

Christmas Reflections

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BY CHINYERE OJIDE

The atmosphere is already charged by the spirit of Christmas via the exciting scarlet color greeting cards, Christmas lightings, road and street marks, the Santa, green trees and special flowers – all accompany the traditional feelings and spirit of Christmas. Busy shops and crazy buying and selling mark this time of the year that invariably keeps most people in good spirit. Last Christmas, a guy entered a Star Bucks coffee shop in Manhattan and asked if anyone needed anything paid for in the loving spirit of Christmas. Well, he got many fingers raised and he paid it all off with his credit card and screamed, “Merry Christmas.”

Christmas is gift coded. Nearly every employee expects some kind of “thank you parcel or check from employers. Sometimes I wonder how private employers cope with such unconditional demand that ought not to be mandatory. Christmas puts folks on edge to give gifts; they might give at most inconvenient costs. Family heads for instance, are expected to give everybody in the family something tangible and probably expensive. Some Christmas gift receivers prefer checks to other offers.

Americans have reached a point in sophistication where gift receivers say what they want. Meanwhile all dictionary connotations of gifts leave the giver the privilege of choosing what to give. But now that privilege is gradually being compromised, and the receiver determines what to expect. Gifts are gradually shifting from being spontaneous surprises to predetermined items or cash. In our capitalist world, money is the denominator. It determines how we treat each other and are in turn treated by others. All over the world, people who have less money or have none at all get low and uncaring treatment.

Above all, Christmas is a time marker and solemn reminder of nothingness of time and life itself. Everybody alive adds one more year to his or her numbered days of life. December chimes in the end of year which pushes us closer to our demise as bio degradable beings living each day on the grace of God without even realizing it. Christmas gives us reason to count our days with grateful hearts of wisdom. No matter our sin or struggles, God let us see another end of a year. We get older, wiser, and must also get nicer. If you ask me I would say that December is the

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month of sober reflections for men on earth. It portends nearness of imminent end to every flesh. "Our years are seventy or eighty" wrote Prophet Moses "and is filled with hurtfulness." Even with the best of health care man remains vulnerable to sickness and death.

So we all have December as another month when the reality of the fading nature of mortal man shows on the calendar. The date counting varies a little from major religions but the difference in gap is not significant. Christians use the Gregorian calendar that recognizes December as the end of the year. The Orientals and the Jews have their own respective counting using lunar references. One thing that a world religion recognizes is the humanistic nature of Christ teachings. "By what shall a man's greatness be judged....by his military prowess..." asked the book: "***The Greatest man who ever lived***" The book answers; " By what ***he taught and the way he lived by what he taught....for this Jesus is the greatest man who ever lived***" Of Jesus Christ, great Mahatma Gandhi wrote " If the world would live by the principle taught in the sermon on the mount, there will never be any problem between my country (India) and yours (to a European president)..... Remember at the birth of Christ, the angel declared "peace on earth to men of good will"!!!