

Xmas

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Intro_

It is indeed that time of year again. When you turn on the TV, the radio, drive down the street, go to work, school or the grocery store and anywhere else I may not have mentioned; the Christian is surrounded by *Christmastide*. I am not entirely sure, but it seems that Christmas is becoming more and more accepted by almost everyone. Now I realize that during this season we all end up having our own little “we don’t celebrate Christmas” story. It is inevitable that we find ourselves in situations where we end up having this conversation or perhaps are placed in a situation that is uncomfortable to some. This world does not understand how a Christian could not celebrate Christmas. To this world, Christmas is 100% pure and everyone who disagrees with this is breaking, as it were, a law. They consider in their hearts how could we not love such a religiously meaningful Holiday? It is a time of love, peace and giving. What is more sacred to a true Christian than these things, and the birth of Christ?... It is true, love is the ultimate goal for the Christian; love for God and love for our neighbor. But this love is found in everyday obedience, not only on December 25th. This morning, I want to share with you the position that *Yuletide* holds to genuine Christians and to reaffirm our position against this man made tradition.

Churches of Christ Change Approach to Christmas

As I noted before, Christmas seems to be getting bigger and more prevalent with each passing year. Not just among the secular world, but even within the so-called Churches of Christ. I want to share with you part of an article I read written by a man named Mike Willis regarding Churches of Christ and the Christmas holiday entitled “Churches of Christ Change Approach to Christmas”.

“The title of this article was taken from an article by Bobby Ross, Jr. in *Christian Chronicle* (December 2005). The *Christian Chronicle* article relates how churches of Christ have changed their approach to Christmas in recent years.

Ross says that in the past “mistletoe was welcome, but mangers certainly were not.” Churches of Christ scrupulously avoided the religious celebration of Christmas. But now he observes, In recent years, though, many churches have become much more willing to reflect on the story of Jesus’ birth at a time when the world is focused on him, the *Chronicle* found in a query of more than 100 ministers and members nationwide.

Following that statement, Ross relates interviews with several associated with institutional churches of Christ. Jim Hackney, from the Keller, Texas church is quoted as saying, “Visitors come to our church on Christmas expecting to hear about the birth of Jesus. We don’t disappoint them. It’s too important to reach out in a positive way at that time”. John Free, elder of the Sunny Hills church in Fullerton, California says, “So Christmas carols are sung in our worship service on the Sunday closest to Christmas, and the sermons typically focus on that part of the Gospels of Matthew and Luke” (8). Glover Shipp, former longtime missionary who is an elder at the church in Edmond, Oklahoma comments, “To celebrate Christmas without Christ, making Santa the chief person in it, doesn’t make sense”.

Along the same line, brother Dan King sent me an ad which appeared in the November 26th issue of the *Nashville Tennessean*. It was an advertisement of the Pegram Church of Christ. They advertised that Rubel Shelly would speak on November 27th but then included an announcement of a special service for Sunday, December 4th. It reads,

“South Cheatham Choral Society, December 4, 3:00 p.m. Enjoy Christmas songs—old and new—including a percussionist, flutist and pianist. A great way to get into the holiday spirit!” Yes, I would agree with brother Ross that churches of Christ are changing how they react to Christmas! The Pegram church not only participates in the religious celebration of Christmas, it also is sponsoring a service using mechanical instruments of music. Things are changing rapidly in the institutional churches as many of them are transitioning into the mainstream of Protestant denominationalism.”

Disappointing the World

“Visitors come to our church on Christmas expecting to hear about the birth of Jesus. We don’t disappoint them. It’s too important to reach out in a positive way at that time”.

Has the church of Christ really come to the point where they are worried more about disappointing visitors, their families and the world than disappointing God? [Matt.10:32-36](#). Let me tell you how I came to the title of our lesson. As I said before I am sure everyone has a little story about us or our kids during this season. But my mom was telling me story the other day of how children in the same class as little Carmen were so aware that she didn’t celebrate Christmas that when one child said the word Christmas that the others told her not to even say *Christmas* around Carmen but instead to say “Xmas”. From a young age we teach our children the significance of not blending the opinions of man with the Word of God. This will cause disappointment in the world, dissension in families and friends. But it draws us closer to God.

Christian Liberty (Romans 14)

One of the persons mentioned in this article was a preacher for the Church of Christ in Oak Ridge, TN named *Wayne Goforth*. In a response written to another Church of Christ in Nebraska regarding celebrating Christmas he wrote *“Our family has never used religious emblems at Christmas in our home ... no stars nor angels. We have glass balls, tinsel, lights, etc. Most Christians I know observe it in this way: as a traditional, American, national, family holiday and nothing more. No religious songs, only Jingle Bells or Frosty the Snowman. If Christians do observe it in a religious fashion, Paul said they are wrong in the matter... I can put a family observance of such under Romans 14.”*

“*Brother*” Goforth preaches Christian Liberty to allow for unsanctioned acts of worship, claiming that if the Christian doesn’t celebrate for the same reason as the secular world then God turns a blind eye towards it. Has God ever been flexible when it comes to acts of worship? Nadab and Abihu were consumed because of a strange fire, [Lev.10:1](#). We know the character of God and it is the same regarding his new covenant as it was with his old. But Goforth and many others have forgotten the Church’s once proud slogan in [1Pet. 4:11](#). Instead, they wave a new banner and cloak their acts of indifference towards God behind the words “In matters of faith unity, in matters of opinion liberty, in all things love.” This is not the manner in which we should serve God; but instead it is with fear and reverence according to [Heb. 12:28-29](#).

Tradition

In addition, celebrating Christmas simply as an American tradition and not as a worship service is not a viable argument. No matter how hard people may try to separate Christmas from the Bible, it is impossible. It is and will always be an unsanctioned form of worship. The apostle Paul warns of the traditions of man; [Col. 2:8](#); [1Tim. 6:3](#). But I think you say it best Mr. Goforth in an article you wrote as to why you left a different church

because you disagreed with the use of the collection “*In the past 10 years now after leaving, the liberals have gone farther than many of them are willing to go. The new line of liberals are wanting (and some have) women preachers and elders. Gymnasiums, drug treatment centers, etc. Those I associated with are denouncing this as liberalism, not being able to see they opened the flood gates for it. You cannot open the flood gates with one hand, and try to stem the tide with the other.*”

Allowing unsanctioned acts of worship and manmade traditions such as Christmas and using Romans 12 and Christian Liberty as a pretext opens the flood gates to a wave of irreverence and rebellion that we have witnessed to cause irrevocable damage.

Mercy and Not Sacrifice

I agree that the sentiments and intentions behind Christmas are good; peace, love and joy. However, that is not sufficient to equate man’s tradition to God’s Word. Men are not doing God any favors trying to worship Him through Christmas. We must understand that what man deems as holy and what God considers holy are two different things. [Isa. 58:8-9.](#) [Hos. 6:6-7.](#)

Conclusion_

Do you consider Christmas as a day to worship the birth of the Son of God? If so, why? What biblical precedence do you have to celebrate it? Instead, let God prevail in your heart and shun all counterfeit worship and begin to recognize what he is pleased for you to do. I leave you with the words of John in [1John 5:20-21.](#)

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