

This Child Here, at Christmas

I don't know why it took me so long to realize that the title to our Non-Profit, This Child Here, has one clear implication in the Holiday Season. Christians may not know the whole story of the birth of Christ, but if there was a man named Jesus, then there was once a child named Jesus. There was: *That Child There*.

We are told they were homeless on the night he was born, so Jesus ended up in as a newbie surrounded by cattle. We are told they were on the run for a few years from Herod, and we are told they landed back in Nazareth where Jesus grew up. After that, things are mostly speculation. How poor was the carpenter's family? Were they middle class? What did Jesus do those first thirty-something years?

From what we read, he had a stable home and family. Once, when he was twelve, they got worried sick searching three days and "found him in the temple courts, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions" . (This is all in Luke 2:41-52)

"Son, why have you treated us like this? Your father and I have been anxiously searching..."

Which tells us: Clearly, his family loved and cared about him enough to be outraged when he disappeared. And for three days, at age 12, Jesus was homeless.

That's what we know of his childhood.

All the studies about and evidence of the childhood experience, point to a couple of truths. First, kids who grow up in a stable home and family have far better emotional and relational development, and a far better shot at life-success, than kids who do not. A two-parent home, a one parent home, a home with extended family, and adoption all provide *the critical adult-child nurture necessary*: the nurture that kids on the streets and in facilities do not receive.

Age 12 is the time kids make choices of their own. Jesus is already exploring options for the future. But if there is abuse in the home or in a facility at an early age, then, around age 12, is when kids run.

We have several objectives in the work of This Child Here in Ukraine. One is quite clear: get youth and children living in facilities, back into families. Family of origin is best. When that is not possible, foster family and adoptive family is next. There are 751 orphanages and about 106,000 kids living in them in Ukraine. Over the next 9 years, Ukraine hopes to complete that shift from facilities to families. They have the will; we have the will and way.

Have a wonderful Christmas and a rewarding year to come, all filled with grace and peace,

This Child Here - Odessa, Ukraine

A 501c3 non-profit Helping orphans, children without parents and children at risk in the region of Odessa, Ukraine
<http://thischildhere.org>

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