

Texas Baptist Forum

January 20, 2006

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Speak up for Christmas

“Let the redeemed of the Lord say so” (Psalm 107:2).

This Christmas season has included many surprises. Some of us were surprised by the department stores that opted not to use the word “Christmas” in their ads this year.

Recently, I had another surprise. Of the scores of people I talked to about the attack on Christmas, I was surprised by the number of folk who hadn't heard about the attack. Do these people watch the news? Or should the question be, “Do these people watch the right news?” Any news agency that won't report this problem is obviously in bed with the “kill Christmas” group.

• [Jump to online-only letters below](#)

Letters are welcomed. Send them to marvknox@baptiststandard.com; 250 words maximum.

Out((Loud))

"When you consider that 80 to 90 percent of the American public celebrates Christmas, that (retailers) actively solicit and advertise to ... make millions and millions of dollars, and they're not willing to mention the words 'Merry Christmas,' something is drastically wrong."

Manuel Zamorano

Protester, who called off his boycott of Macy's department stores after the chain reinstated "Merry Christmas" in its advertising (RNS)

"When did it become the responsibility of department stores to preach the gospel? It is not the purpose of retail establishments to advance the cause of Christ. I do not recall Jesus ever saying, 'Why haven't you turned my marketplace into a house of prayer?' If Christ is missing from Christmas, don't blame department stores. The real reason is somewhere closer to home. ... No wonder Christ seems to be missing from Christmas-Christians keep looking for him in the mall."

James Evans

Pastor of First Baptist Church in Auburn, Ala.
(EthicsDaily.com)

"The speaker believes a Christmas tree is a Christmas tree, and it is as simple as that."

Ron Bonjean

Spokesman for House Speaker Dennis Hastert, R-Ill., explaining Hastert's decision not to label the Capitol Christmas tree a "holiday tree"
(Washington Times/RNS)

"I think the 'Person' of the Year should be God. On the one hand, more people seem certain they know God's will on the social issues of the day. On the other, all of us feel the need to find answers as we confront the 'acts of God' dominating the news, like diseases and global catastrophes."

Coleen Rowley

Former FBI agent and one of three "whistleblowers" honored as Time magazine's "Persons of the Year" in 2002 (RNS)

But it's better not to know the news than to do nothing after hearing it. I guarantee you that if enough Christians lodged a complaint against stores that refuse to use "Christmas" this week, they'd be talking about "Christmas" next week!

Edmund Burke spoke a truth when he said: "The only thing necessary for evil to triumph is that good men do nothing."

Doug Fincher

San Augustine

Speak up for serious matters

The usual hot buttons of "In God We Trust," "... one nation under God," and so forth have been temporarily put on the back burner. Instead, we have changed to the hot buttons of Christmas, as politicians and religious leaders go for more money and political influence.

I heard a well-known religious figure say on the radio that if you don't call a decorated tree a "Christmas tree," it is an attack on Jesus! The speaker of the U.S House of Representatives made a point of renaming the tree at the Capitol a "Christmas tree." Some organizations want to boycott businesses if they don't use politically correct greetings-as defined by religious/political leaders.

Jesus told us to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, visit those in prison and minister to the sick. Did he really intend to mandate certain words of greeting and correct terminology for decorated trees at this time of year and then just forgot to mention it?

Our nation is facing serious problems, not the least of which is corruption in our political system. We have hungry, homeless people and families who have lost loved ones in Iraq. How would Jesus respond to our lack of

concern for serious matters?

I think he would weep.

Carl L. Hess

Ozark, Ala.

Circle grows narrower

Please look at Paul Pressler's last book, where he and others promised those of us with charismatic leanings a place at the Southern Baptist Convention table. Check with Wallace Henley in Houston as well.

I serve Central Baptist Church of Hixson in Chattanooga, Tenn., and have hosted Fresh Oil and New Wine conferences for years. Six hundred-plus Baptist churches cooperate with us.

We want to stay (in the SBC), but the circle of so-called orthodoxy grows ever narrower. If the gifts of the Spirit have ceased, then let the convention say it. Scholars may not believe in the supernatural, but no reputable New Testament scholar denies the gifts are clearly taught.

The action of the International Mission Board is one more step down for a declining denomination whose only hope is a fresh openness to the Holy Spirit.

Ron Phillips

Chattanooga, Tenn.

Decision hurts missions

Regarding the International Mission Board's decision not to appoint

missionaries who use “prayer language” in private: I know there's debate about the nature of speaking in tongues in the Scripture. There are zealous and sincere people on both sides.

However, it is wrong for the IMB to limit God by eliminating missionaries who have their own (presumably Spirit-filled) way of praying.

Our church's mission giving will no longer include this organization.

“But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually just as he wills” (1 Corinthians 12:11).

Darryl Hall

Garland

Obituary embarrassing

I must tell you how disappointed I was with the Standard's coverage of the death of Dr. Adrian Rogers (Nov. 21).

My disappointment and embarrassment is that something so insensitive and one-sided would be printed about a Christian brother at his death.

It would have been better to ignore his passing rather than reprint an article from another agency. I find it difficult to believe that your talented writers could not write their own story.

Dr. Rogers was a man of dignity and humility, and whatever your theological and political differences, he deserved better treatment from your paper. Poor form, sir.

Keith Sanders

Keller

Design for intelligence

Kansas should be commended for taking a stand for teaching intelligent design.

The opponents of teaching intelligent design call such teaching “bad science.” Actually, Darwin's theory of evolution is bad science similar to the alchemist teaching of the past.

Teaching intelligent design in schools moves the teaching of biology out of questionable theories, just as atomic theories moved physical science out of the theory of the alchemist. Just as atomic theory showed heavy metals could not have “evolved” from lighter metals, archeological research now shows higher-order animals appeared rather rapidly—not over thousands of years as thought by Darwin's theory.

Teaching intelligent design in our schools will help today's students seek better scientific understanding of living organisms.

Bill Osborne

Houston

No hypocrisy if you check the facts

If Mark Johnson (Jan. 9) had checked out the facts, he would not have accused the Southern Baptist Convention of hypocrisy regarding its stand on Disney and on *The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*.

ONLINE
ONLY

First, the Harry Potter Books are too violent for small children under fifth

grade. That is my opinion based on my survey reading of several at my local library. I know others who disagree with me. Now, I believe that we can disagree without being disagreeable on things like this.

Second, the SBC has announced as of June 2005 that Disney had made changes that the SBC wanted and that the boycott was off.

Third, *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* is an excellent book written by a famous Christian author, C.S. Lewis, who also wrote *The Screwtape Letters*, another classic.

Fourth, I see LifeWay's attempt to capitalize on this movie first and foremost as promoting good moral literature and secondly as good business. That is their job, is it not?

Therefore, the SBC is not hypocritical but attentive in assisting the promotion of a great movie based on great literature from a company that changed due to our boycott. How better to follow up a boycott than to reward that company when they are doing something right. Not to do that would be hypocritical.

Michael Simons

Cleburne

News of religion, faith, missions, Bible study and Christian ministry among Texas Baptist churches, in the BGCT, the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) and around the world.