

# **Christ is Christmas**

**by Carol Ottley-Mitchell**

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"OK, now that just annoys me!" my mother said.

I didn't even look up. I know she would be griping again about how carnival was taking over Christmas in St. Kitts.

"Look at that sign." She pointed to the sign over Mr. Aboud's store. 'Grand Xmas sale'  
"Why they must 'X' out the most important part of Christmas?"

I rolled my eyes and slouched down in my seat wishing we were home. It was Christmas eve, the busiest day of the year in St. Kitts. Traditionally, everyone left their shopping until the last day and town was awash with people, street vendors, smoky barbques and loud calypso music. Normally I loved the electric atmosphere but today I was not in the mood. Most of my friends were going to the nightclub tonight after hanging in town. My mother had been one of the parents who insisted that "you fin' yourself in bed when you come from town and ready for Church at 5am or else."

She looked over at me now.

"I know you are upset you can't go with your friends tonight but there will be other fetes," she said. "We have to keep focused on the real meaning of Christmas."

I slumped even further in my seat and closed my eyes. It seemed that just a few seconds had passed when the car stopped with a jolt. My mother jumped out and began a heated discussion with a man on a ladder. He was changing the 'Merry Christmas' sign outside of BC Drug Store. He had carefully removed the word 'Christ' and he had stuck a big 'X' in its place.

I heard him say "I just doing what they tell me to do," and he turned his back on my mother.

I got out of the car and looked around. I saw that every 'Merry Christmas' sign within my sight had either been removed or the word 'CHRIST' replaced by an 'X'.

"What's going on?" I said to a man passing by. "What's happening to Christmas?"

"Girl, you crazy? We don't celebrate Christmas no more," he said, "It's Xmas then Carnival."

I was speechless. Sure I enjoyed carnival and this year it felt like Christmas got in the way, but it made me feel very special feel knowing that God sent his only Son to earth and sacrificed him for our salvation. It deserved a celebration!

I walked to the corner of Central and Fort Streets. Just this morning Mommy had dropped a dollar in the Salvation Army pot. The man, dressed in red had smiled, rang his bell and said 'God bless you' and 'Merry Christmas'. Now no one was there except the normal stream of Saturday afternoon shoppers.

I looked up at a store window across the street, my favorite clothing store. This morning I had noticed at the big lighted sign "For unto us a child is born". Below it the store owner had placed a cardboard cutout of Mary holding baby Jesus. Now the only sign in the window was "New outfits for carnival at great prices."

I shook my head. I must be losing my mind, I thought, but everywhere on the street it was the same. All of the Christmas decorations and signs had been removed or changed.

"But what is Christmas without Christ!" I said out loud.

A woman passing by heard me. "You mus' be from foreign," she said. "No one believes that 'Nancy story again. Like a baby born in a barn two thousand years ago could save the world."

"But He did!" I cried out, "He did! I believe it, it's true."

Someone shook my shoulder. I looked over and to my surprise it was my mother. I was back in the car and she was sitting beside me.

"What's true, darling?" she said.

I rubbed my eyes and looked around. We had arrived at home and a group of Christmas carolers, colourfully dressed in red and green uniforms each holding a folder of music, was waiting to enter the house.

"Nothing mom, everything is fine, perfectly fine," I said with great relief that it had all been a dream. "And you are right about everything you said about Christmas being important."

She looked at me curiously. "Well, let's go in. Help me get some sorrel and fruit cake for these guys."

As we walked up to the house, the carolers struck up their first song.

"Oh Holy Night, the stars are brightly shining, this is the night of the dear Savior's birth."

## About the Author

Carol Ottley-Mitchell is the author of the Caribbean Adventure Series, a series about three children and a monkey who have exciting, magical adventures in the Caribbean. Visit [www.CaribbeanAdventureSeries.com](http://www.CaribbeanAdventureSeries.com) for more information.



Photo by [Jaxon Photography](#)

Born in Nevis, Carol has lived in several Caribbean countries. She spent a large part of her formative years in Trinidad, where one of her favorite pastimes was competing with her father to see who could compose the best humorous lyrics to existing songs. This was just the beginning of her interest in creative writing.

Back in St. Kitts, Carol began a more serious side of her writing career in high school when she wrote public service pieces and participated in several debating competitions. After leaving high school to pursue further studies in Barbados and the United States, Carol focused her efforts on developing her information technology and business management skills, while making every effort possible to write and participate in public speaking.

Currently, Carol lives in Ghana with her husband and children.