

## HOOR OF POWER OF 23.12.2007

### VOICE OVER/INTRODUCTION

Tonight, broadcast live around the world from the Crystal Cathedral in Garden Grove California, welcome to "A Christmas Eve Candlelight Celebration" with Robert Anthony Schuller & Dr. Robert Schuller; with special guests - Mr. Piano Roger Williams, Soloist Dorothy Benham, contemporary Christian artists GB5; Carol Aspling and the Cathedral Academy Chorus, child soloist Natalie Leonard; the Crystal Cathedral Choir with Don Neuen; the Hour of Power orchestra with Marc Riley; and Sean Groombridge on the mighty 16,000 pipe Hazel Wright organ.

### CALL TO WORSHIP – "Hallelujah Chorus"

Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! King of kings and Lord of lords, King of kings and Lord of lords, and He shall reign forever and ever. King of kings and Lord of lords, Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah!

### OPENING SENTENCE - RAS

RAS: Merry Christmas! I want to welcome you to Christmas Eve in the Crystal Cathedral. And whether you're visiting here for the first time, you're a member of our congregation, or you're watching this service via satellite, we are honored with your presence here this evening. And together we are going to celebrate the birthday of Jesus Christ. For unto us a Son is given, unto us a Child is born and His name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, and Prince of Peace.

### HYMN – "Joy to the World!"

Joy to the world! The Lord is come; let earth receive her King; let every heart prepare Him room, and heaven and nature sing, and heaven and nature sing, and heaven and heaven and nature sing.

He rules the world with truth and grace, and makes the nations prove the glories of His righteousness, and wonders of His love, and wonders of His love, and wonders, and wonders of His love. Joy! Joy! Joy! Joy!

### PRAYER/INVOCATION – RAS

RAS: Dear Heavenly Father, we gather together from around the world to pray. And we celebrate Your precious gift to us, Your Son, Jesus Christ. In Him we find healing and hope, faith and encouragement. Our fears are turned into confidence, our sorrows are transformed into joy. So on this night, as we sing the songs and we see the sights, we give You glory and thanks for the birth of our Savior and our Lord, Amen.

### ANTHEM – CC HIGH SCHOOL CHOIR – "We Three Kings"

We three kings of Orient are; bearing gifts we traverse afar, field and fountain, moor and mountain, following yonder star. Oh, star of wonder, star of night. Star with royal beauty bright, westward leading, still proceeding, guide us to Thy perfect light.

Born a King on Bethlehem's plain, (born a King) gold I bring to crown Him again, a King forever, ceasing never over us all to reign. Oh, star of wonder, star of night, star with royal beauty bright, westward leading, still proceeding, guide us to Thy perfect light.

Perfect light, through the night, oh, guide us to Thy perfect light. Frankincense to offer have I, this gift to offer have I. Oh, incense owns a deity night, oh, oh, prayer and praising, all men raising, worship Him, God most high.

Earthly gifts to offer have I. Oh, ah nah na hey ah nah. Alleluia, alleluia, earth to the heavens replies, oh, ah nah na hey ah nah. Star of wonder, star of night, star with royal beauty bright, westward leading, still proceeding, guide us to Thy perfect, ma oh ah nah nah. Oh ah nah nah eh ah, mah oh ah nah nah eh ah na, we three kings of Orient are, mah oh ah na, mah oh ah nah!

INSTRUMENTAL – HOUR OF POWER ORCHESTRA – “Trepak from The Nutcracker”

SCRIPTURE – Luke 2:1-7 – RAS

RAS: The historian St. Luke gives us the account of what took place when Jesus Christ was born and we can read it in the Bible. Let me share it with you:

And it came to pass in those days that a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. And all went to be registered, each to his own city. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the city of Nazareth, to Judea to the City of David which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David. There he was registered with Mary, his betrothed who was with child.

And while they were there, the time came for her to be delivered. And she gave birth to her first-born Son, and wrapped Him in swaddling clothes, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

SOLO – NATALIE LEONARD - “Away in a Manger”

Away in a manger no crib for a bed, the little Lord Jesus lay down His sweet head. The stars in the bright sky looked down where He lay; the little Lord Jesus asleep in the hay.

The cattle are lowing, the poor Baby awakes, but little Lord Jesus, no crying He makes. I love You Lord Jesus, look down from the sky, and stay by my cradle 'til morning is nigh.

Be near me Lord Jesus, I ask Thee to stay close by me forever, and love me I pray. Bless all the dear children in Thy tender care, and take us to heaven to live with Thee there. Be near me, Lord Jesus, I pray.

ANTHEM – “Break Forth, O Beauteous, Heav'nly Light/The First Noel”

Break forth, O beauteous, heav'nly light, and usher in the morning; Ye shepherds shrink not with affright, but hear the angel's warning. This child, now weak in

infancy, our confidence and joy shall be, the power of Satan breaking, our peace eternal making.

The first Noel the angel did say was to certain poor shepherds in fields as they lay, in fields where they lay keeping their sheep on a cold winter's night that was so deep: Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel, born is the King of Israel!

They looked up and saw a star shining in the East beyond them far, and to the earth it gave great light, and so it continued both day and night. Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel, born is the King of Israel.

Then let us all with one accord sing praises to our Heav'nly Lord. The God Who reigns o'er heaven and earth did give us His love through our dear Savior's birth. Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel, born is the King of Israel! Born is the King of Israel!

SCRIPTURE – Luke 2:8-14 - RAS

RAS: Now there were in the same country shepherds living out in the fields, keeping their watch over their flock by night. And behold, an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were greatly afraid.

Then the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, Who is Christ the Lord. And this will be the sign to you: You will find a Babe wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger."

And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of heavenly Hosts, praising God and saying: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth, peace and goodwill to all."

ANTHEM – “And the Glory of the Lord”

And the glory, the glory of the Lord, and the glory, the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, shall be revealed, the glory of the Lord, and the glory, the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, shall be revealed. And the glory, the glory of the Lord shall be revealed.

And all flesh shall see it together, and all flesh shall see it together for the mouth of the Lord has spoken it, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken it. And all flesh, and all flesh, and all flesh shall see it together for the mouth of the Lord has spoken it.

And the glory, the glory of the Lord, and all flesh shall see it together. The mouth of the Lord has spoken it, shall be revealed, and all flesh, and all flesh, and all flesh shall see it together, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken it, has spoken it; and all flesh, and all flesh, and all flesh shall see it together.

The glory, the glory of the Lord, and the glory, the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, revealed, shall be revealed. And all flesh shall see it together, together, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken it, for the mouth of the Lord, the mouth of the Lord has spoken it.

VOCAL ENSEMBLE – GB5 – “Silent Night”

Sleep in heavenly peace. Sleep in heavenly peace. Silent night, holy night! All is calm and all is bright. Round yon virgin, mother and child, Holy infant so tender and mild, sleep in heavenly peace, sleep in heavenly peace.

(SINGING IN SPANISH)

Noche de paz! Noche de amor! Todo duerme en derredor. Entre sus astros que esparcen su luz. Bella anunciando al niño Jesús. Brilla la estrella de paz, brilla la estrella de paz. Brilla la estrella de paz.

SCRIPTURE – Matthew 2:1, 2, 9b-11 - RAS

RAS: After I read the following scripture, you'll have an opportunity to present your gifts and so if you would like to prepare those at this time, you may. You can do that while I read.

Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the King, behold, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, saying, "Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the East and have come to worship Him."

And behold, the star which they had seen in the East went before them, till it came and stood over where the young Child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceedingly great joy. And when they had come into the house, they saw the young Child with Mary, His mother, and fell down and worshipped Him. And when they had opened their treasures they presented gifts to Him: gold, frankincense and myrrh.

PREP FOR OFFERING - RAS

RAS: Dear Heavenly Father, we thank You for opportunity and the privilege that we have to give back a small percentage of that which You have given to us. And so we pray that You will recognize our faith in You and use these gifts to declare it from the mountaintops that Jesus Christ is born. We thank You Lord, Amen.

Well each and every Sunday, we want to invite you to come here to the Crystal Cathedral. We have services here every Sunday. We have.. I don't think we have ever missed a Sunday since we started 55 years ago. And you're invited to come back any Sunday or every Sunday and if you're not able to come here physically, you always have an opportunity to watch on the Hour of Power. It's broadcast around the world. We have several different offices internationally and you're welcome to watch there and to pick it up on the stations that you happen to be watching on right now, if you're watching on satellite.

If you're lonely and you have need of some counseling, I know that this is a very tough time for many people during the holidays, we want to help you. We have a telephone counseling center, it's called NEW HOPE and it makes it very easy to remember. Just dial the numbers 7-1-4 and the letters N-E-W H-O-P-E and they'll be a caring, listening ear on the other end of the line. You can also log on to [hourofpower.org](http://hourofpower.org) and you can join our online, interactive prayer community and you can request prayer, you can keep a prayer journal, you can pray for others and it's a wonderful experience, if you wish to participate in this as well.

Well my prayer this Christmas is that you will experience God's blessings on your life and that you'll realize that God loves you and so do we. Merry Christmas.

ANTHEM – “Sing We Now of Christmas”

Sing we now of Christmas, noel sing we here. Hear our joyful praises, echoing bright and clear. Lift up your voice, O let the world rejoice! Sing we now of Christmas, noel sing we here.

Sing we now of Christmas, noel sing we here. Spread the yule tied spirit, comfort and good cheer. God comes among us, fulfillment of His promise. Sing we now of Christmas, noel sing we here.

Sing we now of Christmas, join the glad refrain. All the earth rejoices, hope is born again. Peace good will to all resounds the welcome call. Sing we now of Christmas, noel sing we here. Sing we all noel, sing we all noel, sing we all noel, sing we all noel. Gladsome are the tidings that we tell. Oh, sing noel. Sing we all noel, sing we all noel, sing we all noel, sing we all noel. Joyfully we sing to you noel. Oh, sing noel! Sing noel!

Sing we now of Christmas, let the anthem ring. Glory in the highest, hear the angels sing. Join with all creation in songs of jubilation, sing we now of Christmas, noel sing we here. Noel sing we here. Noel sing we, sing noel. Noel!

ROGER WILLIAMS INTRODUCES PIANO PIECE

RW: Good evening. And Merry Christmas from the piano player. This time of year can be a very hectic time, for I think just about all of us. So little time, so much to do. But before we know it, it's Christmas. Christmas catches up with us and finally we can wander here to the beautiful Cathedral. And thanks to those troops of ours all over the world who are willing to give up, that's right, that's right, these men and women are willing to give up their lives just so we can worship as we please.

Christmas: who can forget all those warm, warm hugs around the Christmas tree? I can't. And the love and the laughter as we all open up our presents. Unforgettable memories. I guess the Christmas song says it best: Yuletide carols being sung by our choir. And folks dressed up like Eskimos. Well at least the rest of the world is dressed up like Eskimos tonight. And I love that last line, it goes like this: Although it's been said many times, many ways, Merry Christmas to you. And Merry Christmas to our dear departed loved ones. That's right, they're no longer with us. And Dear God, how we miss them. I can, I can still feel those loving arms around me. Can you? But this we know, this we believe. They are truly home for Christmas. May they sleep in heavenly peace.

PIANO SOLO – ROGER WILLIAMS – “Music of Christmas - 2006”

RHS THANK YOU TO ROGER WILLIAMS

RHS: Thank you Roger Williams! A member of this church and a wonderful performer here many times in the year.

MESSAGE – THE CHRISTMAS MESSAGE – “The Glorious Gift of Christmas” – RHS

RHS: Hello, my name is Robert Schuller, and I'm the founding pastor of this church. It was 51 years ago that we came to California with a few hundred dollars to start a church. And I had a good member. I knew I couldn't lose. I was married

to her. And a year later, 50 years ago, we held our first Christmas Eve candlelight service and I've conducted services or sermons, each one since. This is my 365th candlelight service. That's maybe a record, 365. Thank you. To all of you who are watching around the world, just feel like you're a part of us because you are part of our family.

Now I have two questions to ask you. Have you ever been blamed for something that wasn't your fault? Have you ever been passed by when you were not recognized for what you had done? Well, if you have a yes to those two questions, then you will understand what I'm about to tell you in the words why Christmas had to happen. Because from the beginning of creation, the Creator God Himself had been often blamed, still is being blamed today, something that He is not the fault, not faulted with. And then why did God let it happen?

And God so often passed by all the time by not getting a thank you from us for what He did that got us through. And for what He has given to us. He has never taken from us.

Let me illustrate. God's name had been dishonored a lot and He knew He needed a new name with the kind of a reputation that He deserved. And His own name had been discredited by cynical and negative people. So He said He needed a new name that people would respect and honor, and He gave Himself a new name by coming to earth on Christmas in a baby and He was called Jesus. And the name was dropped with honor and prestige and recognition.

Now you know why Christmas was a necessity and why God had to come. Where are you today? Are there times where you have been faultily blamed for something that wasn't your fault? And you were not given credit and honor and respect or recognition for what you did so beautifully? Probably you need a new name, too. Maybe you better do what God did. If you're not a Christian, give yourself a new name. Add the words Christian to your name.

My father was a very good man. Worked hard as a farmer. And then came the terrible day when a tornado struck. We escaped with our lives, driving as fast as we could on the country road. We waited until the tornado disappeared like a parascope back into the deep. So we headed for home and there was always a hill that hid our farm buildings except for the peak of the barn. And we didn't see the peak of the barn over the hill. We knew we were in trouble. When we reached the hill, you could see down and all of the nine buildings that made up my father's farm were gone, completely. No rubble, only white marks of cement where the foundations stood. And I saw my father take his fists and hit upon the steering wheel and to his mother, to his wife who sat next to him, he shouted, 'it's all gone, Jenny,' and cried. Cried with sound, not just tears. And he said, 'it's all gone, Jenny.' And the tears rolled and the crying was louder.

Drove as far as he could to where the power poles cut us off. The next night there was a prayer in the church service and a special prayer meeting just for those many farmers that had been hit so badly but none as bad as my father. And I never heard my father say through this time, 'God why did You do it?' I never heard God questioned. We came to the church, all kinds of prayers, all kinds of testimonies but nobody said 'God why did You do it? We're all good people. We didn't deserve this.' Nobody said that. Instead, the prayers were prayers of

thanksgiving: 'Thank You Lord that nobody was killed.' And 'thank You Lord that we still have the ground; it didn't blow away.' And 'thank You God that tomorrow's coming and we can start over again.'

God never got blamed for something that was not His fault. The tornado was not God's fault. And He got thanked for still being with us through the terrible time.

Now, what's it like with you? How are you going to handle it? It will happen in this kind of a world. Blamed when it's not your fault. Not thanked when still so much good is going to you. You know, I invite you to consider taking Jesus Christ as your Savior if you haven't. You've got a name. You can always change names. You can add to it, you can take it away. Paul Yonggi Cho changed to David Yonggi Cho. I know people who have changed their names. Good reasons for it. Why don't you consider changing your name like God did December 25 or if that date is not correct when the baby was born. Become a Christian. And tell people about it. And when you do become a Christian, a follower of Jesus, it'll show in your face. The kind of thoughts that are in your heart, the kind of thoughts that are in your head. It shows in your face. Sure, it shows in your eyes. It shows in your lips. It's going to change you starting with your eyes. It'll change you. And people will begin to say wonderful things about you. They'll say he surely has changed lately. And they'll wonder why. And they will speak well of you. And down the road they will not accuse you of being a part of some of the terrible things. Instead they'll say no you know, a few years ago he might have been into that sort of thing but he's really changed a few years ago. He's really changed. He wouldn't do that. He's a nice guy. He really is. You've given yourself a new name and they will speak well of you instead of blaming you. And they will honor you instead of embarrassing you. And they will glorify you as a person instead of embarrassing you.

Yes, now you can see there had to be a Christmas. God needed it. You need it. We all do. We need the salvation. Christ is the secret.

You know, this week we got lots of gifts and thank you all for all of them. But anyway, we got two big boxes, huge boxes from people that always send us Christmas gifts. Huge. Usually they give us a box of chocolates and I said to my wife, couldn't have two boxes this big full of chocolates. Well we opened them yesterday and inside were other gifts wrapped up. Opened the first one and it was a beautiful model of a wiseman. Opened another one, and another wiseman, a third, oh another wiseman. And then, we opened the next box; another package it was Joseph and another package, and it was Mary, bent over as if she was nursing her child. Wonderful collection. Never saw anything like it. We put them all on the coffee table in our living room. You should see it. And wow.

Then, looked good but Arvella said where is the baby? Baby? Well the mother is suckling the baby. She said I don't think so. I don't see a baby there and I looked closely, no she was not holding a baby. Then where is the baby? I said did you check the boxes? Arvella said sure. You know my line, measure three times, cut only once. Check, double check and re check. I went outdoors and they were laying the trash bin ready to be picked up in a day or two. And I looked through the one, picked every single piece of paper, nothing there. The next box, every single piece of paper, except for a little piece in the corner. I picked that out and

underneath was hidden a small package, little like that. I wonder: I pulled it out, took the paper off and it was the baby. We almost lost the baby. Wow.

I'm looking at you. It's Christmas Eve. Friends, family, food, everything but its so easy to forget the baby. I'm going to pray now and I want you to pray with me. Let's bow our heads. Oh God, Christ is here. He wants to come into everybody's heart. He wants to be the Savior of every person here. He wants them to be born again this night. And He wants them to begin to carry a new name, a follower of Jesus Christmas Eve 2006. Amen.

HYMN – “O Little Town of Bethlehem”

O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie, above thy deep and dreamless sleep the silent stars go by. Yet in thy dark streets shineth the everlasting light; the hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.

O Holy Child of Bethlehem, descend to us, we pray; Cast out our sin and enter in, be born in us today. We hear the Christmas angels, the great glad tidings tell; O come to us, abide with us, our Lord Emmanuel.

SOLO – DOROTHY BENHAM – “O Holy Night”

O Holy Night! The stars are brightly shining, it is the night of our dear Savior's birth! O Holy Night! Long lay the world in sin and error pining, 'til He appeared and the soul felt its worth! A thrill of hope, the weary world rejoices, for yonder breaks a new and glorious morn!

Fall! Fall on your knees! O hear, O hear the angel voices! O Night Divine, O Night when Christ was born! O Night Divine, O Night, O Night Divine. Fall on your knees! Hear the angel voices! O Night Divine, O Night when Christ was born! O Night Divine, O Night, O Night Divine! O Night Divine, Divine!

CLOSING – ED ARNOLD

EA: Thank you for joining us in the Crystal Cathedral for this wonderful Christmas Eve candlelight celebration. Hello, I'm Ed Arnold with a reminder to join us every Sunday on the Hour of Power. This program can be seen each week on the Lifetime.