

Message on the Observance of Christmas *December 20, 1995*

Warm greetings to everyone celebrating Christmas.

The Christmas story is dear and familiar to us all—shepherds and angels, Wise Men and King Herod, Mary and Joseph, and, at the heart of it all, a Child. This Child was born into poverty in a city too crowded to offer Him shelter. He was sent to a region whose people had endured suffering, tyranny, and exile. And yet this Child brought with Him riches so great that they continue to sustain the human spirit two thousand years later: the assurance of God's love and presence in our lives and the promise of salvation.

Each year at Christmas, we celebrate these gifts with family and friends. We place candles in the window as a sign that there is always room for Christ in our homes. We put angels and stars and twinkling lights on the Christmas tree to remind us of the glory and mystery of Christ's birth. We sing the old and beloved Christmas carols to express the joy filling our hearts, and we share special gifts with those

we love, just as God shared His Son with us. And, in contemplating the nativity scene under the tree or in a neighbor's yard, we realize that children hold a special place in God's heart, since He sent His only Son to us as a little Child.

With this simple truth in mind, let us observe Christmas this year by making a solemn commitment to the children of our communities, our nation, and the world. Let us pledge to love and nurture them and promise to give them strong values and a chance to make the most of their God-given talents. Let us resolve that they will grow up in a world that is free and at peace. By cherishing the children God sends us, we express our love and gratitude for the one Child He sent whose coming offers forgiveness and hope to us all.

Hillary and I send best wishes for a blessed and joyous Christmas season and every happiness in the new year.

BILL CLINTON

Statement on Welfare Reform and Budget Negotiations *December 21, 1995*

I am disappointed that Republicans are trying to use the words "welfare reform" as cover to advance a budget plan that is at odds with America's values. Americans know that welfare reform is not about playing budget politics; it is about moving people from welfare to work.

I am determined to work with Congress to achieve real, bipartisan welfare reform. But if Congress sends me this conference report, I will veto it and insist that they try again. This welfare bill includes deep cuts that are tough on children and at odds with my central goal of moving people from welfare to work. The Republican budget cuts in Medicaid and the earned-income

tax credit would undermine real reform and penalize people who choose work over welfare.

At a time when we are trying to engage in serious negotiations toward a balanced budget that is consistent with our priorities—one of which is to reform welfare, as last month's agreement between Republicans and Democrats made clear—this is a sign of bad faith by the Republican leadership and an affront to those in both parties who genuinely want to enact real reform. My administration remains ready at any moment to sit down in good faith with Democrats and Republicans in Congress to work out a real welfare reform plan.