



## CHRISTMAS MESSAGE FROM THE ANGLICAN ARCHBISHOP OF ADELAIDE

The presents have been purchased. The stockings are full. The turkey is in the freezer waiting for its big day. All you have to do is relax.

But perhaps your Christmas shopping is incomplete.

Let me put some additional pressure on your shopping list.

Find something, if only a thought or prayer, for the many Australians in the bush whose living and lifestyle has been shattered by drought and fire. It's all part of a new climate reality exacerbated by many things, including your Christmas shopping.

Climate change is connected to the lifestyle, consumption and standard of living of those of us who belong to the wealthy end of the world's population. Because we do not have to pay for the atmospheric pollution caused by our way of life, we keep making more of it than the environment can cope with in the short term.

While you are at it, look for something for young indigenous Australians who will probably grow up with a life expectancy many years shorter than your own. A greater percentage of them will suffer from substance dependency. Too many of them will be abused before they reach high school and too few of them will complete high school, let alone tertiary studies. Include these Australians on your shopping list as well.

And remember my friends in countries like the Sudan, where peace is fragile, where clothing and healthcare for children is a luxury. Many of them are among the more than two billion people on planet Earth living on less than \$2 a day. Please find a place for them on your shopping list.

Perhaps you might include at least a thought or prayer for the young adults living in South Africa's Soweto as well. One in four of them is HIV positive. One of the big growth industries in their neighbourhood is the funeral industry.

Why should we think about all these people as we do our Christmas shopping?

It is because Christmas celebrates the birth of Jesus, among the poor. It is because Christmas celebrates a child born in the vulnerability of a stable. It is because Christmas remembers a family forced to become refugees within days of a birth of their first child.

It is because in the fragile circumstances of his birth we have come to recognise the approach and very nature of God.

It is because we cannot celebrate the birth of Christ without thinking of those with whom he was and is most identified.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "+ Jeffrey". The signature is written in a cursive style with a small cross symbol to the left of the name.

+ Jeffrey Driver

Anglican Archbishop of Adelaide.