

Ghosts of Christmas Past



By Rob Pue

Hello everyone, and thank you for joining me today. It is a privilege to be with you. I am a Christian, and this week, I will be celebrating Christmas, with my family. It is sad to me that there is such controversy and such animosity surrounding Christmas today. It never used to be this way.

When I was a kid growing up, we always looked forward to this time of year. It was a wonderful time of year, starting with Thanksgiving. I remember how special those family Thanksgivings were. My parents had six children; three girls and then three boys. I am the second to the youngest, number five out of six. By the time I came along, all my sisters were all pretty much grown up and moved away. Thanksgiving was a special time when everyone would be home again and I looked forward to my sisters and their husbands joining us. My Mom was an amazing cook, and I remember the smells of the turkey in the oven, the stuffing, the pumpkin pie. The fun we had when the family was all together.

And I remember that the Christmas season would really begin right after Thanksgiving. There was no such thing as "Black Friday," when I was growing up. At least I had never heard of it. But right after Thanksgiving we would start spending all of our Saturdays at church. That was when us kids would start practicing for the annual Sunday School Christmas program. Usually it was a play depicting the Christmas story. Each of us kids would play a different part. Being a part of the Christmas program taught us many things, not the least of which was diligent Bible study and learning to teach God's

Word ourselves, as we would study and then act out the parts, and read from Scripture aloud to the grown ups in the audience.

When it was over, the church gave everyone a special gift bag of Christmas treats. I remember there was always a popcorn ball and always an orange, amongst other candies and sweets. The church Christmas program was always a centerpiece of the entire Christmas season. My own kids took part when they were young. But then, over the years, it became harder and harder for the church to find grown ups willing to organize and put the Christmas program on. The quality of the program went way down, and then eventually they quit doing them altogether. Today, my family and I are members of a different church home, and we have new traditions there that my children are learning to embrace, even as grown ups now, themselves. And so at our new church, it is once again a time of reverence and awe at the birth of our Savior. I wish others could experience this too!

In my public school, we also celebrated Christmas. Students performed an annual Christmas Concert. This was different from the church's program, because there were songs about Santa Claus and Rudolph the Red nosed Reindeer. But there were ALSO songs like "Silent Night," "Joy to the World," "O Holy Night," and "Hark the Herald Angels Sing." Nobody ever complained and there was no confusion that the celebration at hand was, indeed, Christmas.

I remember there was one student in my class who was Jewish. His name was Nicky. He didn't celebrate Christmas, which to us, was strange. We didn't really understand it. He opted out of the classroom Christmas party and other things. But the rest of us exchanged gifts and had treats the last day before Christmas Break. Nicky simply got an extra day of vacation. But nobody teased or bullied him. It was no big deal.

And every year, about the first week in December or so, my Dad would bring home the Sears Wish Book. How fun was that?! Of course, you would pass right over the front half of the catalog, because that was all clothes and boring stuff. But in the second half... now THAT was where the fun began! I remember many times, laying on the floor in my footie pajames, paging through the Wish Book and seeing all the cool things that looked like fun. And my parents would make sure there were good things for each of us kids under the tree every year.

And us kids also took what meager funds we had available and either made or bought modest gifts for our parents and each other as well. Even though we were kids, we knew what it was to be thoughtful and generous, and to do nice things for one another. We received our Christmas gifts with gratitude and thankfulness. And they were good gifts too... fun things. Craft projects, model airplanes, science kits, things that helped us learn, create, be creative, productive and responsible.

When I look at how things have changed, and what Christmas is like for the children of today, it is really sad. Instead of starting the Christmas season with eager anticipation of a Sunday School Christmas program, today's kids begin their Christmas with "Black Friday." I'm amazed at how many families embrace this as a new tradition at Thanksgiving... how many Moms and Dads take their kids to Black Friday sales. After gorging themselves on food, they fall asleep into a gluttonous stupor and then get up in the dead of night to go stand in line in the freezing cold outside a retail store. Then, as part of what can only be described as a riot, with a mob mentality, they rush in to the "Doorbuster Sales" to get their hands on as much loot as they can before the other guy gets it. In some places, people even get trampled to death because of the greed.

And though they love the extra sales volume this time of year,

a lot of stores will not even acknowledge that it is Christmas time at all... Most will say "Happy Holidays," or "Seasons Greetings." What is that? Could you not say "Seasons Greetings" in July as well? After all, summer is a "season" too, and I actually prefer it over winter!

Christmas celebrations in churches run the gamut from such nonsense as "Ugly Christmas Sweater Sunday," to pastors dressing up like Santa Claus and twisting Scripture to include the man in the red suit in the Nativity, to big theatrical productions with fog machines and laser lights.

Public schools can no longer include traditional Christmas Carols in their "Holiday Celebrations." For that matter, they cannot even suggest there ever was such a person as Jesus Christ. Of course, they have no problem forcing kids to recite the Five Pillars of Islam. But sing Silent Night? Mention the name of Jesus? You may as well throw a poisonous snake on the table – you'd get the same reaction.

And kids seem different today... and of course, they are. How could they not be, growing up in this sort of atmosphere, where God is removed from everything in public, and shunned by all? Unless, of course, "God" is defined as "allah," or perhaps, "The Force." Today, they open their presents and complain they didn't get better things; or more things or the RIGHT things... Instead of being thankful for what they have received, they are thankful what they received came with "gift receipts," so they can return them for cash. And then instead of relishing the warmth and love and togetherness of family, we have a group of people sitting in the same room, but each one tapping away on their Smart Phones, iPods, iPads, Kindles, tablets and laptops. Nobody talking... all you hear is the "tap," "tap," "tap," of fingers hitting screens. Heads down. Like always.

Christians decry the fact that Starbucks will not put Jesus on their coffee cups. They look with disdain on the annual

“naughty or nice list” to see which stores will say Merry Christmas to them and which ones won’t. But it doesn’t change their shopping habits. Not really. Worst of all, most do virtually nothing at all to be salt and light in their communities the rest of the year. Like the ungodly, they do not speak of Jesus or act as the hands and feet of Jesus throughout the year. When they see the atrocities committed by abortionists, they turn the other way. When they see homosexuals redefining marriage, they see that as “politics.” *“Ewww, so distasteful, I’m just not interested in POLITICS.”* With more information available at our very fingertips than ever before in history, most Christians prefer to remain ignorant, while Islamic hoards overtake the world, spreading their false doctrines of hate and evil – because we just can’t be bothered.

In Johnson County, Kentucky, in the heart of the Bible Belt, the W. R. Castle Elementary School District put on their annual “Holiday Play,” this year featuring “A Charlie Brown Christmas.” It’s based on the fifty-year-old cartoon, which has become a perennial classic in America. I watched it every year of my life growing up. It was wonderful. With only three channels to choose from in those days, we LOVED the annual Christmas specials that came on every year.

At the heart of this beloved show is Linus telling the Christmas story and reciting from the gospel of Luke. YES – this happened on national television and no one was embarrassed or ashamed of Jesus’ name. On the contrary, it was HEARTWARMING.

Linus’ 53-second speech contained the heart and soul of “A Charlie Brown Christmas,” and I quote: *“And there were in the same country, shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them; and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, ‘Fear not: for, behold, I bring you tidings of great*

joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David, a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you: You shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth, peace and goodwill towards men.'"

How utterly OFFENSIVE! SO offensive, in fact, that the Castle Elementary principle has announced that anything related to Christianity will be completely scrubbed from the play, and according to a report from Allen West, the School District Superintendent said he has concluded that both the US Supreme Court and the Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals flatly forbid any public school student from uttering Linus' seven Bible verses.

As Allen West reminded us, *"we should bear in mind that at the same time this ridiculousness is occurring, students in other American schools are practicing calligraphy by writing 'there is no god but allah' in Arabic."* And of course, when our Islamic "president" was in office, he summed up his understanding of Christmas by referring to "A Charlie Brown Christmas," when he said, *"They teach us that tiny trees just need a little love and that on this holiday we celebrate peace on Earth and goodwill toward all."* His wife chimed in, *"Because as Linus knows, that's what Christmas is all about."*

Todd Sarnes of Fox News commented, *"It reminds me of the Obama's first Christmas in the White House when they actually considered removing the Nativity from the East Room, and more often than not, the White House holiday cards and decorations in recent years that have glorified the family dog – instead of 'You-know-Who.'"*

Liberals and progressives love to talk about inclusiveness and tolerance. When it comes to this time of year, one has said, *"Why do I wish people 'Happy Holidays?'"* Because from November first to January 15th, there are approximately 29 holidays

observed by seven of the world's major religions, and I don't think mine are the only ones that count."

Ok, well this sort of sums it up. In America today, we are so inclusive, that we are sensitive to everyone (except, of course, those hateful Christians). But what are these so-called "seven major world religions?" Here's a list: Buddhists, who celebrate Bohdi Day. Never heard of it? Me neither. The followers of Kemetic Orthodoxy, the religion of ancient Egypt from 4500 BC. who celebrate "The Day of the Return of the Wandering Goddess." (I'm not making this stuff up, folks, this is what they list as being one of the most important celebrations and one of the world's most major religions. This is why we must say "Happy Holidays!").

Then there are Muslims, who celebrate Eid al-Adha, and this year, the birth of Mohammed. (The dates of Muslim holidays, however, change every year, because the Islamic calendar is based on phases of the moon; since they worship the mood god). Then there are the Aborigines and American Atheists who celebrate the Winter Solstice. Of course Hannukah, celebrated by Jews, and though it sticks in their throats to say it, Christmas, celebrated by Christians.

Yes, I am sad for the young people of today because the country our forefathers fought and died for to preserve our freedom, including our freedom OF religion, where once we had BOTH reverence for God AND respect for one another, we've become so intimidated by a spirit of political correctness, that we have trashed our own history and heritage, and indeed, our very Christian FAITH, to the point where our children cannot even utter Jesus' name, but are practically FORCED at gunpoint to praise allah. Liberals will not allow us a minute's time to read from the gospel of Luke, because, we are told, we must cater instead to the followers of Kemetic Orthodoxy who choose to celebrate The Day of the Return of the Wandering Goddess. I don't know what to say. I'm speechless.

Friends, I am going to celebrate Christmas with my family, and try to instill some of the wonderment and awe, and reverence I had as a child at Christmas time into the lives and hearts of my own children. To me the Ghosts of Christmas Past are fond memories of a simpler time, a more innocent time. A time when God was God and it was OK to love Him. I hope you do the same. And hold your loved ones close. Reverence God and teach your children what the truth really is. And in the new year, endeavor to make your lives count by being always in the service of the King. We can never go back to yesterday, but we can teach our children what it was like, and together we can look forward to the glorious return of our Savior, who really IS Christ the Lord. Amen.

© 2020 Rob Pue – All Rights Reserved

E-Mail Rob Pue: Rob@WisconsinChristianNews.com

Audio CDs and text versions of this message are available when you call me at Wisconsin Christian News, (715) 486-8066. Or email Rob@WisconsinChristianNews.com. Ask for message number 141.