

*From Where I Sit . . .*

## **“AND SO THIS IS CHRISTMAS. . .”**

I was listening to these words to a currently popular Christmas song just this morning and pondering what it's all about. I can't think of a time when the word has triggered so many opposing views and such tempered emotions. I was asked by a local government representative only a few hours ago and after hearing the song how I felt about the store policies prohibiting giving the traditional greeting "Merry Christmas." It set me to deeper thought, though admittedly I've been very troubled for several weeks now building up to this season – pondering how I really felt about the season man calls Christmas.

I feel victimized by two extremes of this issue. In recent editorials I've been reading over and over again from believers who argue that we are religiously celebrating the birth of Jesus. Because I don't feel that we have a Biblical right to invent special "Holy Days" and set them in the church (only God can do this) I get uncomfortable with what goes on in the churches for this celebration. It has become a "High Sabbath" (using Old Testament imagery since we have no New Testament imagery to use). There is no such "Holy Day" in the Bible as one set apart uniquely to honor the birth of Christ – only the Lord's Day observance that honors his death through observing the Lord's Supper every first day of the week. As a part of religious worship within the church we have no Biblical authority to make this day holier than all the rest. I feel victimized by some who would make me appear to be disrespectful to Christ or a scrooge if I don't advocate Christmas pageantry within the worship.

On the other hand, we are living in a time when humanists and all other kinds of "anti-Christian" forces are bent and determined to totally silence the voice of the Christian religion in America. Of all the people claiming that their rights are being taken away, none are so openly and blatantly being plotted against as Christians. The latest manifestation of this, after trying to force prayer out of school, trying to get "In God We Trust" off our currency, removing Christian religious symbols from every public exposure, is now recrimination and threat of firing to employees who say "Merry Christmas." This is part of an overall movement to totally remove Christ from our lives and the battle is well underway.

On one hand I don't want to sound like I've joined ranks with those who make Christmas a special high "Holy Day." On the other, I don't want to sound like a scrooge who comes down on the side of the humanists in an anti-Christian attack. I just want to enjoy Jesus, any day, every day, and be able to thank God for Him without having to go to either of these extremes. Up to now I've been able to do this conscientiously, believing that "*One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind. He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it. . .*"(Romans 14:5-6). But that's on a private and individual basis. The church could not be forced to impose one man's day on everyone else. I've tried to respect each person's right to do this as long as the church wasn't being bound to ceremonially honor it.

I serve notice to a humanist liberal, however, that while we do not observe Christmas ceremonially in the church as a part of worship, I do not intend to silently watch them chip away all our rights to talk of Christ in public places. This country was established on Christian principles, and came into being for the purpose of allowing people their freedom of religious choice. To dictate that one has violated the law by expressing religion publically strikes against the very foundation of who we are as a nation.

I serve notice to religious voices that while I honor and appreciate their intent and desire to acknowledge Jesus in a special way, I will not be forced into a ceremonial religious observance that the Lord didn't place in the church worship, yet I will continue to enjoy the season of Christmas, much as I do Thanksgiving, as an individual, with all it's peace on earth, joy, love, and yes, it's remembrance that Christ is why we have these feelings.

**. . . . Terry Broome**

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