

Deism Today

Winter 2010

Deist Alliance Quarterly Newsletter



Christmas and Jesus Christ

by Brandon Norgaard



Welcome to the Winter issue of Deism Today, the official newsletter of the Deist Alliance. We have dedicated this special issue to Christmas.

Christmas is not a special Deist holiday or celebration, but that does not mean that Deists do not recognize the traditions of other belief systems. The celebration of the winter solstice is an ancient observance, one that marks the transition from winter to spring. The solstice is a natural phenomenon, and observing it is a recognition of the natural progress of the seasons. Christmas may be the most significant holiday of the season, but it is not the only one.

Contents

- p. 1. - Christmas and Jesus Christ
- p. 2 - Celebrating Christmas as a non-Christian Deist
- p. 6 - Yule Be Home for Christmas
- p. 8 - Credits, etc.

continued on page four...



Celebrating Christmas as a non-Christian Deist

by Joel Axenroth

Webster's defines "celebrate" as many things, but the definition that comes closest to defining the celebration of the Christmas holiday for me is "to honor (as a holiday), especially by solemn ceremonies or by refraining from ordinary business".

Christmas has become to many in the United States an almost secular holiday, focused on mass consumerism and over-indulgence at too many holiday parties. We hear of the pagan roots of the Christmas tree and other wintertime displays, elves and flying reindeer, "Black Friday" sales events (a term historically associated with the worst stock market crash of the twentieth century), the mass crush of shoppers fighting for

too few goods at rock-bottom prices, and we even hear of occasional fights over who gets what and when.

Yet to me the celebration is in honor of the birth of Christ, a man I neither worship as divine, nor consider to be my savior, that holds the true meaning of the Christmas season, and honoring him is the focus of my celebration. Christ is to millions and millions of people the center of their lives, their worship, their religion, their relationship with God and their relationship with their fellow man. His words, at their best, as accurately as we have them recorded, speak to the goodness and nobility in man. They have provided untold generations with solace and comfort in times of trial, peace and forgiveness in times of need, and guidance to become true to our better natures, something that I think God has provided us all.

And we hear of Christmas "miracles" each year, examples of friends and enemies, neighbors and strangers, coming together to make the miraculous ordinary. Remember the Christmas "truce" of 1914, when ordinary German and English soldiers defied orders and stopped fighting long enough to exchange gifts with their enemies. Look at the U.S. Marines collecting toys for children or strangers giving their food or time to help the needy. It is the



time of year that often brings out the best in us, and it is to honor the birth of Christ, whose example inspires these simple acts of extraordinary kindness and humanity, that I celebrate.

I find it somehow fitting, and perhaps in keeping with the man we know from the Bible, that we celebrate Christ's birth by giving of ourselves and to one another. It is through this underlying message, when we are in service to one another, that we are truly serving God. Despite all the rampant consumerism, Christ's message of love and service somehow seems to shine through year after year.

So I beg my Christian friends' indulgence, for I, a non-Christian, see Christ's life of love and service to others as a model of how to live my own life, and I seek to share their joy each year in celebrating and honoring his birth.



**Adeste fideles,
Laete triumphantes;
Venite, venite
in Bethlehem
Natum videte,
Regem angelorum:
Venite adoremus
Venite adoremus
Venite adoremus, Dominum!**

**Cantet nunc Io
Chorus angelorum,
Cantet nunc aula coelestium
Gloria Gloria
In excelcís Deo
Venite adoremus
Venite adoremus
Venite adoremus, Dominum!**



...continued from page one





Credits:

Credit for authorship is given for each article.

Unless otherwise noted, images are from Wikimedia Commons.

p. 1 - Tomasz Sienicki - Kalenderlys-2-tsca.jpeg, CC license. p. 2 - Nevit Dilmen - Happy new year 06463.jpg, CC license. p. 3 - Axel Bührmann - A taste of things to come - Christmas tree sugar cookie with sprinkles.jpg, CC license.. p. 4 - Väsk - Julgransförsäljning utanför Lunds domkyrka.jpg, CC license. p. 5 - Gregory Phillips - English holly.jpg, CC license.

Remaining images are in the public domain.



Editor's Note:

The views expressed by the authors of the articles in this newsletter do not necessarily reflect the views of all Deists or of all the members of the Deist Alliance.

Credit for authorship is given for each article. Images not credited above provided by the editor or by One Eyed Jack. All other images are in the public domain or released under the Gnu Free Documentation license, most often from Wikimedia Commons or by the editor.

My profound thanks to all who contributed. All credit goes to those who devoted their time and energy to this project. Any mistakes are mine.

--Chuck



Deist Alliance

<http://deistalliance.org>