

MERRY CHRISTMAS & HAPPY NEW YEAR!

Cole's Foundation Newsletter



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THE BROENIMAN FAMILY; A STORY OF LOVE, LOSS, & SURVIVING CHILDHOOD CANCER

By Billy Soden

Jim and Amie Broeniman of Appleton, Wisconsin were enjoying the playful interaction and development of their 15-month-old daughter, Emma, just as most parents do. Every milestone was celebrated in that short journey from baby to toddlerhood. The private moments they shared as they each bonded with each other through play and love was beyond precious, and beyond words. That kind of love was the overwhelming gift that can only be experienced, not described. Little did the Broeniman's know that this love for each other, given to them in abundance, would soon be sabotaged with a diagnosis that would rock their world and change their lives forever.

Beautiful little Emma was just learning how to stand and walk. She couldn't contain her excitement as she amazed herself with the wonderment of her newfound mobility! As Emma's mom sat at the computer, Emma balanced herself with one hand on the wall as she bent her knees, bouncing happily. Her legs suddenly gave way and she fell to the floor...

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I am not sure if you would agree but for me Christmas is always my favorite time of year. It seems that people will actually take time out of their lives to do something special for someone else. To say, "Merry Christmas" or volunteer to ring a bell standing by a red kettle. The one Christmas story that always fascinates me is the Christmas Truce of 1914. A time when the world was at War you seen the heart of humanity as soldiers from opposing sides of the trenches put down their guns and opened their hearts to celebrate the birth of a King. This Christmas, I encourage you to take the time to have a "Truce" with anything that takes your mind of the most important gift that has ever been given to you and I. The gift of a saviors birth:

While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them.

And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. 10 But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. Luke 2 6-11

May your Christmas be filled with Love, Peace and Joy!

God Bless,

The Ruotsala Family



THE CHRISTMAS TRUCE

It is a great hope for future peace when two great nations, hating each other as foes seldom hated, should, on Christmas Day and for all the the world implies, lay down their arms, exchange smokes, and wish each other happiness.

[Click here to watch "The Christmas Truce" Video](#)



"And then we started sharing everything we were carrying," described another, "tobacco, chocolate, schnapps, shoulder badges, and many other things. It was a charming sight."

"It was an experience of a lifetime, I should think," said one soldier, "and one very rare."



Even at the toughest of times in the heat of the war and the most dreadful of occasions, there can be great humanity.



DID YOU KNOW THIS ABOUT CHRISTMAS?

Did you know that Christmas wasn't declared a federal holiday in the United States until June 26, 1870? In fact, Congress actually met in session on December 25, 1789, the first Christmas under America's new constitution.

Furthermore, did you know that Christmas wasn't declared a state holiday in Virginia until 1890?

Did you know that in 1822 the United States Postal Service wanted to outlaw the delivery of Christmas cards because the overwhelming number of seasonal mail put such an unusual strain on their resources and manpower?

Did you know that from 1659 to 1681, the celebration of Christmas was completely outlawed in Boston, and law-breakers were fined five shillings (approx. \$0.40) for celebrating it?

And did you know that the singing of Christmas carols — as we now know them — was abolished in England by the Puritan Parliament in 1649? It was under the leadership of the famous Oliver Cromwell that this was done. As a result of Parliament's ruling, Christmas hymns and carols were scarce between the late 17th and the early 18th Century in England. Charles Wesley's "Hark! the Herald Angels Sing" was one of the few written during that period that became popular wherever Christians gathered during Advent. After Cromwell died in 1658 and the monarchy was soon restored, the former decision to prohibit the singing of Christmas carols was abandoned. Thus, hymns written to honor the birth of Jesus began to appear and have continued to this day.

Wesley's "Hark! the Herald Angels Sing" is one of the most popular Christmas carols today. It can even be heard in both of the classic films *It's a Wonderful Life* and *A Charlie Brown Christmas*. But did you know that the carol is completely different today than originally written? Did you know that both Wesley's words and tune have been changed?

The first line of the hymn originally read, “Hark! how all the welkin rings, Glory to the King of Kings.” Welkin is an old English word that means “vault of heaven.” In 1753, George Whitefield, a famous English preacher, rewrote the first line of the carol into the modern version, “Hark! the herald angels sing — Glory to the newborn King!” And this, of course, is how we sing it today..

Despite Whitefield’s presumption that angels sing, the song has remarkable theological accuracy, depth, and richness not often found in carols. (Bible students love to point out that nowhere in the Bibles does it ever record that angels actually sing. It doesn’t say they don’t sing, it just never says they do sing. Confused? Maybe they do, maybe they don’t.

I still think that Whitefield’s version has a better ring to it. Try singing and rhyming the phrase, “Hark the herald angels mentioned...” If you listen closely to the lyrics you’ll notice that the carol gives a full explanation of the gospel. We often sing just three verses of the song, but there is a fourth, lesser-known verse, that exists. The fourth verse says:

Come, Desire of nations come, Fix in us Thy humble home;

Rise, the Woman’s conquering Seed, Bruise in us the Serpent’s head.

Adam’s likeness now efface: Stamp Thine image in its place;

Second Adam, from above, Reinstale us in thy love.

Hark the herald angels sing, Glory to the newborn King.

However, what this song had in rich lyrics, it greatly lacked in melody. Wesley insisted that his hymn be sung to a slow, somber, and “boring” religious tune. It wasn’t until the words were paired with a more upbeat melody that it became popular.

The current tune for this carol was composed by Mendelssohn, who himself was a Messianic Jew. It is from the second chorus of a cantata he wrote in 1840. The cantata was originally written to commemorate Johann Gutenberg and the invention of the printing press. Mendelssohn strictly warned that his composition was to only be used in a purely secular manner. However, in 1856, long after both Wesley and Mendelssohn were dead, Dr. William Cummings ignored both of their wishes and joined the lyrics by Wesley with the music by Mendelssohn for the first time. As a result, the modern version of this beautiful, gospel-centered carol was born and generations have been singing it ever since. (Tyler Scarlett)

Peace on earth and
goodwill to all humankind.

