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The Emmaus Journal – "Somebody Please Stop The Merry Go Round – I Have To Get Off!"

By C.L. Mareydt

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'Stop, somebody please stop the merry-go-round, I have to get off.'

Do those words bring back any childhood memories? I can remember that exact phrase coming out of my mouth as a child! I had no sooner jumped up on the playgrounds' intoxicating and well used merry-go-round, then within a few turns of it's rotation, desperately wanting off. I was afraid to jump, and dragging my feet in the worn circular trench underfoot was the next best alternative; unless a kind hearted playmate daringly grabbed an outside rail and forced the merry-go-round to a halt. Not only did I experience the dizzying effects of the merry-go-round's centrifugal force, my equilibrium suffered greatly even well after the ride. But, for some childish reason, this did not stop me, from jumping up on the merry-go-round the next time I went to the playground.

Thankfully, we all grow-up and learn as we go. I personally had to avoid the merry-go-round, even at the gleeful beckonings of my playground friends. Yes, the playground is full of wonderful childhood memories. Many of life's lessons are learned within those memorable childhood years, and thankfully without the matured mental capacity to fully evaluate them till later on in life.

Our Americanized lifestyle presents it's own array of merry-go-rounds. Even, we as Believers have unabashingly jumped aboard some of the seemingly innocent and gone along for the dizzying ride. One of the greatest rides is within the well marketed advent of our Holiday Season. From Thanksgiving Day, thru Christmas Day, on to New Year's Day, there seems to be the same dizzying effect perpetrating our social playgrounds. The Holiday Merry-Go-Round frenzy of preparing for these strategic events surreptitiously invades our homes, schools, churches, business's, and last but not least, our very souls. As Christian Believers we need to recognize the consequences of jumping on this Holiday Merry-Go-Round, each in our own way.

From the red and green holiday color-wheel to the plethoric glitz of holiday decorations, we are bombarded at every turn with the zeal of our local retailers. Advertisements abound to catch our eye.

Credit cards are blithely scanned, with nary a conscious consideration of the so un-holiday red line of over extensions. Check books flash, and pockets empty out their paper bills and jiggling change, all for

the perfect gift that must be perfectly presented in cheerful ribbons and jolly designer paper. Holiday tunes subliminally turn our fancy to seek out Santa Claus at the Mall. The sweet tooth fairy sprinkles her holiday fairy dust upon our taste-buds. Such a rush of plans and festivities, from the holiday greeting cards, to the holiday menu's, to the shopping excursions, to the gift wrapping, to the tree and home decorating, to the parties that run day and night. A crescendo of Holiday anticipations arise as the eventful pressures prevail. A countdown to the 25th ticks away as all eyes turn to the upcoming New Year...

... The proverbial gifts opening and the big eyed children and the fabulous eats abound in displays of holiday cheer. Usually in such merry making with all the holiday hugs, smiles and kisses exchanged right up into the climatic New Year. And, before we can hardly catch our breath again, it is over! The ride has ended, the merry-go-round grinds to a halt. Our dizzy little heads need to rest. Our equilibrium staggers as we try to stumble back into our everyday routines. But, then the holiday decorations have to be packed away, the holiday bills have to be paid, the holiday extra weight has to come off, etc, etc.

But, I thought the Holiday Merry-Go-Round had stopped! Yes, it did, but now comes the cold reality of the Americanized Holiday Merry-Go-Round's after effects. Where once as a child the merry-go-round only left you with a dizzy head, and a funny walk; this kind of merry-go-round leaves you with more to deal with afterwards. We ceremonially rationalize our Holiday Merry-Go-Round, as part of our Christian culture. After all, it is all about Christ anyway, and the extra holiday spirit doesn't harm anyone. What would the children do if we did not celebrate the holiday's like everyone else? We all need this time to be special. After all, it is all biblically based and there's no real harm in it anyway...

... Most certainly our Holiday traditions have become so entrenched within our religious and worldly psyche, that to jump off such a merry-go-round would be unthinkable, if not downright impossible. What on earth would we do? Not have any Holiday Season? Not celebrate Thanksgiving, Christmas, the New Year? That is just plain insane. But, like most of us have found out as adults, we do have a choice, just like we did as a child on the playground; to jump on the merry-go-round or not. We also can realize if the ride is at the point of making us uncomfortable, we can choose to drag our feet, and slow it down, or jump off, or ask for help. We can say no to all our little playmates that are urging us on. We can you know. Perhaps by bringing in some matured christian sense of well being and balance, perhaps by acknowledging the real truth and facts about all the holidays; instead of aimlessly going along with the Holiday Merry-Go-Round ride as it goes faster and faster...

Christians certainly know that Thanksgiving is a life event. Not brushed over so easily once a year with a turkey dinner celebration. But a genuine lifestyle of Thanksgiving toward YaHWeH (God), for more than the historical events that Thanksgiving can relate. As sojourners upon this earth we can empathize with the 'Pilgrims' who celebrated a Thanksgiving Feast due to their tremendous and difficult circumstance they had endured and had come thru.

Christians certainly know that December 25th is not the accurate date of birth for Yahshua (Jesus). If

any close date could be stated it would be most likely in late spring or early fall. December 25th was the birth of Mithra, Iranian God of Light. Liberius, Bishop of Rome ordered the adoption of this date in to counteract the effects of all the pagan festivals. Yahshua's birth date was adjusted to fit accordingly.

Christians certainly know the christmas tree is related to more pagan rituals. The ancient Pagan Romans decorated trees with bits of metal and replicas of their god, Bacchus (a fertility god). They placed 12 candles on the tree in honor of their sun god. The mid-winter festival of Saturnalia started on December-17 and often lasted until a few days after the Solstice. So many underlying cultish facts still remain alive and well within our Christian Holiday Season and perpetuates the Holiday Season's Merry-Go-Round...

... We as Christian Believer's need to continually look upon our lives and faithfully reflect upon the purposes of YaHWeH (God) in and through it all! We are all growing from faith to faith and from glory to glory. Sometimes we just have to stay off certain merry-go-rounds the world has to offer. Sometimes we have to slow down the merry-go-round we have jumped up onto. Sometimes we have to ask a friend to help us actually stop the merry-go-round altogether. Whatever place we may find ourselves on this Holiday Merry-Go-Round, know that we still have a choice in our participation to whatever extent and likewise it's consequences in after effects.

The Holy Spirit, in much prayerful inspiration, can help us to decide in changing, a little or a lot. The Holy Spirit will not lead us in dizzying circles, or take us on some other purposeless ride. With great love and divine interest in our total well being, The Holy Spirit will always lead us toward the mark of our high calling with Yahshua (Jesus).

Take a precious moment this Holiday Season and find your peace and your pleasure in Yahshua

(Jesus), first-most before everything else. This is one Holiday Gift you can personally share with everyone else this Holiday Season with a lasting value that will far supersede anything the Holiday Season's Merry-Go-Round can ever offer.

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