



December 15

Joy to the "World!"

Reading: Luke 2:1-14

***"His name: Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace" (Isa 9:6b)***

This is Christmas Season. Let's learn today and the next two days how to celebrate Christmas meaningfully.

● *Raise the voice of praise & thanksgiving!*

Shout praises to God for "His indescribable gift!" (2 Cor 9:15). The birth of Christ excited both Heaven and earth. The huge angelic choir shouted, "Glory to God!" (Lk 2:13). When the band of scholars saw the star, they could hardly contain "the exceedingly great joy" within themselves (Mt 2:10). To the shepherds it caused "great joy" (Lk 2:10). Simeon exulted so much on holding the Baby Jesus that he felt the unnecessary of lengthening of his sojourn in this world anymore. Dear friend, raise your voice in praise! Let not the audio or videotapes do all the singing! Pretty dresses, sumptuous dinners, rare delicacies and the other enjoyment of the Season should be an expression of joy that Christ came! Let's not be like the Laodicean Church which shut its Lord out and went ahead with its programmes (Rev 3:20). Jesus wants to "dine" with us! This is possible only when we make Him the topic of our conversation around the dining table.

● *Reach out to non-Christians!*

The birth of Jesus is "good tidings of great joy," not to the Christians only, but to "all the people!" (Lk 2:10). Understanding the importance of this message rightly, the shepherds spread it "widely" (v17). We are talking about the Second Coming of Christ whereas there are millions unaware of His First Coming. Why don't we go singing carols to non-Christian homes? Why not visit as many non-Christians as possible in the neighbourhood on Christmas day with sweets and gifts, and present them a New Testament? Why don't we motivate our children to erect a Christmas tree and give gifts exclusively to non-Christian children? Why not use oil lamps rather than candles? Instead of Western hymns, carols may be sung in vernaculars set to Indian music. Why not conduct *bhajans* (celebration of praise)? What have we done to disprove the Indian notion that Christianity is a Western religion? We need men like Dr. E. Stanley Jones (1884-1973) who, with a deep understanding of Indian culture, sought to interpret the Christian faith to the

educated, not as a Western import, but as the fulfilment of their own spiritual longings. His book, *Christ of the Indian Road*, is a classic.

