

The War on Christmas

John Gibson is one of the commentators I enjoy watching on the Fox News Channel. As a journalist he noticed that each year it has become more and more politically incorrect to mention Christmas. Gibson was so outraged by this trend that he wrote a new book titled *The War on Christmas* (Sentinel) in which he documents what he calls “the liberal plot to ban the sacred Christian holiday.”

Gibson gives examples of the censorship that has become common in recent years: You can’t say “Merry Christmas” at school or the office anymore, only “Happy Holidays”; you can’t go caroling in public; if you put up a tree for decoration, it must be called a “friendship” tree, not a Christmas tree. He reports that Santa Claus was banned from one school in Kansas and that in Plano, Texas, some overzealous school board officials actually told parents they couldn’t use red and green to decorate!

In contrast, non-Christian holidays such as Hanukkah, Ramadan and Kwanzaa don’t face persecution. Can you imagine forcing Jewish people to call the menorah (a symbol of the miracle commemorated in Hanukkah) a “holiday candelabra” to avoid offending non-Jews?

Gibson’s book is an interesting read for all of us who are concerned that our rights to practice our faith in daily life are being eroded to such an extent that we must hide behind closed doors to celebrate a traditional holiday. But to me the issues are much deeper than political correctness or the proper interpretation of the Constitution regarding church and state issues.

Through the years, Christians themselves have often downplayed Christmas. Celebrating it is certainly not a scriptural tradition. And many believers have objected to the secularism, commercialism and materialism that generally accompany the holiday.

Now the question isn't whether Christmas has become too secular or commercial but whether it's OK to mention it. To the liberal secularists, even the commercial version is objectionable because it has Christian roots. In their view, that makes it religious, and all religion should be forbidden from the public square.

But there is something much more important at stake here than whether we can put up Christmas trees in public buildings or have Santa Claus at a school function. It's whether the church will be the church.

In light of the current cultural climate, are we willing to take a stand?

There are many ways to do this. If Christmas is under fire in your community, speak up. And if the officials won't back down, work to defeat them at the next election. Replace them with officials who share your values, or run for office yourself.

And why can't churches lead the way in celebrating Christmas? Who cares if the city government won't put a crèche on the front lawn of city hall? With so many churches around, why shouldn't each one have a nice display about the real meaning of Christmas? That way we won't have to add a reindeer or some

other nonreligious object to a nativity scene on city property simply to make it legal.

Why couldn't Christian businesspeople get involved? We still have freedom of speech, so why don't we put up signs saying "Jesus is the reason for the season" or "Wise men still seek Him"?

Each of us can erect displays on our lawns at home, too. Instead of putting up only lights or snowmen in our yards to make them festive, let's put up displays that are a witness to our faith in Christ.

If you decide to make your lawn a testimony this Christmas season, e-mail us a photo of what you do, and we'll post it on our Web site ([http://www.charisma.com](#)). Put your comments there. Tell us the good things that are being done.

One thing is certain: With so much darkness surrounding us, even one small light can make a huge difference.

The Bible tells us to be light in a dark world (see Matt. 5:16; Phil. 2:15). Ultimately, that is why Christ came to Earth-and He is looking for us to follow suit.

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