

What's next after Christmas?

[A Few Moments of Imaginative Personal Contemplation]

by: Agus Santoso

The other day, I was all alone in my office. Although my body was in my office, my mind was somewhere else. The following is the 'journey' that I took then.

Everyone agrees that Christmas, which has been with us for centuries, is one of the **'most favourite'** celebrations of the year. We always wait for this occasion eagerly each year, don't we? We will do a lot of preparations in order to 'welcome' this special celebration. Look at the world around us. Each time Christmas is approaching, there are different kinds of activities conducted around us. All kinds of competitions are conducted everywhere. Church activities are getting more and more frequent. Christmas bells are ringing. Christmas carols are sung everywhere. All sorts of activities can be found. Go to a shopping centre and we will soon realize that Christmas is coming. Switch on your television and we will soon find out that Christmas is coming. Turn on your radio and we will soon be aware that Christmas is coming. Unfortunately, snow isn't falling!!!! Meanwhile, the same so-called Christmas spirit is 'captured' in our institution, too. Surprisingly, out of a sudden, everyone is **'being'** reminded that something special needs to be done.

Such and such a department is ready to carry out a community service, reaching out people in a remote area. They will provide them with better facilities so that people will be able to enjoy their lives. More importantly, they will also provide the best education so that more and more people will be better educated.

Another department is preparing to have a pot-luck party to celebrate the upcoming event. All staff members have been assigned to bring something for the party. Some are arguing with one another about what to bring. Some are busy planning what decorations to put in the waiting room.

Still, another department is about to celebrate this occasion in a more meaningful way. Everyone has donated a certain sum of money to help the poor. Helping the poor is an option on such an occasion.

Let's move on to personal resolutions.

Someone has really been touched by the atmosphere of Christmas that he has decided to start a new life. He is beginning to realize that his previous life was in vain. He

thought that he was able to resolve things alone. Accordingly, he relied more on himself than on anybody else, let alone on God. He is beginning to realize that God really cares.

Another is sitting in her office and beginning to plan for the next trip to Europe during the Christmas holiday. She has got everything with her but she is still of the opinion that the Christmas holiday is not long enough. She wishes she had more time to explore Europe.

A student has made a resolution that after the Christmas holiday she will try to focus more on her studies. She is beginning to realize that what she has been doing needs to be improved. She really wants to show her talents. She has realized that education is more important than anything else.

As for me, first, I am expecting to see my daughter participate in a ballet performance during the Christmas celebration at her school. I hope I can see her perform because my presence means a lot to build up her self-confidence. Anyway, she broke her left arm last month and is still in the recovery process. The thought of joining in the ballet performance has somehow contributed something for her speedy recovery. She has always wanted to get well soon so that she can be in the ballet performance. Her recovery also means a lot to me. I can see her cheerful face again. I can play with her freely - like we used to do - without her left arm being tied to her neck with a sling. Second, I hope that I can be closer to God. I hope that I can do something that will please Him. I know that he has blessed me each single day. That has opened my eyes to glorify Him even more, to be more like Him in whatever I am going to do.

While contemplating more and more deeply, three Christmas messages came to me. My 'daydreaming' was interrupted.... [As a matter of fact, I was expecting more Christmas messages from my colleagues for this article.]

“In the midst of the multidimensional sufferings of most of our people, we need to make all celebrations of X-mas as simple and humble as possible to represent the humblest birth of Christ in the manger of the sheep stable in Jerusalem 2000 years ago, instead of unnecessarily glamorous big Christmas parties all over the country. Should we be able to afford some gifts to the poor, it is worth giving them in the form of 'fishing rods' rather than 'fish' as they will be able to improve the quality of their lives through fishing in the pond or river nearby from time to time. Wishing you all A Merry Christmas 25 December 2005”
(I Made Markus, 2005)

“I wish I could ride on Santa's sleigh with my son and my husband to see the beauty of Christmas Eve from above for a couple of hours.” (Sri Suryanti Sugeng, 2005)

“I hope I can celebrate Christmas in the hometown of someone special. Later on that morning, after the church service, both of us will be going to the old train station nearby. Then, we will be taking a train in the drizzle, traveling around a coffee plantation, on to a hill and into a forest. Nonetheless, it is merely a dream.” (Arya, 2005)

Indeed, ‘**many things**’ might occur before and during the Christmas celebrations. We cannot deny the fact that we are doing all of ‘**those things**’ in commemoration of the birth of our Saviour. We have done them lots and lots of time and again we are ‘**being**’ reminded that this special occasion is actually the beginning of a covenant between the Lord and mankind to wipe out our sins. He has done a lot for us. He has given His only begotten Son, who has sacrificed his life for us all. So, let’s ask ourselves. Have we given our best to Him, to our family, to our institution and to our nation? Should we do these ‘**good things**’ only before and during Christmas?

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Merry X-mas!