

Inside this Christmas card, a story unfolds. It is about "Peace on Earth" (on the front) by Suzanna Wright. The story was written by Jim Wright for publishing in a pre-Christmas edition of the *Richmond News*. With this card open, just fold this side upward to make a flat sheet with the story printed on it.



Welcome to “Peace on Earth”!

This is a 2016 pre-Christmas column by Jim Wright for the *Richmond News*. It features Suzanna Wright’s visual (front of this card) and her father’s insights about it, as follows.

Suzanna has used cartoon style to simply say a lot. I’ll share with you what I see in her art.

For a start, I see diverse people focused on a central treasure—in harmony with each other, animals and nature. They’re even okay with the closeness of at least fifteen humans and the pig, cat, sheep, rabbit and dog.

They’re still, but they pick up energy from the treasure and send off energy with their vibrancy and focus. The treasure is “Peace on Earth,” the higher value imbuing all, enabling a better community and world.

Since the card is for Christmas, I also see the visual as the Nativity of Jesus. I bet there’s a newborn child nestled in the manger, charming everyone as they gaze on him.

The scene includes the baby’s young mom, Mary, along with her fiancé, Joseph. He knows the baby is not his offspring, but he’s kept his faith in a divine power and Mary, who would’ve been shamed or worse if he hadn’t. Joseph and Mary are outwardly ordinary, blending in.

I’m aware that a Roman emperor’s decree has forced them to travel far from their town to Bethlehem, where they have little or no shelter. It occurs to me they’ll later become refugees, fleeing to Egypt to save their child from a murderous local king.

But in Suzanna’s visual they have friendly company, including humble shepherds who were watching over their flocks when peaceful voices led them to the manger. Also, other people may have followed the shepherds back to the manger after they spread the news.

That fits with the Nativity account by Luke of Antioch (near Aleppo), a physician. He became the historian of the early Christians, with an engaging style. I think he wanted readers to identify with the shepherds, who take up half his Nativity story, as well as with the family.

People do that so much that Nativity characters often look Ugandan in Christmas cards from Uganda, Japanese in cards from Japan, and so on. In that vein, Suzanna’s visual is fitting for a community from many lands—when we identify as harmoniously diverse.

Two final notes:

First, Jesus spoke well of shepherds and even identified as “the good shepherd” in his public life thirty years later, in keeping with the Nativity scene. He also reached out to people who’d been shamed. Two millennia later, the values still inspire.

Second, last December our new neighbours from China had little English, so we added a message in Chinese on our 2015 homemade card and dropped it off on Christmas Eve. On Christmas Day, our doorbell rang, and their beaming family presented a Yule-log Christmas cake.

Our Christmas dinner would’ve lacked a cake, so the kindness was perfect.