

Tell the message of Jesus' birth in 140 characters. Can you do it? As I expect you know, if you want to send a message on Twitter, you have to keep within the limit of 140 characters. This is a good discipline. Because you only say what you really have to say. I am not a daily tweeter, but when I do tweet I really enjoy the challenge of putting what I have to say in this concise form. In this letter I want to share with you a few of my attempts to put the message of Christmas in Twitter form!

You see, if the church is serious about 'The Good News of Jesus Christ' and that it is a message for the world, then we do need to get our fingers on buttons and screens! I have just, for example, searched on Twitter to see what happens when I put in 'Christmas'. Here are the top three tweets as of November 13 at 3.53 pm!...

Proper Crimbo @Proper\_Crimbo This week only get 10% off our personalised Christmas stockings and Santa sacks using promo code: TWITTER10

Urban Girl @UrbanGirlOffice Great blog post! Emilee speaks: christmas wish list of a planner nerd

Kathe Wolfhart @GermanXmas 11 Of The Most Magical German Markets Across the U.S.

A few minutes later and they are all different. But a quick swipe across my screen reveals not a single one about the true meaning of Christmas. Now that is hardly surprising on November 13 - after all we hadn't even started Advent yet. And few Christians want to start thinking too much about Christmas before we get even to that special season. But wouldn't it be great if the screens were buzzing with real Christmas messages in at least the few hours of Christmas Day!

So let me issue a challenge. Send me a message of your ideal Christian Christmas Tweet! I might even give a prize to the winner - entries before February 2nd please: The Feast of Candlemas - the Presentation of Christ, at which we begin to turn our focus away from Christmas and towards Easter.

Here are a few samples of messages we could use. Some of them, of course, are direct quotations from the Bible. I give the number of characters in each case.

Glory to God in the highest and peace, goodwill among people (60 characters)

She gave birth to her firstborn son, wrapped him in bands of cloth, laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn. (137)

Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel, which means 'God is with us'. (110)

What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. (85)

God sent his Son, born of a woman, so that we might receive adoption as children (81)

Christmas shows us God's love in frail human form, in a child in a manger, a refugee, an outcast. (94)

Jesus, Mary and Joseph fled persecution to Egypt. Today many of his followers flee the lands of His birth. (105)

There was no room in the inn. Shepherds worshipped. Wise men came from the East. How far will you come to find the maker of the universe? (137)

Over to you...

Have a Christmas that is truly blessed and may that blessing continue into 2015.

Martin Stephenson  
Warden of Readers