



Buy Nothing Christmas Information Kit

Buy Nothing Christmas.org

INFORMATION KIT

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1. WHY BUY NOTHING?

Reasons for supporting a Buy Nothing Christmas

Many people have asked me why I am participating in a Buy Nothing Christmas. I have a short answer and a long answer. The short answer is: After being continuously confronted with stats on the rich and poor and our level of consumption, I had to do something. And, because I'm a member of a church (Mennonite), I wanted to see what would happen if we pricked our collective Canadian conscience with a full-page ad in Canadian Mennonite magazine (Oct. 22, 2001). It's a whimsical social experiment with a hidden agenda that tends to get heavy and paralyzing. So, in keeping with the spirit of our age - amusement and entertainment - I'm trying to keep it light and provocative.

Longer answer

My longer answer involves thoughts on faithfulness, authenticity, empowerment, and experimentation. In terms of faithfulness, I have this profound sense that somehow everyone is connected. This is what my intuition tells me. I also hear it from people talking about globalization. The new physicists, and weather watchers talk about it too. In my studies of Buddhism I learned the fundamental principle of inter-dependent co-origination. In my Christian development, I have come to see God everywhere and in all things. So, when it comes to Christmas and consumer spending, my faith in God compels me to think of all my brothers and sisters all over the globe, although I'm quick to get caught up in my immediate cares and tend to forget about this. Or, I get overwhelmed and do the bare minimum. So, my participation in Buy Nothing Christmas, directs me to a larger, spiritual perspective on the season.

In terms of authenticity, I'm trying to find a way to be "real." I'm on a journey to connect my life and faith. I am not alone, according to Wade Clark Roof, in his book, *Spiritual Marketplace: Baby Boomers and the Remaking of American Religion* (Princeton, 1999). He describes the contemporary scene as an "effusive quest culture" where there's a disenchantment with traditional theism and a "turning inward in search of meaning and strength." Like others mentioned by Roof, instead of leaving the church, I have taken another look at its teachings and found myself inspired by the possibilities of its prophetic edge. Mennonites have a long history of counter-culture protest, peace activism, and justice work. I think it's time to drag this out further into the open.

It seems that economic issues haven't been a big concern of establishment churches. Sallie McFague, in *Life Abundant: Rethinking Theology and Economy for a Planet in Peril* (Fortress, 2001), says of establishment churches, "in all cases personal sexual issues surface as the church's interpretation of sin and evil; public, economic issues seem to be of less concern."

Expensive affluence

In the case of the Mennonite church in Canada, the majority of its members, including me, has benefited from the current economic arrangement (free market capitalism). But our affluence has come with some expense to others. Participating in a Buy Nothing Christmas is one way for me to continue looking at peace and justice issues in terms of global economics. It gets kind of heavy.

In terms of empowerment, I feel relatively powerless to make positive changes in society, which is ironic because I supposedly belong to an influential group of Canadians: I'm white, male, middle-class, heterosexual, married, educated and well-connected to society. But still, I see society dominated by big businesses - the media is owned by fewer and fewer big corporations, entertainment industries own media outlets, internet sites and even phone lines, our retail stores are dominated by international companies. The steam-roller culture is pressing us citizens into consumer moulds - challenging this process is not only daunting, it seems impossible.

Democracy, the ability of citizens to have some say in how their society operates, has been overrun by corporate interests. While some intellectuals hold out hope for the citizen (see John Ralston Saul, *The Unconscious Civilization* [Anansi Press, 1995], especially chapter 3, "From Corporation to Democracy"), I'm not so optimistic. My participation in a Buy Nothing Christmas is one way for me to say that I'm against the pro-corporate orientation of our society. In some respects, citizens as consumers have been reduced to the role of subjects in a feudal society, where corporate interests are king. It's empowering for me to shed this self-concept and take an anti-consumerist stance.

Rising tide of resistance

This is not an unpopular view these days. In *No Logo: Taking Aim at the Brand Bullies* (Vintage, 2000), Naomi Klein documents the rising tide of resistance against corporations and their encroachment into our public and mental spaces. Whereas the media tends to reduce anti-corporate demonstrations to "consumer boycotts," Klein recognizes their real political (i.e. democratic) intentions. "It is more accurate to describe them as political campaigns that use consumer goods as readily accessible targets, as public relations levers and as popular-education tools," she says. As I participate in a Buy Nothing Christmas, I'm seeking to re-assert my political power, which, when combined with the actions of others, is quite empowering, and even offers a hint of hope.

If we were able to influence the government, what would I want to tell it? I would want to work at ways of reducing systemic poverty. Some Christian organizations, such as Citizens for Public Justice in Toronto, and the Canadian Ecumenical Jubilee Initiative (which includes Mennonite participation), have already put forth good suggestions for policy makers.

A good study guide for churches is, *Jubilee, Wealth and the Market* (Canadian Ecumenical Jubilee Initiative, 1999). Ronald J. Sider, a Mennonite, professor, and president of Evangelicals for Social Action, has provided an excellent biblical rationale for Christian attention to unequal distribution of wealth in his book, *Just Generosity: A New Vision for Overcoming Poverty in America* (Baker, 1999).

Beyond charity

In my support of Buy Nothing Christmas, I wish to address how our society is structured and how it tends to favour the rich over the poor. Because this is so complicated, we are tempted to fall back on a charity model. It's taken me a while to understand how acts of charity towards the poor, even though well-intended, are ultimately not as beneficial as structural change.

Jean Swanson has worked as an anti-poverty activist for 25 years, 15 of which were with End Legislated Poverty in Vancouver. In her book, *Poor Bashing: The Politics of Exclusion (Between the Lines, Toronto, 2001)*, she says charity creates the illusion that needs get met. Quoting a member of Ottawa's Social Planning Council, she says, charity "is a visible way of making people feel good about a problem, but not really addressing it in any depth. It doesn't address why the person is poor. It doesn't address jobs. It doesn't address income levels."

Even though charity is important, it should not replace justice work, she says. "If ending poverty is a priority for you, focus on working for more income and power equality," she advises.

People can change

How can we, as ordinary people, change society for the better? I'm not a politician, lobbyist, professor or big-time consultant (I'm currently a graduate student and a journalist). I'm tired of feeling like I can't do anything.

So, even if it's insignificant, I've decided to participate in a Buy Nothing Christmas. It's an experiment - I'm curious to see what happens. I think it's a great way to challenge our own consumer mindset, to put our faith into action, to offer a prophetic "no" to unfettered free-market consumer capitalism, and an excellent way to generate some good dinner-table discussions on the topic of economics, politics, religion, and what we're not getting each other for Christmas.

—*Aiden Schlichting Enns*

2. ANSWERS TO SOME QUESTIONS

1. What Is Buy Nothing Christmas? Buy Nothing Christmas is a national initiative started by Canadian Mennonites who offer a prophetic “no” to the patterns of overconsumption of middle-class North Americans. They are inviting Christians (and others) all over Canada to join a movement to de-commercialize Christmas and re-design a Christian lifestyle that is richer in meaning, smaller in impact upon the earth, and greater in giving to people less-privileged.

2. Who are the Mennonites? A group of Christians who are community-oriented, counter-culture pacifists (at least in theory, see below for more). But this campaign is open to everyone, regardless of religion, faith, creed or conviction.

3. What do I have to do to become a member? There’s no membership, no fees, no plaques, no club cards. But, we need encouragement. So, if you’re sympathetic to the Buy Nothing Christmas campaign, let us know by sending us your feedback (using the information below).

4. Can I be a part of Buy Nothing Christmas even if I buy a few things? Definitely. We are all going to have to buy some things. When you do buy things, we encourage you to remember principles like buying locally, fairly-traded, environmentally friendly packaging, recycling or re-using, buying things that last, and so on. The main aim of this campaign is not to save money (although that can be a side benefit), it’s not to slow down the pace of Christmas (although that can be a side benefit), it is to challenge our over-consumptive lifestyle and how it affects global disparities and the earth. So, even though you might buy a few things at Christmas, it’s important to think in these global economic terms.

5. What if I have children and feel tremendous pressure to buy them stuff? Our precious children - with their normal vulnerability to peer pressure, their desire to fit in, and their disposable income, or ability to influence their parents’ spending - are a mini-battlefield of the marketers and branding machinery. They try to get the kids “needing” gizmos, gadgets, movie-theme toys, and endless “new” versions of popular toys. Companies like to advertise right in the schools (on the walls, books, cafeteria, buses, and computer equipment). The reality is that many parents will find it extremely difficult to practice a Buy Nothing Christmas. But it IS possible. For example, some otherwise normal people have decided that television is a bad influence for their kids. So they just don’t have one in the home. In the same way, we believe there are parents out there who will want to teach their kids the richness of a non-commercial Christmas. Remember, you can still have a special time without buying stuff. If you are a parent, let us know how you deal with this (see the address below).

6. If we all buy nothing this Christmas, won’t a lot of people lose their jobs? Yes, and now we’re getting close to the core reasons for why Buy Nothing Christmas is necessary in the first place: Our economy is based on a consumer-driven capitalism. And because it’s the only economy we have right now, if we stop shopping we stop the economy. Hence we had President George W. Bush and Prime Minister Jean Chrétien telling citizens to get on with their lives after the September 11 terrorist attacks and shop. But there are pitfalls of our current economic system: We work too hard to save money to buy things we don’t really need, we buy into a standard of living that reinforces the gap between the rich and poor, and we ruin the earth to a point where we’ll eventually all lose our jobs anyway.

7. What do you have against capitalism? In a nutshell, it favours the rich, abandons the poor, is heartless, and is based upon the assumption that people buy things out of self-interest. We’re not saying communism is a better alternative. We are in a crucial time when economists are working at new models. Some Christians (e.g. Herman E. Daly and John B. Cobb, Jr. in *For the Common Good: Redirecting the Economy Toward Community, the Environment, and a Sustainable Future* [Beacon Press, 1994]) and others are proposing new models that assume people are not only self-interested, but also interested in the common good.

8. Do you think a Buy Nothing Christmas will make a difference? It already has made a significant difference. Getting people to recognize problems (North American over-consumption) and begin to imagine new, more life-giving solutions is a big deal.

9. Are you against giving gifts at Christmas? Giving gifts at Christmas is a good thing to do - it’s a small re-enactment of the incarnation of God’s love. Gift-giving, as we know from other occasions (like birthdays, weddings, housewarmings) serves as a kind of social glue that keeps us together. It shows affection, thoughtfulness and love. While gift-giving is a good thing to do at Christmas, that doesn’t mean we have to go overboard at Christmas.

10. Who is running this campaign? The campaign is a volunteer effort, loosely coordinated by an ad hoc Buy Nothing Christmas committee consisting of Aiden Schlichting Enns, Karen Schlichting, Tracy Wideman, Eric Stutzman, Elsie Wiebe, Kelly Dueck, Catherine Barga and Joel Kroeker.

11. How is it funded? The campaign is funded entirely by donations, including a contribution from Mennonite Central Committee Canada. Contributions go towards paying for ads and sending out information kits.

12. Is this just for Christians, or can anyone be a part of it? It’s for everybody.

13. What is the connection between this Buy Nothing Day, Earth Day and TV Turnoff Week? There’s lots of overlap, especially with Buy Nothing Day and TV Turnoff Week, which are heavily promoted by Adbusters magazine and website <www.adbusters.org>.

14. What more can you tell me about Mennonites? As mentioned above, they are Christians who are community-oriented, counter-culture pacifists (at least in theory — in reality, they span the spectrums of class, economic power, political influence and accommodation to culture). Their organization is egalitarian and inclusive, with an emphasis on welcoming strangers and helping people in need at home and abroad. The life and teachings of Jesus in the New Testament are primary.

They believe Jesus gave fairly clear and prosaic lessons on how to live (see Matthew, chs. 5-7) a radical lifestyle which is profoundly spiritual with a socio-economic impact. Historically, they constitute the radical wing of the 16th Century Protestant Reformation. They were persecuted by both Lutherans and Catholics for their alternative, anti-institutional, community lifestyle, their insistence that the church should remain separate from the state, that people should be baptized as adults, and that personal faith should be evident to others by a communal life that is peace-loving and concerned about the alleviating the suffering of others.

3. ALTERNATIVE GIFT IDEAS

Many of the following ideas were borrowed from the website for the Hundred Dollar Holiday <www.newdream.org/commerc/100holiday.html>. You are welcome to give us your gift ideas using the addresses below.

1. Create coupons for a massage, spring cleaning, child-minding, manicure, etc.
2. Create a menu of various culinary delights (e.g., Tantalizing Thai, Mexican Fiesta, etc.) and have the gift recipient choose one of the options.
3. Collect meaningful photos for the gift recipient, make colour photocopies and create a collage.
4. Write and illustrate a book for the young people in your life.
5. Knit a stocking, hat, socks, etc.
6. Do something exciting and challenging together (e.g., long walk, bike ride, hike, art course).
7. Compile a list of memories and arrange them in a creative fashion.
8. Videotape and interview your elderly parents about childhood memories, how they met, etc., and give to siblings or children.
9. Paint an empty wine bottle with non-toxic paint and fill with olive oil. Top with an oil pour spout that can be found at a gourmet cooking shop.
10. Bake your favourite holiday treat and pack in a recycled tin.
11. Fill a basket with home-made goodies.
12. Frame a piece of your artwork.
13. Make a mixed cassette tape and choose songs that make you think of that person. Under each title, explain why you chose that song.
14. Give away a valued possession.
15. Make a puppet from a sock.
16. Fill an old trunk or suitcase with fun clothing, hats and gaudy jewelry for your children to play dress-up.
16. Wrap gifts in newspaper, maps, scarves or interesting clothing.
17. Make a calendar with pictures of family members and/or scenery.
18. For the elderly people in your life, research newspaper and magazine articles from their youth and present in a creative fashion.
19. Stamp and address postcards for family members.
20. Collect quotes that make you think of someone.
21. Make a soothing, herb pillow filled with lavender, rose, etc.
22. Make a birdseed ball.
23. If you are skilled in a particular area, offer a lesson or class.
24. Make hand-made soap or candles.
25. Purchase gifts at a fair-trade shop, garage sale or thrift shop.
26. Make tree ornaments out of old CDs.
27. Buy a used book and in the inside cover explain why you chose the book for that person.

4. FOR FURTHER READING

Doris Janzen Longacre, *Living More With Less* (Herald Press, 1980). A neoclassic.

Trek: Venture into a World of Enough, a resource packet available from Mennonite Central Committee <www.mcc.org>. Nifty, bite-size chunks.

Sallie McFague, *Life Abundant: Rethinking Theology and Economy for a Planet in Peril* (Fortress, 2001). Wow.

Bill McKibben, *Hundred Dollar Holiday* (Simon & Shuster, 1998).

Herman E. Daly and John B. Cobb, Jr. in *For the Common Good: Redirecting the Economy Toward Community, the Environment, and a Sustainable Future* (Beacon Press, 1994). Ambitious readers only

Jubilee, Wealth and the Market (Canadian Ecumenical Jubilee Initiative, 1999). Order from jubilee@devp.org, or <www.web.net/~jubilee>.

5. POSTERS

Download a FREE poster and change your world. (See the website for several posters, www.buynothingchristmas.org.) Buy Nothing Christmas is a stress-reliever, and more people need to hear about. You can change your world by simply putting up one of these posters (or make your own) in your church, place of worship, home or work. Be sneaky about it if you have to. The point is to get people thinking. It's an idea whose time has come, so get out there and make a difference!

6. CURRICULUM

A CLOSER LOOK AT CHRISTMAS

A three-session study guide for small groups

Session 1

EXAMINING THE STORY OF CHRIST'S BIRTH

Read Matthew 2:1-12 and Luke 2:8-20

The recounting of Jesus' nativity is one of the most celebrated stories of the Bible, and with good reason. The mystery of birth, the beauty of a new born, and the promise of salvation make the story well-suited for telling year after year during the bleakness of winter. The Magis play a significant role in the account. The universality of the message is reinforced with these astrologers who journey from afar to celebrate Jesus' birth. But what about the treasures they brought with them?

Surely their trappings of wealth were incongruous with the humble conditions in which they found the "King of the Jews." But the contrast of three kingly figures paying homage to an infant in a feeding trough makes perfect sense if you consider that Jesus brought a message that elevated the low. For example, the Magis arrived much after the birth - perhaps months later - and they play second fiddle to the local shepherds who arrived immediately on the scene.

These marginal, poor, field workers were the ones entrusted with announcing Christ's birth. This is more noteworthy than the gifts brought by representatives of the privileged class. Certainly Mary knew the arrival of her son was not God's way of affirming the elite of the day but an indication that the tables needed to be turned. Thus she sang in the Magnificat: "He has brought down rulers from their thrones, but has lifted up the humble. He has filled the hungry with good things, but has sent the rich away empty." (Luke 1: 46)

This reversal of the traditional social standing was central to Jesus' description of the kingdom of God - a realm characterized by Donald Kraybill as "an inverted, or upside down, way of life that contrasts with the prevailing social order" (see *The Upside-Down Kingdom*, Herald Press, revised 1990). King Herod tried to snuff out Jesus' dramatic message of liberation, but it could not be denied and has inspired countless marginalized people over the centuries.

Discussion

1. Think about common understanding of the nativity story. How does it compare with what you read in the paragraphs above?
2. How can we reflect the Magi in our celebration of Christmas?
3. How can we reflect the shepherds in our celebration of Christmas?
4. In what ways does the story of Jesus' birth affect your impression of Jesus' life and message?

Responsive reading

One: O Gracious God, as we recount the story of Jesus' birth, we hear of fear, anxiety, and uncertainty.

All: Help us to remember the hope in Christmas.

One: Much like that first Christmas, our celebration of Christ's birth is filled with disarray.

All: Help us to remember the peace in Christmas.

One: When we feel overwhelmed by pressures to shop, decorate, bake and cook,

All: Help us to find the joy in Christmas.

One: When money dwindles and expectations increase,

All: Help us to find the grace in Christmas.

One: When our calendars fill up and our patience runs down,

All: Help us to find the abundance in Christmas.

All: O God, this Advent let us embrace the celebration of the birth of a baby in a manger. Help us to experience a Christmas that-holds a place for Christ's promise of peace.

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THE CELEBRATION OF CHRISTMAS

Read Leviticus 23: 39-44 and Nehemiah 8:9-12

The holidays described in the Old Testament show that God recognized the value of taking time off to appreciate the good things in life. What better reason to celebrate than the coming of the Messiah? The Bible does not give an exact date when Jesus was born. We observe Christmas Day on December 25 because church leaders took the long-standing, pre-Christian celebration of winter solstice and adapted it to commemorate the birth of Jesus.

In Northern Europe, the winter solstice was a time to celebrate the coming of longer days and more sunlight. Further south where winter wasn't so bleak, the Roman solstice festival of Saturnalia was marked by the consumption of food and wine and a reversal of Rome's social order. Slaves were masters and peasants ruled the city.

In the fourth century, the Bishop of Rome decreed that Jesus' birth would be celebrated on December 25. But even after the winter festivals received their Christian makeover, they still retained their "carnival" nature. This included heavy drinking, peasant subversion of social standards and other challenges to class-based inequalities.

Puritans later reacted against the excess of Christmas festivities and went so far as to outlaw them in some parts of England and the American colonies. According to Stephen Nissenbaum (*The Battle for Christmas*, Knopf, 1996), Puritans objected to Christmas celebrations because, "Most fundamentally, Christmas was an occasion when the social hierarchy itself was symbolically turned upside down, in a gesture that inverted designated roles of gender, age, and class."

Religious leaders were not the only ones threatened by this inversion. In the nineteenth century, members among New York's bourgeois hatched a plan to turn the rowdy, public, subversive celebration into a family affair with a focus on gift-giving, and, of course, gift-buying. This dramatic shift in the way to celebrate Christmas led to the holiday commercialism we see today. This means that the modern "religion of consumer capitalism" is only a couple hundred years old. Shopping malls have become like places of worship – most people are apt to spend more time in the mall around Christmas than in church.

While we still emphasize the overconsumption aspect of Christmas, we've lost the social-inversion dimensions of past celebrations. Overturning the status quo was central to festivals of the past – today it is Jesus' message that is overturned. As Leigh Schmidt notes: "feasts celebrating affluence and indulgence are seen as standing the liberating message of Christianity - good news for the poor and the downtrodden - on its head: Santa Claus and the promise of material reward, not the Christ Child and the divine humility of the manger, become the ultimate symbolic measure of American time."

Discussion

1. To what extent should early Christmas festivities shape our current celebrations of Jesus' birth?
 2. How does the commercialization of Christmas gift-giving affect the way you give presents?
 3. What expectations are on us at Christmas time? How do we challenge unreasonable expectations without challenging the celebration?
 4. What are some ways we can overturn the status quo during advent season?
 5. Can you envision a Christmas season that maintained a carnival nature, without the pressures to buy and spend? What would it look like?
 6. How can you promote this vision in your community?
- How can you promote this vision in your community?

Responsive reading

All: O God, in the fullness of time you sent your son Jesus in a manner that confounded kings yet moved shepherds and magi. Guide us now as we prepare to celebrate the coming of the Prince of Peace.

One: As we make our family plans for Advent and Christmas,

All: We commit to hold central the one whose birth we celebrate.

One: As we feel the pressure to buy and buy and buy,

All: We commit to resist our temptations to find you in material things.

One: As we consider all of the waste generated in our celebrations,

All: We commit to set limits on what we will consume and throw away.

One: As our plans do not include those who are hungry, sick, lonely and imprisoned,

All: We commit to seek you in the spirit of humility.

One: As we make our Christmas lists for family and friends,

All: We commit to remember our reason to celebrate.

All: O God, forgive us when we forget who you are and why you have come. As we prepare for the Prince of Peace to be born in our midst, help us to bring peace to a troubled world and people. As the shepherds and magi looked for you in a stable, let us look for you among those you came to serve. Amen.

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Session 3

CHRISTIAN RESPONSE TO CONSUMERISM

Read Deuteronomy 8:10-14 and 2 Corinthians 8:13-14

There is no shortage of Bible passages that call us to show restraint and not hoard goods. If we are interested in the plight of the poor, it is difficult to justify over-indulgence as our neighbors starve. The scriptures make it very clear that we are to care of the poor and feed the hungry.

The consumerism that surrounds the celebration of Jesus' birth is particularly curious when we contrast it with his teachings on possessions. He often told his listeners to dispense with wealth and belongings entirely and take a carefree approach to possessions: "Seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well." (Matthew 6:33)

Of course, it's a good thing that people should be well fed and clothed, should have adequate housing, and be able to use modern technology in their daily lives. But Fr. Timothy V. Vaverek argues that to make these things the ideal is "to diminish the purpose of life, and to lead people into the dead-end of materialism." Surely the average North American has reached the point where he or she has "enough." Proverbs makes the point nicely: "Give me neither poverty nor riches." (Proverbs 30: 8)

Theologian Sallie McFague also captures this ideal in her call for "cruciform living," which she describes as "an alternative notion of the abundant life which will involve a philosophy of enoughness, limitations on energy use, and sacrifice for the sake of others."

We have enough, and to keep adding to our pile not only takes up resources that could go to the poor but also has a devastating impact on the environment. If everyone consumed according to North American standards, the Earth would be completely stripped of its resources in short order. We cannot love God if we do not love and treat with reverence the world that God created.

Ultimately, we must remember that with his life and teachings, Jesus contracted dramatically with his surrounding culture. Christians are called to live in similar opposition to the norms and assumptions of their society. Thus, in a culture marked so heavily by acquisition and consumption, following Christ's example means living simply and aspiring for attitude of "enough."

Discussion

1. What types of gift-giving serve the interests of the poor?
2. What criteria do I use to determine what I truly need and what is not essential?
3. When friends and family begin to ask me what I want for Christmas, what will I tell them? And how do I avoid sounding self-righteous?
4. Think about a meaningful gift you have received. What made it meaningful? How can this affect your gift-giving?
5. How do we celebrate joyfully this Christmas, while still holding the awareness of our hungry neighbor and suffering environment?
6. What Christmas traditions besides gift-giving can we reinvent or rediscover to celebrate Christmas more meaningfully?

Responsive reading

One: Holy Child of Bethlehem, whose parents found no room in the inn,

All: We pray for all who are homeless.

One: Holy Child of Bethlehem, born in a stable,

All: We pray for all who live in poverty.

One: Holy Child of Bethlehem, rejected stranger,

All: We pray for all who are lost, alone, all who cry for loved ones.

One: Holy Child of Bethlehem, whom Herod sought to kill,

All: We pray for all who live with danger, all who are persecuted.

One: Holy Child of Bethlehem, a refugee in Egypt,

All: We pray for all who are far from their homes.

One: Holy Child of Bethlehem, in you God was pleased to dwell,

All: Help us, we pray, to see the divine image in people everywhere.

(Notes: This study series was prepared by Nicholas Klassen, with help from Catherine Barga and Aiden Schlichting Enns in November, 2002. The litanies are based on material provided by Alternatives for Simple Living, <www.simpleliving.org>.

Resources for further study

Richard Horsley and James Tracy, Eds. *Christmas Unwrapped: Consumerism, Christ, and Culture* (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 2001)

Donald Krabbill, *The Upside-Down Kingdom: A Sociological Analysis of the Synoptic Gospel* (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press. Revised edition 1990)

Sallie McFague, *Life Abundant: Rethinking Theology and Economy for a Planet in Peril* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2001)

Stephen Nissenbaum, *The Battle for Christmas* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1996)

Leigh Eric Schmidt, "Christianity in the Marketplace: Christmas and the Consumer Culture," *Cross Currents*, Fall 1992, Vol. 42 Issue 3

Timothy V. Vaverek, "Christian Asceticism: Breaking Consumerism's Destructive Hold," *Houston Catholic Worker*, January 2001, Vol. 21, No. 1

7. INVITATION TO CONTACT US

We welcome your comments, feed-back, gift ideas, other good resources we should know about, and most of all your stories (successful or otherwise) of celebrating a Buy Nothing Christmas. The campaign is a volunteer effort, loosely coordinated by an ad hoc Buy Nothing Christmas committee consisting of Aiden Schlichting Enns, Karen Schlichting, Tracy Wideman, Eric Stutzman, Elsie Wiebe, Kelly Dueck, Catherine Bargen, Joel Kroeker and Fred Kaarsemaker.

For more information, contact,

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