

A Christmas Letter

... that includes an explanation of why Jesus is the Reason for the Season and gives an invitation to respond to Him.

At Christmas we work really hard to get people to attend the events we put on, but just getting people to attend an event matters little if we do not introduce them to the reason for Christmas—Jesus.

In addition to events, we often send out personal, church and ministry Christmas letters, but again, if we don't share with people the real joy of Christmas—Jesus and the salvation He gives us—our Christmas message is incomplete.

This Christmas publication here will help solve both of those challenges. It uses the favorite hymn, “Hark the Herald Angels Sing” as a introduction to why Jesus came at Christmas and invites people to respond to him.

There are three different versions of this piece, illustrated at the left are:

- A full color traditional version
- A more contemporary layout in black and white
- A simple layout in spot color, along with color-separated pages

Additional resources for faith exploration

If you are considering becoming a Christian...
This is not a decision to be taken lightly. It is not a quick fix, fire-insurance, one more thing to try to make you feel better. It is an eternal commitment to Jesus Christ as Forgiver and Leader of your life. Please take time to explore these sites:

Who is Jesus? <http://www.whojesus-really.com/english/mem.htm>
Lots of questions answered here about Jesus

Questioning Faith list of links: <http://www.xp.com/questioningfaith/resources/>
Great list of topics/questions of all sorts about the Christian faith with links to answers.

Christian Research Institute: <http://www.cri.org/>
This is the website of the Christian Research Institute and Hank Hanegraaff, the Bible Answer Man. It has many resources that answer questions about the Christian faith and other religions in depth. Excellent books and resources are also available on the site.

Ten Reasons to Believe: <http://www.rbc.org/>
An excellent site to explore the Christian faith in detail. Contains a number of lists including: Ten reasons to believe in life after death, Ten reasons to believe in Christ rather than religion, Ten reasons to believe in the Bible.

Campus Crusade for Christ: <http://www.ccc.org/how-to-know-god/jesus/who-is-jesus-god-or-not-a-god.htm>
Lots of information for those exploring the Christian life and for those who want to live it.

Websites for growing in the Christian faith

Once you become a Christian you are expected to grow in your faith—these sites will help:

Ten Action Steps for a New Christian: <http://www.rbc.org/>
A simple, yet vitally important list of the actions important for a new Christian, with clear explanations. Free materials.

Christian Research Institute: <http://www.cri.org/>
I'm listing this website again because it is also one of the best resources for Christian growth.

The Bible Letter Bible: <http://www.bibleletterbible.com/index.html>
A classic site of free Bible study tools: commentaries, maps, all sorts of study guides. This is wonderful resource for personal Bible study. From individual verses you can click on concordance and commentaries related to the verse.

Our Daily Bread: <http://www.rbc.org/cdd/cdb.html>
A wonderful daily devotional for both new and more mature Christians.

Radio Bible Class Ministries: <http://www.rbc.org/>
There are a wealth of resources on this site for growing in your Christian life. There are Bible reading plans, articles on finding a church, answers to many questions people have about the Christian faith.

Into Thy Word: <http://sites.sagepartners.com/intothyword.html>
A wonderful site that will teach you how to study the Bible, lots of great Bible study articles, fantastic links on their Bible Study Tools page, lots of great information.

Christian Classics Ethereal Library: <http://www.ccel.org/>
This site contains the digital copies of many of the great classics of the Christian faith. It also has online book study groups and lots of other resources for in-depth, Christian study.

Many people today, know little about the background of Christmas or little about Jesus, you may want to print the last page of this handout also which is a sheet that gives websites where people can explore the Christian faith in depth.

Becoming a Christian is not a decision not to be taken lightly and this sheet encourages careful exploration of the facts before a decision is made.

Suggestions for use:

This piece can be:

- Given out during or following any Christmas service
- Posted on your website for your people to use any way they want
- Given out on a CD following a

service.

- Printed up and passed out to your people to include in Christmas letters.
- Copied and sent out on email letters.
- Any other way you can think of to share the gospel joy this Christmas season!

Hark the Herald Angels Sing! but why?
At Christmas did you ever wonder what that joyous singing was about?

It certainly couldn't have been for Jesus.

Leaving the glory of heaven to inhabit a body that would get tired and hurt from a hard day's work in the carpenter shop wasn't reason for joy. Then to preach the message for a few hours, and to communicate one's love for the majority of folks, not believe him, but to finally have him die for us, the singing wasn't for Jesus.

It probably wasn't for the angels themselves.

It would give them no joy to watch for the next 33 years the incredible wonder of the Creator of the universe playing with little kids, spending the years and quelling a little child, watching him come right and welcome to the hearing and life itself as a friend who had died, and to have all that love rejected. No, the angels weren't singing for themselves.

I think the angels were singing for us.

The celebration was because they knew Jesus was the true connection between people and God. They knew Jesus could give that empty place in each heart that God created and only He can fill. They knew Jesus came to earth to bridge the gap between God and man by his death on the cross. That's why we have Christmas and the angels sing.

Their song is for you if you know Jesus.

If not, at the place in your heart is still empty and without Jesus, this year consider filling it with him.

But think carefully first. Though salvation in Jesus is a free gift, it isn't one without cost. You get it free, but Jesus died to give it to you. Also, if you accept Jesus' gift of salvation, know He takes it very seriously and you won't ever be the same. A new life will start in you, the very life of God.

If you want God's gift in all His fulness, chances are that He might ask for some changes your life to make room for new things He'll want to bring in. You'll be getting a whole way of life that will be more satisfying than you can imagine. You'll want to read the Bible, you'll want to talk to God in prayer, you'll want to go to a church and meet other members of your new family of God. You'll want to grow spiritually and become all your Creator meant for you to be.

It can be scary. You'll be under new management, but whatever you might be slightly clenching now will seem no more important to you than it does to a child who gladly sits under his mother's hand when he realizes his parents have a real bicycle for him.

The first Christmas began with a glorious song from angels, but the song isn't over. Did you know the angels want to sing for you?

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Dear Jesus,

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Who is Jesus? <http://www.whoisjesus-really.com/english/menu.htm>

Lots of questions answered here about Jesus.

Questioning Faith list of links: <http://www.ivpress.com/questioningfaith/resources/>

Great list of topics/questions of all sorts about the Christian faith with links to answers.

Christian Research Institute: <http://www.equip.org/>

This is the website of the Christian Research Institute and Hank Hanegraff, the Bible Answer Man. It has many resources that answer questions about the Christian faith and other religions in depth. Excellent books and resources are also available on the site.

Ten Reasons to Believe: <http://www.rbc.org/rtb/>

An excellent site to explore the Christian faith in detail. Contains a number of lists including: Ten reasons to believe in life after death, Ten reasons to believe in Christ rather than religion, Ten reasons to believe in the Bible

Campus Crusade for Christ: <http://www.ccci.org/how-to-know-god/jesus/who-is-jesus-god-or-just-a-good-man.aspx>

Lots of information for those exploring the Christian life and for those who want to live it.

Websites for growing in the Christian faith

Once you become a Christian you are expected to grow in your faith—these sites will help:

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A simple, yet vitally important list of the actions important for a new Christian, with clear explanations. Free materials.

Christian Research Institute: <http://www.equip.org/>

I'm listing this website again because it is also one of the best resources for Christian growth.

The Blue Letter Bible: <http://www.blueletterbible.org/index.html>

A classic site of free Bible study tools: commentaries, maps, all sorts of study guides. This is wonderful resource for personal Bible study. From individual verses you can click on concordance and commentaries related to the verse.

Our Daily Bread: <http://www.rbc.org/odb/odb.shtml>

A wonderful daily devotional for both new and more mature Christians.

Radio Bible Class Ministries: <http://www.rbc.org/>

There are a wealth of resources on this site for growing in your Christian life. There are Bible reading plans, articles on finding a church, answers to many questions people have about the Christian faith.

Into Thy Word: <http://sites.silaspartners.com/intothyword.html>

A wonderful site that will teach you how to study the Bible, lots of great Bible study articles, fantastic links on their Bible Study Tools page, lots of great information.

Christian Classics Ethereal Library: <http://www.ccel.org/>

This site contains the digital copies of many of the great classics of the Christian faith. It also has online book study groups and lots of other resources for indepth, Christian study.