



## A DEVOTIONAL FOR CHILDREN'S MINISTERS WHO WORK WORK WITH CHILDREN OF DIVORCE

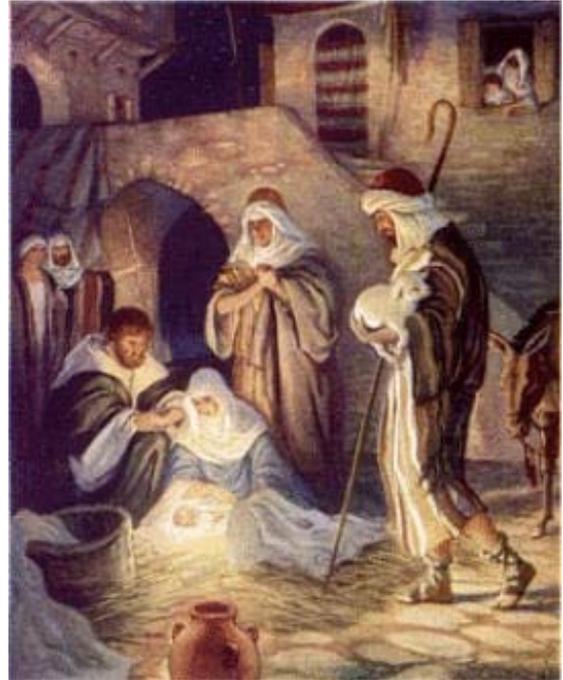
By Linda Ranson Jacobs

12/24/2011

Why do we work with the many hurting children in our congregations? I have often thought about this issue. This really pricks my heart at holidays and special times of the year. I know most of us work with the hurting children because we love the Lord and we want to further the kingdom. But, what is the motivation year after year. I came up with the following thoughts about why we do what we do.

### First

*For to us a child is born,  
to us a son is given;  
and the government shall be upon his shoulder,  
and his name shall be called  
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,  
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.  
Of the increase of his government and of peace  
there will be no end,  
on the throne of David and over his kingdom,  
to establish it and to uphold it  
with justice and with righteousness  
from this time forth and forevermore.  
The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this. (Isaiah 9:6-7 ESV)*



For every little soul that comes to church, the birth of a Savior was foretold years ago. To each of us and to all our hurting kids this Savior is called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father and Prince of Peace. His peace knows no end. With this Savior, there is justice and righteousness even for the hurting child.

### Second

*And Mary said,  
"My soul magnifies the Lord,  
and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,  
for he has looked on the humble estate of his servant.  
For behold, from now on all generations will call me blessed;  
for he who is mighty has done great things for me,  
and holy is his name.*





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*And his mercy is for those who fear him  
from generation to generation. (Luke 1:46-50 ESV)*

Imagine all that was going through a young girl's mind when she came to the realization that this tiny baby growing inside her was indeed the "holy one". In her praising the Father she asks that His mercy be extended for generations, "from generation to generation".

Probably for the first time in the history of man, the fear of the Lord is being negated by society's lifestyle and the breakup of the intact family. We now are learning that the act of divorce is impacting our churches and the religious lives of our young people. Many adult children of divorce turn away from the Lord and from organized religions never to return to the religious practices of their families.

Divorce is carried from one generation to the next. Unless there is intervention, for the most part children are going to do what the parents do. Divorce divides family heritages and generational family rituals. How can the mercy of the Lord be extended to those who don't fear Him; to those who don't know Him and to those who purposely turn away? Divorce in particular is changing our families and our churches more than any other social revolution.

### **Third**

*And while they were there, the time came for her to give birth. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn. (Luke 2:6-7 ESV)*

Imagine the prickly hay and the coldness of the environment in the manger. And yet to those of us who know the story, this placing our Savior in a manger, elicits such warm joy. Through the many Christmas pageants and the Christmas carols we transport our minds back to that moment the baby was placed in a manger. From the minute the baby was born, our world changed.

Today our world continues to change. Our knowledge base is expanding rapidly. It seems our form of communication is revolutionized almost every minute. Wars and rumors of wars abound. Our morality is decaying literally before our eyes on TV and the Internet. But the true meaning of Christmas, of the baby being born and placed in a manger, is still alive. It still abides in the hearts of His people. Hurting children all over the world need to have the true meaning of Christmas shared with them. The children in our church classes need to learn from us about this abiding love we experience.





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### **Fourth**

*And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with great fear. And the angel said to them, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. (Luke 2:9-11 ESV)*

When I was a little child I used to wonder why the shepherds were afraid. I mean after all it was an angel that appeared to them. Weren't the angels good things? Now as an adult I understand that along with the angel was the glory of the Lord. Imagine being there...the glory of the Lord shining all around you, everywhere you looked? If that wasn't enough, the angel spoke to them. Whoa!

This angel in one brief sentence spoke volumes. It was a good news story full of hope and a revelation of a Savior who would come for all people. Not just any savior coming for a select few but a Savior, "who is Christ our Lord".

Today the children come to us. They come to us afraid and fearful. They come to us confused about the breakup of their parents or the loss of an intact family. They come to us wanting someone to tell them not be afraid. They look to us for good news, for joy and for comfort. They come to us and many are surprised to find warm and caring adults waiting with open arms to love them and to tell them about the Savior, who is Christ the Lord.

### **Fifth**

*And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!" (Luke 2:13-14 ESV)*

Peace among men? Many of our kids come from homes that have not experienced much peace. Many who come from outside the church know nothing about praising God. They don't understand this "glory to God in the highest". But we do! It is up to us to magnify our Savior to the little ones not just at Christmas but also at every day.

While we celebrate Christmas, some of our kids will tolerate Christmas and other holidays. On some holidays such as Thanksgiving and Christmas many of our kids will be shuttled from house to house. They may be required to eat several meals, one with mom, one with dad, one or two at grandparents and if there are stepfamilies, then with the steps also.





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The true meaning of holidays such as Christmas may get lost in the shuffle with divorcing parents trying to outdo the other parent. On the other hand, due to financial hard ship, some children will not have much of a Christmas. If this is the first Christmas in a divorced home, many children will feel an overwhelming sadness.

***Lastly, this is why we work with the children and do what we do.....***

*Then children were brought to him that he might lay his hands on them and pray. The disciples rebuked the people, but Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me and do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of heaven." (Matthew 19:13-14 ESV)*

Jesus said to let the children come to him. He didn't say let only the quiet obedient children come to him. He said to let the children come to him and not to hinder them.

This is why we work with those angry screaming children; why we put up with the kicking, hitting, punching and running away kids. This is why we find the patience one more time to face the sarcastic 12-year whose words hurt us to the core. This is why we put our arms around the shy child, the bored, the discouraged, the lonely and the confused child. This is why we greet the silly, the excited, laughing and the confident child with high fives, fist bumps or hugs. We do this because the "glory of the Lord shone round about them" just as His glory today continues to shine round about us.

We do this ministry because....

*For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this. (Isaiah 9:6-7 ESV)*

**MERRY CHRISTMAS!**

*From [DivorceMinistry4Kids.com](http://DivorceMinistry4Kids.com)*



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*ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Linda Ranson Jacobs is one of the forefront leaders in the area of children and divorce. She developed and created the DivorceCare for Kids programs. DC4K is an international program for churches to use to help children of divorced parents find healing within the arms of a loving church family. As a speaker, author, trainer, program developer and child care center owner, Linda has assisted countless families by modeling and acting on the healing love she has found in Jesus Christ. More great articles about how to successfully minister to the child of divorce in your church can be found at Linda's website [Healthy Loving Partnerships for Our Kids \(HLP4\) \[http://www.hlp4.com\]](http://www.hlp4.com). Linda also offers support, encouragement, and suggestions to help single parents and those working with single parent children. She can be reached by e-mail at [Linda@hlp4.com](mailto:Linda@hlp4.com).*