

To Those Who Say There Is No War on Christmas

Christmas is the most notable day on the calendar where the general American public is reminded of the life of Jesus Christ. That is why some want to do away with it.

Someone sent me an article from *USA Today* that has this headline: "Not All **Christians** Believe There Is a 'War on Christmas.'" The article quotes Christian leaders and authors saying they disagree with those of us who believe there is a war on Christmas.

I could give a litany of examples of exactly how the war on Christmas has manifested itself the last decade or so. From nativity scenes no longer being allowed on the courthouse square to schools changing Christmas break to "winter" break, from Christmas parades being changed to "winter" parades to children being told they can no longer sing carols during their "winter" program, etc. There is an intentional effort by some secularists to purge the word *Christmas* from our culture. Whether it will be successful or not remains to be seen. But it's discouraging to see some fellow Christians say, "Who cares?"

The very word itself—*Christmas*—is a reminder that this particular holiday is the celebration of **Jesus Christ**. Those who promote political correctness and extreme multiculturalism resent this because it is exclusionary in their view.

Some Christians are willing to go along with that line of thinking. For example, *USA Today* quoted Dan Scott, senior pastor of Christ Church in Nashville, who said this: "We really need a way to treat the public square as the public square and private realms as private realms and not feel demonized because we come from a different perspective." In

other words, Christians should keep Christmas in our homes and churches—the “private realms”—but we can’t expect the general public to be accepting of Christmas any longer because it promotes Christianity.

Christmas is the exaltation of one particular religion that makes a claim of being the only true religion, and that is unacceptable to the movers and shakers of contemporary American popular culture, elitist academia and many in the mainstream media, news and entertainment. Therefore, *Christmas* must be replaced with words and ideas that are broad and general so as to knock Christmas from its traditional place in America’s public life. It is an attempt to define Christianity as no more important to the history and fabric of America than is, say, Hinduism.

This is what these people (often called secular progressives) believe, and evidently a number of Christians agree with that position. Subsequently, these Christians find more fault with their fellow believers—those of us who want to keep Christ in Christmas and Christmas in America—than they do with those who want to eradicate Christmas.

This is why it concerns me when I read stories like the one in *USA Today*. One of the people quoted in the article is Christian author Rachel Held Evans, best known for her book *A Year of Biblical Womanhood*. Evans wrote a blog post that went viral where she challenges the idea of a war on Christmas with these questions: “Did someone threaten your life, safety, civil liberties or right to **worship**?” No. “Did someone wish you happy holidays?” Yes. “You are not being persecuted.”

What Evans has done here is very clever. She framed the issue falsely. She set up a straw man. No one is arguing that Christians are being persecuted physically. What we are saying is Christianity itself is under siege in America. Just ask the Christian bakery owners in Washington state, the Christian florist in Colorado or the Christian photographer in New

Mexico, who were all fined by their state governments because they would not participate in homosexual “weddings.” But what Evans has done is like the man who cheats on his wife and she confronts him about it. It might go something like this:

“I know you are cheating on me. What do you have to say for yourself?” the wife says. To which the husband responds: “There are children dying in sweatshops in Third World countries, and you are talking to me about my having sex a couple of times with some woman? Are you serious?”

See how this works? The “logic” is: If your life is not being threatened or your family is not in physical danger or your church is not being padlocked, then we have no cause to point out the war of Christmas. It’s much ado about nothing, say these Christian brothers.

The war on Christmas is really part of the larger war on Christianity, and it concerns me that smart people like Rev. Scott and Evans don’t seem to get that.

Then there was the quote from Daniel Darling, vice president of communications for the Southern Baptist Convention’s Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission. The article said this about his position: “He [Darling] said on Friday that some media outlets are overstating the war on Christmas debate, and very few Christians actually engage in it. ‘We advise people that, rather than trying to force that weary Wal-Mart worker to say “Merry Christmas” against company policy, how about we be the bearers of joy. Instead of taking offense, say, “Here’s the story, we’re the joyful ones. We’re the ones that have the greatest story.”’”

Darling, like Evans, has created a false caricature of his fellow Christians who want to keep Christmas alive in the public square. The image Darling creates is one of a Christian bully. Who does this browbeating of store employees? No one I know. (By the way, Wal-Mart does not forbid its employees from

wishing customers a “Merry Christmas.”)

What the American Family Association (AFA) and some other groups do is produce a Naughty & Nice list of companies that do or don't allow Christmas in their stores. Due to the efforts of AFA, many household name corporations have put Christmas back in their promotions, advertisements and stores over the last few years. The Gap was the latest store to write AFA about how they were doing this. This is a good thing. Christians should applaud Gap and others when they refuse to yield to political correctness and recognize that if not for the Christmas gift-buying season, many of them would not be in business.

All of this Christians criticizing other Christians, often based on false information as demonstrated here, seems to be a trend. I'm not sure why this is, but I have a couple of theories.

First, we Bible-believing Christians have been so maligned and lied about by the media, particularly the entertainment and news media, that the negative stereotype that has been created has stuck. And now even we are quick to believe the worst about our fellow brothers and sisters.

The second reason is what I call the “nicer than Jesus” mentality. It is human nature to want to be liked and avoid confrontation. Christian activism, while it should always be carried out with civility and manners, is sometimes by necessity confrontational—and confrontation is not considered nice by some. But Jesus himself said in Matthew 5:10, “Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” Jesus is talking here about a public stand for biblical righteousness, not just being a Christian. The world doesn't care if you are Christian—as long as you don't talk about what's right and wrong, moral and immoral, or good and evil. That's when the persecution comes.

Is there a war on Christmas? Yes. Is it part of a larger war on Christianity? Yes. Does this matter to the future of our country? Most certainly.

Just because Christians are not being physically persecuted in America today doesn't mean these matters are not important. Not only is Christianity good for the individual, the moral value system that comes from Christianity is also good for society at large. God help us get it back before it's too late.

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