



NightLight

A NEWSLETTER OF McLEAN MINISTRIES

"take heed....as to a light that shines in a dark place." II Peter 1:19

Volume 307 • December 2018



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Dear Friends,

The Christmas lullaby, *Away in a Manger*, paints pictures in our minds of Jesus as a child watching over all children. Well, of course He certainly does watch over and loves every soul, young and old. There is certainly nothing wrong with communicating to a child musical images of Jesus as a child identifying fully with every child.

Yet there is a problem with the words "no crying He makes." It is not reasonable to think Jesus as a baby did not cry, since, being fully human, His lungs would have needed the development just like every other child who was ever born. But besides that, do we want to communicate a picture of the Incarnation that is not born in tears? No, Jesus did not descend to us either as a fully conscious sentient being aloof from human realities, nor did He arrive fully feeling the weight of the world's sorrow. But He DID come as a refugee

baby in difficult circumstances.

There are many who attribute this song to Martin Luther, but he did not write it. It is a thoroughly American lyric. When I first saw Luther's name connected with its authorship, I doubted it. Turns out my sense was right. It is a forgivable sentimentalism rooted in our lack of understanding the plight of a helpless refugee Middle Eastern family.

I am not trying to ruin anyone's favorite Christmas song (if it is your favorite). It is still a song that is useful for communicating good helpful images. We live in a world of so much upheaval, when not only the Middle East, but also other parts of the world, are filled with crying refugees. I would so much hope we might learn the lyrics I have printed (on the next page) and give them at least equal hearing, not only at Christmas, but every other day of the year, until the Child, who is now a Man and King of the Universe, comes again, and ends the suffering of every refugee.





CHILD OF THE POOR by Scott Soper

HELPLESS AND HUNGRY, LOWLY, AFRAID
WRAPPED IN THE CHILL OF MID WINTER
COMES NOW AMONG US BORN INTO POVERTY'S EMBRACE
NEW LIFE FOR THE WORLD

WHO IS THIS WHO LIVES WITH THE LOWLY
SHARING THEIR SORROWS, KNOWING THEIR HUNGER
THIS IS CHRIST REVEALED TO THE WORLD
IN THE EYES OF A CHILD, A CHILD OF THE POOR

WHO IS THE STRANGER HERE IN OUR MIDST
LOOKING FOR SHELTER AMONG US
WHO IS THIS OUTCAST/ WHO DO WE SEE AMIDST THE POOR,
THE CHILDREN OF GOD

BRING ALL THE THIRSTY, ALL WHO SEEK PEACE
BRING THOSE WITH NOTHING TO OFFER
STRENGTHEN THE FEEBLE, SAY TO THE FRIGHTENED HEART,
'FEAR NOT, HERE IS YOUR GOD'

Song performed on YouTube by *The Hound and the Fox* titled
"What Child is This, Child of the Poor"





THE BIBLE PROJECT



While Mary and I were in Texas, our nephew told me about a teaching tool that I can't wait to introduce to you. It is called ***THE BIBLE PROJECT***. Now before you get bored by that seemingly stilted title and conjure up in your mind images of hour long lectures in a classroom setting, it is totally opposite from that. For instance I clicked on the subject of JUSTICE, since we just spent weeks in *Nightlight* on that topic. These guys covered in six minutes what it seemed to take me six weeks to try to unpack! How? With an ingenious combination of solid theology and compelling, entertaining, and highly creative graphic storytelling. Tim Mackie, the Hebrew and theology side of the partnership, and Jon Collins, the graphics storytelling side, have come together to produce the very best of millennial clear-thinking innovation to make difficult and dense bible subjects not only available to the average person, but to make it come alive. It will stir your head and heart, your logic and imagination, your thoughts and feelings, with the spirit of truth. And they manage to accomplish this in sessions that can be absorbed in no more than twenty minutes. Most sessions I have reviewed so far are under ten minutes.

THE BIBLE PROJECT can be found on YouTube so it is free. They depend on private donations. With that small beginning they have now reached over a million people and growing. I hope you will become the new addition to their ever increasing audience. I don't want to sound over the top. But I have never seen graphics, teaching, and spirit so wonderfully combined to present the Word of God. This is what the millennial generation is really about. They just don't know it yet. And with tools like this, many more millennials as well as others will find a treasury of help which they will in turn communicate to their whole world.



Closing Thoughts...



This season maybe we should try something new. We often try to squeeze in too much on certain days or events, in often disappointed hopes of trying to squeeze out momentary emotions which so soon evaporate, if we ever catch them at all. Maybe we could begin to enjoy the festive moment and appreciate the specialness when it happens. Instead of squeezing in so we can squeeze out, begin to live each moment in the awe of the treasures in front of us. May we learn to become so focused on the eternal value of our loved ones, and even more on those we are missing, that maybe by this time next year we are transformed. We may find that we have begun to live every moment so filled with love that it becomes actually possible to live in the atmosphere of holy days instead of the after-burn of an unholy daze.

Merry Christmas!



**LOVE INDESTRUCTIBLE IN FRAILTY APPEARS
BOW DOWN AND WORSHIP FOR THIS IS YOUR GOD**

McLean Ministries

P.O. Box 2088 • Hickory, North Carolina 28603 • 828.322.5402

Visit our website: www.mcleanministries.org or email us at claymcleanministries@pobox.com