

A Politically Incorrect Christmas in Baghdad

Walking the streets of Washington, D.C., leading up to Christmas, I came across a most interesting phenomenon: Nowhere, and I mean absolutely nowhere, was Jesus to be found.

It was truly amazing.

Extensive Christmas decorations were everywhere. In the stores, on the streets, everywhere I turned, it was Christmas.

I started talking to people, asking them the simple question, "Isn't Christmas celebrating the birthday of Jesus?"

The answers I got were amazing.

Everyone I talked to paused and said, "You know; you're right. It is supposed to be His birthday. What happened to Jesus?"

Imagine if you had a birthday. Your friends all came over, they partied, they ate, they exchanged presents—and everybody acted as if you didn't even exist.

After a few minutes of that, you would stand up and say, "Hey! It's my birthday!"

As I began to talk to people, dozens of them, I started to get angry. No matter what faith, creed, color—and you can find just about anything in Washington—they agreed. It just wasn't right!

There seems to be a studied attempt to ignore Jesus on His birthday.

Contrast that to Baghdad, Iraq. I am an Assyrian Christian, and my family is originally from the Iraqi village of Mahmoudi in northern Iraq. I was there during Saddam Hussein's time and

remember the sheer terror that reigned 24 hours a day, the constant fear that you could be hauled off by one of his goons and never seen again.

But thanks to our failed policies, the poor Iraqis have not learned yet that you are supposed to ignore Jesus on Christmas. A special Christmas celebration was held in downtown Baghdad sponsored by the Iraqi government.

Guess what was the main attraction. A huge Christmas tree topped by a star? A massive Santa Claus? Fake snow?

No. They displayed a huge picture of Jesus. There it was: A huge, beautifully painted color painting of Jesus, the center of the Christmas celebration—a massive four- or five-story picture of our Savior in downtown Baghdad.

The Iraqi government spokesman took it all one step further when he announced on behalf of the Iraqi Government, “All Iraqis are Christians today.”

Did I miss something? No.

After a meeting with the Iraqi prime minister on behalf of the Assyrian Christians, the indigenous people of Iraq, I paused and asked, “Prime Minister, would you mind if I prayed for you?”

He beamed, ordered all his beefy, confused security guards who were surrounding us to bow their heads, and we had a wonderful time of prayer.

Meeting later with the Iraqi president on the same subject, I asked the question again. This time he pointed to his chest and said, “I just had surgery on my heart—pray here!”

I thought to myself, *What kind of a reception would I get on Capitol Hill, at the State Department or a dozen other government agencies if, after a meeting, I asked, “Would you mind if we had a word of prayer together?”*

There would be, with a few exceptions, a cold silence, mass panic or a plain, straight “no.”

Washington, D.C., and all of us can learn something this Christmas season from the politically incorrect Iraqi government.

As every Iraqi official says so proudly, they have been liberated and now celebrate Christmas the way it should be celebrated—with an emphasis on Jesus.

May God bless them all, and may He call us back to our senses before it is too late. {eo}

Amir George directs the World Helpline at . He urges anyone who wants to be a part of daily prayer on Capitol Hill at 7:30 a.m. and 12 p.m. to contact thewhitehouseprayerteam@.

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