



DORON SCHNEIDER

Dear Friend,

At a time when ancient anti-Semitism is once again rearing its ugly head, both globally and in Israel, Hanukkah has become a symbol of hope for many Jews that light will overcome darkness, especially since the horrific terrorist attack by Hamas on October 7.

God sent His son Jesus Christ into this dark world to be the light of the world. "And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it." (John 3:19)

This year in Israel, the first candle of the Hanukkah menorah will be lit on Christmas Day. In this way, Christmas and Hanukkah merge into "Christmikkah," a powerful symbol of the unity of Israel and the Church.

We hereby wish you a blessed Christmas season from the land where our Savior was born and will soon return.

Yours,

Doron & Shelly

A Short Christmas Story

I stood at the window of our warm room and looked down at the street. It was the day before Christmas Eve. Outside, an icy snowstorm was raging and sweeping the snow that had fallen in abundance the day before into high drifts. They piled up in front of every garden fence and blocked the yard gates.



Those who had nothing to do outside stayed inside, cozy by the roaring stove in the room, through which the smell of baked apples simmering in the oven wafted. It was warm and cozy in our living room. In the summer, we had collected plenty of wood in the forest with our father and stacked it in the yard behind the house. Now it was time for Christmas.

Mother was decorating the Christmas tree, and I was allowed to put up the little nativity figures. All the work in the house was almost finished. Contentment mixed with cheerful comfort and a festive mood arose. It flashed from every corner of our small apartment on the ground floor of the apartment building on our street. Mother had been cleaning and scrubbing for days in preparation for the holidays.

Apart from me and my parents, no one knew about the secret beneath our apartment in the basement. There, under the wooden floor, we had hidden a Jewish family.



Scene from the movie Inglourious Basterds

Christmas Season is a happy family time with mutual gifts and surprises. I wondered what surprise awaits me, what it could be that my mother would give me tomorrow. Suddenly, the Christmas carol "Silent Night, Holy Night" rang out from the street below. A barrel organ played it, and a trembling female voice sang along. I went to the window and looked down at the street singers. I saw a poorly dressed woman who had wrapped an old scarf around her head to protect herself from the cold. Suddenly the singing stopped. We heard a man cursing. I jumped backwards. Then I heard marching boots on the street, they became louder and louder and were getting closer to our apartment. Nazis were on their way to look for Jews in hiding. They knocked on our door. We froze and stood shaking in the kitchen. The people in hiding were directly under our floor and heard the Nazis questioning each of our parents.

They searched the entire apartment. Mom and Dad kept quiet and didn't tell our secret. Then one of them came over to me. My hands were shaking as he bent down, looked me in the eyes and asked in a quiet, friendly voice: "Do you have Jews in your house?"



Scene from the movie Inglourious Basterds

At first, I hesitated to answer, I didn't know what to say, but then I said "yes". My parents were frightened and almost had a heart attack. The Nazis politely asked me to lead them to them. So I ran ahead of them and led them through the hall into the living room, where our beautiful Christmas tree was set up and where I had just put up the nativity figures.

I bent down under the tree and took the little Jewish Christ child Jesus figure out of the manger in the Nativity scene and showed him to them.

The two Nazis looked confused, turned abruptly and left the house. The frightened Jews who were hiding under the floor thanked God for their rescue. Relieved and happy, we hugged each other. Now the Christmas celebration could begin in full comfort, filled with double festive joy.

