



# ***REFLECTIONS***

*December 29, 2013*

**Only be careful, and watch yourselves closely so that you do not forget the things your eyes have seen or let them slip from your heart as long as you live.**

*Deuteronomy 4:9*

## **Christmas Traditions**

The Christmas season was like no other. It was like no other because things had happened during the year that had never happened before; because everyone was older and perhaps wiser than they had ever been; because the family had become a little more scattered, and our experiences made us all a little different than we once were.

But just as the Christmas season was different, it was also much the same. The traditional tree, the Coca-Cola village, and nativity scenes graced our home with signs of celebration. Then Christmas Day we enjoyed gift exchanges, laughter, and a fabulous feast; and when calm restored, I found myself retreating into my annual reflective mood.

The lyrics, “I’m dreaming of a white Christmas,” danced through my mind and tears moistened my eyes. I was not dreaming of a white Christmas. But I was dreaming of Christmas memories, just like the ones I used to know—Christmases with the love and joy that have blessed me all of my days. And not just at Christmas. Christmas is just the time that I reflect most deeply on those blessings.

I remember Christmas Eve at Munna and Papa’s when we all sat around the tree in the living room and exchanged gifts. I was always on my knees ripping open the packages. Little did I realize then how much love was packaged inside those wrappings.

When the tree was emptied of all it held, we gathered ourselves for bed. In the night Santa would come, enjoy a Coke and some cookies, then spread plentiful gifts under the once emptied tree, and morning would see the celebration begin all over again.

Now Munna and Papa, and Mom and Dad are precious memories of times gone by, but the traditions live on. The traditions continue though transformed a bit to incorporate the traditions of new family members and to recognize different times, places and schedules. But the basics are still there.

Traditions are practices that honor the past. Christmastime is when traditions are most respectfully followed. These annual reenactments are expressions that reach back to reconnect with memories held dear. Traditions vary from family to family and household to household. But they are all founded on one common word—Love—the kind of Love God gave to the world that first Christmas Day. And lest we forget amidst it all,

The celebration of His Love for us is what Christmas traditions are all about.

*You are the light of the world,*

*Richard +*

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