



What A Christ - Mess!

December Newsletter 2023

Whatever you think an equitable political solution to the current Israel/Palestine crisis should look like, it's clear that what is actually happening was never God's plan for His City! And at Christmas? Fear, hatred, violence and suffering, innocent deaths on both sides! We cry out with the Psalmist, "How long, O LORD?" (89:46, 90:13–16) We moan and pray for the peace of Jerusalem, the "city of peace", literally = "HE will make peace!" What a mess!

And yet, how many of our own families, churches and communities find peace to be in short supply as we come together (or refuse to) for the holidays? Are we choosing to reinforce our walls, shooting at "them" via gossip or internet? After all, we're justified, because we're "right", aren't we? How we grieve God's Holy Spirit, Who longs, with Jesus, to dwell in us and gather us under His wings like His little chicks - but we will not! We cannot, without His help!

Just as you and I were the ones who swung the hammer to drive the nails into Jesus' hands and feet, so we are the ones for whom He left Heaven to endure the pain and humiliation of becoming like us, to pay the price of our redemption. Only so might we become like Him, a beloved and nurtured child of the Father, resting

**"O Jerusalem,
Jerusalem,
the city that kills
the prophets
and stones
God's messengers!**

**How often I have
wanted to gather
your children together
as a hen gathers
her chicks
beneath her wings--
but you would not!"**

Matthew 23:37–38

in His presence, forever! The Owner of all was born in a barn to two impoverished young commoners. The Healer of all suffered injury and pain and loss in the cold. The Provider of all desperately craved his young mother's milk to keep Him alive, depending on her for all His needs. That's Christmas! And Easter, too, for they cannot be separated! The world was just as full of hatred and greed then as now. He came to put an end to it, once and for all. But it cost Him all the blood, sweat and tears He had as man and God!

Yet, around the world, Jesus reveals His love and power to save us in the midst of our mess, to overcome the power of hate, death and destruction. I see it in the jail, where our mess is most visible, and His transformation most dramatic! God is at work! We plan in 2024 to bring some new faces on board to expand the work we are doing there, and we invite you to join us in that work! Perhaps you have some administrative skills you would like to offer, or perhaps God is calling you to give financially on a yearly or monthly basis. I will be retiring as CEO in October 2024, and we are looking for the right person to step into that role to carry this ministry into the next generation! Please join us in praying for this transition!

But right now, in this Christmas season, please consider how God would have you give to make the coming of Christ a reality in the life of a man or woman who has come to the end of themselves, lonely and away from their family, crying out to God for help! \$43 provides 42 weeks of Bible-based curriculum. \$1000 equips 10 inmates and their Certified Jail Ministers. \$330 provides training and reference/teaching materials for six inmates who lead study and prayer groups among their peers. We visit kids in the Juvenile Hall also. Please pray for these folks as they struggle with difficult circumstances and seek God's will for their lives!

And give! Freely! Joyfully! Triumphant! Because we've read the end of the book! We know Who wins! And we want to be part of that victory!

May our Glorious Savior bless your Christmas celebration richly!

Jan and Roxanne

