

Reflecting on Christmas

In reflecting on the season of Christmas, it is important to understand the significance of the period of celebration. For most, it is the known to be the festive season which is characterized by various forms of enjoyment, eating drinking, shopping and the giving and receiving of gifts. One positive characteristic of Christmas is that it brings together families and friends. The special thing about Christmas resides in the values associated with it. These are faith, family and solidarity, which are the three core values which ought not to be lost or forgotten.

Faith as the main pillar, directly relates to the relationship individuals establish with God, whose birthday is celebrated annually at Christmas. This makes absolute sense, as it is highly unlikely that a non-believer would accept, appreciate and respect the celebration that is associated with Jesus Christ as the spiritual leader of the universe. After faith comes the pillar of family, which is deemed as an important pillar in the life of each individual. Every employee will have a biological family, but by the same token, will have a workplace family. The important not to overlook the fact that nobody can live alone all the time, and therefore will lean on the support of one of these groups. Next is the pillar of solidarity. The bonding which this brings, makes all the difference in how people think, feel and act. These three pillars combine to build the character of a loving, caring and sharing people.

Over time, many changes have been made to the traditions of Christmas. For the most part, attention was concentrated on gift giving. While the world has not totally moved away from this, it is advisable that in gift giving, more attention is placed on the needs of the individual, rather than on their wants. In these times of an economic, financial and social crisis, the family at the domestic level, community level, the workplace and the business community, ought to take more interest in assisting those who are facing hardship in one form or fashion. In a world of changing and new priorities, changing cultural norms and values, rapid advancement in new technologies, the world has become a difficult place in which to live; as many are find themselves in a survival mode.

The plight facing people across the global, is ably summarized by Palitha Jayasooniya who in addressing the topic of 'Christmas Reflections' wrote: "Christmas can be a difficult time for many people. Looking back over the year, they may see many dreams not fulfilled and many questions unanswered. Others face stress, loneliness and financial struggles. They can't seem to identify with the celebratory Christmas spirit around them that somehow seems to have eluded them. Their cry, echoed through the words of Country legend Merle Haggard may be, 'If we make it through December, everything is gonna be alright I know.'"

Evidently, most workers and those who are unemployed will experience some challenges and frustrations this Christmas. If there are to emerge from this stress and agony, it is important for them to have faith and hope in the belief that things will change for the better. The birth of Christ was in itself was a signal of hope in creating a better and more enlightened world. Hope can

therefore be seen as the catalyst for reducing the feelings of helplessness, increasing happiness, reducing stress, and improving the quality of life.

It is the hope that workers, employers, unemployed persons and members of the society irrespective of their circumstances, will identify and share with the thought that “To have hope is to want an outcome that makes your life better in some way. It not only can help make a tough present situation more bearable but also can eventually improve our lives because envisioning a better future motivates you to take the steps to make it happen.”