

Have Yourself a Metaphysical Christmas

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After I discovered Unity, the original Christmas story about the birth of Jesus in a manger—with Mary, Joseph, the shepherds, angels, Herod, the Star in the East, and the wise men and their three gifts—assumed another spiritual dimension that gave me metaphysical and transformative insight.

This insight involves the birth in our awareness of our latent spiritual potential that occurs when we realize that Christmas is truly our story—the birthright drama conveyed in Paul's great declaration: "Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Colossians 1:27). The Christ Spirit permeates your consciousness and becomes a vital part of your humanity. It all happens in consciousness in which each component of the story has a role in the transformative experience of your inner Christmas.

The inn represents your intellect. Because there was no room in the inn, the baby was born in the manger, which symbolizes your heart, your emotions. It doesn't make any difference what the condition of your heart is, Christ can be born there.

We are again involved with our thoughts and feelings with Joseph, Mary and Herod. Joseph, the human father of Jesus, represents the intellectual nature. Our intellect can serve an important father role to protect, guide and support a new spiritual awareness in us by maintaining the right state of mind.

Mary symbolizes the inspired activity of our emotional nature as the highest emotional experience we can have, pure intuition. This is how the Christ Spirit comes to us, through intuitive insight. It was through the virgin awareness that Jesus was born. Mary "kept these things in her heart" and "magnified the Lord."

Herod, as the autocratic and egoic false self, is also a part of our intellect. Always threatened by something new, he tries to kill the idea.

The shepherds and sheep also introduce us to the inner scene of our intellectual and emotional process. The shepherd is the humble, often simple type of thought process that (like Joseph) watches and tends the flock of inner feelings with loving care. Angels represent messages from God as divine inspiration and guidance, which bring "good tidings of great joy."

The three wise men, who followed the Star in the East, were really Magi who represent the kind of higher wisdom and spiritual insight that can come right into our ordinary thoughts and feelings when we are open to the guidance of the "Great Star."

Charles Fillmore [Unity's co-founder] said that in the Bible, a "star" represents the possibilities of our own Christhood. When we have the open and receptive consciousness symbolized by the Magi, our higher Christ like aspirations always lead to an awareness of our divine potential.

The three gifts are gold, frankincense and myrrh. Gold represents our material possessions, which, when dedicated to God, become a force for good and a powerful magnet for everything we truly need in life. Frankincense is incense, a beautiful symbol of an atmosphere of prayer which extends upward into the higher consciousness of our spiritual aspirations. Myrrh, an embalming ointment, is connected with Jesus' directive: "Follow me: and let the dead bury the dead" (Matthew 8:22) and Paul's statement "I die daily" (1 Corinthians 15:31) as a means to relinquish the wrong concerns and begin our lives anew each day.

These are the three gifts we give Christ for Christmas: a dedication of everything in our lives to God, a deeper commitment to prayer, and a trusting surrender of the lesser in our lives for the greater—a higher consciousness.

So along with the more traditional ways you celebrate Christmas this year, set aside some quality time of prayer and contemplation devoted to the inner metaphysical drama of the Christmas story and let it quicken within you the awareness of your True Nature waiting to be born. It will add a new and profound spiritual dimension to your Christmas experience.