

Putting the 'X' Factor back into Christmas!

In 2009 the Geordies went wild: Joe McElderry, hero of South Shields & Newcastle College had the 'X' Factor, or so we were told. His single was destined to be the Christmas Number One until an Internet campaign against the dominance of the show rather than him meant he ended up in Number two spot. We trust his climb up the ladder of celebrity is not a slippery one. So what is the 'X' Factor?

Another Joe was featured in the Christmas story: and he proved to be a worthy number two in the purposes of God. A Man of principles, honour and obedience. Qualities we don't treasure enough today. Joseph too had the 'X' Factor but this time it was courtesy of God the Holy Spirit rather than Simon Cowell.

Now there's a trend towards dropping Christ-mas and simply using X-Mass! X can mean all kinds of things: the kiss of welcome or of betrayal, the 'X' standing for what is past or wrong or pointing to X clusivity! 'Mass' by the way is a local Spanish word: it, simply translated, means MORE. The World must choose: MORE for me/ MORE for me and less for OTHERS/ or what was meant when the word Christ-mas was first coined: MORE of CHRIST, resulting in MORE for all.

The World, Newcastle & Canterbury needs to recapture the real X Factor and put it back into its Christmas celebration. Thank-you all for the Real 'X' Factor you have brought to your particular passions and concerns over this past year, no five-minute wonder, but real commitment, which has no doubt changed real lives.

You see there is an 'X' Factor only God can grace our lives with and at Christmas we celebrate it in the unique person of Jesus. Yet for those of us who know the end of the story we also know that from the birth of the Church at Pentecost the "X" Factor was released to The Body of Christ and has down the centuries enabled ordinary men and women to do extraordinary acts of selfless service for humanity.

Of course Joe McElderry may know his namesake Joe Carpenter, he might also know of the X factor only God can give: we don't know and wish him all the very best.

If only the World would realise the X when is stood up it becomes a Cross and the Baby becomes a Man with more X Factor than anyone had ever had or will ever have. At Christmas we see that God the Father chooses to give us His Son Jesus to secure afresh a life transforming cross-shaped relationship with Him. So lets put an X against sentimentality and

exclusivity: and declare afresh this Christmas the only lasting X factor that can transform lives and situations, that simply and humbly says to God: more of Christ and less of me.

We have all been given a mission: to put the X Factor back into our city and Community. Now all we need to do is put the stand up the X: and put the cross back into Christmas and then we can really celebrate.

Pastor David.

16th December 2012.