

Commercialization of holy days religion essay



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Over two thousand years ago, an angel named Gabriel appeared to a young Jewish woman named Mary, and told her she would have a son, Jesus, who would be the Son of God (Luke 1: 26-38). Mary and her husband-to-be, Joseph, lived in a town called Nazareth (Matthew 1: 18-24), but had to travel to the city of Bethlehem to register for a census ordered by the Roman emperor, Caesar Augustus (Luke 1: 1-4). When they got there, all the rooms in the inn was full, so they ended up spending the night in a stable, a place where animals were kept. There might have been fresh hay on the floor that they used for beds (Luke 1: 5-7).

It turned out King Herod lied when he told the wise men he wanted to worship Jesus (Matthew 2: 1-8), and the wise men had a dream that warned them about it, so they took a different route home (Matthew 2: 12), while Mary and Joseph brought Jesus and fled to Egypt, instructed by God in a dream Joseph had (Matthew 2: 13-14). They stayed there until Herod had died, then they returned to Nazareth (Matthew 2: 19-23).

This story, the birth of Jesus, was once the main reason families gather to watch the children do musicals, sit at the Christmas Eve and Christmas Day church services to reflect on the significance of Christ's birth, the joy of the Savior's entrance into the world. As the society has become more modernized, Christmas has also become less sacred to the public, and more commercialized. Although love is still demonstrated, Santa Claus has become the main reason to celebrate Christmas. People start to see the holiday as a time for a shopping spree, a time to receive gifts, a time to consume huge amounts of fattening yet delicious food, the long and relaxing break from work and stress...everything, but the birth of Jesus (Rodewald).

Thirty-five years ago in 1975, 10 Santa clauses marched into a department store in Sweden, took everything in the store, put it in their sacks and pretended to be giving away presents for free, carrying signs that said, "Gifts are free. The store treats you." They almost got into trouble, but they did it as a protest against the commercialization of Christmas. While most of the world was forgetting what Christmas really meant, after this incident, several organizations and people tried to save and revive the original traditions of Christmas (Walsh).

Has religious marketing gone too far? Has Christmas lost its meaning, or is it okay to celebrate a materialistic Christmas as long as love is demonstrated through giving and receiving gifts? The commercialization of Christmas has extensively affected the sacred holiday because it has lost its true focus on the celebration of Jesus' birth, religious marketing has gone too far, and the society has become more secular.

Christmas has lost its true focus. It says in the Bible that, "Jesus was in the world, but no one knew or bothered to find out about Him, even when He created the world (John 1: 10)." The classic story of the birth of Jesus – all the way from the virgin Mary being shocked by what the angel had told her, to the journey with Joseph to Bethlehem to be registered as husband and wife as well as to look for a place to give birth, to the visits of the shepherds and the wise men, and at last escaping from King Herod (Matthew 1-2; Luke 1-2) – that used to be told everywhere, has been less known by the public (Rodewald). It has gotten to a point where even when the "Miracle Birth of Jesus" has been introduced to the society, it is forgotten so fast that people "are so eager to get ready for Christmas and then December 26 rolls around <https://assignbuster.com/commercialization-of-holy-days-religion-essay/>

and stores are already getting ready for Valentine's Day(Rodewald)." The praise Christ deserves on His birthday that someone originally decided to remember towards the end of December has become so much more insignificant to the commercial world.

Christmas was originally meant to be for the celebration of Jesus Christ's birth, but it has become so commercial that several people don't even know about the religious aspect to this holiday. Tons of people only know about how Santa goes around giving out presents, or even just the presents, the Christmas tree and the decorations. It has been debated whether or not Jesus and God really created the world, and maybe that is the reason less people celebrate the birth of Jesus during Christmas, but according to the Bible, the world was God's creation (Genesis 1: 1), and still belongs to Him; Jesus was born over two thousand years ago (Matthew 1: 16), and still exists now (John 1: 10). Therefore, the true meaning of Christmas is to celebrate the miracle birth of Jesus Christ.

Religious marketing has gone too far. "The truth is that the growth of religious pluralism is behind the decline in importance of Christianity and, by extension, the religious aspects of Christmas (Cline)." Fewer people see and this includes Christians see Christmas as a time for religious observance (Cline). Christmas has become more of an exchange of wealth, a business, a commercial enterprise, than a religious observance, and Austin Cline believes that the responsibility for the commercialization of the holiday lies with Christians and the free market, although the conservatives usually defend themselves against this viewpoint. "Retailers must cater to a broad public, not just Christians, which means that exclusively Christian elements

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of the holiday season fade into the background while aspects which appeal to everyone (usually pagan or recent elements) grow in importance (Cline)."

To satisfy the general public's increased apathy towards the sacred meaning of the supposed-to-be Christian festival, as well as the society's stand against possibly the most debated upon religion, the media has practically avoided any association with the religion throughout the years. " Until about ten years ago, God more or less stayed out of prime-time television...This is no cause for surprise. In an industry based on popularity and advertising revenue, network executives before the cable era were in the unenviable position of trying to please all the people all the time, or at least trying never to offend anyone...(Forbes and Mahan 44)" Maybe God and Jesus have been included more in the media today, but the society has been so desperate to promote the traditions and celebration of Christmas that they are going overboard and publicizing the holiday for popularity and wealth instead. Christmas has become a tool for supplementary income, instead of something special to celebrate.

One of the reasons behind the immense commercialization of Christmas may be the secularization of the holiday season and the society, although some would prefer to call it the de-Christianization that has mostly been happening in America (Cline). " It's true that both have occurred...The holiday season remains religious with many religions taking part, but it no longer is exclusively Christian. The loss of Christmas as the focus of the holiday season and the loss of public(Cline)." " The loss of Christmas as the focus of the holiday season and the loss of public acknowledgement of the religious elements of Christmas represent the loss of Christian privilege occurring <https://assignbuster.com/commercialization-of-holy-days-religion-essay/>

throughout American culture(Cline).” Nonetheless, the society nowadays is overdoing the celebration of holidays (Folgate). As if forgetting the true meaning is not enough, people spend way too much money on useless decorations and materialistic things that only last for the short holiday (Folgate). The gifts and decorations certainly add to the spirit of the holidays, but these things should be done with a purpose, instead of being done just because everybody else is doing it as well (Folgate). “ As the holiday has become more secular, so have its songs, with religious and spiritual compositions largely supplanted by the banalities of Rudolph, sleigh bells and Santa(Feinstein).” People are forgetting about the true meaning of Christmas. It has come to a point where most people only care about the presents, the decorations, the Christmas tree, the food, and Santa Claus and his Reindeers. Christmas has gradually become a holiday to spend too much, to get drunk and wasted, to get out of control, instead of the religious, pure celebration of Jesus’ birth. Consequently, the society is leaning more on the materialistic benefits of Christmas, rather than the miracle birth of Christ Jesus.

The main focus of Christmas has shifted away from the miracle birth of Jesus, Christmas has become a tool for wealth through advertising and marketing, and the society is gradually leaning more on the materialistic rules they have invented for themselves, spending heaps of cash on decorations, gifts, unnecessary things, some not even knowing why they are doing so. The commercialization of Christmas has had largely influenced the sacred holiday. We need to figure out what the holiday really celebrates before spending an endless amount of money on useless decorations and

materialistic things that only last for a short amount of time, just because going with the flow seems to be the safest. Like Pastor Pete Marshal has said, “ Christmas is not in the stores — but in the hearts of people. Maybe there’s nothing in the store they need. But what about some token of love — what about love itself — and friendship — and understanding — and consideration — and a helping hand — and a smile — and a prayer?

Christmas will never be commercial unless you let it be.”