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American's Changing Views of Christmas By Bob Waldrep



"And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and...said...I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord." Luke 2:8-11 NIV

A report released this month by Pew Research Center found that an **overwhelming majority of Americans celebrate Christmas but only one-third (32%) favor stores/businesses acknowledging it by using the greeting Merry Christmas.** This has declined from 43% who favored its usage in 2005. At the same time the number of Americans who do not care how they are greeted has grown from 45% to 52%.

Pew reports that **Americans believe the "religious" aspects of Christmas are also declining in public life** as are American's views about the validity of the biblical account of the events surrounding Jesus' birth. Regarding these, their polling determined the following:

90% of Americans celebrate Christmas but only 55% do so because they view it as a religious (46%) or religious and cultural (9%) holiday.

51% plan to attend a religious service on Christmas/Christmas Eve Day (down from 54% in 2013)

66% are in favor of Christian symbols, such as nativity scenes, allowed on government property during the Christmas season; however, 29% of these favor it only if accompanied by the symbols of other religions.

Even though the central figure of Christmas is Jesus, **the number of Americans who believe the biblical story of Christmas shows a decline from just three years ago.**

66% say they believe Jesus was born to a virgin - down from 73% in 2014

75% believe Jesus was laid in a manger - down from 81%

68% believe the wise men, guided by a star, brought Jesus gifts - down from 75%

67% believe angels announced the birth of Jesus to shepherds - down from 74%

Only 57% believe all four of the above facts, which are central to the Christmas story, are true—down from 65% in 2014. The biggest decline is among Millennials (those born after 1980) which dropped from 59% to 44%. This compares to Gen Xers (born 1965-1980) which went from 67% to 62%; Baby Boomers (born 1946-1964) which declined from 68% to 65%. Interestingly, those born in 1945 or before actually increased from 66% to 70%.

This data about Christmas reflects **we live in a culture that is increasingly turning away from the truth of Scripture** to embrace a worldview that is often of one's own doing. We will address this idea more thoroughly in our first newsletter of 2018 in our review of Reza Aslan's new book, *God: A Human History*, in which he reinvents God as he did Jesus in his book *Zealot*.

As Christians, we must continue to place emphasis on the truth of the biblical account of Jesus' birth. It is why Merry Christmas is not only a proper greeting but one that reminds us we are not celebrating a "happy holiday" but the birth of the savior - **for there is no Christmas without Christ.**

So, from all of us at Crosswinds Foundation, **we wish you a very Merry Christmas** and may you know the peace and comfort that comes from knowing and celebrating the Savior.

Wishing You and Yours a Merry Christmas!

Bob Waldrep, Linwood Bragan, Don Malin, Todd Gober, Nelu Filip, Ieremia Rusu and the Board Members of Crosswinds Foundation

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