

**The Logic of Christmas
Jon Frost
John 1: 1-5, 10-14**

Perhaps, like me, in the weeks leading up to Christmas, you've been part of conversations like the following:

So, what are your plans for Christmas this year? Well, we're doing Christmas just with our family Christmas morning. Then we're going to my in laws to do Christmas with them. Then, the next day, we're doing Christmas with my siblings and their kids...

There are infinite iterations of this conversation, as many variations as there are family configurations. But this year, I've found myself pondering the phrase "doing Christmas," which most of us use at some point during the month of December. I mean, it's kind of a peculiar phrase when you step back and stare at it a while right? What does it mean to do Christmas? I mean, Christmas is this thing for which there is months of preparation - parties, recitals, concerts, family gatherings - and yet we talk about doing Christmas like it's an experience that can be contained with a clearly defined beginning and end time on our calendars - at the end of which we find ourselves in January wondering what on earth just happened. We did Christmas but what exactly did we do?

I am experiencing this season very differently this year. My wife Rachel and I welcomed twins - a son and daughter- into the world in early October after a long journey to parenthood. Over the years, as I've watched friends and family members become parents, I was always amazed at how it seemed like once people became parents, something clicked and they instantly became expertly suited to care for their new child.

However, standing on the other side of it, I'm convinced that we all become very skilled at faking it! I mean, seriously, has anyone in the history of humanity felt qualified to be discharged from the hospital with a newborn?

You can do all sorts of preparation. There are tons of books, blogs, and baby experts out there that can fill you with mountains of knowledge, leading you to believe that once a baby comes into the picture, things should go pretty much as described in the literature. And so I've caught myself on multiple occasions these first couple of months, based on my preparation, trying to apply rational, logical thinking to situations with our babies.

Like - if you're sleeping soundly in my arms here, you should have no trouble sleeping in your cradle there.

Or - if we give them a little extra formula, they should sleep longer into the morning.

Or this gem: Put them down drowsy but still awake and they should self-soothe to sleep.

The reality is that caring for a newborn has very little about it that is logical. But it is this beautiful, mysterious, dynamic interaction that draws you in and demands that you become your best self. Because it will test and try your patience.

As I hear this beloved story as told in the Gospel of Luke, and the prologue from the Gospel of John, I'm struck by how there is very little about the Christmas story that is logical.

The beginning of John's Gospel paints this very broad picture of the creation of the world, echoing the beginning of the story in Genesis. In the beginning, when God created the heavens and the earth, there was the Word. All things came into being through the Word. All of life has this Word as its source.

In the Greek, the word used over and over for the Word in John's Gospel is *logos*, from which we get words like logic. In the beginning was the *logos*, and the *logos* was with God, and the *logos* was God.

In using this word, John is appealing to his Jewish audience, who were familiar with the idea of the power of God's Word to bring life into being. It was similar to the Hebrew concept of Wisdom found throughout the Hebrew Scriptures. But John was also speaking the language of his Greek audience, who had a philosophical concept of *logos* as this universal principle of rationality within reach of every person. So who is this Word?

And here's where the logic of Christmas seems to break down, and it's the climax of what John wants to tell us in the beginning of his Gospel. The Word through whom all things were made, the Word who was in the beginning with God, who in fact was God, has now become flesh. Not as a mighty ruler, not as a charismatic leader - but as a completely helpless baby. A baby. Really God? This is the big plan to address the darkness of the world? A baby.

Perhaps in 1st century Bethlehem like 21st century West Chester, logic would tell us that we need a quick fix to all of the world's problems which seem so insurmountable. We long for God to make right all of the wrong we see and feel around us.

But the logic of Christmas works in an entirely different manner - it's the logic of love. This is how God does Christmas. God visits the earth, taking on flesh, and depends on the love and nurture of a teenage girl probably scared out of her mind, yet resolved nonetheless to carry this child and raise him. And it takes the love of a young man engaged to her to remain with her and raise this child as his own. It takes the love and wonder of shepherds traveling in the middle of the night to catch a glimpse of this child. And it takes countless more people whose stories we never encounter in the pages of Scripture to help this child become who he will be, Jesus the Christ, the Savior of the world.

John 1:12 says, "To all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God." Friends, this Christmas may we receive this child as God's invitation to the slow work of love that will transform this world and shine light into the darkness. May we not just do Christmas. But may we savor it, celebrate it, ponder it, and may it cultivate in us habits of incarnation where we would bear in our own flesh the love of God into the world all of our days. Amen.