

Letters Defending Christmas Traditions

These letters were written either to Pastor Pete or Lee Grady, Editor of CHARISMA MAGAZINE regarding Pastor Pete's December 2005 article: **Rediscovering Christmas Traditions**. Pastor Pete's responses to these letters serve as an excellent defense of Christmas traditions and the festive celebration of the Christmas.

Peace be with you.

Read 3/4 of your article published in Charisma and could not continue.

I am not one of the bashers, but the Lord dealt with me about this. My family decided to do the Hanukkah (festival of lights).

The word of God does not bring any type of confusion. I cannot add to his word. I plan to live my life 100% on the word of God. I am at peace with this word the Holy Spirit gave me is:

Col 2:8 - See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the basic principles of this world rather than on Christ.

GOD BLESS YOU.

--

MARIA C. HAMILTON

Apart from Him I can do nothing!

Maria, thank you for taking the time to write me. It saddens me that you disliked the article, but I have to allow for the fact that not everyone will agree with what I write, and you are certainly free to have and express your opinion. However, your use of scripture was a cheap shot, in my opinion, for you used it, it seems, to infer that my article in some way was a "hollow and deceptive philosophy which depends on human tradition and basic principles of this world rather than on Christ." If encouraging Christians to be Christocentric (focused on the person and work of Christ) by using the season of Advent to remember his virgin birth, which is essential to the doctrine of the Incarnation and deity of Christ, and to the doctrine of the Blessed Trinity as a way of expressing gratitude and worship to Him, is tantamount to taking them captive through hollow and deceptive philosophies, which is ludicrous, then how can you then turn around celebrate the tradition of Hanukkah, which does not show up in the scriptures? As a pastor I teach my congregation to both recognize and celebrate Hanukkah as part of their Advent observance and as a way of putting into proper perspective the tradition of hanging lights at Christmas time, and finding its ultimate fulfillment in Jesus who proclaimed that He was the light of the world. But if you are going to pass such a judgment on my article (and indirectly, upon me) one would think you would be fair in assessing any and all those

celebrations you choose to observe and practice. Why you would take the time to write me such a caustic email without caring enough about me as a brother in the Lord to point out exactly where in my article I deceived people with hollow, man centered and worldly philosophy, is beyond me. But I would advise you to read a little further on in the book of Colossians, say to verses 16-17 which warn people like you to not pass judgment on those in the body of Christ who find significant purpose in honoring God in Christ on special days which commemorate some aspect of His person and work. It reads -

"Therefore do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink, or with regard to a religious festival, a New Moon celebration or a Sabbath day. These are a shadow of the things that were to come; the reality, however, is found in Christ."

It seems that your e-mail was meant to take a cheap shot at me while you remained ensconced in your own self-righteous and hypocritical traditions. Maria, I don't know what or who has taught you this position but it is not a Biblical one nor a charitable one. The scripture is plain in its admonishment to those like you who are prone to judge what other Christians hold dear. Read Romans 14 for a more contextual teaching on this. Your selection of scripture was out of context and just that - highly selective and poorly interpreted and applied. Verses 4 - 6 of Romans 14 reads,

"Who are you to judge someone else's servant? To his own master he stands or falls. And he will stand, for the Lord is able to make him stand.

One man considers one day more sacred than another; another man considers every day alike. Each one should be fully convinced in his own mind. He who regards one day as special, does so to the Lord. He who eats meat, eats to the Lord, for he gives thanks to God; and he who abstains, does so to the Lord and gives thanks to God.

I hope this helps you both understand and have more grace for those you disagree with. What I wrote and what I believe about Christ centered Christmas traditions is "to the Lord." Grace and peace be to you in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Pastor Pete Bertolero

SORRY.

MY INTENTION WAS NOT MEANT TO PASS JUDGMENT ON YOU.

COL 2:8 WAS FOR ME, IN DEALING WITH SO MANY CHRISTIANS TRYING TO FIND AN EXCUSE TO CELEBRATE DECEMBER 25 AS CHRIST'S BIRTHDAY. I WAS A FORMER CATHOLIC AND DID THE WHOLE YARD OF THAT CELEBRATION. MY LORD AND SAVIOR DID NOT BORN ON DEC 25TH, BUT DIED FOR ME ON THE 14TH OF NISAN.

I LOVE THAT WORD: CHRISTOCENTRIC. THANKS, JUST LEARNED A NEW WORD -- I BELIEVE I AM ONE, FOR I AM FOCUSED AND OBSESSED WITH VERY MUCH PASSION FOR CHRIST MY SAVIOR.

I AGREE THAT THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS NOT ABOUT EATING AND DRINKING...

Maria, it was very kind of you to e-mail me your apology. I accept it with the same gracious spirit that it was given in. Thank you. The tone and logical flow of your previous letter mad it sound like the Holy Spirit had givven you that word and that you were applying it to your negative reaction to my article. There are still some aspects to the way you describe your attitude toward the feasibiklity of Christ being born on December 25th that perplexes me. The negative way you describe "SO MANY CHRISTIANS TRYING TO FIND AN EXCUSE TO CELEBRATE DECEMBER 25 AS CHRIST'S BIRTHDAY" seems to be aimed at the hypocrisy you witnessed growing up in the Catholic church (which I witnessed as well). You also used another negative discription of the way you used to celebrate Christmas as doing "THE WHOLE YARD OF THAT CELEBRATION" and then further made a statement of fact in saying that your "LORD AND SAVIOR [DID] NOT BORN ON DEC 25TH, BUT DIED FOR ME ON THE 14TH OF NISAN." While the latter part of your staement is true, in that our Lord did die on the 14th of Nisan, which is the date of Pascha or Passover; but there is no way you can know as a matter of historical fact He was not born on December 25th. Yet you make it sound like this is true beyond a shadow of doubt, and that too, perplexes me, for I proved in the article historical facts that strongly point to the feasibility that He was in fact born on that date, and furthermore, that the arguments most used to support the idea He was not born on that date are plain wrong. Is this a case where your mind is made up so you don't want to be confused with the facts? Many times, people form a very rigid opinion of something based not on historical or rational facts, but on psychological issues that have not been reconciled by the Holy Spirit and the cross of Christ. Your attitude toward the birth date of Christ seems to be based more on bitterness and judgments against the Catholic church (psychological issues) rather than on a fair and logical examination of the facts. It is ok with me if you choose not to buy into the evidence that supports a December 25th birthdate for Christ because of the bad taste you have in your mouth toward the Catholic church, but you should not confuse the posture you are taking with fact nor should you state it as fact, nor should you testify that the Holy Spirit is the one inspiring you to do so, for "He is the Spirit of truth" and so far, what you have said to back up Colossians 2:8 does not agree with Colossians 2:16-17 aned Romans 14:6-7. God is not the author of confusion, but you seem confused. Perhaps you should reread my article and this time finish it. There should be nothing in it that should be so offensive as to trigger you to not finish it. Its about our Lord and the wonderful truths behind the Biblical revelation of the evergreen trees and such. Give it another try. May the Lord jesus Christ bless you with His shalom. Pastor Pete

I PRAY THE LORD BLESS YOU IN YOUR ENDEAVORS OF DOING YOUR MISSION IN PREACHING/TEACHING HIS HOLY WORD.

WITHOUT OFFENSE AND WITH MUCH LOVE. BE BLESSED IN THIS MONTH.

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MARIA C. HAMILTON

Apart from Him I can do nothing!

From Lee Grady, editor of Charisma

Peter I think we are going to have to craft a reply to this and print it in the magazine. Any thoughts on what we can say about the urban legend?

Dear Sir:

Recently at a men's morning bible study, a man read from your magazine a short article on the "true" meaning of the song "Twelve Days of Christmas."

Needless to say, I, and many others, were quite surprised by some of the statements of the article, including one that Catholics in England were forbidden for a time to be a Catholic. Nothing could be more false and a short fact check of English history would prove this point.

This article, in fact, is merely a reprint of a 'urban' legend that has been circulating on the internet for a while. I would point you to: <http://www.snopes.com/holidays/christmas/12days.asp>

which I found through google in about 10 seconds.

Please do a better job fact checking your articles in the future.

With best regards,

Bob

One more letter on this subject

Thank you for the article by Peter Bertolero on Rediscovering Christmas. I have some friends who are against celebrating Christmas because of just the reasons he outlined. I too had heard of all the pagan "beginnings" of Christmas but also believe that God is in the business of redeeming culture. It was encouraging that others see that as well.

But, there was one item that bothered me, the box about "Decoding a Christmas Carol". This is not a fact, as was presented in your magazine, but rather a dubious story. The best discussion that I have found of this legend is found on the Urban Legends Reference Pages. I've included the link here.

Thank you for your consideration of my letter.
Martha Hollowell
Richmond, VA

Here's my reply, Lee.

I stand by the assertions made in my article, "Decoding the Twelve Days of Christmas" published in the December 2004 issue of Charisma. The foremost Christmas historian in the world today, the Countess Maria von Hubert-Staufer, who has written a good number of books on Christmas traditions in different cultures throughout the centuries and who is both a personal friend and resource (her websight is www.Christmasarchives.com), has verified that not only did the Catholic church use this song as a memorization tool to disciple children, but used other songs and poems in the same capacity. The Countess writes that The Twelve Days of Christmas "was just one of many cryptic rhymes developed for recusant children, and also to help them remember (all children remember with rhymes). The Countess answers those who bought this kind of misinformation about the non-existence of Catholic persecution in England by saying they "obviously are not aware of just how impossible it was to be a Catholic in penal times here!"

The Countess also supports the research of Reverend William Saunders, who was the dean of the Notre Dame Graduate School of Christendom College and pastor of a church in Sterling, Virginia. Many have bought the notion that the tradition behind this carol is false because they have no idea how severely Roman Catholicism was persecuted during this time. One person was so emboldened as to write that the notion that Catholics in England were forbidden for a time from being Catholics was not only false, but that "nothing could be more false and a short fact check of English history would prove this point." The Countess would disagree with him quite sternly on this point. Perhaps he should try studying Reformation documents rather than the Urban Legends page. Such study would prove that 'young Catholics' were not even tolerated let alone allowed to have Catholic doctrine! The Countess's own recusant family paid their fines to be allowed to continue being Catholic quietly, until they had nothing left.

By the time the Puritans came under Oliver Cromwell, many Catholics just went underground or went abroad to more tolerant countries. Anyone found harboring Catholic priests or teachers were hung, drawn and quartered. There was no such thing as Catholic Teaching irregardless of doctrinal agreement with the Church of England! The *snopes* article is woefully ignorant and in error on this as well as many other points.

Rev. Saunders wrote that persecution of the RCC began with the reign of Queen Elizabeth I of England in 1558. Any practice of the RCC faith was strictly forbidden, with the threat of being charged with treason, punishable by being hung, drawn, and quartered for attending or offering Mass! Any Catholic caught

harboring a priest in their home or allowing him to offer Mass was subject to the same penalty. Catholic citizens were not allowed to vote, to hold property, to be witnesses in court, or to have weapons. Anyone who did not attend Protestant services was fined and imprisoned for repeated offenses. All Catholic schools were closed and instruction in the faith was forbidden. It didn't matter whether RCC doctrine agreed with the Church of England on some points. The issue wasn't doctrinal, it was denominational. It is like this today in other regions of the world, where Catholics and Protestants carry out violent acts against one another. It has very little to do with doctrine, and a lot to do with denomination and political affiliation.

These penal laws remained in effect until April, 1829 when King George IV reluctantly signed the Emancipation Bill, granting political and religious freedom to Catholics. However, to this day the King or Queen of the United Kingdom cannot be a Roman Catholic. So it is historically tenable that the song The Twelve Days of Christmas was in fact piggy-backed upon by Catholics in England to help catechize children in the faith. For a rebuttal of the oft-cited snopes.com article allegedly debunking this Christmas Carol as an Urban Legend, please check our web page www.fgcchurch.com some time in mid-February. I am currently in the process of defending this so-called "Urban Legend" and debunking the debunkers attempt at debunking it. I would also warn Charisma readers that the creators and proprietors of the Urban Legends web sight are most likely not Christians, have been known to selectively write about positions in ways that make it easy for them to "debunk" it (in apologetics we call this building a "straw man") while dismissing significant facts that would give whatever they're debunking more credibility than they want it to have. They have been known to use their web site to discredit the Republican Party and President Bush, while being biased by their liberal left-wing political beliefs. I don't have the space necessary to give examples of the many times these people have been wrong and either covered it up, or left their erroneous information uncorrected. It is not wise or prudent to put one's trust in the positions offered on this web sight. Those who have merely parroted what *they* have written and forwarded their information might find themselves embarrassed for being the very thing these people accuse others of being: gullible and misinformed.

Pastor Peter,

If I sent you an idol from africa that was very beautiful and would look very nice in your living room would you take it and use it as a decorative piece in your home? I think this is relevant when we Christians begin to adopt those things that are truly pagan into our lives. Is 52:11 and 2 corth 6:17, are clear about separating ourselves from the world. In it but not of it. I don't condemn those that practice Christmas, but I don't need it either. And neither do Christians. What's the problem in losing it all together? Our lives are made full with Christ in us. There is no need for holidays, our lives should be a daily holiday.

It seems that we "Christians" try so much to do what the worlds does as to not miss out on something. The world hates us or should hate us if we are doing as our Lord Jesus asked us too. My family, my wife and I, 3 girls and 1 boy have not missed a beat since we stopped celebrating it.

I believe that it is more then just celebrating a holiday. For most Christians they feel as though if they don't their brothers and sisters will condemn them. And that is wrong.

Tony Kenoly

Hello Tony, I appreciate you taking the time to e-mail me your feelings about my Charisma article, (which I assume you read, though you never cited it). It is difficult however, to discern the purpose of your letter or why you felt the need to write me in this fashion. However, I believe you at least deserve a response (you did want me to respond, didn't you?).

You wrote:

If I sent you an idol from africa that was very beautiful and would look very nice in your living room would you take it and use it as a decorative piece in your home? I think this is relevant when we Christians begin to adopt those things that are truly pagan into our lives.

This is a peculiar way to begin a letter I must say. No greeting. No contextualization of the reason behind your e-mail to me. No explanation whatsoever. Then you ask me a hypothetical question concerning idols. The brief answer is obviously and categorically, "No." No, I would not knowingly have anything pagan or idolatrous in your home. But why you would feel this is a relevant question (relevant to what, you never say), is not clear. What exactly was it that you read from my article that would cause you to ask such a rhetorical and ludicrous question? What was it that you think I wrote that would encourage other brothers and sisters in Jesus, in your words - ***to adopt those things that are truly pagan into our lives***. If you were sincere and led by the Spirit of Christ to correct me of error in doctrine or interpretation of Scripture, or cite specific passages of scripture that support your contention and expose the error of mine, one would think you would have taken me to task on something specifically in error in my article. Your opinionated assumption that somehow my article was in favor of Christian people adopting "those things that are truly pagan" is both puzzling and irrational. Why don't you say what you mean and give direct "proof" that what I wrote is what you assume I wrote by giving examples from the article, as Matthew 18 teaches us to do whenever going to a brother with a fault? Your assumption that what I wrote (whatever that is) could have been or might have been, but "truly" was "pagan" is pretty bold of you in light of no examples. Proverbs counsels in 15:1 that "A soft answer turns away wrath, but foolish words stir up anger." Both the tone and content of your e-mail disobeys both the Spirit of Matthew 18, Galatians 6:1 and Proverbs 15:1. The next time you choose to correct an elder in Christ's church, you need to exercise a bit more humility and support what your saying with examples, if your intention is to truly show your brother his fault or error.

You go on to say:

Is 52:11 and 2 corth 6:17, are clear about separating ourselves from the world. In it but not of it.

Ok, I agree with your understanding of the meaning of these passages. Soooooooo? What are you getting at? What did I write that disagrees with these verses?

You wrote:

I don't condemn those that practice Christmas, but I don't need it either. And neither do Christians. What's the problem in losing it all together? Our lives are made full with Christ in us. There is no need for holidays, our lives should be a daily holiday.

Lots a double speak here, Anthony. You say that you don't condemn those Christians that practice the Christ-mas, but that you don't need it either. Good. Sooooo? If you don't condemn those who do, then why do you feel under such compulsion to write me this e-mail and accuse me of promoting idolatry and paganism? You speak with forked tongue, brother. You are not being honest, humble, fair or longsuffering or patient. Your religious spirit comes accross as condemning, judgmental, accusatory, and arrogant. Your statement that "And neither do Christians" need to practice Christmas is very prideful. Who gave you the authority to judge what other Christians need or don't need (although I never said anything about "need" as in all Christians "need" to celebrate Christ's mass. However, you come accross as if you are attempting to say that all Christians need not to celebrate it. If "there is no need for holidays" as you say, why was it so important to God to create the seven major festivals for Israel to celebrate Him with? Why did Jesus set an example for us by attending them? Why did the Post-resurrection Apostles? Early church fathers? God remembering, Christ exalting, Bible teaching celebrations should be OK with anyone who loves Jesus. And if not, the Bible is clear that in such matters, we are not to judge one another. Have you ever read Colossians or Romans? let me refresh your memory. Colossians 2:16-17 first. It reads - ***"Therefore do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink, or with regard to a religious festival, a New Moon celebration or a Sabbath day. These are a shadow of the things that were to come; the reality, however, is found in Christ."*** By the authority of this scripture, I tell you that I am under scriptural admonition to not let you or people like you to judge me or other brothers and sisters who find joy and meaning in celebrating important events in Biblical history and in the life, person and work of Christ, and I rebuke you for doing so. That I personally hold that such celebrations are significant and important does create a problem for me when people like you talk of losing them, especially when history shows us that it is the pagans and the secularists who rush in to define what they will then mean and how they will best be observed in carnal, drunken revelry and crass consumerism and matterialism which is precisely what happened when these holy days were dropped from the Protestant roster. If the heart attitude of those who began the traditions of celebrating Christ by assigning certain times on the calender to coincide with the time in the past when they occurred in the life of Jesus, then what would motivate someone whose attitude is to do away with such Christ exalting days? There is no way around the judgmental, pharaisaical tone of your letter. Again the scripture declares in Romans 14:4-6 ***"Who are you to judge someone else's servant? To his own master he stands or falls. And he will stand, for the Lord is able to make him stand. One man considers one day more sacred than another; another man considers every day alike. Each one should be fully convinced in his own mind. He who regards one day as special, does so to the Lord. He who eats meat, eats to the Lord, for he gives thanks to God; and he who abstains, does so to the Lord and gives thanks to God."***

These scriptures should help you both understand and have more grace for those you disagree with. What I wrote and what I believe about Christ centered Christmas traditions is "to the Lord." You may or may not agree that such things are necessary for you and your family. But joy is contagious, so please don't judge those of us who are passionate and zealous in encouraging God's people to celebrate Christ and draw others to do the same as a way of drawing people to Christ, which my church does during the holidays and regular days. Your statements ***Our lives are made full with Christ in us*** (I agree. Whats your point? If anything I have overstated this in my article. Nowhere did I state that we "need" the addition of Christ honoring celebrations on top of Christ. If you read that into what I wrote, its not about me but about you, brother. Just because we say a believer "needs" to go to church, read the Bible, do devotions, doesn't mean "in addition to" Christ, but because we are in Christ, and want to be like Him and serve Him); ***There is no need for holidays*** (there you go again, imposing your opinions and beliefs on everyone who experience joy and gladness of heart during specific times of focussing and remembering something specific that happened in the life of Christ. Why do you feel you need to dictate and control people with what really is nothing more than your likes and dislikes, opinions and biases?), ***our lives should be a daily holiday.*** (I agree).

It seems that we "Christians" try so much to do what the worlds does as to not miss out on something. There you go judging others again. You are inferring a judgment on me and those who love to celebrate Christmas and other holy celebrations as trying "to do what the world does". Let me say it again, Tony. The

world didn't create Christmas. If you truly read my article you would know that the early Church was celebrating it 30 years before Emperor Aurelian decided to create a pagan holiday at the same time. The world only took the vacuum created by over zealous puritans and Anglicans and filled it with their own revelries. This happened after and not before, Christians had celebrated Christmas for 1400 years! get your facts straight. Christmassers like myself do not feel we need to celebrate Christmas and other holy days of remembrance because we are "missing out on something" the world enjoys, but because we are onto something: the celebration of the birth of Christ. I do not always remember and give Christ His duly worship for everything He and the Father ever did. Usually I am filled with a general gratitude to God for all He has done. I am thankful for seasons when I can focus on specific aspects of my redemption in Christ, in order to give them the due observance and remembrance they deserve from me. That you do not feel any need for these is odd to me, but acceptable, and I can bless you for it. That you feel such a personal position requires you to not celebrate at all on these days, to be a non-participant in the joyous celebrations and worshipful practices of the church during these days, and to be angry and judgmental toward those who do not feel the same as you, is against the teachings of scripture and reveals error in your own heart and that your position is more "issues driven" than "faith based."

The world hates us or should hate us if we are doing as our Lord Jesus asked us too.

This is a miss-application of scripture based on a wrong interpretation of what Jesus meant by what he said. If your erroneous understanding of Paul's remarks to the Corinthians and Jesus teaching in John was true, then we would have a problem because they would not line up with what the book of Acts said about the reputation of the early church. Acts 5:12-13 says *The apostles performed many miraculous signs and wonders among the people. And all the believers used to meet together in Solomon's Colonnade. No one else dared join them, even though they were highly regarded by the people.* You need to grow in your understanding of the Biblical teaching on "the world." Jesus wasn't talking about all non-Christian people everywhere, but about the "world's system." The world "system" is the foundation for the Anti-Christ. It is anti-Christ. It does hate us. Look around Tony. hadn't you noticed what the world's system has attempted to do to Christmas this year? It has even become illegal in some state run schools to play even the instrumental music of Christmas carols, or mention Jesus, or read the Bible about the Christmas narrative. This is because the "World system" hates Christ, the Bible, and the God of the Bible, and therefore hates the Church as well. As a matter of fact, your opinion about Christmas is more in tune with what the world feels about it, and what you wish would happen to Christmas echoes what the World wished to - that it would be eliminated altogether - is much more worldly than anything you could pin on Christ-centered, Christ honoring Christmassing! Shame on you!

My family, my wife and I, 3 girls and 1 boy have not missed a beat since we stopped celebrating it.

I really don't know what you mean by "not missing a beat". Do you really mean that you don't celebrate Christmas at all? Does your church teach this and support you in this decision? What church do you attend weekly? Or do you go to church at all? Is it a Christian church, and if so whose your pastor and what is its denomination? Are you a Jehovah's Witness or a Seventh Day Adventist, Tony? If so, this would explain alot. Why any man who professes a love and passion for Christ and the Bible would feel such a need to not participate at all with Christ honoring celebrations is beyond my understanding. I am willing to bet that if you are not involved in a heretic church, that you and your family may be looked upon as odd, peculiar, or just plain "Bah-Humbuggers."

For most Christians they feel as though if they don't their brothers and sisters will condemn them. And that is wrong.

Oh, so you feel you are in a position to speak for "most Christians" now, is that right Tony? You know this for a fact - that most Christians feel this way? How did you come to know this Tony? Have you talked to the millions of Christians all over the world, most of whom celebrate Christmas (Christ's birth, remember?) in the face of persecution and retaliation, because they believe Christ should be celebrated and worshipped for this sanctified date? Have you spoken to those faithful Christians that make up the church in Iraq? Iran? China? Bosnia? What a bunch of balony. How can you hope to have any integrity when you make such ludicrous statements as this. You made a straw man statement because that's about all you can mow down with your weak, unreasonable, judgmental letter. I do not condemn you for your choice to not participate in

Christmas celebrations if this decision was made "as unto the Lord." But be forewarned from Colossians 2 and Romans 14: Christ-massers also do so unto the Lord, being fully convinced in their own conscience, and do so being thankful to God, and I, as a Pastor in Christ's church, am duty bound to help them do so in such a way that Christ is the focus of their Christmas celebrations. By the tone and tecture of your letter, you do not come accross as fully convinced in your own heart, not do you sound very thankful, but instead, bitter. I would to the Lord that this not be the case. However, you have no right or authority as a fellow Christian to judge me or other brethren who do celebrate Christmas with joyful, Christ exalting, Bible believing faith. This is according to the Word of God. To do so, as you have done in your letter, is to usurp authority over the one before whom I stand or fall, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Dear Brother Peter,

Blessings to you from our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ and may any and all strife that my oringinal e-mail may have caused be accursed and I ask for your forgiveness. Sorry for the confusion in regards to my e-mail. I know how many e-mail's articles of this nature can attract, and I am sure that you have had your full of such replies. Both good and bad.

I am a brother in the Lord and I do attend the fellowship of the brethern as often as possible. After reading your letter it is clear to see that I may have caused you some strife. This was not my intent.

I do not believe that you are trying to promote paganism or idoltry. In regards to my opening question, it was more retorical then needing a response. I know that you would not do such a thing.

Brother I simply was trying to convey that my family does not practice Christmas and we are judged almost by every brother and sister. My parents do however and we go over to their home and have dinner with them to show our gratitude. If asked what I think about Christmas I share my convictions with love and not condemnation.

The purpose of my email was to show that the holiday is not the important thing. It is to show the love of Christ first and foremost. Wetheir you participate or not.

My convictions are set on being separate from the world and that would include pagan practices revised to be Christian. The ark of the covenant and the festivals practice by Hebrews today where constructed by God and conveyed to Moses by God. They where not taken from practices first established by the pagans then revised to worship the Lord.

Many if not all the articles of Christmas are pagan and the practice of those same rites have been translated to todays practice of Christmas. So I choose not to participate in reverence to my Lord. But when I am asked by believers to express this I am met with the Buh Humbug spirit which I know we can both agree is not the love of Christ. And truly has me questioning why they celeabrate Christmas, out of tradition or because of their love to the Father for sending His Son.

I hope that this clears up any misunderstanding. It is not my intention to rebuke anyone only to convey this. Love your neighbor as yourself.

In His service,

Tony Kenoly