



## **Christmas: Census, Taxes, and Health Care**

By Dr. Linda Hancock

### **ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

Dr. Hancock has written a regular weekly column entitled “All Psyched Up” for newspapers in two Canadian provinces for more than a dozen years. Over the years, her readers and clients have said that they have benefited from her common-sense solutions, wisdom, and sense of humour. Dr. Linda Hancock, the author of “Life is An Adventure...every step of the way” and “Open for Business Success” is a Registered Psychologist who has a private practice in Medicine Hat. She can be reached at 403-529-6877 or through email [office@drlindahancock.com](mailto:office@drlindahancock.com)

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I remember a time when the census taker would come to the house and fill out a form to record information about each person who lived in that residence. During the last census I instead received a card on my door asking me to call a lady who gathered the data over the telephone.

My taxes are done each year by an accountant who sends everything electronically over the internet to the right computer by the deadline given.

Health issues are easily taken care of with a short drive to my physician's office or by asking for direction from my well-trained pharmacist. If I need tests, I have a choice of labs to visit. The local hospital has a number of departments with specialists and state-of-the-art technology.

Life is easy and yet I regularly hear people complain. They don't like to drive in winter, wait in the Emergency department, pay their taxes or share "private" information. They judge single mothers, become upset when their flights are delayed and find it unacceptable when their reservations aren't as they had expected. Their accommodations must have the best amenities and be both smoke and pet free to prevent allergic reactions.

When it comes to Christmas, they want people to show up on time, bringing the "right" gifts and having the "right" attitude.

It's interesting how far we have come from the first Christmas.

Joseph and Mary were required to travel a long distance. They didn't have seats in first class on an airline or a newer-model Subaru but instead had one donkey on which Mary rode. Joseph walked.

They were not able to phone their information into a Census taker or have their accountant submit tax data electronically. They had to show up in their home town and do things themselves.

They obviously didn't have a reservation for a suite in a luxury hotel as we are told that they went from one inn to another looking for a place to stay. There was no mention of the idea that they might want to go to a hospital where they could consult with an obstetrician and have the security of knowing there was a neo-natal unit available to them.

The stable where they ended up was full of hay and animals. I wonder if either Joseph or Mary had problems with asthma or allergies. Would they have been able to order room service or get extra pillows and blankets from the innkeeper?

Who delivered the child? If Joseph was young how would he know what to do? Was Mary feeling any post-partum depression? Did they confide in anyone that Joseph wasn't the father of the child?

Did they care when people who saw the bright star overhead showed up without an invitation to visit their son? And what did they think of the gifts that seemed so inappropriate for an infant? Had they brought diapers and tiny clothes with them or had they hoped for a baby shower to supply these?

You see, sometimes we think that we have so much to complain about. We are unhappy that we need to spend time with our partner's family because we don't like what they have to say. We think the children should be quieter and there should be fewer toys that require batteries. We don't like the time that the church service begins or the fact that the car will be cold and we have to walk so far through the parking lot to get to it. We even complain when we eat too much on Christmas day.

Seems a little ridiculous when you consider that we could be walking or riding a donkey to give birth to a baby in a barn without the help of professionals or the support of family.

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This Christmas let's focus on how blessed we are because of the things that Joseph and Mary did that we don't have to do.

Happy Christmas, everyone!