

TKJ Schematic

news & views for supporters and friends of



Christmas 2005

It's Christmas time again already! Is it that the years are accelerating or is it that I am slowing down?

The Holy Birth and every holy birth

Christmas is the celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ, the Savior of the world, Emmanuel: God with us. God became man, without ceasing to be God. It is really impossible for us to wrap our minds around the fact that Mary's womb was wrapped around the uncontainable God. We come to the manger with awe and wonder like the shepherds and kings. We worship then we celebrate.

We celebrate this birth by giving gifts to one another. Why? Jesus' holy birth made every birth holy. Without Him, we were all dead, in Him we are all alive. "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." (1 Corinthians 15:22) God became flesh, thereby redeeming and sanctifying human flesh. He died and rose again and sits in Heaven in the flesh, as a human being; and the first born among many brethren. This gives hope and potential to each and every one of us. We give gifts to one another at Christmas to acknowledge this. Every gift given should be a reaffirmation to the recipient that they are loved by God.

Christmas gifts are not performance bonuses. They are of grace and sometimes mercy. In other words, Christmas gifts are not conditioned by whether we were personally "naughty or nice". Christmas gifts affirm our original 'niceness' and our redeemed 'niceness' because of Christ.

Every birth is holy. Every life is sacred. No one is to be written off or thrown away. Every person that you ever have seen or will see was once a little baby in someone's arms, full of potential, full of hope, with that wonderful new baby smell. And I mean everyone: from Gary Heidnik to Mother Raphaela; from Saddam Hussein to Jimmy Carter; even that annoying person with 25 items in the express checkout line.

Orthodoxy is nothing, if not incarnational. So let's make this personal. About fifty years ago, a young, black woman in South Carolina gave birth to a baby boy. She named him Hulon. Fast forward thirty years. This boy is a man living on the streets of Philadelphia. He has an alcohol problem. He is a binge alcoholic. He earns the money he needs by helping with demolitions in exchange for the metal salvaged. It's dirty work that none of the union guys want to do. When he can't find those jobs, he sometimes has a shopping cart to pick up aluminum cans to recycle. Hulon is a sweet man. He helps look after an older man who lives on the street. Hulon tries to go to church regularly. He sometimes spends Christmas with friends of mine that he met at his church.

Sometimes Hulon goes into the rescue mission to have a warm, dry place and to be sober for a while. He chafes under the rules and confinement though.

Hulon has an amazing set of skills for surviving on the street. I have known him for almost twenty years. He knows how to keep himself clean and to be safe and avoid arrest. You are naturally prone to ask: If he has so many skills, why is he living on the street? That is about the same thing as asking me why, with all my skills, am I still living in the same old half-twin in an unfriendly town after 28 years. Some things don't go according to plan. Life happens a day at a time. Most of the time it is easier to cope than to make a radical change. But enough about me.

My point is that my life would be poorer, if I had never met Hulon or Tom, Tony, Peaches, Alex, Shirley, Martin, Tyrone, Christopher, Rosie, Charles, Donald, Jerome, Pete, and all the others. Then there are those who have died: Oscar, Angie, Pops, Nanci and the others.

Let's celebrate The Holy Birth this year by honoring every holy birth. Let us give gifts to our family and friends and to those less fortunate. Let us show love and respect to all people, our enemies and even that annoying person with too many items in the express line.

Cookies, Socks & Underwear

I'm putting out the call for cookies, socks and underwear to give away on the street for Christmas. When I say cookies, I mean homemade cookies. We would like to serve them on December 29th. You know you want to make more batches than you really want to eat. So put together an assortment for the guys on the street. A taste of home goes a long way to share the love of God.

Men's white tube socks are best and various sizes men's underwear: briefs, boxers and T-shirts. You may drop them by our house or call and we can arrange an appropriate way to get them. While I was writing this, I received an e-mail telling me that the ladies of St. John Chrysostom Albanian Orthodox Church will be bringing socks & underwear & coats to give away on the 22nd. Do God's people respond quickly, or what?

Now We're Cooking with Gas!

Since we roast a turkey almost every week, then turn it into 20 to 30 quarts of soup that simmers for several hours on our stove, it puts a good bit of extra wear and tear on the stove. We discovered our oven wasn't working with the whole family over for our daughter Rosalie's birthday party and a large raw salmon. The stove was a little more than ten years old, and I have been repairing it about once every two years. I had just replaced the broiler lighter about six months ago. This didn't

seem like the usual lighter problem. We cut up the salmon and fried it in the electric skillet.

We needed a new oven before Thursday, so I could roast a turkey and make soup. Bethann and I went to the local appliance store and in five minutes decided on a new gas range. It has an extra large oven and five burners on top. The fifth burner is oblong in the middle. It is perfect for simmering the soup for hours. I had to do some refitting of the gas piping, so it took me seven hours to install the new stove, but it was worth it. I installed it on Wednesday, December 7th, the next day I roasted a turkey, made 25 quarts of soup and five gallons of hot mocha.

Sometimes technology is our friend.

Author! Author!

I'm going to be published in April 2006. Heather Zydek is a feature writer and editor with *Relevant* magazine. She received a copy of *TKJ Schematic* with her icon order a couple of years ago. She interviewed me for an article in *The Handmaiden*, at that time. Last Summer she asked me to write a chapter for a book that she is editing on how Christians can respond to various social ills. She asked me to write the chapter on homelessness. It will be one of ten to twelve topics covered in *The Revolution: A Field Manual for Changing Your World*. Jim Wallis is writing the forward. I am jazzed! For my name to appear in the same volume as Jim Wallis' is just way beyond my expectations. You can order it now for delivery when it is released by going to Amazon.com, then searching for "Heather Zydek". I will offer it for sale at www.comeandseeicons.com as well. I will autograph your copy if you say "Please."

What We Do

The King's Jubilee serves soup, sandwiches, pasta with meat sauce, hot chocolate, fruit and goodies (if we have them) to between 50 and 150 men and a few women in Center City Philadelphia every Thursday night. This is in a park, year-round. We also share toiletries, blankets and season appropriate clothing with them.

We serve in the open air, because some of those we serve are paranoid and will not readily enter a place with which they are unfamiliar. Also, some of them are not homeless, but are on very low, fixed incomes. They won't go to a soup kitchen to take from a program just for the homeless, but they feel free to eat with us to stretch their food budget, so they can stay off the street.

We also try to gather resources for other ministries that serve the poor in Jesus' Name. If we can't do it in Jesus' Name, we don't have the time or the desire to do it.

**Christ is Born!
Glorify him!**

No, We Can't Ship in Time for Christmas.

"COME AND SEE" Icons, Books & Art was started with the hope that it would provide a steady income with flexible hours to facilitate my involvement in service with The King's Jubilee. After almost five years, the website has over 1,000 different icons on it. We have signed royalty agreements with more than a dozen iconographers of a variety of styles. The collection is growing all the time. We have shipped to all 50 states, every province in Canada and to over thirty other countries on all six inhabited continents. This month we shipped to Singapore for the first time. We average about 7,000 hits per day on the website. Please come and browse our collection at www.comeandseeicons.com

The Christmas Appeal

We can only do what we do, because there are many others who share the resources God has given them with us. Donations are gladly and gratefully received. In addition to checks and cash, personal size shampoos, soaps & lotions are always welcome, as well as men's clothing in season.

One aspect of our ministry is to help other front lines ministries who are serving the poor in Jesus' Name. This Christmas, we would like to be able to assist The Word in Action International Ministries in their ministry to the poor in North Philadelphia, especially to those families transitioning off of the street. They operate a food bank and clothing closet, as well as tutoring, Bible studies and homeless outreach. No one who comes to Rev. Joses & Chantal St. Phard goes away hungry. They are running short of cash. We'd like to help.

Checks can be mailed to:



216 W. Fourth St.
East Greenville, PA 18041-1629

Our phone is: 215-679-7563

email: TKJ@shoutforjoy.net

Thank you. May the Lord bless you as you bless the poor in Jesus' Name. Have a Blessed Nativity Season!

Peace,

Cranford Joseph Coulter

P.S. This newsletter as well as past ones are available for viewing and printing in PDF format from our website at: www.shoutforjoy.net