More Than One Christmas

Have you noticed that there are really two Christmases at play in the world today?

One is secular expression of Christmas characterized by hyper-commercialization and the other is the religious Christmas where Christ is at the center.

In fact, some would say that there are three Christmases in the modern world. Here’s what C.S. Lewis once wrote (in a moment of what sounds like humbug-ery):

“Three things go by the name of Christmas. One is a religious festival. This is important and obligatory for Christians...The second (it has complex historical connections with the first, but we needn’t go into them) is a popular holiday, an occasion for merry-making and hospitality. If it were my business to have a ‘view’ on this, I should say that I much approve of merry-making. But what I approve of much more is everybody minding his own business...But the third thing called Christmas is unfortunately everyone’s business. I mean of course the commercial racket.”

Whether it is two or three, the problem is that the secular Christmas is overshadowing the religious one. This is to the detriment of everyone because without the religious truth of Christmas, we can forget why we are doing what we are doing at this time of year.

How do we solve this? Some would say that in order to restore the holiness of Christmas we need more manger scenes in public squares, Christian hymns instead of Christmas carols, and the abandonment of “Happy Holidays” in favor of “Merry Christmas” when greeted in a store. That should do it.

To me, it is less about doing battle with the secular Christmas than it is turning up the volume on the religious Christmas.

Trying to get the secular Christmas to look more like the religious one is a good and lofty goal. In reality, however, Christmas is made holy by a devotional appreciation for the near unbelievable truth that God loved us so much that God embraced the human condition. God became one of us; full of laughter and tears and anger and heartache and celebration and grief.

What does that mean for your life? What does that mean for our world?

Those questions are not answered by more manger scenes, fewer “winter carols”, or saying “Merry Christmas” instead of “Happy Holidays”. And they certainly aren’t answered by Amazon prime or next day delivery.

Those questions are only answered in your own heart when, in your mind’s eye, you enter a stable on a dark night and behold God as a baby; a baby that changed everything.

See you in church,
**Christmas Services coming up:**

**Saturday, December 24**
7:00 PM - Christmas Eve Candle Light and Communion Service. The offering this evening will be for the two Melrose Food pantries and Bread of Life.

**Sunday, December 25**
Christmas Day Service will be at 10:00 AM.

Bob Hughes, Ray Luebbe (Betsy Garrett’s father), Mary Sakata and Becky Faro (Trish Faro’s daughters), Ginny Niles, Nyal Fuentes, Claire Griffin, Herb Gray, Bill Albright, Bill Copeland, Merle Copeland, Gem Colvin, Dot Allen, Bob Pierce, Anne Wing, Ella Boyle, Scott

**Additional poinsettias were**
In Memory of Those who have touched out lives From The Ahlin/Krueger families

**SUNDAY SCHOOL:**
There is also no Sunday School on December 25th. However, for children too young to remain in Worship, we will have a Christmas video set up in the Library. Parents who choose this option should plan to remain with their children.

On Sunday, January 1, 2017, there will be an Open Classroom activity for children in the K-2 classroom. Older children are invited to remain in Worship.

**NOTE:** There will be no Messenger the week after Christmas. Messenger will resume January 3rd, with cutoff date for items of submission being December 30th. Merry Christmas!