

Hunting Buffalo at the Texas Manger

Christ the Redeemer Church
November 29, 2009
1st Sunday of Advent

Jeremiah 33:14-16
Rev Gary L. Smith
www.christredeemerchurch.com

What if Jesus Had Been Borne in Texas? This Christ the Redeemer Church 2009 Christmas Play is an Interactive Play. You will not come to watch. You will come to participate. You will not be an audience. You will be part of the play. You are in it.

This year is a Guy's version of the Christmas Play. Chili to eat. Animals to hunt. Angels talking with a twang. Disgruntled teenage travelers on a long family trip.

Homemade Chili. Oh, we will let some girls into the play. Katie will be singing a solo "Jesus Loves Me" at the manger. Well, at the barn. Alicia will be singing a solo. Kara will be singing a solo.

The wise men will be dressed in firemen's suits. You will eventually figure it all out.

We four male directors are letting the children write some of their own parts and lines. Not all of this can be found in Luke.

I heard an interesting interview with an author on the radio this morning on the way to church. He says that the next generation of authors will be doing Collaborative Writing...writing books as a collective process. He says that the current model of writing a book is for a top author to determine a subject matter, get up front royalties from a publisher, go off to a solitary space and write a book, sell it, and turn around and do it again.

He went on to say that in the future more and more authors will be writing as a group process. His example is that an author could decide to write a life story on the President of the United States. Go off, research it, and write it. He says that kids growing up with My Space and Facebook are used to writing and sharing as a group and will push future authors to use their inputs for a group book. It will no longer be a solitary writing process where one author is holed up and putting out singular thoughts. It will be a group thought process pulled together by one organizing author/director.

He says critics of this thinking fail to realize that prior to the creation of the western printing press in 1454 that our community stories and writings were collaborative, story telling, community-derived products. He said that the printing press cut off the community development of a story and led to a singular author concept. Social networking sites are taking this younger generation back to the days when group sharing and community story telling through oral tradition was the way stories were passed on via the community.

Our way of letting the kids write their own lines and parts in the Christmas Play this year goes back to the old fashioned collaborative, community-created group story development process. What we are doing this year is not new. It dates back to pre-printing press days.

Blake wanted to be the buffalo in the Christmas story. The roaming buffalo. A wise man is going to be an armed Buffalo Hunter. The buffalo is going to be downed and dragged back to the manger to provide food for the hungry travelers at the manger.

Sydney wants to be a countrified angel. My spell checker on my computer did not recognize the phrase countrified at first.

Carpenter and Maddie are going to take your money. They are selling tickets for the homemade Chili that will be cooking during the performance. They are tax collectors. Come with money to the play.

“The time is coming when I will do the good thing I promised...” writes Jeremiah.

Mark the hunting wise man said he will drag the dead buffalo behind the manger scene. Then he will give him some Legos to play with because he does not want Blake to be bored the rest of the play while he is laying there as a dead buffalo.

With everything going on in our adult world we need this year’s play to be written by the kids.

So today we light this first candle of Advent. Come this year with a good thing, O Lord. Come into our lives this month and give us a Moment of Hope. This year we are going to be eating Chili around the Manger. Wearing western clothes, cowboy hats, watching stick horses being ridden in the Pageant.

Who wrote this Story? Some One who did not come into our world to Watch. But Some One Who came into our world to participate in our lives. The Christmas Story is an Interactive play. God did not come to watch. God came to Participate in our lives. God came to do some Collaborative work with us here on earth.

I am glad to have another Advent to enjoy in life. The kids can not wait. And they are making me eager to see what they are going to do. And they are making me hungry for chili this year. And hungry for Advent chocolate from Germany. Amen.