

The Man and the Birds

By Red Miller

I have a favorite contemporary Christmas story. Because the author of this story is unknown, I am claiming it as mine to share with others.

The Man and the Birds

Now the man to whom I'm going to introduce to you was not a scrooge, he was a kind decent, mostly good man, generous to his family, upright in his dealings with other men but he just didn't believe all that incarnation stuff which the churches proclaim at Christmas time. It just didn't make sense and he was just too honest to pretend otherwise, he just couldn't swallow the Jesus story about God coming to earth as a man. I'm truly sorry to distress you he told his wife but I'm not going with you to church this Christmas eve, he said he'd feel like a hypocrite, that he would much rather just stay at home, but that he would wait up for them, and so he stayed, and they went to the midnight service.

Shortly after the family drove away in the car, snow began to fall, he went to the window to watch the flurries getting heavier and heavier and then he went back to his fireside chair and he began to read his newspaper. Minutes later he was startled by a thudding sound, then another and then another sort of a thump or a thud, at first he thought someone must be throwing snowballs against his living room window but when he went to the front door to investigate, he found a flock of birds huddled miserably in the snow, they'd been caught in a storm and in a desperate search for shelter they had tried to fly through his large landscape window.

Well, he couldn't let the poor creatures lie there and freeze so remembering the barn, where the children stabled their ponies that would provide a warm shelter if he could direct the birds to it. Quickly he put on a coat, goulashes, and tramped through the deepening snow to the barn and he opened the doors wide, turned on a light but the birds did not come in. He figured food would entice them in, so he hurried back to the house, fetched bread crumbs, sprinkled them on the snow making a trail to the yellow lighted wide open doorway to the stable, but to his dismay the birds ignored the bread crumbs, and continued to flop around helplessly in the snow. He tried catching them, he tried shooing them into the barn by walking around them and waving his arms, instead they scattered in every direction except in the warm lighted barn and then he realized that they were afraid of him.

So, then he reasoned, I am a strange and terrifying creature, if only I could think of some way to let them know that they can trust me, that I'm not trying to hurt them but help them but now because any move he made tended to frighten them and confuse them, they just would not follow— they would not be led or shooed because they feared him, if only I could be a bird he thought to himself and mingle with them and speak their language, then I could tell them not to be afraid. Then I could show them the way to safe warm barn. But I would have to be one of them so they could see and hear and understand. At that moment the church bells began to ring, the sound reached his ears above the sounds of the wind and he stood there listening to the bells and *Adeste Fideles* [O Come, All Ye Faithful], listening to the bells reeling the glad tidings of Christmas and he sank to his knees in the snow...

In one of our Praise and Worship choruses we sing these words. "He came from heaven to earth to show the way— From the earth to the cross our debt to pay. Like the birds floundering helplessly in the snow we were floundering helplessly in sin and He came to save us. God came into this world so that we could know Him, so that he could care for us, so that we could understand him and trust him.

Anita and I wish you all a Merry and Blessed Christmas!

In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy. Philip 1:4