

The Colours of Christmas

There is a song titled **WHITE CHRISTMAS** with the following lyrics:



*I'm dreaming of a white Christmas
Just like the ones I used to know
Where the treetops glisten,
and children listen
To hear sleigh bells in the snow*

*I'm dreaming of a white Christmas
With every Christmas card I write
May your days be merry and bright
And may all your Christmases be white*

There is no snow in Singapore, so we won't be celebrating a **WHITE CHRISTMAS**; and we can stop dreaming for all our Christmases to be white. Maybe if you keep thinking about Santa Claus riding to town with his reindeer team, you will really dream in your sleep that you hear sleigh bells in the snow. Once you wake up, quickly wash your face and get real!



It is easy to understand what Christmas actually is, if you are not dead set to ignore the obvious fact and to favour fantasy which you then pass on to the kids about someone in red going to slide down the house chimney with gifts for them. Take a look at the etymology of the significant word shown on the left.

Do you still think of arguing whether Christmas is a celebration of Christ or a Santa Claus carnival?

“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever

believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.” (John 3:16)

When Christians celebrate Christmas, they are reminded of a few things:

- Firstly, God's love for man.
- Because of God's love for us, He sent us his Son, Jesus the Christ.

- We have a choice to believe in him or to believe in Santa Claus.
- If we choose to believe in Christ, then we have the gift of eternal life. (If we believe in Santa Claus, will we receive gifts furtively stuffed into our Christmas stockings at night?)

Kids can be innocent in believing in fairy tales; but grown-ups are expected to be able to tell apart the truth and the falsehood. Sometimes, adults choose to celebrate the falsehood “just for merriment”; but then the revelry built around the falsehood begins to encircle their life with delusions of worldly pleasures. Once they experience for themselves the truth, only then will the truth set them free. (John 8:32)

If you can't have a **WHITE CHRISTMAS**, then what colour of Christmas do you like? Have you thought of a **BLACK CHRISTMAS**?

November 29 was known as Black Friday, the Friday following Thanksgiving Day in America. A black Friday is normally a day of good cheer to stores as they traditionally offer steep discounts and enjoy massive sales. Businesses were very happy to deem November 29 this year as the beginning of the Christmas shopping season, with a record-breaking sales of 41 items per second reported by online retailer, Amazon. It was “the beginning of great sales”, not “the ending”. Hence, the days following would put more Christmas cheer on the faces of the store owners and it could aptly be called a **BLACK CHRISTMAS** by them because they rejoiced in seeing their accounts awash in black ink.

A **BLACK CHRISTMAS** may be a delight to businesses that get the chance to get their accounts out of the red; but to consumers who overspend, regret may follow



after a brief season of revelry. “Even in laughter the heart may ache, and rejoicing may end in grief.” (Prov. 14:13) A holiday season is also a time when police bookings for traffic violations and intemperate behavior tend to rise. Therefore, to people who lose themselves to worldly pleasures instead of focusing right on what the season is actually

about, the Christmas may indeed turn out to be a black one with a negative connotation for the colour.

I do not support a **BLACK CHRISTMAS**, especially since I don't have the means to afford to contribute the favoured ink colour to companies eyeing my wallet, or

the wherewithal to spend on immoderate amounts of revelry. Instead, a **GREEN CHRISTMAS** comes to my mind as I think of the evergreen fir tree that is traditionally used in Christmas decorations of homes.

We have had “once-in-50-years” floods increasing in intensity in Singapore. Wet summers and warm winters are getting more and more common in various parts of the world. Weather disasters attributable to global warming point to the diagnosis that the Earth is getting very sick. There is now strong scientific consensus that human activities have been affecting global climate. Long before the concept of a Green Earth and the reality of global warming were recognized, Henry David Thoreau (1817-1862) had 20/20 foresight in advising that “In wilderness is the preservation of the world.” Unfortunately, nobody took heed. Celebrating a **GREEN CHRISTMAS** is to recognize a Green Earth that we need to protect for our own interest, even if we are



ignorant that taking care of the Earth is a mandate God has given to man. Many people are not conscious that their extravagance of Christmas consumption with loads of wastage is hurting the Earth badly. We can do little things to reduce the holiday season’s environmental impact – carpooling can cut down greenhouse gases; buying less gifts and giving sensible gifts can cut wastages from such gifts being discarded because they are useless or unneeded; reducing the use of resource-intensive decorations can save more trees ... Having a meaningful Christmas celebrating Christ is not necessarily a costly affair to our pocket or planet.

The colour red also comes to mind. What do you think of a **RED CHRISTMAS**? When Christ was born, an angel appeared to the shepherds in the fields and said to them, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord.” (Luke 2:10-11)

Keep Christ in
Christmas!
Have a
blessed holiday!

The birth of Christ was indeed great news. Curiously, the Bible does not tell us to remember Christ’s birth; instead, it tells us to remember His death. (1 Cor. 11:23-24) However, for a momentous event of great joy like the first advent of our

Messiah, we cannot fail to remember even if we are not specifically told to remember it. While the holy birth gave us hope, the problem of our sin would never be resolved without the blood that would be shed and the life that would be sacrificed on the Cross. Note that our lives were restored and changed by the power of God's grace not at the birth of the Holy Child, but at the point when Christ gave up His life on the Cross as propitiation for our sin, when the temple veil was rent apart. The gospel of grace can be said to be founded upon the blood sacrifice of the Son of God. Hence, if we cannot avoid remembering the momentous event of Christ's birth, much less can we avoid reflecting on Christ's death. Christmas was not an isolated event in God's plan. From the birth of Christ to His death on the Cross and thereafter to His resurrection were events that unfolded in a continuous inseparable chain to reveal the whole plan of God for our redemption. Celebrating a **RED CHRISTMAS**, reminding ourselves of the blood shed on the Cross, we wish for peace on Earth and good will to all men, and remind ourselves that Jesus was born to die:

*Hark! the cherubic armies shout,
And glory leads the song:
Good will and peace are heard throughout
The harmonious heav'nly throng,
The harmonious heav'nly throng.*

*With joy the chorus we repeat,
Glory to God on high!
Good will and peace are now complete,
Jesus was born to die,
Jesus was born to die.*

Jesus loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood. (Rev. 1:5)

I suddenly have a thought about having a **WHITE CHRISTMAS** distinctly different from adorers of Santa Claus – meaning that we have Christ at the centre of our celebration, and we cherish the hope of having **our sins washed white as snow** (Isa. 1:18) as we “draw near to God with a sincere heart and with the full assurance that faith brings, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water.” (Heb. 10:22)

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