

BUY NOTHING CHRISTMAS

www.buynothingchristmas.org

UH OH WE'RE IN THE RED, DEAR

(to the tune of Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer)

Uh oh we're in the red, dear / On our credit card it shows / Christmas is almost over / But the debit line still grows /

Shopping like Santa's zombies / Sent our budget down in flames / But all our Christmas spirit / Helped the giant retail chains. // I'm so foggy Christmas Eve / Wondering how we'll pay / Christmas doesn't seem so bright / When our finances are tight // So here's a plan for next year / Let's forget the shopping spree / Let's give a gift of love, so / All our Christmas gifts are free.

Lyrics thanks to Center for a New American Dream <http://www.newdream.org/>



ALTERNATIVE GIFT IDEAS

www.buynothingchristmas.org

GIFTS OF TIME candlelight dinner, massage, babysitting, dog walking or pet sitting

HOMEMADE GIFTS Make a family calendar marked with important dates, such as birthdays and anniversaries. Decorate with family photos.

Find **HUNDREDS** of other alternative gift ideas in **SIMPLIFY THE HOLIDAYS**, a **FREE** book from the Center for a New American Dream www.newdream.org



HOLIDAY GIFT GIVING FACTS

www.buynothingchristmas.org

Amount of money an average American planned to spent on holiday gifts in 2001 ... APPROX. \$1,042

Rate at which consumer debt is growing in the United States ... **TWICE THE RATE OF WAGES**

Data from **SIMPLIFY THE HOLIDAYS**, a **FREE** book from the Center for a New American Dream www.newdream.org



CHRISTMAS NUMBER TRIVIA

www.buynothingchristmas.org

Total U.S. credit-card debt ... **OVER \$600 BILLION**

Number of **EXTRA TONS** of trash produced in the U.S. each year between Thanksgiving and New Year's Day ... **5 MILLION**

Data from **SIMPLIFY THE HOLIDAYS**, a **FREE** book from the Center for a New American Dream www.newdream.org



REMEMBERING XMAS IN APRIL

www.buynothingchristmas.org

Percentage of consumers who plan to pay for holiday purchases with credit ... **57**

Average number of months it takes a credit-card user to pay off holiday bills ... **4**

Data from **SIMPLIFY THE HOLIDAYS**, a **FREE** book from the Center for a New American Dream www.newdream.org



Consumer Wonderland

www.buynothingchristmas.org

(to the tune of Winter Wonderland)

TV's on / are you watching? / Another product / that they're hawking / one more thing you need / to make life complete / Welcome to Consumer Wonderland! // In the stores you will

hear it / "Pricey gifts / show holiday spirit" / That's what they call it / to get to your wallet / Welcome to Consumer Wonderland! // At the mall we can go out shopping / and buy lots of stuff we can't afford / We'll have lots of fun with our new toys / until we realize that we're still bored // When you shop / ain't it thrilling / until / you get the billing / the money you still owe the stuff broke long ago / Welcome to Consumer Wonderland!

Lyrics thanks to Center for a New American Dream <http://www.newdream.org/>



God Rest Ye Merry, Gentlemen

www.buynothingchristmas.org

Slow down ye frantic shoppers for there's something we must say / If you would spare a moment all the stores would go away / Big business has been telling us what Christmas means today

[REFRAIN] NOW IT'S TIME WE DECIDED FOR OURSELVES, FOR OURSELVES / YES IT'S TIME WE DECIDED FOR OURSELVES. // To some folks Christmas means a time for gathering with friends / And enemies might take it as a time to make amends / But TV says it's time for pricey gifts and selfish ends // **[REFRAIN]** // Some people feel that Christmas is when Jesus makes a call / For others it's a time to stress good will and peace to all / But advertisers tell us it means Santa's at the mall // **[REFRAIN]**

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ALTERNATIVE GIFT IDEAS

GIFTS OF TIME take a canoe, boat, train or balloon ride, organize a zoo or museum outing

HOMEMADE GIFTS Record interviews of parents, grandparents, aunts and uncles on audio tapes; you can ask them to discuss their memories of the person you plan to give the tape to, or your family's history.

Find **HUNDREDS** of other gift ideas in **SIMPLIFY THE HOLIDAYS**, a **FREE** book from www.newdream.org [Collect all 10 FREE Buy Nothing Christmas '03 cards!]



CAN I BE A PART OF BUY NOTHING CHRISTMAS EVEN IF I BUY A FEW THINGS? YES, DEFINITELY.

We are all going to have to buy some things. When you do buy things, we encourage you to remember principles like buying locally, fairly-traded, environmentally-friendly packaging, recycling or reusing, buying things that last, and so on. **BOTTOM LINE:** it's important to think in global economic terms whenever you're purchasing anything. More information and links at www.buynothingchristmas.org. Card designed by a United Methodist seminary student in Evanston, Illinois.

Collect all 10 Buy Nothing Christmas '03 cards! They're FREE! Give to friends!



WHAT DO THE BUY NOTHING CHRISTMAS ORGANIZERS HAVE AGAINST CAPITALISM?

In a nutshell, it favors the rich, abandons the poor, is heartless, and is based upon the assumption that people buy things out of self-interest. **WERE NOT SAYING THAT COMMUNISM IS A BETTER OPTION.** We are in a critical time when economists (e.g. Herman E. Daly and John B. Cobb Jr. **FOR THE COMMON GOOD**, 1994) are working on and proposing new models that assume that people are not only self-interested, but also interested in the common good.

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what is buy nothing christmas?

Buy Nothing Christmas is an initiative started by Canadian Mennonites who offer a prophetic "no" to the patterns of overconsumption of middle-class North Americans. They are inviting people all over North America to join a movement to decommmercialize Christmas and redesign a lifestyle that is richer in meaning, smaller in impact upon the earth, and greater in giving to people less-privileged. More information and links at www.buynothingchristmas.org. Cards designed by a United Methodist seminary student in Evanston, Illinois.

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BUY NOTHING?! BUT I HAVE CHILDREN AND FEEL TREMENDOUS PRESSURE TO BUY THEM STUFF!!

Our precious children — with their normal vulnerability to peer pressure, their desire to fit in, and their disposable income (or ability to influence their parents' spending) are a mini-battlefield of the marketers and branding machinery. Many parents will find it extremely difficult to practice a Buy Nothing Christmas. But it IS possible. We believe there are parents out there who will want to teach their kids the richness of a non-commercial Christmas. You CAN have a special time without buying stuff.

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are we against christmas gifts?

No! Giving gifts at Christmas is a good thing to do — it's a small re-enactment of the incarnation of God's love. Gift-giving, as we know from other occasions (e.g. birthdays, weddings, housewarmings), serves as a kind of social glue that keeps us together. It shows affection, thoughtfulness and love. While gift-giving is a good thing to do at Christmas, that doesn't mean we have to go overboard at Christmas. Lots more questions are answered at www.buynothingchristmas.org. May Grace and Peace be with you in this holiday season. Shalom!

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ALTERNATIVE GIFT IDEAS

GIFTS OF TIME a monthly lunch date with an elderly relative/friend, a camping/hiking trip

HOMEMADE GIFTS Prepare homemade soups or dinners that can be frozen for future use. Make a rope swing, painted wooden blocks or a sandbox for a child. Create birdseed balls with seed, suet and leftover ribbons to hang outside.

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alternative gift ideas for kids

Instead of making your annual contribution to the dead toy pile in your child's room, give your kids gifts they can't break. Like pen pals. Or the "adoption" of a wild animal at a wildlife organization or zoo. Instead of joining the stampede for the latest mass-produced gizmo, make a gift that fits the child you love: a web page featuring him, or a story with her as the main character.

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BUDGET ZERO GIFT IDEAS

Put together a little book of favorite family recipes. Give a gift exemption voucher, so the recipient needn't feel obliged to get a gift for you. Practice random acts of kindness in someone else's name: plant a tree, donate books to a library or support a young artist. Give attractive and meaningful articles from your own home. List 100 of your fondest memories with the recipient.

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