be the norm for many. We, the ordinary and helpless people, wonder in awe.

Jesus Christ came to the world to give supreme value and dignity to man. But even with all the sublime teachings and injunctions of religions we see so much devilish activities man is doing to man. Religious fanaticism, bigotry and fundamentalism have also been besetting problems in the world. In spite of all the glorious achievements of science and technology and use of the fertile imaginations of mankind there is sectarian use of religion. Vainly we seek God while we neglect our neighbours, when we break the divine image in our fellow men. Something must have gone wrong with our world where now fair is foul and foul seems to be fair.

Due to human craving for power and wealth there has been awful progress in militarisation and weaponry, in devices for killing man. Undue intervention on the part of the rich nations in the internal affairs of the poor ones, promotion to democracy in those countries is also hindered. The web of globalisation appears to be a new way of economic colonisation of the developing countries by the technologically advanced nations. Globalisation, materialism, and consumerism have compelled the poor countries to enter into unhealthy business relations with the rich ones. Much of the earth's resources are being abused to feed those gods of materialism and consumerism.

Half of the world's population today lives on an average income of less than 2 US dollars a day. One billion people are now homeless and refugees in various countries. Jesus spoke about justice and peace 2000 years ago in the Roman colony of Palestine. But still today the same problems of injustice and violence continue. The present world's annual spending on arms is US $780 billion and on illegal drugs $400 billion.

More than 2.3 billion people suffer from diseases caused from water pollution today. According to the World Commission on Water for the 21st Century more than half of world's major rivers are so and polluted that they pose a big threat not only to human health but also to the entire ecosystem. The death toll from air pollution is around 3.0 million per year. Today 35,000 children die due to malnutrition and preventable diseases, 1 million children become prostitute every year, and there are 100 million street children.

About 36 million people worldwide are currently living with AIDS 95 per cent of whom live in the developing countries. AIDS has already killed 22 million people.

More than 150 million children do not attend primary school and 150 million drop out before grade four. Contaminated water claims lives of five million children annually. Due to wars and internal conflicts in various countries about 40 million are refugees in other countries own and are being displaced in their own home countries. About 250 million children are child labourers and more than 3,00,000 are forced to take arms.

God is God of justice and peace. The teachings of Jesus focus on the genuine human rights of the poor. Justice is giving one one's due in due time. The entire world suffers from lack of peace because human rights are violated in every country and society. In order to establish peace we need to do justice. To do so we also need to address the root causes, the bad structures that help perpetrate socio-economic injustice to people and deprive them of human rights. There is no easy and quick solution to this hydra-headed problems and predicaments of our world. It requires a loving commitment to the cause of peace and progress on the part of all people of good will. The Bible says, "Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute. Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy" (Proverbs 31:8-9).

The problem of the world has always been spiritual and moral. Some one has nicely put it: "The heart of the problem is the problem of the heart." Let the essence of Christmas speak to our hearts and transform our lives, our attitude and our values for the cause of a better world for all people.

## Happy Birthday, Christ

SUNITA D'COSTA

*Happy Birthday O Christ, where are you?*
*All great souls and you too*
*Are you far away nowhere near?*
*Have we abandoned you, O Saviour dear?*

*By dying on the cross you showed the world*
*That love never dies, it never lies cold.*
*But the life-giving gem has lost its shine*
*And darkness creeps and people whine*

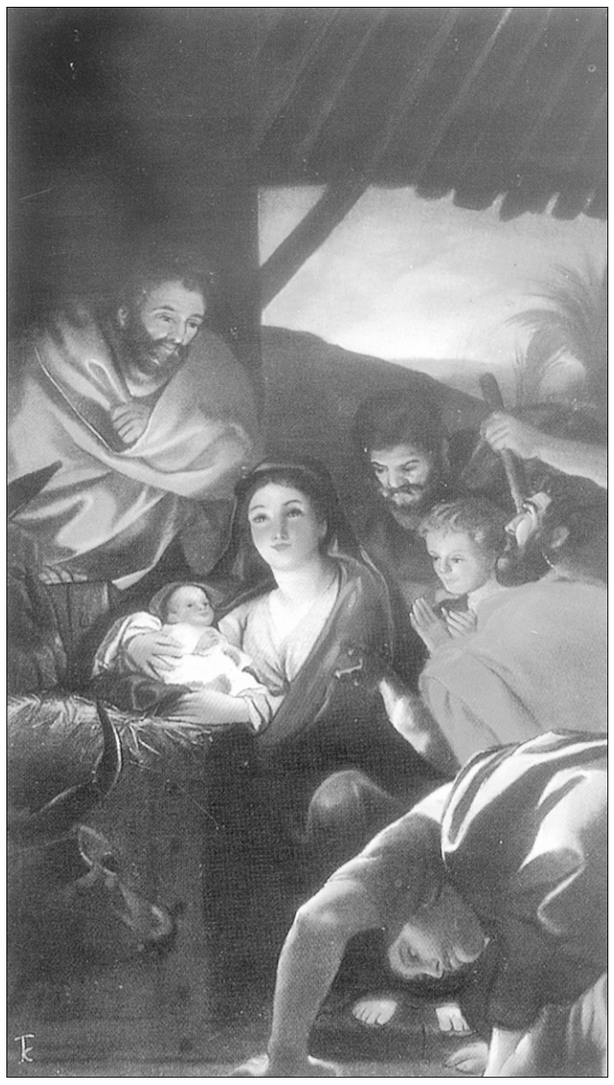
*Listen to our call O indispensable friend*
*Leave us not at evil's end*
*Relieve us from mundane gain*
*O humble soul, be born again!*

# Christmas message: Peace on earth

FR. PATRICK GOMES

TODAY the whole Christian world celebrates with much joy and fervour the solemnity of the Nativity of Jesus Christ Christmas. Today the people of Christian faith gather together in the attractively decorated Church to attend the Christmas prayer service which is Holy Mass. Holy Mass is being offered by the ordained priest in the present and active participation of big number of the devoted faithful. Christmas Liturgy is celebrated in the midnight of 24th December and during the daytime of 25th. This year's Christmas is the first Christmas of the new century.

**Christmas mystery :** It is the mystery of God's incarnation. The Holy Bible says that God who is the 'Word' came to the world as a human being, that is, embracing the human nature and other fragile conditions but sin. Remaining fully God He comes as a man to reveal who He is. That God becomes man and comes to the world, speaks very directly of His mercy and love for mankind. Man was created by God in God's own image (Genesis 1:27) but because of his disobedience to God was excluded from immortality. God who created man with the goal and plan to keep him with Him forever did not and cannot desire the complete destruction of mankind. And so He makes his plan for man to obtain mercy and salvation through Jesus Christ by bestowing adoption to them in Jesus. When Jesus will come He will rule the world with new standard and new values; there will be no bondage of sin but peace and joy. Mankind will find a way to return to the Creator in and through Jesus the God-made-man.



**Messiah and Messianic kingdom foretold :** Through His prophets God several times at several stages of the history of salvation spoke about His coming at times in very strong symbolic manner. The Isaaian prophecy says : A shoot springs from the stock of Jesse, a scion thrusts from his roots : on him the spirit of the Lord rests, a spirit of wisdom and insight, a spirit of counsel and power, a spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord. He does not judge by appearances but judges the wretched with integrity and with equity and gives a verdict for the poor of the land..... Integrity is the loincloth round his waist, faithfulness the belt about his hips" (Holy Bible, book of Prophet Isaiah 11 : 1-3). The messianic prophecy also speaks about the nature of the kingdom that will be built by God's coming to this world. Loaded with strong symbols the prophecy speaks : When he comes "nation will not lift sword against nation, there will be no more training for war.....the wolf will live with the lamb, the panther will lie down with the kid, calf and lion cub feed together with a little boy to lead them. The cow and the bear will make friends, their young will lie down together" (Book of Prophet Isaiah 1 :8; 11: 6-8). So the coming of one who will come as the fullest revelation of God will result peace and harmony in the world; and one who will follow the way opened by him, will find a way to go to the land where there is everlasting peace and joy the heaven.

**Prophecy fulfilled:** In a unique manner through the divine intervention God comes to the world in a particular land (Bethlehem), particular culture and language (Jew), becoming a human person in everything but sin. He is Jesus born of the Virgin Mary through the power of the Holy Spirit. He comes in a very poor manner without any security or comfort, yet a saviour. He is born to give a new birth to mankind freeing man from every chain of sin. And so there is a tremendous joy in the world at his birth. The prophet speaks: The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light; on those who live in a land of deep shadow a light has shone. All the footgear of battle, every cloak rolled in blood, are burnt and consumed by fire. For there is a child born for us, a son given to us and dominion is laid on his shoulders; and this is the name given to him : Wonder-Counsellor, Mighty-God, Eternal-Father, Prince of Peace. The heavenly angel announces this birth to shepherd saying: Do not be afraid. Listen, I bring you news of great joy, a joy to be shared by the whole people. Today in the town of David a saviour has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord" (Holy Bible, Gospel of Luke 2 : 10-11). He comes as the Prince of Peace. The band of angel sang : Glory to God in the highest heaven, and peace to men who enjoy his favour (Luke 2:13). He was made in the likeness of sinful flesh, in order to condemn sin and to expel it from the flesh. He came to dwell among man and invite man to become like himself. Those who accept him he gives them power to become children of God (ref. Reading Holy Bible John 1:14, 11-12).

**Christmas message -- peace and communion:** Jesus comes to the world to establish peace. He does it by being one with man through the incarnation (God-made-man), sinful man is in communion with God through Jesus Christ. Jesus forgives sinners, heals the paralytic, gives life to the dead, gives sight to the blind, feeds the hungry; finally dies on the cross and is risen from the dead bringing eternal salvation for mankind. We are at the closing of the first year of the new century. This year brought us various news of events joyous and sad, even sinful. The destructive events like terrorists works and the events of deaths of the innocent thousands in the world, and the immoral and unjust activities even in our country can be overcome by the strength of the peace-message of this year's Christmas. Jesus not only teaches and preaches to us but by his life manifests to us how hatred and fights can be crushed by love and forgiveness; how the poor and downtrodden can be given dignity and respect. In fact, his birth is the answer to all challenges establishing peace in the world.

There can be false peace and true peace. In the name of justice one may have very wrong notion of peace by hurting others, destroying others' dignity. One may have the tendency to have false peace by taking revenge; by gaining the expected result using unfair means or using bribes. One may try to have immoral satisfaction by using authority for self-interest. Jesus is born as a Prince of Peace to give true peace. When we are authentic in our conscience, in our judgement, when we are transparent in our dealing with others in every sector of life, when we are not only telling the truth but are truthful, we obtain peace, become owner of peace and we transmit this peace to others.

**Conclusion :** Let the feast of the Nativity of Jesus inspire us first of all to be man of peace and to make every endeavour to establish peace in our family, in our society, in our working place and at large in our country. May the blessing of Christmas be in every one and in every family. To all Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists and Christians: Merry Christmas!

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# Christmas clears the haze of identity crisis

RICHARD TAPAS ADHIKARY

THE story goes like this, "The beast coming out of the sea had ten horns and seven heads, with ten crowns on his horns, and on each head a blasphemous name. The beast I saw resembled a leopard, but had feet like those of a bear and a mouth like that of a lion. The dragon gave the beast his power and his throne and great authority. One of the heads of the beast seemed to have had a fatal wound, but the fatal wound had been healed. The whole world was astonished and followed the beast. Men worshiped the dragon because he had given authority to the beast, and they also worshiped the beast and asked, 'Who is like the beast ? Who can make war against him ?'"

The next part of the story is, "He opened his mouth to blaspheme God, and to slander His name and His dwelling place and those who live in heaven. He was given power to make war against the Saints and to conquer them. And he was given the authority over every tribe, people, language and nation. All inhabitants of the earth will worship the beast -- all whose names have not been written in the book of the life belonging to the Lamb that was slain from the creation of the world."

The beast of the story is of the most deadly and horrible stature. The Holy Bible in its last part Revelation Chapter 13 from verses 1 to 8 points to a kingdom and we at present are the ruled. The beast here has its image of the Satan who is indomitable in our life indeed. He is the ruler of the world. He is the king. His role is massive alluring mankind to his super money and power games everywhere. Everyone feels to follow him because he is everywhere dynamic to exercise all sorts of worldly life.

The followers of this kingly beast disregard Jesus as a right rival. Jesus said, "Blessed are you when men hate you, when they exclude you and insult you and reject your name as evil, because of the Son of Man. Rejoice in that day and leap for joy, because great is your reward in heaven." Believing in Jesus as Savior is some sort of entering a world of sobriety and calm of life. Such mode of life really now appears to be impossibly existent amidst these incessant money and power races.

In Matthew Chapter 1 verse 22 and 23 it is written, "All this took place to fulfil what the Lord had said through the prophet : The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him 'Immanuel' which means, 'God with us.'" Jesus is called 'Immanuel'. Jesus must be with his believers or followers. But the believers are now too few in real sense. The followers are there only by name, not by faith.

Christmas to the most followers seems to be an occasion of mere eating, drinking and being merry. The gifts of the three Magi are the earnest offers to the new born Christ in the manger. Christians now are absolutely unmindful of their such offers to Jesus at his birth commemoration. Christmas has become a celebration apparently conducted by the rich Christians because they have established a culture of superficial gestures and merrymaking on this great occasion. As such the celebration is now substantially related with money.

In fact, Christmas is truly a message of Jesus' birth day. His being born in a stable to virgin Mary has a message of God's great design for mankind. The Holy Bible is given perfection with the Gospels which make The New Testament. The perfection is blended with the illustrious story of Jesus' coming to the world in blood and flesh. Jesus was God. Jesus became man. Jesus turned to God again. These three fundamental events are interwoven in the truth of Trinity of God. The Trinity is an establishment of man's eternal freedom. Man cannot enjoy this freedom in his corporeal existence. Neither can he be overcoming his eternal reward of hellish fate, unless his life is framed and glittered with the truth of Trinity of God.

Jesus' birth which we celebrate as Christmas is meaningful to his Crucifixion and then Resurrection. Everything is positively important. The New Testament proclaims this from top to bottom. St. Paul preaches Jesus' coming, his reformation and crucifixion and resurrection to Corinthians, Ephesians, Colossians, Galatians and many more nations. In one word St. Paul preached Salvation of Jesus to them and thus Jesus' kingdom emerged among them.

The beast referred to at the beginning is symbolic of the entity of anti-Christ or anti-God. This is Satanic which now rules the world. Jesus says, "Many are called but the chosen are the fewer". This indicates an obvious picture of the real and the untrue worshipers of God. The essence or quality of Christianity is fully subjective and self oriented. It is of no use if there are many Christians without faith. God's concern is not in the population of Christian people but every Christian's application of faith in his own life.

The New Testament makes The Holy Bible a very sober one. Its words are all easy written and easy versed for everybody. The New Testament advocates self realization which is of a sort of one's earnest quest for eternal liberty. This trend leads to the world of Renaissance. The Gospels are the most communicable series of stories of Jesus'; works healing and loving myriads of people.

For each Christian Jesus is the benign image bearing the Cross of life. The Cross to him or her is an ordeal in a pilgrim. In Roman regime a convict was ordained to bear a chosen cross made beforehand towards the venue of crucifixion as punishment. Notwithstanding the cross was too heavy and the distance was long, the convict had to shoulder it to the yard of crucifixion as his own ordained duty. To Christ similar Cross was given to shoulder to Golgotha, the place of Crucifixion. However, the cross awarded to Jesus was ordained in fact for the real convict Barabbas, a criminal of the day. Jesus had no cross as for his own because he was never found guilty.

Therefore, since Christ's bearing the cross and his Crucifixion, The New Testament establishes new significance for a faithful. Life for the faithful exists implicative in the vision of Salvation. Symbolically cross is a heavy sort of ordeal to bear one's life in close tie with God or Holy Spirit. A successful cross-bearer's assured goal is Heaven, a real abode of God who is eternal. Cross is heavy as good as a Christian's life is hard to lead. As Jesus says, "But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it (Matthew : 7 : 14)."

Christmas' enormous joys are indeed real to one who treats its meaning in its deeper context of what Christ actually asks one to do as a Christian and who is one's neighbour to care for. His neighbour may not be known or familiar one. Still the neighbour is like his next of kin to have been looked after in distress. Jesus leaves a famous parable to make it vivid. The story is of a Samaritan and a wounded man, going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, robbed of and left out in the street uncared, fatally groaning. A priest at the time was passing by. Thinking it an unwanted situation he quickly escaped the victim. A Levite is the second one passing by soon after. Feeling uncomforted and troubled unnecessarily, this guy too left the helpless man just like the former. These two revealed their selfishness and cruelty to the helpless stranger. But neither of the two did any breach of world's law. At this moment a Samaritan appeared there. His heart filled with pity. Being unmindful of who the unfortunate guy was, he at once swooped over him, took him up to his own donkey and led to an inn. He fed him and gave him proper medicine. The man soon became well. The Samaritan gave the innkeeper two silver coins and said, "Look after him and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have (Luke: 10 : 25 37)."

Jesus' above parable was his reply to an expert of law of Moses (Jewish law ) who wanted to test Jesus by questioning how one could inherit an eternal life. The parable rightly points that though the Samaritan was inferior to both the priest and the Levite in social stratum in Jewish culture, he was the right one to have an eternal life because he considered the victim his neighbour. As such he was superior to all despite the priest was an ordained one to be a social leader and so was the Levite a man of tall talks for all in the society.

To a Christian a neighbour may be a Muslim or a Hindu or a Buddhist, known or stranger, even at the farthest end from his location, a Christian learns from Jesus to consider this earth to be the home of everyone. Every man has inherited a soul that belongs to the greater soul of God. He may receive Jesus as his Saviour at any time in remorse and faith. Therefore, no one is his enemy. A Christian always exists in the realm of Salvation which is guided by the Holy Spirit right to God Himself. God is invisible or incorporeal or supernatural. Therefore, any worldly force or any blood and flesh cannot be his enemy to harm at all.

On this grand Christmas billions of men may swoop to arrangements of extravagant joy making all over the world. To a great extent this is worldly just as other kinds of worshipers do in their own religious or cultural festivals, unless Jesus himself attends their souls in silence. In Luke Chapter 13, verse 24 Jesus warned, "Make every effort to enter through the narrow door, because many , I tell you, will try to enter and will not be able to". 'The narrow door' symbolizes Heaven's entrance which is very narrow or hard like shouldering the cross. Jesus' kingdom and Christians' kingdom are single truth. They make one kingdom in one's own life. This is the truth in one's within. A Christian's hard job it is, in order to live in this kingdom. This is absolutely personal, not racial and every process of having Holy Spirit is invisible which only God sees. Therefore, to judge anyone's spiritual matter is only within the reach of God's jurisdiction. Hence, any religious verdict is ruled out in Christianity. Man cannot judge man's Godly aspects which belong to God in fact.

Jesus says in Matthew, " If you have two apples, give one to your neighbour". This is an obvious suggestion of a society where equal distribution is established. Therefore, Lenin's advocacy for equal distribution system is already true in Christianity. But surprisingly some thinkers confuse Christianity with capitalism while they refute all religions in general. Christianity is not religion, rather it is 'faith in Jesus and life in Salvation'. This cannot ensure a faithful to give all the required worldly things for life. But it ensures time with eternal peace and fulfilment right after this earthly life. Therefore, Christianity never points to a code of worldly life nor concentrate on scientific code of life. Because scientific code of life or sound economic or political systems may only make this world or worldly pattern of life sound for a transient period which can never win Godly life.

This reality of Christianity also rules out crusade culture because it was a mishandling of the truth by the people of dark time. Christianity was mishandled in raging crusade to retaliate and kill to win others' land by the hands of the religious villains. But Christ or Christianity is antagonistic to bloodshed and conquer of men and country. Christian world comes to win over crusade culture through the reality of life. Now Christian world considers crusade materialistic and untrue for Jesus' kingdom. A Christian's war is against his own desires, like anger, hatred, jealousy, revenge, killing, adultery and so on. For spiritual freedom or redemption in Christianity no one is required to change his physical position because there is no place as holy except one's own soul cleansed through remorse and submission to Jesus. Spiritual purgation never requires money, social status or transfer of position because these are all materialistic and worldly which even many poor but good people cannot afford to please their Creator with. Christianity is never materialistic. Jesus says, "Many will be convened but a few are chosen". By this, Christianity indicates that mere high population or number of countries will do nothing with the real connection with God and Salvation. Such conception is bully and worldly to attack and win other's property and this is completely carnal and antichrist. If Christianity is worldly or material, then what is the use of God, Salvation or Jesus' birth etc.?

In Ephesians Chapter 6 Verses 10 to 18, a Christian's war is made vivid to all. For the war the requisites are the armour of God, righteousness, the Gospel of peace, the shield of faith, the helmet of Salvation and the Sword of the Spirit (word of God.

So, Christian's war is metaphysical. Christian's war is from within, a quest for an abode in Heaven, accompanying God. Therefore, Christian's war is calm and peaceful, everlasting to the invisible Creator, not against anyone. Christians are developed to a sophisticated sense of life from their dark era of Crusades. Christian's faith is simple and honest. Mere religious practice and material rituals cannot make a nation pious and prosperous. Bangladesh is a brilliant example of it. Faith should be simple and honest based on wisdom and tolerance for all and sundry, right in a person's comprehensive reach. This is the high time now to accept this reality giving up ego and blindness partiality for one's own nation or society. Here prosperity is a far cry. Jesus' life in the New Testament epitomizes a Godly hero, never touching any woman in a carnal sense, never running away when conspirators hunted him to take to false trial to the rulers, never hiding himself or telling fake in front of a fatal hostility. Because his personality is the right sign of the world's revolutionary spirit and his Resurrection is his supernatural might as of being himself the same entity of God, the Creator.

The New Testament heralds the Good News of Jesus Christ who ransoms Salvation. In performing the job of establishing the world of Salvation through Jesus, myriads of miracles of Jesus' healing the fatal diseases, giving life as well as light to people etc. are noted. These are supreme of Jesus' being the Saviour. This rules out the ill practice of torture of women, disparity between men and women, any emergence of false or villainous religious leaders to bring pathos in the society or endorsing the painful practice of dowry system. There are many more windows in the New Testament to let more light in to enable one to realize one's own fault first and then to self-cleansing in remorse. "No thyself" is the nearest truth to Christianity. The Testament has paved the way of openness of attitudes and sense of honesty in practice. The New Testament has ignited the lamp of civilization in the West. Perhaps power and plenty have made the West tend to some sort of unjust practices. The scenario has overshadowed Jesus' face.

Nevertheless, the West has also lit the lamp of global love and tolerance in co-existence. Many Christians' benevolence and peace missions are widely proven everywhere. There are so many great souls following Christ are sacrificing and serving millions of non Christian children, men and women without any return, even at the cost of life. In education and building peaceful society their role is secular and generous. Mother Teresa, Dr. William Carey and many other noble missionaries gave their life for other nations and lit the lamp of knowledge in their hearts. Their attitude has been brandished with the sharpness of the Spirit of the New Testament.

On this very Christmas 2001, therefore, a Christian's prayer has to be for being like a good tree that gives good fruits indiscriminately to all, and which will only be true to solve the very identity crisis of his own being in real sense. In fact, a tree is known by its own fruits. Again, a good tree is good for all and sundry.