



*'Tis the season
of fake trees
and fake news.
I confess proudly
that we have both
fake and real trees.
Plus lights
in the form of trees
in most of our windows.
You can't tell fake from real
when driving by
at 60 miles an hour.
If we can't
tell the difference
does it matter?
Is that fake joy
Jean is tacking up?
Or what?
Is the Jesus story
any less fake
than the Santa story?
Is there a meaning larger
than the story
that changes fake to real?
It's the spirit, we say
and unspoken meaning
that it's all about.*

Art Morgan

News of Two Pregnant Ladies

And Two Cousins



Cousins Andrew and Kyle
About 25 years ago

mm — Advent Week Three — JOY!

I was looking for "Joy" quotes in Luke's Christmas tales. Lots of joy, but not many quotes. But I stumbled on the usually overlooked and forgotten tale of two pregnant ladies (in Luke 1)

Don't get hung up on my use of "tale" with these stories. It's better than calling them "fake" news. Biblical truths often come wrapped in packages most people never open.

How do you tell "fake" from "real"? One of my simplistic rules is to be skeptical of stories that require a lot of angels or have God speaking out loud.

Another of my rules is to have an ear open to themes I've heard before. The story-tellers of long ago liked miraculous pregnancies and babies.

Both of these are found in Luke's first chapter.

First there is a barren wife and an elderly husband, or as Luke says it, **"There was a priest whose wife was Elizabeth, who was childless."**

Then the angel Gabriel appears. Don't roll your eyes and say "fake." When angels show up, pay extra attention. They always know something only God can know..

Angels are famous for telling people not to be afraid. So Gabriel says

"Do not be afraid Zechariah. Your wife will bear a son and you shall call his name John. You will have joy and gladness."

Zechariah explains that he and his wife are too old. So Gabriel explains things to the old priest. And sure enough, she got pregnant.

That's the first pregnant lady.

But Gabriel is not done.

"In Elizabeth's 6th month Gabriel went to Nazareth to a girl, Mary who was engaged to Joseph. Gabriel tells her she is going to become pregnant with a son who is to be named Jesus."

It's what in these times we call an OMG moment.

"How can this happen since I don't have a husband?"

Listen up. Gabriel is going to make a profound statement about God and Jesus. Gabriel only says, **"The Holy Spirit."** And sure enough, Mary got pregnant. Now we have two pregnant ladies.

Gabriel also tells Mary that her relative, Elizabeth is 6 month's pregnant. So, naturally, Mary ran right over to Elizabeth's as pregnant women do to share mutual good news. Strangely, **"When Mary got there the baby leaped in Elizabeth's womb."**

So John gave his mom-to-be a little womb-kick of joy for news of his cousin, Jesus. The hearer is to know that something big is going on here. The meaning is far more profound than the story.

The joy part is not fake. I speak from my personal experience. Within the last month or so I have had phone calls from each of these two grandsons, Andrew and Kyle. They are cousins. Each had a story about a pregnant lady. Each of the ladies is bearing a son who will be delivered in less than three months. The lady's names are Erin and Sabrina. Two more great-grandsons!

Pregnancy is a mysterious wonder. The season of expectancy and hope is exciting. It is a holy event...special...none like it. Luke explains the coming of Jesus in pregnancy stories as the way God imparts to human hearts. It is **joy-full**. I tell you that the story is true. It still works.

"I bring you good news of a great joy..."

Art Morgan 3rd Week of Advent 2016