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PAPERS (3014)**

BOX 25

FOLDER 106

**CHRISTMAS: A COSMIC
INSIGHT**

DECEMBER 23, 1990

12/23/90

ON TUESDAY OF THIS WEEK THE CHRISTIAN WORLD WILL CELEBRATE CHRISTMAS , AND ANY CHILD CAN TELL YOU THAT CHRISTMAS IS THE BIRTHDAY OF JESUS -- BUT HAVING SAID THAT, HE WILL CHANGE THE SUBJECT TO A MORE VIVID INTEREST IN SANTA CLAUS.

ANYONE CAN TELL THE CHRISTMAS STORY: OF ~~SH~~EPHERDS AND WISE-MEN, OF MARY AND JOSEPH AND THE INN THAT HAD NO ROOM. WE REMEMBER IT WELL BECAUSE OF ~~THE~~ LITTLE CHRISTMAS CRECHES WE ASEMBLE IN OUR HOMES OR SEE DISPLAYED IN SHOP WINDOWS OR SEE DRAMATIZED IN TELEVISION SPECIALS . AND IN ~~AWAY~~ THIS CRECHE IS SYMBOLIC OF THE PASTE-ON PIETY OF THE SEASON, WHICH IS SO SOON PACKED AWAY WITH ORNAMENTS AND TINSEL AFTER THE PERFUNCTORY PRACTICE IS FULFILLED.

OH, IT IS A GLORIOUS TIME OF FAMILY GATHERINGS, AND THE EXCHANGE OF REMEMBRANCES, AND GOOD FOOD AND CONVIVIAL ~~BATHERINGS~~^{DINNERS Parties} -- BUT IT IS OFTEN THE LICENSE FOR IRRATIONAL BEHAVIOR = AND AS ~~THE~~ BISHOP PUTS IT, "FOR KISSING THE WRONG PERSON UNDER THE MISTLETOE".

DON'T MISUNDERSTAND ME, I LOVE THE TRADITIONAL CHRISTMAS CUSTOMS. AND I CONFESS TO BEING A SOFT ~~SENT~~MENTALIST WHEN IT COMES TO THE CHRISTMAS TREE AND GIFTS AND CAROLS.

BUT I WANT US TO BE REALISTIC ABOUT CHRISTMAS^{AND} HOW THE LEGENDS AND CUSTOMS EVOLVED, AND WHAT THE WHOLE THING SHOULD MEAN FOR US TODAY, AND HOW WE CAN APPLY ITS AIMS IN OUR PRACTICE OF THE TRUTH.

LOOKING WELL BACK INTO ANTIQUITY, WELL ~~BEFORE~~ ^{AND} THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE BIBLE AND THE ~~WORSHIP~~ OF YAHWEH...BACK IN THE CHILDHOOD OF HUMANITY...THE DAILY DEATH OF THE SUN WAS REGARDED AS A REALITY. THIS IS SOMEWHAT INCREDIBLE SEEING THAT IT HAPPENED EVERY TWENTY-FOUR HOURS. BUT IT WAS A CONSTANT TOPIC OF ANXIETY: AND IT IS CERTAIN THAT ONCE A YEAR IT ALARMED THEM TERRIBLY. ~~THE~~ ^{THE SUN} ~~BEGAN~~ TO FAIL IN AUTUMN AND TO FALL INTO INCREASING DEPRESSION AS WINTER DREW ON.

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PRIMITIVE MAN ~~PROBABLY~~ LIVED ~~ON~~ IN CONSTANT FEAR, BUT NONE WAS GREATER THAN THE FEAR THAT TOOK HOLD OF THE PEOPLE AT THIS SEEMING DECAY OF THEIR GREAT GOD OF LIGHT AND WARMTH. WAS HE DYING OR WOULD HE REVIVE AND REAPPEAR? THERE WERE ^{NO} ALMANACS, NO CALENDARS, NO SYSTEMATIC ORDERING OF TIME INTO SEASONS AND YEARS, NO MEMORY OF WHAT HAPPENED LAST YEAR -- ALL THEY KNEW WAS THAT THEIR CHIEF SOURCE OF COMFORT AND LIFE WAS FAILING. PERHAPS WE CAN IMAGINE THE EAGERNESS WITH WHICH THOSE EARLY MEN AND WOMEN WATCHED FOR THE FIRST INDICATION OF A LENGTHENING DAY: AND THE UNIVERSAL JOY WHEN THE PRIEST OR WITCH DOCTOR ANNOUNCED THAT THE DAY WAS LENGTHENING -- AND THAT THE SUN WAS REALLY BORN AGAIN TO A NEW AND GLORIOUS CAREER. THAT WAS ROUGHLY ON DECEMBER 21STTH.

THE TIME CAME WHEN NATURAL PHENOMENA WERE NO LONGER DEIFIED, AND ONE INVISIBLE GOD TOOK THE PLACE OF THE MANY VISIBLE ONES. BUT MANY FESTIVALS AND RITES OF SOLAR ORIGIN ARE STILL WITH US TODAY, ENTWINED INTO THE FABRIC OF MODERN CIVILIZATION. AS THE ROMANS CONQUERED THE WORLD, THEY BROUGHT ^{BACK} GREAT SPOILS OF THEIR WARS... AMONG WHICH WERE THE GODS OF THE LOCAL PEOPLE. THESE WERE INCORPORATED INTO ^{THE} ROMAN RELIGION WHICH, THUS, WAS COMPOSED OF MANY GODS. TWO OF THEM COMPETED FOR FAVOR AT THE FESTIVAL OF WINTER SOLSTICE: ^{SATURNA} SATURNALIA THE FESTIVAL THAT ^{WAS} SIMILAR IN MANY WAYS TO OUR CHRISTMAS. IT IS A COMPLETE HOLIDAY, OFF WORK, HAD FAMILY GATHERINGS, THE CHILDREN RECEIVED GIFTS OF TOYS BROUGHT BY A SANTA CLAUS-LIKE FIGURE WITH A WHITE BEARD WHO CAME DOWN FROM THE NORTH ON THE FESTIVAL DAY, ABOUT DEC. 17th.

AND MITHRA, THE PERSIAN GOD OF LIGHT, DEFENDER OF TRUTH, AND ENEMY OF THE POWER OF DARKNESS. CELEBRATED DECEMBER 25th. SO THE WINTER SOLSTICE FESTIVAL WAS INTRODUCED INTO THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH IN THE FOURTH CENTURY as a festival in honor of the BIRTH OF JESUS CHRIST.

TODAY WHEN WE TRIM OUR CHRISTMAS TREE WITH LIGHTS (~~which used to be candles~~) it is a REMNANT OF THE RITE WHICH WAS TO GUIDE THE SUN-GOD BACK TO LIFE; AND WHEN WE EAT OUR PLUM-PUDDING WE REALIZE THAT THOUGH IT IS GROSSLY INCONGRUOUS WITH THE BIRTH OF JESUS, IT IS IN HARMONY WITH A ~~FEST~~ ^{FEST} OF HONOUR OF THE SUN/ASHELD IN ANCIENT TIMES WHEN CAKES OF CORN AND FRUIT WERE LAID ON ^{THE} ALTARS AND DEDICATED TO THE LORD OF LIGHT. ~~AND IT IS OFTEN POINTED OUT THAT MODERNS PREFER TO CELEBRATE CHRISTMAS IN THE MANNER OF A PAGAN FESTIVAL.~~

THE MOST ANCIENT SYMBOL OF THE SUN IS A WHEEL WITH SPOKES FOR RAYS, AND IF WE DIG INTO THE DERIVATION WE FIND THAT OUR WORD WHEEL COMES FROM YOLE OR YUUL, MEANING SUN, AND USED AS A FESTIVAL TERM AT THE WINTER SOLSTICE, SO THAT WE STILL SPEAK OF THE "YULE LOG." WE COULD SPEND HOURS IN JUST FINDING THE MANY RELICS OF SUN-WORSHIP IN OUR CHRISTIAN TRADITIONS.

IF WE PROBE HONESTLY INTO THE BACKGROUND AND ROOTS OF CHRISTMAS, THE FIRST OBVIOUS THING WE DISCOVER IS THAT JESUS' BIRTH HAD IMPLICATIONS FAR BEYOND THE DRAMATIC BEGINNING OF A RELIGION. ~~IT SEEMS TO ME THAT THE UNIVERSE IS TOO GRAND AND TOO INTELLIGENT TO BE ANCOMPASSED BY ONE SECTARIAN CONCEPT, OR LIMITED TO ONE "BIRTHDAY OF A KING."~~

ACTUALLY THERE ARE NO RECORDS THAT TELL WHEN JESUS WAS BORN. NOT EVEN THE YEAR IS CERTAIN. ~~ACTUALLY~~ SCHOLARS AGREE TODAY THAT THERE WAS AN ERROR IN COMPUTATION... WAS FOUR OR FIVE YEARS EARLIER.

THE HUMAN CREATURE FROM EARLIEST TIMES, HAS INTUITIVELY KNOWN THE MEANING OF AND THE NEED FOR Transcendent light. NOTE THE WIDESPREAD ~~CELEBRATION~~ ^{OBSCURANCE} OF THE ANNUAL CELEBRATION OF ~~LIGHT~~ AT THE FESTIVAL OF WINTER SOLSTICE.: THE TIME WHEN THE SUN IS AT ITS GREATEST DISTANCE FROM THE CELESTIAL EQUATOR - ABOUT DEC, 22nd.

NOT KNOWING THE ACTUAL DATE OF JESUS' BIRTH, IT COULD BE THAT ~~THE REASON~~ JESUS' BIRTH WAS SET AT THIS TIME BY DESIGN, TO SYMBOLIZE THE RE-INFUSION OF THE PLANET WITH AN ENERGY Force BRINGING VIBRATORY RHYTHMS TO LIFT THE EARTH TO THE KIND OF "PEACE ON EARTH GOOD WILL TO MEN" SUNG BY THE "HEAVENLY HOSTS."

YOU ~~SEE~~, NOT ONLY IS ~~THE~~ DATE OF JESUS' BIRTH NOT KNOWN, THE STORY OF THE BIRTH IS SERIOUSLY UP TO QUESTION. IT DOES NOT STAND THE TEST OF HISTORICITY. IT IS GENERALLY AGREED TO BY MOST BIBLICAL SCHOLARS TODAY THAT THE CHRISTMAS LEGENDS ARE THE RESULT OF A FEW SIMPLE FACTS THAT HAVE BEEN BLOWN ^{UP} INTO SCENARIOS BORN OUT OF CONJECTURE; AND THEN THROUGH THE CENTURIES THEY HAVE BEEN OVER-DRAMATIZED AND OVER-SENTAMENTALIZED. NOT THAT THEY ARE FABLES, BUT THAT THE REAL MEANING IS OFTEN OBSCURED BY AN EMPHASIS ON MATERIALISM IN THE GRIM CHARADE OF GIFT-GIVING UNDER UNBELIEVABLE PRESSURES OF CONFORMITY AND OBLIGATION AND GUILT. (PHILIP WYLIE) SOUNDS A "BAH HUMBUG" TONE WHEN HE REFERS TO THE "HOPPED-UP, PRESSURE-LADEN, STATUS-SEEKING, COMPETITIVE DEGRADATION OF CHRISTMAS."

EVERY YEAR WE HEAR THE VOICE OF CONCERN THAT CHRISTMAS HAS BECOME TOO MATERIALISTIC: "LET'S PUT CHRIST BACK INTO CHRISTMAS". IT IS LIKELY THAT BACK IN EARLY ROMAN TIMES THERE WAS A SIMILAR CRY OVER THE WILD AND MATERIALISTIC WAY THE ROMANS KEPT THE FEAST OF THE WINTER SOLSTICE: "LET'S PUT SATURN BACK INTO SATURNALIA!"

OF COURSE THERE IS MATERIALISM INVOLVED, BUT DON'T BLAME THE MERCHANT. HE SIMPLY PROVIDES THE THINGS WE WANT. IT IS STILL COMMERCE WHETHER IT IS THE MANUFACTURE AND SALE OF BIBLES OR BAUBLES. THE PROBLEM IS NOT THAT CHRISTMAS IS OVER-MATERIALISTIC...BUT THAT PEOPLE ABANDON THE SPIRITUAL IDEALS OF THE HOLY DAY FOR SUPERFICIAL RELIGIOUS INVOLVEMENT WITH WHAT BECOMES A "HOLLOW DAY."

WE MIGHT NOTE A FEW OF THE INCONSISTENCIES IN THE CHRISTMAS LEGENDS THAT MAKE ANY ANALYTICAL STUDY OF CHRISTMAS DIFFICULT:

AS YOU REMEMBER THERE ARE TWO VERSIONS OF THE NATIVITY: IN LUKE THERE IS THE ACCOUNT OF JOSEPH AND MARY COMING TO BETHLEHEM. IT SAYS CRYPTICALLY, "WHILE THERE SHE BROUGHT FORTH HER FIRSTBORN SON, ...AND LAID HIM IN A MANGER, BECAUSE THERE WAS NO ROOM IN THE INN." IT IS INTERESTING HOW WE TEND TO READ INFERENCES INTO SCRIPTURAL WORDS ACCORDING TO A CONTEMPORARY FRAME OF REFERENCE. FOR INSTANCE THE WORD "INN" CONJURES UP SOMETHING LIKE AN ENGLISH PUB OR A HIGHWAY MOTEL. WITH A BAR FILLED WITH LOUD-LAUGHING REVELERS.

THE FACT IS THE BIBLICAL TERM "INN" IS "KHAN", WHICH WAS LITTLE MORE THAN A PROTECTIVE ENCLAVE, WITH JUST FOUR WALLS, NO ROOF. THEY WERE LIKE CARAVAN MOTELS...PLACED A DAY'S JOURNEY APART ON THE ROADS FROM JERUSALEM TO JERICHO AND TO DAMASCUS, ETC. BY TAKING THEIR ANIMALS INTO THE KHANE AT NIGHT THEY WERE PROTECTED FROM WILD ANIMALS AND THIEVES. WHAT THE SCRIPTURE PROBABLY ORIGINALLY SAID, "THERE WERE NO ROOMS IN THE KHAN...NO PLACE SUITABLE FOR THE BIRTH OF A CHILD. AND THE INNKEEPER WHO HAS BEEN PILLORIED AS THE EPITOME OF HARD-HEARTEDNESS...WAS ACTUALLY A COMPASSIONATE MAN, WHO FOUND THE TRAVELERS A WARM AND SAFE CAVE IN THE HILLS.

THE MATTHEW SCENARIO IS COLORED WITH GRANDEUR AND REGAL SPLENDOR. IT TELLS OF THREE WISE MEN, ALSO CALLED THREE KINGS, MAGI OF ASTROLOGY, THEY SAID, "We have seen the star in the EAST AND HAVE COME TO WORSHIP THE SAVIOUR BORN IN A MANGER." BUT IF THEY WERE FOLLOWING A STAR IN THE EASTERN SKY, THEY WOULD BE RIDING EASTWARD AWAY FROM JERUSALEM...NOT TOWARD IT. SO THEY WERE NOT FOLLOWING AN ASTRONOMICAL STAR IN THE SKY AT ALL. THEY WERE FOLLOWING AN ASTROLOGICAL SIGN THAT LED THEM TO BETHLEHEM. BRINGING GIFTS OF GOLD, FRANK-INCENSE AND MYRRH. IN OTHER WORDS THE STAR WAS WITHIN THEM.

WHAT ARE WE SAYING? THAT CHRISTMAS IS A FRAUD? OF COURSE NOT. BUT THE TRUE CHRISTMAS IS NOT BASED ON FANTASY OR CONJECTURE... A STORY THAT, LIKE A MOVIE, YOU WATCH FOR AN HOUR AND HAVE A GOOD CRY OVER...AND THEN GO OUT INTO LIVES OF ROUTINENESS, NOT THE LEAST BIT CHANGED BY THE EXPERIENCE.

THE ESSENTIAL MESSAGE OF CHRISTMAS IS PUT INTO POIGNANT WORDS BY THE MEDIEVAL MYSTIC, BROTHER ANGELES (JOANN SCHEEFLER):

"THOUGH CHRIST A THOUSAND TIMES IN BETHLEHEM BE BORN,
IF HE'S NOT BORN IN THE ~~HE~~, THY SOUL IS ALL FORLORN."

THE REAL NEED IS TO PUT OURSELVES BACK INTO CHRISTMAS, ... TO SEE IT AS A BEAUTIFUL SEASON OF LOVE AND SHARING, PULLING OUT ALL THE BEST STOPS OF OUR NATURE, ENGAGING IN WHAT I CALL "PRACTICAL CHRISTMASING". FOR THE ESSENCE THAT IS CHRISTMAS IS NOT LIMITED TO A DAY OR A SEASON. CHRISTMAS AND ALL ITS TRADITIONS AND LEGENDS AND ITS JOY AND PEACE... BUT THE ACTIVITY OF GOD MOVING THROUGH THE MINDS AND HEARTS OF PEOPLE IN A BEAUTIFULLY SPONTANEOUS WAY.

OF COURSE IT IS A FACADE, OF COURSE THE MISTLETOE IS PLASTIC AND THE CRECHE FIGURES ARE PLASTER AND PAPIER-MACHE, OF COURSE THE SANTA CLAUSES WITH THE SUIT AND MANNER THAT DO NOT FIT WILL

~~WE~~ SOON BE BACK AGAIN IN THE UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION LINE.

YES, AND THE DAY AFTER CHRISTMAS THE TREES AND GARLANDS WILL COME DOWN AND THE CHRISTMAS PARAPHERNALIA WILL BE PACKED AWAY IN ATTICS AND STORE-ROOMS FOR ANOTHER YEAR...AND THE STORES WILL MAKE A QUICK TRANSITION TO JANUARY WHITE SALES. ~~2~~ THEN WHAT IS THE POINT?

THE POINT IS...WE HAVE ANOTHER OPPORTUNITY TO LIVE FOR A BRIEF SEASON IN WHICH THE ~~T~~RANSCENDENT LEVEL OF PEOPLE ARE AT THEIR ZENITH. CHRISTMAS MAY BE AN IMPORTANT OUTLET FOR THE SPIRITUAL FLOW INTO THE WORLD, SO THAT THE BALANCE IS TIPPED FROM DARKNESS TO LIGHT. AS SOMEONE SAID, "IF THERE WERE NO CHRISTMAS WE WOULD HAVE TO INVENT ONE."

CHRISTMAS IS LIKE AN OASIS IN A HECTIC, STRIFE-TORN WORLD...AND WHEN WE HEAR THE DARK CRY, "WHAT IS THE WORLD COMING TO?" WE SHOULD LOOK UP IN CHILD-LIKE WONDER AND SAY, "LOOD WHAT IS COMING INTO THE WORLD."

SO TODAY, WHEN THE WORLD STANDS IN SUCH DESPARATE NEED OF LIGHT, THERE IS AN URGENT NEED FOR A RENAISSANCE OF THE EARLY CHRISTIAN EXPERIENCE - a return to meanings within form, TO COMMITMENT BEYOND DOCTRINE. AND THE ~~GR~~ IDEA THAT CHRISTMAS SHOULD SYMBOLIZE IS THE REBIRTH OF LIGHT INTO THE WORLD, THE AWAKENING IN PEOPLE TO THE DYNAMIC POTENTIAL OF THEIR GOD-SELF -- WITH ~~IS~~ ^{THE} INHERENT PROMISE THAT ~~AS~~ PEOPLE ACT IN LOVE AND GOOD WILL, THERE CAN BE PEACE ON EARTH.

INSTEAD OF THE PASTE-ON CELEBRATION OF NOSTALGIA AND FUN, CHRISTMAS SHOULD TURN US AWAY FROM THINGS AS THEY ARE, TO HELP US SERIOUSLY VIEW HOW THEY CAN BE AND SHOULD BE....TO LEAD US INTO DEEPER LEVELS OF UNDERSTANDING IN OUR QUEST FOR LIGHT, SO THAT WE MAY LOOK UPON ~~OR~~ WHAT WE ARE, WHAT WE ARE BECOMING, AND WHAT WE SOMEDAY SHALL BE.

AT THE TIME OF THE WINTER SOLSTICE, IF WE REALLY OPEN OURSELVES
TO THE COSMIC ASPECTS OF THE EVENT THERE IS A CHRIST MASS INVOLVED.
INNER CELEBRATION

THERE IS A PROFOUND TRUTH CONCEALED IN THE MAGIC OF THE BETHLEHEM
LEGEND THAT TELLS OF EVEN THE LOWLY ANIMALS COMING TO PARTICIPATE
IN THE NATIVITY. EVERY LIFE-WAVE ON EARTH IS LITERALLY FILLED
WITH EXALTATION WHEN THIS FLOW OF DIVINE LIGHT PENETRATES TO THE
HEART OF THE PLANET, CAN YOU ACCEPT THIS COSMIC INSIGHT? CAN
YOU BELIEVE THAT ON CHRISTMAS EVE A BURST OF TRANSCENDENT LIGHT
WILL DAWN IN YOUR CONSCIOUSNESS?

JESUS WAS SINGING OF THIS EXPERIENCE WHEN HE SAYS:

"IN HIM WAS LIFE: AND THE LIFE WAS THE LIGHT OF MEN. AND THE
LIGHT SHINETH IN THE DARKNESS: AND THE DARKNESS APPREHENDED IT
NOT...THERE WAS THE TRUE LIGHT WHICH LIGHTETH EVERY MAN COMING
INTO THE WORLD."FOR SO LONG PEOPLE HAVE BEEN FIGHTING THEIR WAY
THROUGH THE DARKNESS, SOMETIMES AS UNCHRISTLIKE AS THE LOWLIEST
OF CREATURES. BUT PEOPLE HAVE ALWAYS DREAMED OF THEIR POTENTIAL
FOR GOOD.

LIKE THE URGE OF THE "WOLF OF GUBBIO" IN JOSEPHINE PRESTON PEABODY'S
PLAY, LONGING TO BE A HUMAN BEING. IN THE COLD AND LONELINESS
OF THE DARK AND DREARY NIGHT. HE "WONDERS HOW 'TWOULD FEEL
TO SIT WITH MEN AND SHARE THEIR MEAL."

IN A MEETING WITH ST. FRANCIS, THE WOLF CONFESSES HIS SHAME
AND GUILT, TOGETHER WITH HIS LONGING TO BE A MAN, WHILE FRANCIS
CONFESSES HIS OWN WOLFISH SINS...HE SAYS:

"WILT THOU EARN A MAN'S OWN PEACE? THEN WORK AND LEARN!
BACK TO THE WORLD; AND THRE MAKE GOOD
ALL THOU HAST DREAMED OF BROTHERHOOD.
HOPE AND LOSE AND HOPE AGDAIN,
AND REMEMBER AND FORGET
WITH US ALL: FOR ~~MAN~~ ARE MAN,
BUT NOT BROTHERS, NO NOT YET!"

THERE IS A PIVOTAL SCENE IN WHICH THE WOLF PULLS BACK, SAYING,
"I DON'T WANT TO BE A MAN UNTIL MEN STOP ACTING LIKE WOLVES."

THE CLIMAX OF the play takes place ON CHRISTMAS EVE. THE WOLF
OF GUBBIO, IN AN ACT OF HEARTBROKEN CONTRITION, DISSOLVES FEAR
AND ANTAGONISM AND EARNS HIS PLACE IN THE RANKS OF LOVE AND BROTHERHOOD.

SO IN THIS SYMBOLIC WAY, THE AUTHOR DEALS WITH THE REBIRTH OF LIGHT
- THE LIFTING UP OF THE BESTIAL NATURE OF MAN TO THE AWARENESS
OF THE INHERENT DIVINITY. THIS IS WHAT CHRISTMAS IS ALL ABOUT.

IN OTHER WORDS, IF WE REALLY TAKE SERIOUSLY THE LITTLE CELESTIAL
SPARK OF LIGHT IN ALL PERSONS...AND COMMIT OURSELVES TO THE PERSONAL
DEMONSTRATION OF THE REBIRTH OF LIGHT -- WE WOULD REALIZE THAT
A MEETING SUCH AS THIS 'WORTH-SHIP EXPERIENCE' every sunday --
IS NOT AN END, BUT A PREPARATION FOR WORK TO BE DONE WHICH COMES
NEXT.

I LOVE THE STORY OF THE MAN WHO ATTENDED A QUAKER MEETING IN
A QUAKER MEETINGHOUSE. AND NOT KNOWING ANYTHING ABOUT IT, HE WAS
PUZZLED THAT THE CONGREGATION SAT IN SILENCE FOR A LONG TIME. HE
WHISPERED TO THE MAN NEXT TO HIM, "WHEN DOES THE SERVICE BEGIN."
THE MAN REPLIED: "WHEN THE MEETING IS OVER."

AND IN THE SAME WAY THE TRUE CHRISTMAS BEGINS WHEN THE DAY
OF CELEBRATION IS OVER. THERE IS SLEEVES-ROLLED-UP WORK TO BE
DONE, THE NEW CONSCIOUSNESS TO REVEAL, AND A NEW LIGHT TO SHINE.
TOO VISIONARY? YOU MAY SAY. BUT A SOCIETY THAT CAN PUT A MAN
ON THE MOON AND SEND PICTURES BACK TO EARTH OF THE RINGS OF SATURN
AND THE MOONS OF JUPITER...SHOULD BE READY TO EXPLORE NEW STEPS
IN A REBIRTH OF LIGHT, TO SEED THE MENTAL ATMOSPHERE OF THE PLANET
WITH NEW THOUGHTS OF TRANSCENDENT SIGNIFICANCE.

I WILL BE TALKING MUCH ABOUT THIS IN THE COMING YEAR, AS WE HAVE

SET AS OUR THEME, "A CIRCLE OF LIGHT." WE WILL INTRODUCE THIS IMPORTANT
PEACE INITIATIVE ON SUNDAY JANUARY 5TH. WE HOPE YOU WILL JOIN
US IN THIS IMPORTANT ~~VENTURE~~

IF WE COULD OPEN THE FROZEN GROUND TODAY AND READ THE HISTORY OF
EVERY BURIED GRAIN OF WHEAT, OF EVERY SLUGGISH ROOT HIDING IN THE
WARM EARTH WITH ITS NEXT YEAR'S BLOSSOMS FOLDED UP WITHIN IT;
IF WE COULD KNOW THE NATURE OF THEIR LATENT FORCES, AND SEE THEIR
WHOLE POTENTIAL, WE SHOULD BE ABLE TO TELL EACH OF THEM, WHEN
ITS TIME WOULD BE FULL; AND WE COULD PROPHECY WHEN THE GROUND
WOULD BREAK AND HOW THE FLOWER WOULD BLOOM AND AT WHAT MOMENT
THE FRUIT WOULD RIPEN. AND NEXT SPRING AND SUMMER WE WOULD SEE
IT ALL COME TO PASS.

SO WITH THE OVER-ALL CONSCIOUSNESS OF HUMANKIND ON THE GLOBE,
WE COULD READ THE HOPES AND FEARS, THE DEEP-SEATED BELIEFS AND
DOMINANT STATES OF MIND...AND WE COULD FORECAST FAIRLY ACCURATELY
THE TRENDS OF MANKIND IN THE YEARS TO COME. THIS MAY SOUND LIKE
PREDESTINATION. BUT IT IS NOTHING OF THE SORT. YOU SEE, THE
FULNESS OF TIME CONCERNS OUR READINESS TO RECEIVE AND NOT GOD'S
READINESS TO GIVE. IT IS IN NO WAY FORE-ORDAINED, FOR THE PICTURE
WE SENSE CAN CHANGE AND DOES - AS CONSCIOUSNESS CHANGES.

EVERY YEAR AT THE WINTER SOLSTICE IT IS THE FULLNESS OF TIME FOR
THE WORLD. IT IS A DIVINE APPOINTMENT -- THE QUESTION IS: "WILL
WE KEEP THE APPOINTMENT? THE ANGEL VOICES ARE SINGING...ARE WE
LISTENING? THE LIGHT IS DAWNING...ARE WE SEEING? THERE IS A
MOVEMENT OF LIFE WITHIN US...ARE WE RESPONDING?"

G. B. SHAW ONCE SAID, "GOD HAS CREATED A WORLD SO WONDERFUL,
ONLY OUR BLINDNESS AND IGNORANCE CAN KEEP IT FROM PERFECT EXPRESSION."

EACH YEAR AT THE WINTER SOLSTICE -(EVERY SEASON OF CHRISTMAS)-
THERE IS A COSMIC FLOW OF LIGHT THAT BOMBARDS THE PLANET EARTH

AND ONLY OUR INERTIAL INVOLVEMENT IN THE PASTE-ON TRAPPINGS OF THE ANNUAL HOLIDAY (HOLLOW DAY??) CAN KEEP US FROM DISCOVERING AND GIVING BIRTH TO THE DEPTH OF LIGHT WITHIN US.

CHRISTMAS SHOULD NOT BE A BACKWARD ~~GLANCE~~, BUT ^A FORWARD LOOK. IT IS A PROPHETIC DAY, OR SHOULD BE. THE BIRTH OF THE CHRIST, THE REBIRTH OF LIGHT, BELONGS TO AN ORDER OF LIFE NOT YET ~~AT~~^{ATTAINED}, A GLIMPSE OF A RACE OF PEOPLE YET TO BE.

HOW OFTE~~N~~ AND HOW EASILY WE SAY, "MERRY CHRISTMAS!" certainly HAVE A MERRY TIME. BUT THIS IS NOT ENOUGH. THE WORLD^{CALLS} FOR LIGHT^{AND} PEACE. HOW MUCH BETTER TO IDENTIFY WITH THE COSMIC PROCESS, "THE FESTIVAL OF LIGHT" - SAYING TO ONE ANOTHER, "HAPPY CHRISTMAS OF LIGHT!"

FOR THIS IS THE^{DEEPER} DEEPER AND MORE CREATIVE MEANING - THE COSMIC INSIGHT INTO CHRISTMAS.