

BETHLEHEM 2002

Dr. Cherrie Coghlan

This poem was written during the siege of the Church of the Nativity and while studying theology. It may express a general wish for an integrative resolution in situations of conflict and pain. The middle lines of the second stanza relate to the idea from New Testament Studies that while Bethlehem is the birthplace of the Christ of religion, the historical Jesus may have been born in Nazareth. Sadly, the situation in the Middle East remains tense and volatile as we approach Christmas again.

A stranger to the Earth he came
Out of the breath of God
And took his dwelling in that place
Where conflict rages still
Or did he?

Was he one of us –
Or something else?
That child of a human mother who
May not have been born here at all
But squeezed into place
To fit a prophecy –
To sow the seed of anarchy in men
And women too.

And is it likely that he knew
Throughout eternity
That in this stable church
A battle would ensue
Endangering the very hope
Of Peace on Earth?

Here rival myopias strive
For propaganda victory,
And no one seems to hear
The anguished cries of every human mother
In the birth pangs of
A more inclusive vision.

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