



bloodline network newsletter

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“THE DAWN OF REDEEMING GRACE”

"Glory to God in the Highest, and on Earth peace, good will toward men!"

Love came to earth wrapped in swaddling clothes and the abounding effects of His Love never end. All our hopes and dreams are birthed in Jesus to ultimately grow into glorious manifestation in Him.

The whole season seems wrapped up in the ambiance of glistening pageantry. Many fond memories generate from the mere scent of cinnamon or pine needles ... strung together with an array of sparkling lights or candy canes ... and “should auld acquaintance be forgot and never brought to mind? ... We’ll take a cup of kindness yet, for auld lang syne” from the heartfelt wishes of loved ones this season.

The medley of holiday music over the centuries seems to encapsulate the true meaning of Christmas. One of the most beloved songs for the holy day was written by Joseph Mohr—a Catholic priest living in the quaint alpine village of Oberndorf, Austria. On the afternoon before Christmas Mohr wrote some stanzas that he felt appropriate for the holy day and gave the poem to the church organist Franz Gruber to write a melody.

It’s reputed that the pipe organ at St. Nicholas Church had given out and could not be repaired in time for that evening. So his friend “wrote a simple tune setting the words for a tenor, a bass and two guitars.” At the Christmas Midnight service of 1816 “Silent Night” was heard for the first time.

Silent Night

*“Silent night, holy night, All is calm, all is bright.
Round yon Virgin Mother and Child, Holy Infant so tender and mild.
Sleep in heavenly peace, Sleep in heavenly peace.”*

*Silent night, holy night! Shepherds quake at the sight.
Glories stream from heaven afar, Heavenly hosts sing "Alleluia!"
Christ, the Savior is born, Christ, the Savior is born.*

*Silent night, holy night, Son of God, love's pure light.
Radiant beams from Thy holy face, With the dawn of redeeming grace.
Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth, Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth."*

As children many of us first learned to feel the presence of God by singing "Silent Night"—sensing the atmosphere of peace and love generated towards us in the silent hush of a holy moment. How wonderful to know we can step into that atmosphere He lovingly created for us any time we want to—especially if we need to feel His peace.

Often babies drift off to sleep by the gentle whispers of loving mothers softly singing and cradling their young to recreate a heavenly atmosphere of peace on earth. For some of us God's awesome peace and love is synonymous with the season ... and we shed it abroad in our "goodwill towards men."

God always holds you and tenderly sings His song over you as you sleep. Breathe deeply of the peace that's able to calm the soul. Endeavor to experience His love in deeper, richer ways by regarding even difficult situations for its godly potential. Everything is meant to work together to further transform you into His brilliancy—it's how you become the spectacular manifestation of His glory in the earth.

Pause a moment this holiday season to relish His holiness ... cherish the beauty of His grace and truth in your loved ones also ... and sense His love anew in the coming year. And if your memories cause you to struggle with depression then maybe its time to rewrite the script you play over and over in your mind. That's what the poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow did.

In the summer of 1861 his wife Fanny melted wax to preserve the beautiful curls she cut from her seven year old daughter's hair. Tragically her dress caught fire and she died the next morning from her burns. A mood of intense melancholy overtook the poet and that Christmas he wrote in his journal, "How inexpressibly sad are all holidays. I can make no record of these days. Better leave them wrapped in silence. Perhaps someday God will give me peace."

Longfellow's wrote in 1862, "'A Merry Christmas' say the children, but that is no more for me." The next year he received word that his oldest son Charles, a lieutenant serving in the Civil War, had been severely wounded and crippled from a bullet passing under his shoulder blades. Longfellow made no entry at all in his journal for the Christmas of 1863.

But on December 25, 1864 the peal after peal of church bells finally broke through his despondency. The poet was recharged with a joyous hope. "God is not dead after all ...

right shall prevail—bringing peace and goodwill!” Longfellow sat down at his desk and penned the poem “Christmas Bells.”

I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day

*I heard the bells on Christmas Day, Their old familiar carols play
And wild and sweet the words repeat. Of Peace on earth, goodwill to men!*

*I thought as now this day had come, The belfries of all Christendom
Had rung so long the unbroken song, Of peace on earth, goodwill to men!*

*Till, ringing, singing on its way, The world revolved from night to day,
A voice, a chime, A chant sublime, Of peace on earth, goodwill to men!*

The next two stanzas of the “Christmas Bells” poem are about the Civil War and reveal the depths of Longfellow’s despair—but were never adapted to music.)

<i>(Then from each black accursed mouth, The cannon thundered in the South, And with the sound, The carols drowned, Of peace on earth, goodwill to men!)</i>	<i>(It was as if an earthquake rent, The hearthstones of a continent, And made forlorn, The households born, Of peace on earth, goodwill to men)</i>
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*And in despair I bowed my head; "There is no peace on earth," I said,
"For hate is strong and mocks the song, Of peace on earth, goodwill to men!"*

*Then pealed the bells more loud and deep, "God is not dead, nor doth He sleep,
The wrong shall fail, the right prevail, With peace on earth, goodwill to men!"*

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow rewrote the gloom of his tragic script in the bright light of new awareness. No longer did he feel the disappointment, loneliness and heartache that the season once triggered in him. He poured his feelings out in a poem and the calm of a deeper eternal reality awakened in him.

Longfellow experienced an ‘Epiphany’ moment. Suddenly he understood the real “reason for the season.” When he opened the windows of his heart he heard the joyous refrain of bells echoing hope. As long as man remembers the meaning of Christ’s birth there’s hope in the world.

Just like Longfellow, we are experiencing war. Some have personally felt the loss of loved ones fighting in Iraq and Afghanistan ... others know someone whose been injured or died. Many are going through difficult times with their families, finances or health. It takes time to heal, it takes time to change—for Longfellow it lasted four years. But he woke up on that Christmas morning and experienced a breakthrough. His struggle actually created the memorable holiday classic that’s been treasured for centuries.

God's righteousness prevails from generation to generation—His Light and Love sparkles anew in the earth by manifesting creativity through you. That's what happened to Jester Hairston—he wrote a ballad in 1956 that beautifully expressed his understanding of Christmas in a delightfully engaging calypso rhythm and it quickly became a favorite.

Mary's Boy Child

*“Long time ago in Bethlehem, So the Holy Bible say,
Mary's Boy Child, Jesus Christ, Was born on Christmas Day.
Hark; now hear the angels sing, “New King's born today,
And man will live forevermore because of Christmas Day.”*

*While Shepherds watched their flocks by night, They saw a bright new shining star,
And heard a choir from heaven sing; The music came from afar.
Hark; now hear the angels sing, “New King's born today,
And man will live forevermore because of Christmas Day.”*

*Now Joseph and his wife Mary, Came to Bethlehem that night;
They found no place to bear her Child; Not a single room was in sight.
By and by, they found a little nook, In a stable all forlorn,
And in a manger cold and dark, Mary's little Boy Child was born,
Trumpets sound and angels sing; Listen to what they say,
“That man will live for evermore because of Christmas Day.”*

We often hear the expression, “Wise Men Still Seek Him.” The scripture says that Wise Men saw the star in the sky and searched for a king. They logically went to Herod in Jerusalem but couldn't find Him there—‘the Christ’ was birthed ‘outside’ the political system. Herod gathered the chief priests and scribes together only to discover that ‘the Christ’ was also birthed ‘outside’ the religious system. It's to shepherds watching their flocks that the heavenly host sang on the night of His birth—not the recognized authority in the land but to common laborers.

Years later a “Voice from heaven” proclaimed pleasure in His only Begotten Son at the beginning of His ministry—not in the company of the Levitical Priesthood but among the lost sheep of Israel. When Jesus called twelve disciples to Him, He chose those who were ‘outside’ the traditional religious and political systems to set up His Kingdom in the earth. His choices were mainly common laborers such as fisherman and a tax collector.

Today “Wise Men still seek Him” in the light of revealed truth, trying to discern the form and shape of this ‘Holy Thing’ long before it's birthed in the earth. They search for its manifestation because their desire is to assist in the birthing process. As the Wise Men of old awakened the religious and political systems, so will those who search for the manifestation of ‘the Christ’ in the marketplace.

Just as King Jesus was born in a little stable in Bethlehem, the Body of Christ is emerging from a humble position in the earth. Not everyone sees this happening because

it's also 'outside' the norms of the religious or political systems. But Wise Men see His Light radiating 'inside.' They know who are His because they discern His Body in the "dawn of redeeming grace."

Those who comprehend His Light speak of the corporate man as the assembling of an army of believers in all ranks and positions to function in the outworking of His tabernacle in the earth. And assembling together from all walks of life—we honor the King of Kings as the Lord of everyone!

We gladly celebrate Jesus' Birthday ... so thankful that His Word became flesh ... but also extremely grateful that He's born again in us! That's exciting! God illuminated our minds with the truth of His Word. We treasure His renewing grace that dawned in our hearts to transform our current lives into the magnificence of who we are in Him—and creatively expressed in our acts of "goodwill toward men."

Roger and Karen Roth are the set ministry of a local church in Northeastern Wisconsin. They are a ministry son of Dr. Hanby, and along with writing the Bloodline articles each month, they are directors of a portion of Dr. Hanby's ministry called THE FATHER'S HEART.

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