

A Christmas for the Birds

By: Bill and Davina Winn- adapted from Paul Harvey's "A Man and the Birds"

Scene 1

Rich and Grace Stewart are sitting in their kitchen at the table talking. It is snowing outside and there is a glum spirit among them.

Grace: What's wrong Rich? (Rich does not answer) RICH! What's wrong, what's bothering you?

Rich: Oh, I'm sorry I guess I was just a little zoned out there, huh?

Grace: Yeah, you look like you are in another world.

Rich: I know I'm just trying to make sense of all this.

Grace: Trying to make sense of what?

Rich: Everything (Grace interrupts)

Grace: (Interrupting) Rich are you okay? You're starting to scare me a little.

Rich: No its fine I've just been thinking about some things lately and I ... (stops as if looking for words)

Grace: Rich, hello- it's me, what? What have you been thinking about?

Rich: God

Grace: God?

Rich: Yeah, God (pause)

Grace: Well it's Christmas time and I suppose everyone thinks about God at Christmas. Give it a few days and after we all open presents and visit your parents you'll get over it.

Rich: No it's more than that. I mean every year we put up a tree. We find a church to visit, we sing Christmas songs and... well this whole thing is about God but I never really thought about any of it before.

Grace: What do you mean you never thought about it before? We all know the Christmas story about the baby Jesus and Santa Claus and all that Yule Tide stuff. We learned that as little kids... everyone knows (Rich interrupts)

Rich: Do we? Do we really know?

Grace: (reaching over and clasping Rich's hand gently) Rich, honey relax all is well in the Stewart household.

Rich: Grace, what if it's true!?

Grace: What if what is true? (teasingly) Rich, did your mommy never tell you that Santa Clause isn't real.

(Enter- Ritchie) Hey what did you say about Santa Claus—He's not real? I want a refund! (laughs while pouring hot chocolate)

Rich: (Sarcastically to Ritchie) It was Bigfoot that brought the presents at my house anyway. (To Grace) No, Grace I mean it what if it's all true about Jesus really being the Savior of the world and all.

(Ritchie sits at the table)

Ritchie: One of my friends at school says that Christmas is a pagan holiday and that Jesus wasn't really born in December anyway.

Rich: Well, Christmas is in the right home here then. According to all those TV preachers we're as pagan as they come.

Ritchie: COOL! Does this mean I can go to that Monster Death Rock Concert? I mean now that we are all pagan and stuff?

Grace and Rich together: NO!

Ritchie: (Ritchie leaves the room, mumbling out loud) PINO

Grace: What was that? PINO?

Ritchie: Yeah, Pagan In Name Only (Grace and Rich laugh, Ritchie leaves)

Rich: (yelling to Ritchie) Finish your homework before you get on facebook. Okay?

Ritchie: (yelling from offstage) Okay!

Rich: What do **you** believe about Christmas? It's hard to imagine we've been married almost 20 years and we have never talked about spiritual things before.

Grace: I believe that whatever you believe is... well that all religions are basically good... and... oh I don't know!

Rich: See that's what I am talking about. We have never stopped in our busy lives and questioned these things. I just wonder... what if it's true?

Grace: Rich, just because we give presents to our children and put up a tree doesn't mean we have to believe in all that superstitious mumbo jumbo.

Rich: I know I just... well maybe I just need more eggnog. (Laughs as Grace pours more eggnog)

End Scene 1

Scene 2 The Office

Scene- Several office workers are in the break room and are discussing the Holidays

Jim: I thought that the office Christmas party was going to be at DJ's.

Dwight: DJ's is owned by members of the mafia and the secret order of the Ferrets.

Rich, Jim, Pam, and Phyllis: What?

Dwight: You wouldn't understand. They probably have you all brainwashed

(Pam and Phyllis give Dwight a strange look)

Rich: What are you guys doing for the holidays? I mean with your families and all.

Pam: Well, every year we put our tree up and have a big family celebration when we light it. And then we put all our presents under it and wait for Christmas morning. So we're good to go already.

Jim: Our church puts on a Christmas pageant in December. We celebrate the birth of Jesus. It's important for us. It's because He became a man that we are adopted and accepted by God.

Phil: Yeah, Jim, spare us the sermon.

Jim: Hey, it's the reason for the season. That's all I'm saying, that's why it's called CHRIST-mass.

Pam: Well I have to go now and get the rest of my CHRIST-mass shopping done.

(Phil, Pam, and Dwight leave.)

Jim: (to Rich) What does your family do for Christmas?

Rich: Usual stuff I guess. Presents, a tree, lights on the house, and we have dinner with my parents.

Jim: Sounds really nice.

Rich: Aren't you going to tell me I should go to church on Christmas?

Jim: Hey if you want to go to church that would be awesome for you, but you don't have to go to church to make God like you or anything.

Rich: Yeah but what about all that, "If you don't go to church you're going to hell." Stuff?

Jim: (laughing) You've been listening to religious people- listen to Jesus and He'll tell you something a lot cooler than that. Look, its quitting time and I have to pick up my son from school have a great Christmas. Oh, if you want to come to our Christmas play its Saturday night at 8. (Exit Jim)

Rich: (alone in the room) Yeah um okay? (Inquisitively) Religious people? I thought Jim was religious?

End Scene 2

## Scene 3

Scene set up

Rich and his family are in the kitchen again. They are discussing their days and wrapping presents.)

Rich: Hey honey, how was your day?

Grace: It was fine. We got out of work a little early and I got a few errands done.

Rich: Great.

Grace: Oh, I got your favorite Christmas sweater cleaned. You know the one with all the reindeer on it.

Rich: Cool I love that sweater.

Ritchie: (Walks in the kitchen) That is the goofiest sweater ever.

Rich: Son, one day you'll be old and your kids will say that your clothes are goofy too.

Ritchie: No way, I'm going to be cool forever.

Rich and Grace: (together) Groovy!

Ritchie: You guys are hilarious.

Grace: More like crazy from having children. So how was school? Did you get your algebra test back?

Ritchie: Yeah, I got it back... I got an F. (Grace and Rich turn in shock) Just kidding I got a B.

Rich: Good because Santa Claus don't bring presents to people with F's in math.

Ritchie: I thought Bigfoot brought our presents.

Grace: That was your father's demented family.

Ritchie: Hey I met this cool new kid at school today. He says they have an awesome Christmas play at his church. Can we go?

Grace and Rich pass each other a look of skepticism)

Grace: Well we'll see.

Ritchie: Is that a we'll see... like it actually might happen or is that a "we'll see" like forget it.

Rich: We'll see (says with authority)

Ritchie: (turning to leave) Okay well anyway he says his church is way cool and not religious.

Rich: You know, Grace there is a new shipping supervisor at work that said the same thing. His name is Jim and he talks about Jesus a lot but says he is not religious.

Grace: I thought being a Jesus Freak **made** you religious.

Rich: Yeah maybe he's confused. But he invited us to his church Christmas play.

Grace: When is it?

Rich: I don't remember.

Grace: Well what's the name of his church?

Rich: I don't know.

Grace: It's just as well. We don't fit in at church.

Rich: Yeah I guess you're right. I'm going to get Ritchie's last present and wrap it while he's up in his room. (Rich leaves scene)

(Phone Rings)

Grace: (Yelling) I've got it. (Picks up phone) Hello.

Janice: Grace, it's Janice how in the world are you!

Grace: My goodness Janice, how are you? It's been forever since we've talked. I've been meaning to call but things are just so hectic these days.

Janice: I know same here. Listen Grace, how are you?

Grace: Oh, we're all fine we're finishing up all of our last minute Holiday preparations.

Janice: I just called to wish you a Merry Christmas and say that you and Rich and Ritchie are in our prayers this Christmas.

Grace: Well thanks, we'll be thinking of you all too.

Janice: Grace (pausing)

Grace: Yeah?

Janice: (slowly and intentionally) God bless you.

Grace: Okay (puzzled) Bye Janice.

Janice: Good bye Grace.

End Scene 3

## Scene 4

Scene Set up:

Grace and Rich are lighting candles and pouring eggnog. On the table are a few wrapped presents.

Grace: Ritchie! Come on down here sweetie its time to open your one **Christmas Eve present.**

Ritchie: Be there in a minute I'm finishing a chat with Jimmy.

Grace: Jimmy who?

Ritchie: Jimmy the new kid at school I told you about. He snuck into his Youth Pastor's office and is using his computer.

Rich: Even the church kids are sneaky. (says joking with a smile)

Grace: (yelling) Well get down here, you're going to really like this present.

Ritchie: Coming!

(Several loud thumps are heard against the picture window in their living room.)

Rich: What was that?

Grace: I don't know. Sounded like snow balls hitting our window.

Rich: (angry storming towards the front door) That Wilson kid!

(Rich opens door and looks around)

Rich: Billy Wilson! Is that you? Hey Grace, look at this. Look at all of these birds on the ground under our window.

Grace: My goodness what happened to those poor little birds.

Rich: They must have flown into our window trying to get in out of the storm.

(By now Ritchie has joined them) (Rich just stands and observes during the whole rescue attempt)

Ritchie: Well we have to help them. (Runs to try and catch them and the birds scatter)

Grace: You're just scattering them!

Grace: Maybe if we put out a box they'll get in it and be warm.

Ritchie: Great idea. (gets box birds scatter even more)

Grace: You're just scaring them more!

Grace: It needs bread crumbs; we'll put some bread crumbs in the box to coax them in.

Ritchie: Yeah! (runs off and returns with a single slice of bread)

Grace: (While Ritchie is fetching the bread...yells to him) Don't touch my wheat bread I baked for your Grandparents!!!

(during the rescue attempts Rich just watches and has an "Epiphany")

Rich: (stops Ritchie as he returns with the bread) You're not a bird, Son.

Ritchie: What?

Rich: You're not a bird. I know we only want to help them but you're so big and scary to them. They can't see that you only want to save them.

Grace: So what? We have to become birds in order to help them? (sarcastically)

Rich: Falls on His knees and begins to weep.

Ritchie: (with nervous laughter) Dad, they're just birds.

Grace: (walks over and kneels next to Rich with her arm around his shoulder)

Rich: (Standing up with Grace) No, don't you see? This is the Christmas story. Hidden among these birds.

Grace: Birds?

Rich: Grace, all through my childhood in Sunday school this is what I never understood. This is what never clicked for me.

Grace: God became a bird? (confused)

Rich: Yes... He became us. He became Rich, Grace, and Ritchie Stewart and He became everyone else too. (Rich has a big Epiphany) That's what Jim was talking about! You see?! Jesus became a man. Jesus is one of us he understands our fears. That is what Jim meant that now we have been included, adopted and accepted by God! We don't have to become God- he became US!

(Suddenly a bright light and the figure of an angel appears)

Gabriel: He's right.

(Everyone turns to see the angel and Rich and Grace fall to their knees, Ritchie looks around for a second and kneels too)

Rich: (stammering) W-W-W- Who are you?

Gabriel: Do not be afraid and do not bow to worship me for there is one worthy of worship. I am His messenger.

(Stewart Family stands)

Grace: What do you want from us, is God mad at us? (panic in her voice) I know we don't go to church and all but we could start right now. We'll give all our money to the poor! Please...don't smite us!

Gabriel: (stretches out his arm as if to settle Grace) Smite you? (with a chuckle in his voice) No Grace, God is not mad at you, He has never been mad at you. He has always loved you and it is because of His great love for you that He sent Jesus to be born among men in order to save you.

Rich: (cut to the heart of his soul at what he has heard he covers his mouth with both hands)

Gabriel: Astonishing isn't it?

Rich: What do we do?

Gabriel: Believe it and live in the freedom of the Father's embrace!

(Phone rings)

(Everyone looks over at the phone, Rich goes to get it and when they all look back the angel is gone)

Rich: (picks up phone) Hello.

Jim: Rich! Hello can your hear me?

Rich: Um, yeah.

Jim: Its Jim (pause) from work.

Rich: What's up?

Jim: Hey its intermission at our church Christmas play it is the most awesome play I have ever seen. They're really doing a fantastic job this year. If you hurry you can make the last half.

Rich: Okay we'll be there, where is it?

Jim: Just off route 6 right at Paradise Rd.

Rich: Wow, we only live like 5 miles from there, see you in a flash, bye.

Jim: We're in the front section on the right, we have seats for you.

Rich: Cool, see you there. (hangs up) (to the family) Get in the car we're going to a Christmas play!

Grace: Great I'll get the coats.

End Scene 4

## Scene 5

Scene Set up:

Jim and family are seated; Rich, Grace, and Ritchie sneak in and sit with Jim and his family

Jim: (stands to greet Rich) You're just in time for the finale'. This song says it all.

Stage for the play they are watching has Mary and manger. Mary dances as Angel sings "Here with us" by Joy Williams.

After the song stage is dark.

Ritchie: Mom, Dad, can we go here; I mean can we start coming here for church?

Rich and Grace: (together) Yes we can, Son.

Ritchie: Cool.

End Scene 5