

The Story of Jesus

Published by Evangelist Van Billingsley

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Merry Christmas!

“For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.” -- Luke 2:11

I enjoy some of the secular things of the season like Christmas music, the festive atmosphere, decorations, etc., but what is really special to me is to focus on the birth of Christ, Christmas carols which magnify Christ as our Savior, and preaching on the shepherds, the wise men, the announcements of His birth, the reasons for His birth, etc. That is the reality of keeping Christ in Christmas.

In fact, the birth of Christ in scripture is all about the birth of the Savior, and we lose the meaning of Christmas altogether without preaching salvation to the lost!

Is Christmas Christian or Pagan?

by Evangelist Van Billingsley
(Reprinted from Fall 2009 Edition)

I will not write an in-depth essay on this, but I would like to point out a few facts. We do know a lot of pagan traditions and mythological figures have been inserted into the lost world’s version of Christmas. I do not celebrate Christmas in accordance to the world’s view. When spiritual Christians celebrate Christmas, we do so to celebrate the birth of our Saviour and we focus on the rich scriptural record of this world changing event. Our

songs magnify our Saviour and His magnificent salvation. A Christian Christmas is in no way a pagan celebration. I’ve known many to apply the passage in Jeremiah referring to the vain customs of the heathen

-- Continued on page 3

Inside This Edition. . .

- Opening Commentary, cover
Merry Christmas
- Featured Sermon, cover, p. 3 & 4
Is Christmas Christian or Pagan?
- News from the Editor’s Desk, p. 2



Our Ministry News...

I am thankful for another busy year of Missionary Evangelism across our great nation. The division and peril in this country magnifies the importance of preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ more fervently to the many unreached Americans in our nation.

As this year comes to a close, allow me to reflect on this past year for a moment. We held five tent revivals in Alabama, South Carolina, Michigan, and South Dakota. This included another VBS in the South Dakota meeting, then I also had opportunity to help many other church planters and small churches with Revivals, door knocking, VBS, Fall Festivals, etc. It was even my pleasure to assist with another tent revival with a church planter in Minnesota held by another evangelist friend; the tent they planned to use became unavailable, and since I was planning to help them with door knocking for a few days, I was able to set up our tent for this meeting. This is not something we could normally do since we have our own schedule to fulfill, but the Lord allowed this need to be met.

We saw several souls saved along the way and I was even able to participate in a couple of Baptisms. In addition to the states already mentioned, I had privilege to preach in Nebraska, Missouri, Illinois, North Carolina and Georgia, plus visit ministries in Wisconsin, Iowa and Tennessee.

The only mechanical issue I faced this year was when the alternator I had repaired last year finally died for good. This is a high output and high priced alternator, but the Lord provided a good deal in a very small town and provided the cash to pay for it the day I picked it up and installed it.

As usual, I am spending the coming weeks during the winter doing maintenance, reporting to churches and doing some deputation while working on next year's schedule.

We have four tent revivals already scheduled for the coming year with others being discussed. As usual, other meetings and projects are also being planned between tent revivals.

I know I've been vague on details in this short space, but please pray for more open doors, much needed support, and health and safety as I travel in these coming days.

A Servant of Christ,
Evangelist Van Billingsley

*Is Christmas Christian or Pagan?**(...continued from cover)*

people who "cutteth a tree out of the forest," and "deck it with silver and with gold," to the Christmas tree. We must admit with those few words pulled out of context it does sound just like the Christmas tree, but in the context and with the text as a whole, we see a totally different picture. For limited space, I'll quote only four verses: For the customs of the people are vain: for one cutteth a tree out of the forest, the work of the hands of the workman, with the axe. They deck it with silver and with gold; they fasten it with nails and with hammers, that it move not. They are upright as the palm tree, but speak not: they must needs be borne, because they cannot go. Be not afraid of them; for they cannot do evil, neither also is it in them to do good. Forasmuch as there is none like unto thee, O LORD; thou art great, and thy name is great in might. (Jeremiah 10:3-6) This passage is exposing the vanity in the details of building an idol to call a god and bow to,

the works of man's hands, which must be carried by man and cannot move nor do anything, evil or good. God's Word certainly forbids making graven images or likenesses to worship, yet much value is placed upon things which symbolize spiritual things such as the furnishings and adornments in the Tabernacle. If you are inclined to bow and worship a Christmas tree, then I suggest you not allow one in your home; otherwise, the Christmas tree with its many colors and evergreen twigs can represent many scriptural truths. There are many legends as well as outright lies concerning many Christmas traditions. The name "Kris Kringle" is absolutely not the name of some satanic, pagan god relating to the winter solstice. "Kris Kringle" is in fact a variation of the German word "Christkindl" meaning "Christ Child" passed down from Dutch traditions. This name certainly should not be applied to the

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mythological figure with powers of witchcraft and attributes

of deity, nor to the third/forth century preacher known as Saint Nicholas. Very little is known about Saint Nicholas. The Catholics lay claim to St. Nicholas as well as St. Patrick, but we must remember that they also lay claim to St. Peter and others of whom they have no part. St. Nicholas lived from A.D. 270 346, making him a man in his fifties at the birth of the Catholic Church. He may have fallen into the doctrinal errors of the early Catholic Church, but he may have been a true preacher of the gospel. Tradition tells us that he was rich, mostly by inheritance and that he loved to give gifts to the poor and needy, often secretly, and especially around Christmas time. It is variations of his name through various languages that the name Santa Claus is derived. We know no

evil of the man, only that he lived and died over 1600 years ago. Giving gifts at Christmas can be said to have originated with the wise men who brought gifts to the Christ child early in His childhood since this is part of the Christmas story in the Word of God. It is certainly a way for us to follow His example as God gave the greatest gift known to man, His only begotten Son. One thing I have confirmed to be of pagan origin is the Yule log. This came from a winter solstice ritual and for this cause I recommend never using terms such as "Yule Tide" in reference to Christmas. It is, however, not a complicated thing and certainly not an evil thing to celebrate a Christian Christmas.

--VB



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proclaiming

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-- A Missionary to our Homeland --

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