**Christmas and Jesus**

**The date of Christ’s birth is purely conjectural -- there is no historical evidence that Christ was born on December 25. Mention of a December 25 celebration of Christ’s birth first appeared around the year 353, but it wasn’t until 440 -- more than four centuries after his actual birth--that the Church proclaimed that day as the official date for the festival. *(James Meyers, in Mammoth Book of Trivia, p. 196)***

**December 25 was not celebrated as the birthdate of Christ until the year 440 A. D. *(Isaac Asimov’s Book of Facts, p. 370)***

**Six Christ birthdates possibly more accurate than December 25th (as suggested by scholars): August 28th, May 20th, April 19th, April 20th, November 17th, and March 28th. *(Robert Hendrickson, in The Dictionary of Eponyms)***

**A six-year-old was watching the classic film, King of Kings, on TV with her eight-year-old brother. She was quite wrapped up in it emotionally and started crying during Christ’s final moments on the Cross. Whereupon her brother put his arm around her. “Don’t worry, Janie,” he said, “He’ll come back at Christmas.” *(Gene Scott)***

**Girl: “So what would you like for Christmas?” Boy: “Nothing store-bought, make me something instead.” Girl: “Make you something? Who do I look like, Martha Stewart? It’s unnatural not to buy gifts this time of year.” Boy: “Well, I argue it’s unnatural the way people have forgotten the true meaning of Christmas. Everything is so commercialized.” Girl: “Not this argument again.” Boy: “If God had wanted all this materialism, Jesus would have been born in a ‘Wal-Mart.” *(Steve Breen, in Grand Avenue comic strip)***

**“Here’s a king,” announced our three-year-old as he unwrapped a figurine from our Nativity scene. “And here’s a donkey,” he added as he continued unpacking. Removing tissue from the statue of the infant, molded permanently in his manger, our son exclaimed, “Here’s baby Jesus in his car seat!” *(Nancy Wolfinger)***

**Each Christmas our church presents a concert featuring a live Nativity scene. My five-year-old nephew was up in the balcony, not paying much attention. As the wise men began marching down the center aisle toward the manger, my brother leaned over and whispered to my nephew, “Curtis, look! You’re missing it! Here comes the king!” Curtis jumped up, looked over the balcony railing and asked, “That’s Elvis?” *(Julie Loomis, in Reader’s Digest)***

**How old is Baby Jesus? Four, according to my 6-year-old godchild, Shaun. While lighting the Advent wreath, Shaun observed that since Christmas is the celebration of the birthday of Baby Jesus, and there are four candles on the Advent wreath, then Jesus must be turning 4 this Christmas. *(Michael J. Bradley, in Catholic Digest)***

**A concerned little girl approached her father one day and said, “Daddy, I just don’t believe it’s right to ignore Jesus.” The father, more than a little confused, answered, “I agree with you. We shouldn’t ignore Jesus. But what made you think of that?” “Well, it’s that Christmas song we sing at church. You know, the one that says, ‘O come let us ignore Him.’” *(King Duncan & Angela Akers, in Amusing Grace, p. 68)***

**Billy says while opening his presents under the tree: “I’m glad Jesus wasn’t born on the 29th of February!” *(Bil Keane, in The Family Circus comic strip)***

**A Child is born! That is forever the message of Christmas. A Child is born! In the early days of the 19th century, the world was following with bated breath the march of Napoleon and waiting with feverish impatience for the latest war news. And all the while, in their own homes, babies were being born. Just think of some of those babies. Why, in one year, lying midway between Trafalgar and Waterloo, their stole into the world a host of heroes! During that year, 1809, William Gladstone was born in Liverpool, Alfred Tennyson drew his first breath at the Stomersby rectory, Oliver Wendell Holmes made his initial appearance in Massachusetts, and Abraham Lincoln was born in Old Kentucky. Music was enriched by the advent of Frederic Chopin at Warsaw and Felix Mendelsohn at Hamburg. But nobody thought of babies. Everything was thinking of battles. Yet, viewing that age in a perspective the years enable us to command, we may well ask ourselves which of the battles of 1809 mattered more than the babies of 1809. When a wrong wants righting, or a work wants doing, or a truth wants preaching, God sends a baby into the world to do it. That is why, long ago, A Babe was born at Bethlehem*. (F. W. Boreham)***

**In a rehearsal in Barbara Robinson’s delightful story, The Best Christmas Pageant Ever, a question arises over what to name the Christ child. One little boy offered the names found in Isaiah, “Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.” One of the children, Imogene Herdman, spoke up and said, “He’d never get out of the first grade if he had to learn how to write all of that!” *(King Duncan & Angela Akers, in Amusing Grace, p. 346)***

**The origin of Xmas, an abbreviation for Christmas, originated with Greek Christians. “X” is the first letter of the Greek word for Christ, Xristos. By the sixteenth century, Xmas was widely used throughout Europe among Christians who understood that it meant “Christ’s mass.” Later Christians, unfamiliar with the Greek origin, mistook the “X” as a sign of disrespect and an attempt by unbelievers to rid Christmas of its central meaning. Some Christians still disapprove of the abbreviation. *(Victor M. Parachin, in Unity magazine)***

**With the Birth within of the Christ consciousness, we can BE THE TRUTH in action, or the LIVING WORD. Perhaps that is why the Greek letter “X” (the Christ) is often used in XMAS, as we do “cross” over into a new awareness. (Rev. Andy Kress)**

**Ever wonder what the X stands for in Xmas? Copyists used abbreviations as far back as the fourth century. X means CH, the first two letters in Christ's name, in Greek. Thus, Xmas is short for Christmas*. (hindu.com, as at appeared in the Rocky Mountain News)***

**Why is the abbreviation for Christmas Xmas? Using X to represent Christ in Christmas is a tradition nearly as old as Christianity. It stems from the fact that the first letter in the Greek word for Christ is chi, which is represented by a symbol similar to X in the modern Roman alphabet, according to snopes.com. *(Rocky Mountain News)***

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