**Cancel Christmas?** dkm Dec 2022

I just got a flyer in the mail about ‘community carols’ at the local church. Many family activities are listed for all to enjoy. For the last two years such gatherings were not possible because of Covid 19. I pray that hearing the name of Jesus in such carols may lead people to ask, ‘What has Jesus got to do with Christmas?

Christmas has become an institution in our western culture, and even in other cultures. Unbelievers often celebrate more than believers, and even believers celebrate in improper ways. Some think of Christmas as a time for gluttony and drunkenness. Unfortunately, this institution called Christmas in more about money and the economy nowadays, than it is about family, and even less about the incarnation. Retailers are still trying to make up for the two cancelled Christmases.

What would happen if Christmas was cancelled permanently? The premier of Victoria may well try this! Most likely we would have a recession. We would be left with mother’s day and father’s day, and birthdays. What would you do if Christmas was cancelled? As Christians, we know that Christmas is a celebration of the incarnation, the birth of Jesus Christ. We don’t know the date on which he was born but long ago the church decided on December 25. What we do know is the circumstance surrounding the birth of Jesus as written in the Bible. The nativity scene, with a man and his wife holding a baby, and with angels and shepherds, comes from the Bible- unlike Santa. Despite the poverty and squalid conditions of Jesus birth, it was a time of great joy, in heaven and on earth- at least for the lowly shepherds who came to see the newborn King

While gifts were brought to Jesus, it was Jesus himself who is God’s gift to the world. ‘For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in him will not perish but have eternal life’ (John 3:16). My favourite verse for Christmas is John 1:14: ‘The Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we behold his glory, the glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth’. In celebrating Christmas we should stick to the truth, as found in Jesus not Santa, and reflect on the grace of God in forgiving and cleansing us from sin when we confess and believe in Jesus.

Christmas is about the incarnation, about God becoming man in order to save us from sin and death through Jesus Christ. Christmas and Easter cannot be separated; the message of Easter has similarly been lost in the flood of chocolate eggs and rabbits.

So what if Christmas was cancelled? Could we not still celebrate the incarnation? Without the incarnation there is no logical reason for Christmas anyway. God has given us a day to celebrate the incarnation, the crucifixion, and the resurrection of his Son, Jesus Christ. He has given us the Lord’s Day, one day in seven, to remember Jesus and worship him. Little children want of have a birthday every week. Well, Jesus is so special we can celebrate his birth every week. So the meaning of Christmas will not be lost for true Christians if Christmas is cancelled.

*Let me now thank you in the Lord for your fellowship and support here in our church over this past year. I continue to pray for you and your family as you celebrate the incarnation, God becoming flesh in order to save us from sin and death. Please remember this wonderful truth of the gospel more than once a year. Give thanks to the Lord every day for his wonderful mercy and grace through which you have been saved- if you are saved.*

JOY TO THE WORLD THE LORD HAS COME