

# Rainbow Bend

November 2008 Vol. 15, Issue 11



## The Origin of Christmas

### **Christmas Origin - The Messiah's Birth Foretold**

The Christmas origin begins with the predictions of Christ over the many centuries before His birth. *The sceptre* (a Hebrew symbol of governmental authority) *shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh* (Hebrew, the "Messiah") *come; and unto Him shall the gathering of the people be.* (Genesis 49:10). *"But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting."* (Micah 5:2). *Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel.* (literally, "God-with-us" in Hebrew) (Isaiah 7:14). *For unto us a child is born, unto to us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace* (Isaiah 9:6 KJV).

The fulfillment of over 300 Old Testament prophecies of the Messiah started with Christmas. As you can see above, these predictions included (i) the time of His birth being before the Jewish people lost their sovereign power to 1st Century Rome when Archelaus took the throne in Israel; (ii) Bethlehem, a small insignificant town, being the place of His birth; and (iii) that He would be born of a virgin. All of these prophecies show up in the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Septuagint versions of the Jewish scriptures, which have been established by secular sources as predating Jesus Christ by between 100 and 250 years. It is amazing to note that when Israel's religious elite cried, *"Woe to us, for the scepter has been removed and the Messiah has not come!"* (Talmud, Babylon, Sanhedrin), Jesus had already been born and He was growing as a young boy in Galilee.

### **Christmas Origin - God's Plan for the World Revealed**

The Christmas origin has pagan roots. That is well documented. The Christmas season is sadly over-commercialized. That is apparent to all of us. However, the message of Christmas is true, and the implications of Jesus' historical birth in Bethlehem about 2,000 years ago are enormous for all of us. The Son of God, Jesus Christ, humbled Himself and came to the world as a little baby born in a manger. Was He born on December 25th? Probably not - that's a date chosen by the early Roman church to correspond to a preexistent Winter solstice festival. Regardless, the truth of His birth (whether in late summer, early autumn, or otherwise) cannot be denied. Jesus Christ was undoubtedly an historic figure, and His purpose was simply to fulfill the meaning of His name, "The Lord Saves."

After His birth, Jesus grew to be a man and started His public ministry at the age of 30. He was called many things by many people, including a great man, a great teacher and a great prophet. He did remarkable wonders and acts of charity, and He died a horrible death on a Roman cross for the crime of blasphemy. But was Jesus Christ God incarnate? Did He rise from the dead three days after His crucifixion? Christmas is a time to genuinely open our hearts and earnestly seek the truth about our Messiah. Jesus told us who He was and is - He didn't mince words. *"I am the way, the truth and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me."* (John 14:6). *"He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life"* (John 3:36).

### **Christmas Origin - The Greatest Gift of All!**

The Christmas origin, at its meaningful heart, began about 2,000 years ago in a manger in Bethlehem. The Christmas story is simple -- Jesus wishes to be born within your heart today! As we hustle about the shopping malls this Christmas season looking for that perfect gift, let's all reflect on the greatest Christmas gift of all. Open your heart to the Messiah who was born in a manger in humility, died on a cross in love, and rose from the grave in glory. Accept the gift of Jesus Christ this Christmas - the most glorious gift in all history!

(Story copied from the web.)



Walk to  
**Emmaus**  
THE UPPER ROOM



**COASTAL BEND**  
**EMMAUS COMMUNITY**

**CELEBRATING**  
**25 YEARS**  
**1983-2008**



**John 9:25 "I once was blind, but now I can see."**



With these words, the poor beggar, referred to in John's gospel, who had been blind since birth, boldly declared the change in his life that occurred when he met Jesus. The change was not only physical, but also spiritual. In fact, the physical change in his life was a symbol of the spiritual change. Just as the man was born blind, all of us are born into sin – a state of spiritual blindness and separation from God. Jesus Christ came so that we -- the blind -- could see.

The miracle occurred, however, only after the blind man travelled from the temple down to the pool of Siloam where he washed his eyes as Jesus instructed. The journey, which took him across half of Jerusalem, must have been difficult. But how worth it must have been for the man to experience a new life – physically and spiritually.

Many men have had a similar experience on the Walk to Siloam – a fourth-day community similar to the Cursillo, Walk to Emmaus, and other movements. The Walk to Siloam is unique, however, because it focuses on the spiritual growth of homeless men. Just as the Walk to Emmaus is based on the story from Luke's gospel, the Walk to Siloam is based on the story referred to above from John's gospel, where a man blind from birth washes his face and receives his sight after washing in the pool of Siloam.

The Walk to Siloam was birthed on New Year's Day in 2003, when Craig Adams met Tony Reyes at the Mission 911 homeless shelter to discuss the vision for a walk for homeless men. Craig had been a pilgrim on the Walk to Emmaus in Corpus Christi. Tony had been a pilgrim on the Presbyterian Cursillo in Austin. They both agreed that the walk was doable and set about creating a team of local leaders from the Emmaus and Cursillo movements to make the vision a reality. Walk to Siloam #1 was held at the Zephyr Baptist Encampment in May 2004. Some of the other early leaders who assisted on Walk #1 were Steve Fieldcamp (spiritual director), James Vaughn (music director), Dan Pierce (assistant lay director), Juan Balboa (assistant lay director), Gary Hudson (head cha), and Tommy Barker (assistant head cha).

A walk has been held every year since then. In fact, Walk to Siloam #6 is scheduled for February 2009. The following people have served as lay directors of the different walks

Walk #1	2004	Craig Adams	Walk #4	2007	John de Montel
Walk #2	2005	Dan Pierce	Walk #5	2008	Michael Swantner
Walk #3	2006	Tony Reyes	Walk #6	2009	Mark de Koch

Pilgrims are selected from homeless shelters around the city and taken by charter bus to the Zephyr Camp. There they are greeted by the team members who have been praying and preparing for the walk. They greet each other in an opening ceremony and meet their "new best friend." They spend the rest of their time together listening to talks, attending chapel, taking communion, playing games, making posters and other projects, and, of course, eating lots and lots of good food. The cost of the walk for each pilgrim is paid for by members of the fourth day community who sponsor the pilgrims.

The Walk to Siloam would not be possible without the assistance and support of the Emmaus and Cursillo communities. Dozens of people from the fourth-day community have served on teams for the Walk to Siloam or sponsored pilgrims. Hundreds of others have given sacrificial acts of agape love, by donating food or money or gifts, writing agape letters and attending the candlelight vigil. What an amazing thing it is for these men, who have experienced so much rejection in life, to know that they are loved and accepted by Jesus and His followers. The Walk receives support not only from the Coastal Bend Emmaus community, but also the Windmill community which also holds its walks at the Zephyr Encampment.

Over 100 pilgrims have attended the Walk to Siloam since it began. Pilgrims have attended from Search for Truth Rescue Mission, Mission 911, the Good Samaritan, Church Without Walls and Victory Outreach. Many of them have made decisions to follow Jesus Christ. Many of them have since found jobs and homes. Many of them have been reconciled with their families. Many of them, however, continue to struggle with problems in life -- such as addictions or anxiety or anger -- that keep them from being "productive" citizens. All of them, however, have experienced the love of Jesus Christ in a tangible way and have been invited to become citizens -- not of an earthly kingdom -- but of a heavenly kingdom. In the Kingdom of God, how productive we are does not depend on our abilities -- but on our abiding with Christ. Jesus said, "If you abide in me, you will bear much fruit."

So, on the Walk to Siloam, we teach the men -- and we remind ourselves -- that the secret to true change is to allow Jesus to change a man's heart. Just as the blind man in John's gospel, the journey may not always be easy. There will be days when we stumble down unfamiliar paths seemingly all alone. But the hope of new, abundant, eternal Life not only waits for us at the end of the road -- but also travels with us every step of the way.

De Colores  
Craig Adams





# Girls Chrysalis Flight



Our Girls Chrysalis Flight will be held the second weekend of June, the 11-14th, 2009. If anyone is interested in serving, whether youth or adult, please send your application to

Judy Luna

45 Encino Loma

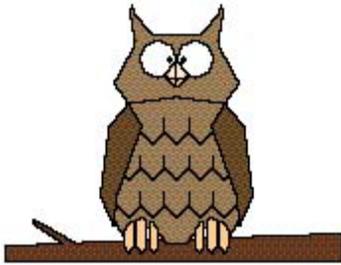
Beeville, TX 78102

Please be in prayer about anyone you would like to sponsor for the chrysalis. The youth must be at least 15 years old and have completed their freshman year in high school.

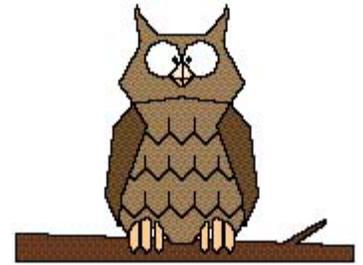
Fly with Christ,

Judy Luna Adult Lay Director

Lauren Carter Youth Lay Director



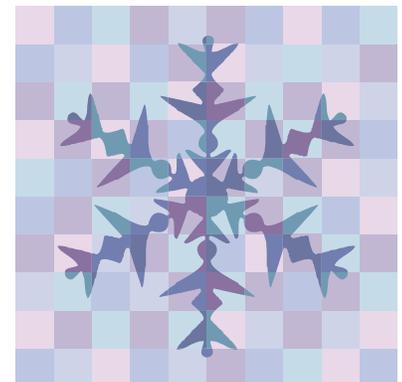
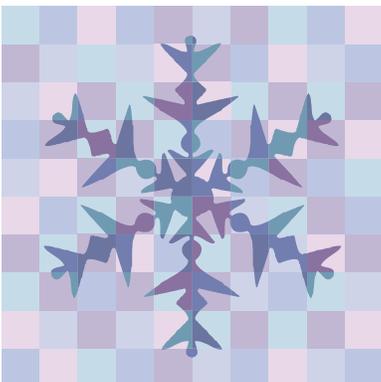
## WINTER HOOT



December 19, 2008

6:30 p.m.

Padre Island Baptist Church  
Snacks, Fellowship, and Worship  
Bring a snack of your choice.  
Everyone Welcome!!



January 22-25  
Women's WTE #1477  
Nancy Gunter LD

January 22-25  
Houston Men's JTD #68  
Steve Hanshaw LD

February 6-8  
Women's JTD #69  
Laura Cantwell LD

**Clarification**  
The increase in team  
and pilgrims fees to  
\$170 in 2009 is for  
**Emmaus only.**



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Coastal Bend Emmaus Community  
PO Box 324  
Corpus Christi, TX 78403  
H (361) 854-6326 C (361) 816-6937  
pga@agcm.cc

**JTD Information**  
5620 Gollihar Rd.  
Corpus Christi, TX 78412  
Voice Mail: 1-888-546-7382  
j2damascus@yahoo.com

**Chrysalis Information**  
Minta Moore  
P.O. Box 6830  
Corpus Christi, TX 78466  
361-949-6828 mintam@sbcglobal.net

**Wanted**

Someone to make new  
wooden table names.  
Needed by January  
22,2009. Contact  
Gail Anderson  
H (361) 854-6326 C (361)  
816-6937 pga@agcm.cc  
pga@agcm.cc

Please plan to join us to celebrate the  
10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Journey to  
Damascus  
at the 2009 Journey to Damascus  
Pot Luck Gathering  
**Friday, January 23, 2009**  
**at Most Precious Blood's Parish**  
**Hall**  
Praise and Worship Music  
Fourth Day Speakers

**2008/2009 EMMAUS BOARD**

Lay Director	Gail Anderson
Asst. Lay Dir.	Jim Schuchardt
Co-Spiritual Directors	Rev. Gloria Lear Rev. Mark Porterfield
Treasurer	Gale Bridgeman

Website:  
[www.CoastalBendEmmaus.org](http://www.CoastalBendEmmaus.org)

**2007/2008 DAMASCUS BOARD**

President	Jim Kollaja
Vice President	Maury Jarrell
Spiritual Director	Father Tom Goodwin
Asst SD's	Rev. Billy Storms
Treasurer	Leonard Lee

Website:  
[www.JourneyToDamascus.org](http://www.JourneyToDamascus.org)

**2008 CHRYSALIS BOARD**

Lay Director	Minta Moore
Asst. Lay Dir.	Julie Brown
Spiritual Director	Rev. Chuck Miller

Website:  
[www.ChrysalisCoastalBend.org](http://www.ChrysalisCoastalBend.org)

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