

A Christmas Child Brings a Community Hope

A number of years ago in a not-too-big and not-too-small American town, a memorable Christmas came to pass. It was Christmas Eve. In a not-too-big and not-too-small church, faces were lit only by candlelight. Then, into the crowd walked a man boldly carrying a small child in his arms. Both had heads held high.

Eyes throughout the congregation turned to them in wonder. Could this be the child they had heard of but never seen?

Warily, the child surveyed the scene with enormous, dark eyes. Disproportionately large in her malnourished little frame, the eyes took on fairytale-like dimensions. It seemed that Christmas magic had brought a classic sad-eyed doll to life.

Indeed, she had been sad: abandoned, abused and weighing but 16 pounds at 18 months of age. Recently thrust from all she knew in Eastern Europe, she had been forced into a foreign land, with foreign speech and foreign food.

But her life was about to get better. This was her first Christmas in America, and she was now my daughter.

News traveled fast in the not-too-big and not-too-small American town. For months after she arrived, the sad-eyed doll received welcome after welcome from everyone she met. All hearts were open to her. It was as if she were not exclusive to our family. Everyone seemed to feel she could have been theirs, had only their arms reached cross the world and found her first.

Isn't this the enduring appeal of the nativity? Vulnerable and approachable, a child enters our world from another far away. Belonging to us all, we welcome Him with outstretched arms.

Perhaps each of our births is a type of first Christmas. We arrive as strangers on this planet. We might be unwanted like baby Jesus at the inns of Bethlehem, or the sad-eyed child in her home country. Maybe not. But on this hostile planet, we all will have crosses to bear.

We are not the Savior, but we can be a savior. We each belong to the family of suffering flesh, yet with the potential to love. And love is what brings peace on earth to every sad-eyed heart. {eoa}

Dr. Cynthia has been involved with ethnic evangelism in the USA for over four decades. Although American and not from the Middle East, her experience and personal and professional connections with the Muslim world help her to understand and connect with Muslims. A board-certified physician with decades of experience in America and overseas, Dr. Cynthia is now retired from medicine, and besides hosting , she directs American Ethnic Ministries and is still active in personal evangelism, organizing outreaches, writing tracts and devotionals, and discipling new believers.