



Another quirky Christmas Letter from Barry and Vanessa Chant. 2016.

Every year, Barry and Vanessa's Quirky Christmas letter has delighted, annoyed, amused, bemused, gladdened, saddened, elated, frustrated and occasionally informed their readers. This year's is different again. So here it is for your reading pleasure. If you don't like it, last year's was actually better so why don't you read that one instead? (<http://www.barrychant.com/barrywritings/barry-and-vanessas-2015-quirky-christmas-letter/>)

Still here? OK. Here we go. Need some new ideas to liven up your Christmas celebration? Look no further!

First up, how about **a new song** for the occasion? You can sing it at home or at church or school or wherever. Everyone will know the tune. There is no copyright restriction on the music in Australia and this letter is your permission to use the lyrics. *Be sure to sing it with feeling!* Anyway, here it is:

Once a little baby slumbered in a tucker box
Under the shade of an olive wood tree;
And he sang to the crooning of his Mother Mary,
Who'll come and carry the cross with Me?

*Who'll come and carry, who'll come and carry,
Who'll come and carry the cross with Me?
And he sang to the crooning of his mother Mary,
Who'll come and carry the cross with Me?*

Loud cried the angels in the highest heaven,
Glory to God for eternity!
And the shepherds responded to the voice of majesty,
Who'll come and carry the cross with Me?

*Who'll come and carry, who'll come and carry,
Who'll come and carry the cross with Me?
And the shepherds responded to the voice of majesty,
Who'll come and carry the cross with Me?*

Bright shone the star above the town of Bethlehem,
Down came the wise men—one, two, three—
And they knelt as they gave their gold and myrrh and frankincense,
Who'll come and carry the cross with Me?

*Who'll come and carry, who'll come and carry,
Who'll come and carry the cross with Me?
And they knelt and they gave their myrrh and gold and frankincense
Who'll come and carry the cross with Me?*

High hung the Saviour on the cross of Calvary,
Deep in the sleep of the grave lay He;
Then He rose from the dead, O grave where is your victory?
Who'll come and carry the Cross with Me?

*Who'll come and carry, Who'll come and carry,
Who'll come and carry the cross with Me?
Then He rose from the dead, O grave where is your victory?
Who'll come and carry the Cross with Me?
Who'll come and carry the Cross with Me?*

Tune 'Waltzing Matilda' Lyrics © Barry Chant 2016

Now here's another suggestion. You can also do this one around the table or at church or in your youth group and it can involve everyone. Adults can do it; young people can do it; kids can do it. Strangers can do it (Luke 14:13). Warning: You may need an interpreter if you don't speak Aussie.

So what is it? It's is a dinkum Aussie skit called ***While Stockmen Watched their Mob One Night***. You can perform it **as a family** after Christmas dinner. Just clear a space in your lounge room or your back patio and go for it. Three people can play the role of shepherds; others can be angels; someone can read the Bible; everyone can be in the choir; and there is need for at least one techie, one soloist and one musician. (If you don't have a musician, sing the songs anyway.) This could be a great way to involve dinner guests who might be uncomfortable with a straight Bible reading or prayer.

Just make copies of the script, assign the roles and read the parts. There's no need to memorise the lines but it could be a good idea to practice them once or twice beforehand, especially the songs.

The play is also ideal for a Christmas celebration for **School, Sunday School, Youth and other groups and Church**. In these cases, the parts could be memorised and acted out properly and the musicians well-rehearsed beforehand. Costuming is a cinch. Props are minimal.

There are no copyright restrictions on using the play, but if you do use it, please let us know where you performed it and how it went.

Link: <http://www.barrychant.com/barrywritings/while-stockmen-watched-their-mob-one-night/>

Finally, a **timely prayer** that you can also use at any Christmas function. One person can read it or you could all read it together.

A Christmas blessing

*May this Christmas be a special time
of gentle and good cheer;
may every blessing fill your life
throughout the coming year.
Walk calmly in the light and love
the Saviour came to bring,
As Jesus' peace upon you
turns each winter into spring.*

Our Year at a Glance

Barry spoke regularly at local churches on Sundays around NSW during the year and also devoted considerable time to writing. Around 4000 copies of *My Personal Practical Prayer Diary* were distributed in 2016. **Vanessa** maintained her regular counselling ministry, including both marriage preparation and relationships counselling plus supervision of other counsellors. She also gave many hours to the Wesley International Congregation, where all income from clients went to overseas missions.

January: A memorable holiday in Fiji with 22 of our family. Everyone still talks about it.

February: Enjoyed a ten-day South Pacific Cruise with Stuart and Margaret Robinson (plus 2000 others!). We organised a joyful and inspiring Sunday service on board where the small chapel was packed with worshipers of all denoms.

March: Big event: our second great grandson was born—Archer Cook.



CRC Men's Convention in Port Moresby on the theme of Rekindle the Flame. Hundreds of men attended; some 'hiked' for days to get there; up to 2000 present on Sunday morning; vibrant worship; spontaneous standing ovation at the end for Jesus..

April: Barry attended the CRC NSW State Conference. Vanessa had surgery on her knee.

May: Sydney CRC pastoral gathering; Portlife CRC church 60th anniversary celebration in SA. (Barry was the second pastor of this church 1963-1975)

June: Ministry at Full Gospel Churches seminar in Sydney.

July: Barry and his brother Ken taught at Winter School at Adelaide Christian Centre (CRC). B and V visited the growing Georgetown Baptist Church (Penang) pastored by a Tabor graduate (see photo). Also River of Life church and the huge Full Gospel Assembly

(Kuala Lumpur) where there are ten congregations numbering thousands of people. The Chinese-speaking Youth group alone numbers over 2000.



August: Ministry at Full Gospel Assembly and Grace Assembly of God in Singapore. Sold around 2,500 of Barry's books in four weeks in Malaysia/Singapore.

Barry addressed the Full Gospel Churches conference in Melbourne.

Then to Tasmania to the Hobart CRC church which has an exciting and successful outreach to the prisoners of the Risdon prison (right next door) and to Alphacrucis College where Vanessa taught on counselling.

September: Barry's computer was hacked and had to be completely cleaned and reset. Redeemer Baptist Church annual conference (4th year in succession). This year Barry taught from Paul's letters to Timothy.

Our Indian tenants, who had become like family to us, moved on; we renovated our 'granny flat'; our granddaughter Ness came to live with us.

October: Vanessa had heart surgery, from which she has recovered well. Ministry every Sunday at various churches including Living Word (African), Shellharbour (CRC), River of Life (Crosslink).

November: Ministry at various churches including Wesley International Congregation, where we had pastored for eight years and a Holy Spirit seminar at Kingston City Church (CRC) in Melbourne. Another Sydney CRC pastoral gathering

December: Scheduled Sunday ministry at Life Christian Centre and Austral-Asian Community Church, both in Adelaide.

*We hope you have a cheery Christmas and an
exceptional new year.*

Barry and Vanessa Thant.