

How familiar are we with the Christmas story.

The nativity scene, We manage to keep Jesus boxed up for eleven months, and then we set him out for a few weeks before we put him back in his box for another year. "When asked if Christmas is primarily a religious holiday, only 39 percent of young adults agree. When asked what they're looking forward to during the holidays, 69 percent of us point to time with family and friends; only 11 percent cite religious reflection and services. We possibly will spend \$781 billion on Christmas presents this month. An observer could be forgiven for thinking Christmas is more about us than it is about Christ."

How do we change this situation? How do we point our culture to the reason for the season? We will not do this with noisy marches, or with petitions to parliaments or legislatures, or with repetitive battles in sterile courtrooms. If we have any hope of transforming the season, it must begin with each of us.

"When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, 'Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us.' And they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger. And when they saw it, they made known the saying that had been told them concerning this child. And all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them"

After the birth of the Christ, the first people transformed were the shepherds. After they had received the good news of His birth, they went to Him. And after they had witnessed the grace of God, they spread the news of His birth abroad. Notice that "All who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them." They were evangelists, telling everyone what they had witnessed.

After witnessing the Risen Saviour, the Apostles made the same discovery. Charged to be quiet concerning Jesus, Peter and John declared to the religious leaders, "We cannot stop speaking about what we have seen and heard"

I would never argue that you should not erect a crèche; I will, however, insist that each of us who name the Name of the Christ whom we confess are responsible to tell all who He is and what He has done for us. What better time to begin than at Christmas? What better place than with our own family. As we gather with our family, I encourage each of us to determine to read again the old, familiar—and yet startlingly new account of the birth of the Saviour, Christ the Lord. Let us make Our Own journey to Bethlehem, be transformed as the Shepherds were and keep Jesus out of the box for the whole year.

Christ's Journey to Bethlehem