

Please Stop Fighting About Christmas

*It's bad enough that rabid secularists hate Christmas.
It's downright tragic that some Christian purists judge others
for celebrating
the holiday.*

Two
weeks ago when I wrote about how God worked in the lives of
people in the biblical
Christmas story, several readers jumped in to remind me that
the modern
celebration of Christmas is a pagan holiday that is luring
unsuspecting,
gift-giving revelers into hell itself. One person who
identified himself as
“Albert” wrote in our online forum that he “isn’t comfortable
celebrating
Christmas” because of its demonic origins.

You
probably know there are many Christians who boycott Christmas
for various
reasons—some factual and some quite debatable. These people
insist:

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The holiday has become too commercialized and promotes greed.
(I would agree.)

*No

one knows when Jesus was born. (True—and the Bible is silent
about the date.
However, “Albert” and other anti-Christmas purists insist
Jesus was born on

Sept. 11, in 3 B.C., during Rosh Hoshanna.)

"I unashamedly love Christmas. I love the trees, the ornaments, the lights, the smells, the foods, the music, the gifts and the family and friends who share the celebration with me."

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The Dec. 25 date was chosen to "Christianize" the pagan celebration of Saturnalia, an ancient winter solstice festival. (Probably true—but is there anything wrong with Christianizing something? I'm glad a pagan celebration was replaced.)

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Christmas trees are a pagan tradition, since Druids believed evergreen boughs were magical and had the power to scare away demons. ("Thursday" is also named for the Norse god Thor, but that doesn't mean I worship him when I use the word.)

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Dec. 25 is the birthday of Nimrod, who later became known as the pagan god Baal, who later became known as Nicolas, who later became known as Santa Claus. For this reason, we can be sure that demons lurk behind all wreaths, candles, ornaments, fruitcakes, sleighs or anyone dressed in red and green. (I *knew* there was something weird about fruitcake!)

In all fairness to these Christmas critics, I must admit I never led my children to believe in Santa Claus. This was not because I was

afraid he was Baal, Nimrod or an ancient Turkish bishop in disguise, but because (1) I felt I would be lying to my kids if I told them Santa brought them gifts; (2) I hate standing in lines at department stores; and (3) the prospect of inviting a strange old man into my house so he can “check” on my sleeping daughters is downright creepy.

But

I unashamedly love Christmas. I love the trees, the ornaments, the lights, the smells, the foods, the music, the gifts and the family and friends who share the celebration with me. All the decorations point me to Jesus—from the bells on the front porch to the angel on top of the tree to the plastic manger scene that shows some wear (mainly because our dog, Flapjack, chewed one of the shepherds in 1996.) For me, Christmas is a wondrous time of year when I ponder the miracle of Christ’s birth and, hopefully, get lots of chances to share his generous love with people who are less fortunate than I am.

People

have been fighting about Christmas for a long, long time. Christmas gift-giving was condemned by the Catholic Church during the Middle Ages because of the pagan origins of the holiday. Then, anti-Catholic Puritans declared war on Christmas in England and banned it from 1647 to 1660, calling it “a popish festival with no justification.” In the United States,

Puritans outlawed
Christmas in Massachusetts from 1659 to 1681, and it was an
unpopular holiday
after the Revolutionary War because Americans associated it
with England.

Christmas
became a federal holiday in 1870, long before the American
Civil Liberties
Union was there to stop it. Yet today, in spite of the fact
that Christmas, for
many people, has morphed into a meaningless mush of
secularized snowflakes,
reindeer, penguins, gift cards and year-end sales, the
Scrooges of our day want
to suck all the remaining Christian spirituality out of it.

I
expect atheists to hate Christmas. I know they will try to ban
nativity scenes
from public parks, or remove Christmas carols from classrooms.
But it is
downright tragic when Christians—who should welcome every
opportunity to bring
the miracle of Jesus' incarnation into public life—start bah-
humbugging (or
even demonizing) the holiday.

Keep
Christmas in your own way, by all means. If it is offensive to
you to hang
mistletoe from your mantle or to send a Christmas card to
friends, then don't.
I won't judge you for that. But please don't judge other
believers simply
because they want to celebrate all that is pure and decent and
meaningful in
this special time of year.

P.S.

– Merry Christmas!

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