

THE NEWS

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Economist & Sun • Stouffville Tribune

Christmas means love through Jesus

BY MIKE ADLER
STAFF WRITER

Dave Hunt, a missionary, sees the birth of Christ as the moment God intervened so that people could have peace and hope.

Owen Budden, a Salvation Army lieutenant, thinks of God's faithfulness in sending the world a messiah.

And John Howarth, an Evangelical pastor, reminds his flock that Jesus was born to die on the cross for their sins.

Celebrated this evening (except by some Orthodox churches, which celebrate it Jan. 7), the birth of Jesus Christ inspires a range of reflection in local Christians.

One thing they all say is that the birth of the child Christians believe is the son of God changed the world forever.

"Instead of being hopeless, we can have hope," Rev. Kenneth Fung of All-Saints Anglican Church in Milliken said this week.

The true meaning of Christmas, which all believers should reflect on, is

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the love that Jesus has shown us, he said. Jesus came to the world in a dark time of oppression, and he comes to us in our darkest moments, said Lorraine Runza, lay pastor at the Anglican church St. Philip's on-the-hill in Unionville.

But Runza, who spends time working with residents at Union Villa Home for Senior Citizens in Unionville, believes Christ comes to people through others.

"We are the hands and heart of God for one another," she said.

The world is in turmoil but Jesus, also known as the Prince of Peace, can bring hope and inner peace to people.

They can then have the grace to bring peace to the world around them, said Hunt, who has briefly returned to

his Stouffville home from missionary work in Zambia.

Howarth, pastor of Bloomington Gospel Church in Stouffville, said Evangelical Christians believe all people are sinners, and that someone who was perfect had to pay the price for all their sins.

"Jesus was born to die. That's the express purpose for his coming."

Besides his purpose as the perfect sacrifice, Jesus was also born to become the living word of God, Howarth said.

"Everything he did and everything he said explains to us what God is."

Budden said at the birth of Jesus, God fulfilled the prophecy of a messiah by becoming a living child. Salvation through Christ became available to the whole world, he said.

Sadly, a lot of the children seem to think Christmas is all about Santa and receiving gifts. Behind all that tinsel and decoration, we need to remind ourselves that the real reason we celebrate is God's love, Budden said.

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