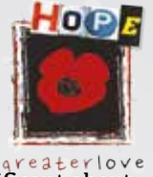


# The Gift of Christmas



In 1914, something special happened through a song, a football match and two communities. What was most significant about this was that it happened on Christmas Day, because there is something about this moment and something about this day in history, that can unite countries, communities, even enemies.

Maybe it's the gift of the Saviour, the Prince of Peace, (Isaiah 9:6) to a world, 2000 years ago. That gift can play a significant part of this day as it did 100 years ago, 200 years ago even 2000 years ago.

Maybe, just maybe, the Prince of Peace invites us to allow him to play a significant part in this carol service on this day.

- Where there is conflict, as Prince of Peace he has the ability to bring peace.
- Where there is guilt, as the Saviour of the world, he has the ability to bring forgiveness (Luke 2:11).
- Where there is confusion, as the Wonderful Counsellor (Isaiah 9:6) he has the ability to bring direction.

This Christmas gift is not just for a moment, not even for a day; the Saviour of the world is for a lifetime.

Come with me to imagine that day: the God of all creation sends the gift of his son, and in 1914 there's something in the opposing factions of war that recognises his birth-day and the gift of new life that he brought to the world.

This gift is powerful today as the time when they were first spoken but these are not just words. Since that day, the birthday of Christ, 100s, 1000s of people have discovered the Christ of Christmas, in a personal transformational way.

The First World War nurse, Edith Cavell, was executed for helping Allied troops escape from occupied Belgium. She was willing to treat injured troops from both sides in the war. The night before she died, she said: 'Standing as I do in view of God and eternity, I realise that patriotism is not enough, I must have no hatred or bitterness towards anyone.'

Edith understood that Jesus' greater love commands us to love our enemies as well as our neighbours and friends.

Captain Noel Chavasse was a medical doctor and British Army officer in the First World War who is one of only three people to be awarded a Victoria Cross twice. The first citation reads:

'His courage and self-sacrifice, were beyond praise.'

After he recovered, similar sacrificial action gained him a second VC. The citation reads:

'Though severely wounded early in the action whilst carrying a wounded soldier to the Dressing Station, Capt. Chavasse refused to leave his post, and for two days not only continued to perform his duties, but in addition went out repeatedly under heavy fire to search for and attend to the wounded ... By his extraordinary energy and inspiring example, he was instrumental in rescuing many wounded... This devoted and gallant officer subsequently died of his wounds.'

These are just two examples of Christians who showed extraordinary courage in war. They found strength and peace from their faith in Jesus, the Prince of Peace. That same courage, strength and peace is still available today. The same Jesus who walked on earth two thousand years ago, wants to walk with us into every situation, bringing peace, love and hope for the future.

[www.hopetogether.org.uk/christmas](http://www.hopetogether.org.uk/christmas)

