

# THE WOODLAND HILLS PROCLAIMER

"how I kept back nothing that was helpful, but proclaimed it to you"

## SERVICES

Acts 20:20

## ELDERS

### SUNDAY

9:30 AM – BIBLE STUDY  
10:30 AM – A.M. ASSEMBLY  
6:00 PM – P.M. ASSEMBLY

*Woodland Hills church of Christ*  
410 Woodland Hills Drive  
Conroe, Texas 77303  
Telephone: 936/756-9322

WAYNE REED HARROLD STARR

## DEACONS

JAMES COST  
JIM COOK  
VERNON RIEHL

### WEDNESDAY

7:00 PM – BIBLE STUDY

VOLUME 2 WEEK 46

To our visitors – "WELCOME" - Thank you for choosing to visit with us

Nov 15, 2009

# What About Christmas?

By Ferrell Jenkins

It's almost Christmas Time! Radio, television, newspapers and special church programs repeat the "Christmas Story." Crib and manger scenes depict the story for all Americans to see. The question of whether communities have the right to display nativity scenes on public property has made its way to our highest court. Erroneous speculation and truth mingle in the commonly told "Christmas Story." It sounds so good, but is this the way Jesus wants people to remember Him? The Biblical answer is clear; it is not!

## The Truth About Jesus' Birth

Matthew and Luke record the Biblical accounts of the birth of Jesus ([Mt. 1:25-2:12](#); [Lk. 2:1-20](#)). Based on various lines of evidence, it is possible to place the birth of Jesus somewhere between 7 and 4 B.C. We do not know the month and day of His birth and there is no way to find out even the season of the year when He was born. Adam Clarke, the noted Methodist scholar of the early 19th century, stated correctly that the Bible writers do not give the birth date of Jesus. He continued as follows: "Learned and pious men have trifled egregiously on this subject, making that of importance which the Holy Spirit, by His silence has plainly informed them is of none" (Clarke's Commentary, on [Lk. 2:8](#)). Oscar Cullman, a modern church historian, said the early Christians "altogether rejected such a festival as unchristian" (The Early Church, p. 34).

## Then Why December 25?

As the church began to make departures from the New Testament pattern in organization, doctrine, and worship the observance of special days became common. By the 3rd and 4th centuries the church observed Epiphany, Easter and Christmas. The pagan Romans celebrated the Mithraic feast of the Sun god, the Roman Saturnalia and other pagan feasts toward the end of December. Since Jesus is the light of the world, it is understandable that Christians would think of honoring Him at that time ([Jn. 1:5-9](#); [8:12](#)). The emperor Constantine "pursued the deliberate policy of uniting the worship of the Sun with that of Christ" (Cullman, p. 29).

By about the middle of the fourth century the church at Rome began the observance of the birth of Jesus on December 25. To my knowledge, the first person to claim that Christ was actually born on that day was Chrysostom of Antioch (A.D. 386). Opposition to this practice continued for many years among some of the churches. The observance of Christmas began with the apostate church which was developing into what we now know as the Roman Catholic Church. Christmas had its origin in a pre Christian age among the pagans. It did not originate by the authority of God, Christ, or the Apostles and is not the way He chose to be remembered.

## Should the Church Remember Christ at Christmas?

We should remember Christ, but not in ways which He did not authorize. New Testament churches did not celebrate, in any special way, the birth of Christ. In the Scriptures God has given us all instruction about life and Godliness ([2 Pet. 1:3](#); [2 Tim. 3:16-17](#)). He has given us no authority for the church to participate in any kind of special service related to Christmas. The New Testament gives warnings to Christians about the observance of days, etc. ([Col. 2:16](#); [Gal. 4:10-11](#)).

The extent to which an individual may participate in the activities of Christmas is a matter of opinion. My family recognizes that many celebrate Christmas as a civil or cultural holiday instead of a religious one. With days off from work, it is a fine time for families to gather, exchange gifts, and to explain to others the difference between church and individual activities. Further individual participation in the religious aspect of Christmas may fall within the freedom allowed in Romans 14. Here Paul speaks of a brother who regarded one day above another (vs. 5) and observed it for the Lord (vs. 6). Paul says each person should be "fully convinced in his own mind."

## Conclusion

There should not be any special services at the church of Christ in observance of Christmas. Whatever else we may wish to do or not do individually, let us keep it on an opinion basis and not judge one another.

We often are asked why we do not, as a congregation, observe the birth of Jesus on December 25th. While many are calling to “bring Christ back into Christmas”, we have argued that Christ never belonged there in the first place.

Our problem is not with remembering with great appreciation the wonderful event. The Christ child’s entry into the world signified “good tidings of great joy” (cf. Luke 3:10). The angel said, “For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord” (vs. 11). This we do often, as we contemplate not only our Lord’s birth, but also his perfect life, sacrificial death, resurrection, and ascension back to the Father. Our problem is with any man (or group of men) who would take it upon himself (or themselves) to establish a religious holiday (holy day). Nowhere in scripture is there any authority for such a practice. It finds its genesis entirely in the mind of man. The Pharisees were one time guilty of establishing their own religious tradition. In response to their arrogance, Jesus said: **“Hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy about you, saying: ‘These people draw near to Me with their mouth, And honor Me with their lips, But their heart is far from Me. And in vain they worship Me, Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men’” (Matthew 15:7-9).**

Let us be willing to limit ourselves to worshipping God in ways revealed in His Will.

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### WOODLAND HILLS NEWS AND NOTES

Kathy Nelson’s daughter April (former member) is expecting a baby – in May. Congrats to all.

**PRAYER LIST:** Janice Billeri, Mindy Blackstone, Haskell & Doris Butler, Ruby Goad, Jerry Harrell, Bill & Jo Ellen McCarty, Leola Pence, Nelva Peyton, Jerri Scott, Bertie Strokos, James & Lou Ann Webb, Jennifer West, Jane Zeitz.

Area gospel meetings are posted in the foyer



### **PROVERB OF THE WEEK**

**Proverbs 21:7**  
**The violence of the wicked will**  
**destroy them, Because they refuse to**  
**do justice**

### **SCHEDULE TO SERVE - Nov 22th**

#### AM – Service

Announcements: Martin Billeri  
Song Leader: Luis Serpas  
Lord Supper Bread: David Cade  
Asst: Roy Hickenbottom  
Cup: Bill Izenbarger  
Asst: Sam Laird  
Prayer Open: Gerald Hodges  
Close: Lynn Farrell

#### PM – Service

Song Leader: Jim Rains  
Lord Supper: David Cade  
Prayer Open: James Webb  
Close: Mike Burk